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Stemilt encourages Memorial Day promotions with California cherries

By

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As the 2024 California cherry season approaches, industry experts anticipate a strong crop with significant promotional opportunities for retailers. “The 2024 cherry crop will have good volume and plenty of promotional opportunity for retailers to take advantage of this season,” said Brianna Shales, marketing director for [Stemilt Growers](#).



Often purchased on impulse, cherries present a unique retail opportunity around key seasonal times. “When it comes to cherries, Memorial Day is one of the biggest promotional times of California’s season,” Shales noted. She advised that in the weeks following Memorial Day, retailers should intensify their promotional efforts to maintain strong sales volumes. To optimize cherry sales, eye-catching displays and maintaining product quality are essential.

“Cherries are purchased on impulse 75 percent of the time, so creating enticing displays and carrying a quality product can help retailers encourage repeat purchases throughout the season,” she added.

The marketing push isn’t just in-store; digital strategies play a crucial role. Shales said that online banners and social media posts are effective tools to alert consumers about the availability of

cherries. Stemilt has embraced digital marketing, partnering with social media influencers to spread the word.

The seasonality of cherries offers a distinct promotional advantage. As one of the few truly seasonal items left in produce, informing consumers about their availability is critical. This strategic approach not only boosts sales but also enhances the consumer experience with fresh, quality fruit.

Chinchiolo Stemilt California has roots that trace back to the early 20th century, beginning when three brothers, renowned leaders in the cherry industry, migrated from Italy to the United States in 1921. They were pioneers in adopting refrigeration techniques for transporting fruit to the East Coast, significantly advancing the preservation and quality of cherries during transit. This innovative spirit helped the company to open up new markets, notably Japan, and in the 1990s, introduce the Coral cherry to the market while expanding production into Kern County.

In 2003, the partnership between this visionary company and the Mathison family marked the birth of CSC. This collaboration elevated the quality of cherries by implementing cooling processes right at the ranch before the fruit was shipped to packing facilities.

Additionally, significant enhancements have been made in cherry packing technology. In 2022, CSC's Rainier cherry line upgraded to the latest optical packingline, greatly enhancing the sorting process. "Equipped with automated sorting and packing capabilities that have more than doubled daily production of Rainier cherries," said Shales.

This technology not only speeds up the packing process but also improves the accuracy of sorting by color and size, ensuring that only the highest quality cherries reach the market. According to Shales, "electronic sorters allow cameras to view shades of color under the cherry's skin, which makes it easier to sort out those that have internal damage and could break down in transit."

Shales underscored Stemilt's commitment to delivering high-quality cherries consistently. The company's regional focus on low-chill varieties allows for a steadier crop set and high-quality fruit production. "Our goal is to give the consumer a more consistent experience, and a great eating experience at the same time," she emphasized.

Stemilt's meticulous harvest management aligns targets on quality such as size, firmness and sugars between their California and Washington operations. This strategy ensures that consumers receive the best possible product throughout the cherry season.

With a robust 2024 cherry crop forecast, combined with strategic promotional efforts and technological advancements in production and packing, Chinchiolo Stemilt California is poised to provide exceptional California Cherries to both retailers and consumers.

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