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Mission Produce championing organic avocados

By

Keith Loria

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[Mission Produce](#) is a go-to source for fresh, organically grown avocados.

“We have mastered the art of growing, packing and ripening certified organic avocados to meet the needs of our customers all year long,” said Megan Berenbach, director of sales for the Oxnard, CA-based company. “Demand for organic avocados continues to grow, so Mission continues to invest additional resources into organic programs, pursuing innovative ways to support and develop the category.”

Mission Produce works closely with its organic growers and lead by example with production technology innovations and best practices for organic growing.

For instance, its organic growers in California are certified by USDA-accredited inspectors and are audited annually on the requirements set by the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990.

“We follow globally recognized food safety standards to promote the integrity of organic products throughout the supply chain,” Berenbach said.

Although organics make up a relatively small portion of overall avocado sales in the United States, the segment is fast-moving with organic volume sales growing at twice the rate of conventional volume sales.

“Organic programs can also produce higher profit margins,” Berenbach said. “The current price premium for organics at retail is around 33 percent. But to capture organic shoppers that are willing to pay that premium, it’s important to use an effective merchandising strategy.”

For that reason, Mission Organics are distinctively packaged in purple so shoppers can easily differentiate between organic and conventional on the shelf.

“We also recommend that organic and conventional avocados be positioned in eye-catching, consumer-friendly displays next to each other to promote organic avocado purchases,” Berenbach said. “Bags are also a great way to capture the attention of organic avocado shoppers.”

Mission Produce’s consumer demographic research has shown consumers appreciate a convenient, grab-and-go, high-value product, so the company designed its bagged organic avocados to appeal to the organic avocado shopper. In fact, nearly two-thirds of industry organic sales come from bagged organics.

“To drive a successful organic avocado category, Mission Produce relies on our masters in the art of ripening to get the ripeness right,” Berenbach said. “With four decades of artistic intuition, industry-

leading technology, and a science-based ripening process, we develop customer-specific ripe programs to support retailer demand and promote a positive consumer experience with our avocados.”

Berenbach believes it’s also important for retailers to stay competitive on the retail pricing of organic avocados.

“Consumers look for deals on organics, so as the market fluctuates, retailers can take advantage of promotional opportunities,” she said. “The fall months going into early winter are one of the most advantageous times to promote organics, due to the strong Mexican supply. We use our industry intel to stay in-tune with the latest market trends, and we’re here to help our partners get the most out of their promotional programming.”

Because demand for organic avocados is consistently strong, the company leverages its diversified sourcing strategy and strong grower relationships to maintain a reliable, year-round supply of organic avocados.

“We are currently sourcing organic avocados primarily from Mexico,” Berenbach said. “Looking at the upcoming California season, which is expected to start up around January or February, the crop will be on its ‘off year,’ so slightly less volume is expected for both conventional and organic fruit. That said, plenty of supply is anticipated and the size curve appears to be trending on smaller fruit. On the other hand, Peru is to be expecting more volume and a later start to harvest compared to the 2023 season.”

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About Keith Loria |

A graduate of the University of Miami, Keith Loria is a D.C.-based award-winning journalist who has been writing for major publications for close to 20 years on topics as diverse as real estate, food and sports. He started his career with the Associated Press and has held high editorial positions at magazines aimed at healthcare, sports and technology. When not busy writing, he can be found enjoying time with his wife, Patricia, and two daughters, Jordan and Cassidy.

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