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Square 1 continues asparagus growth trend

By

Tim Linden

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[Square 1 Farms](#) continues to increase its asparagus volume from Peru as the company expands its footprint in that commodity sector.

“We have seen a nice increase in total volume for 2024,” said Tim Ryan Jr., vice president of sales at SQ1. “Peru will always play a major role in our business as we are situated in south Florida, but we also recognize the need to diversify our supply with partners in Mexico, as well as domestically, when available.

“We are continuing to gain market share in asparagus, and we have also been expanding our product offering from Guatemala, Canada, and domestic growing regions,” he said.

Ryan reported no significant changes with regard to its asparagus offerings from Peru nor any changes in its mix of colors. He also expects a relatively smooth season with regard to logistics but did say SQ1 plans to utilize air shipments for a significant portion of its volume specifically to account for delays in ocean voyages.

Reflecting on the Peruvian deal for this year, the Square 1 executive said there have been several challenging periods thus far. “Overall, Peruvian asparagus production has been in decline for the past several years. Through week 34, we have seen a 16 percent decline compared to 2023, and we saw an almost 20 percent decline in 2023 compared to 2022,” he reported. “Combined, there is over 35 percent less production in the last two years. The ‘spring’ peak season (fall in the U.S.) is expected to start by early October, and this year, we are anticipating a more normal production curve, albeit with less total volume. Since production is falling on average 18 percent per year, we don’t expect an abundance of supply for the North American fall/winter months, like we have seen in previous years.”

However, Ryan said the industry should still have sufficient volume to promote for the traditional Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday seasons.

Climatic conditions are generally taking the heat for yield declines and Ryan echoed those

sentiments. “Over the last six to eight weeks, we have seen significant impacts to the yields in Peru due to a much cooler ‘winter’ than normal in July and August. The cooler temperatures are affecting the sizing profile, resulting in a greater percentage of thinner-sized spears, which are not usable for retail. This has impacted grower budgets and continues to impact yields heading into the fall holiday season.”

As a result, Ryan said opportunities where there is abundant supply of asparagus to support retail promotions have been scarce in 2024. “That said, we are entering the peak season from Peru and as more regions in Mexico become available, there should be opportunities to promote during October-December,” he concluded.

[Tim Linden](#)

About Tim Linden |

Tim Linden grew up in a produce family as both his father and grandfather spent their business careers on the wholesale terminal markets in San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Tim graduated from San Diego State University in 1974 with a degree in journalism. Shortly thereafter he began his career at The Packer where he stayed for eight years, leaving in 1983 to join Western Growers as editor of its monthly magazine. In 1986, Tim launched Champ Publishing as an agricultural publishing specialty company.

Today he is a contract publisher for several trade associations and writes extensively on all aspects of the produce business. He began writing for The Produce News in 1997, and currently wears the title of Editor at Large.

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