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Nardelli Bros. working on Florida promotions for upcoming holidays

By

Keith Loria

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[Nardelli Bros. Inc.-Lakeview Farms](#) is a trusted fifth-generation family business that has been a major player in the produce industry for more than 125 years.

Based in Cedarville, NJ, the company also grows in Georgia and Florida, and is seeing the latter



season starting up this month.

As of mid-November, the Florida farms were beginning on several of the seasonal items, with lettuce, parsley, cabbage, corn, green beans and more either underway or about to be. Those will be followed by dry items such as peppers, cucumbers and squash.

“We’ve had a good year in 2023, with some good volumes,” said Bill Nardelli Sr., president of the company. “As always, there have been some ups and downs, and we’ve had some dry weather, meaning we had to irrigate 24 hours a day, seven days a week, which was hard to keep up with, but we managed.”

Nardelli Bros. has seen some supply gaps in both Georgia and Florida for corn and beans, and some other commodities that have potential to fluctuate due to weather issues, and that could impact the Thanksgiving promotions, especially around corn.

The weather saw some extremes in temperature, which slowed down growing at times, but it’s nothing the company hadn’t experienced before.

“Prices are a little less on some commodities than we’d like to see,” Nardelli said. “What’s happened to us and many other growers in the country is that there are levels that are popular with the retailers to maintain for delivered cost. The costs have escalated in every aspect and in so many facets — growing, distribution, cooling, labor — just everything related to agriculture.”

Consequently, it puts the company in something of a vice.

“We’re trying to service our customers and get us to the retailers and wholesalers as reasonable as possible, and they don’t want to see any increases, but it’s shrinking our profit margins considerably,” Nardelli said. “We’re trying to do different things to be more efficient, but after 125 years, we’d like to think we’re as efficient as we can be.”

With November and December starting the “big food holidays,” Nardelli is hoping to see a big push, and the company is working on getting out some good promotions for its retailers and wholesalers for Thanksgiving and Christmas.

When the company farms its main operation in New Jersey, it’s competing with 15-20 other areas of the country that are also producing local fruits and vegetables, so when it switches to Florida, there’s not as much competition.

“If the weather is cooperative and Mother Nature leaves us alone, Florida tends to be more attractive, because you’re only competing with maybe Texas and California,” Nardelli said. “You get more opportunity at market share because the rest of the country is not producing. That strengthens the market.”

Going into 2024, Nardelli is optimistic about what lies ahead, and he noted you have to be optimistic to stay sane in this business.

“You need to have a positive attitude,” he said. “When you see some of the costs and things happening, it can be a little depressing, but you need to keep looking for new items and new things and be positive. We are so entrenched in the 80 commodities that we raise here, that we just need to do a better job of being more cost efficient.”

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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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