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**Mission Produce a leader in organic avocados**

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By

Keith Loria

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[Mission Produce](#) is the 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.”

The company does this by working closely with organic growers and leading by example with production technology innovations and best practices for organic growing.

Mission’s 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 U.S., the segment is fast-moving. In fact, organic volume sales are growing twice the rate of conventional volume sales.”

Organic sales were strong in Q4 2023 with volume up 7.5 percent compared to the prior year, mostly driven by strong promotional pricing.

“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’s 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. We know this consumer demographic appreciates a convenient, grab-and-go, high-value product, so we designed our 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 relies on its masters in the Art of Ripening to get the ripeness right.

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“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 said. “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.”

The fall months going into early winter are one of the most advantageous times to promote organics, due to the strong Mexican supply and Mission utilizes its industry intel to stay in-tune with the latest market trends, and to help its partners get the most out of their promotional programming.

“Demand for organic avocados is consistently strong, so we leverage our diversified sourcing strategy and strong grower relationships to maintain a reliable, year-round supply of organic avocados,” Berenbach said.

Currently, Mexico is the primary origin for organic avocados. California season is expected to start up around the middle of February, and 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 is starting to normalize with balanced availability across all sizing.

“Peru is expecting more volume and a later start to harvest compared to the 2023 season,” Berenbach said.

Overall, Mission remains committed to providing the best avocados around.

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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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