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Nash Produce hopes for better sweet potato season in 2025

By

Keith Loria

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Since 2006, Nash Produce has established itself as a reliable packer and distributor of sweet potatoes, catering to major retailers and prominent foodservice companies.

With over 11,000 acres dedicated to sweet potatoes, Nash Produce exports its products to Mexico, Europe and Canada, fostering strong customer relationships across these markets.

As the calendar turned to February, the company was excited about what's ahead.

"We are excited about the transplant season and getting a head start on our new crop," said Robin Narron, sales support and marketing director for the Nashville, NC-based company. "The crop this year is very short and small."

For that crop, the weather was horrible, with very dry days at the beginning of the crop cycle followed by excess rain causing the crops to get very, very wet, and as a result, the quantity was down about 35 percent overall with size being smaller than usual as well.

"We are definitely down from previous years," Narron said.

They will begin transplanting the new crop in the spring. Transitioning from the 2024 crop to the 2025 crop will be challenging given how short the 2024 crop is.

"One of our biggest challenges for this year is going to be stretching out that 2024 crop to make it last," Narron said. "Pricing is an issue, so pricing is still down. As far as agriculture as a whole, not just sweet potatoes, pricing is an issue and a struggle."

Nash Produce has the experience and knowhow to fight through troubling times like these and make sure that its customer base is well served.

"We just do the best we can as an industry and as a company to stay ahead of the issues, let our retailers and our customers know what's going on and give them ways that we can work through this together," Narron said. "You're always going to have issues. Whether they are as big as they are now as far as sizing and quantity, or smaller issues, the big thing for us is to be able to talk to our retailers/customers and work through any issues."

Strong relationships with customers start with communication and doing what they say they are going to do.

"Having a sufficient supply of sweet potatoes is also important, so they don't have to worry about whether we are going to get out or not," Narron said. "Going to the trade shows help. It allows us to

have face-to-face conversations with retailers and customers that we don't get to do too often, and get feedback with them on what we can change and do better."

Pricing remains one of the biggest challenges for most in the ag business and Nash Produce is no different.

"Farmers aren't making money; it's as hard as it's ever been, and if we don't make money, farmers don't make money, so pricing is going to be a big topic in 2025," Narron said.

That's why the company works with its retailers, providing nutrition information and recipes to share with the consumers to help increase sales at the grocery store.

"We also work very closely with the North Carolina Sweetpotato Commission to promote the consumption of North Carolina sweet potatoes domestically and internationally," Narron said. "That helps the retailers sell sweet potatoes as well."

The challenges don't mean that Nash Produce is going to stop looking to grow, and it plans to keep its eyes on any growth opportunities that pop up.

"We just try to stay ahead of the game," Narron said.

[Keith Loria](#)

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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