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## **Rainier's new apple varieties generate big buzz at retail**

November 13, 2012

Rainier Fruit Co., which will exhibit at booth No. 500 at this year's New York Produce Show & Conference, is armed with a strong message designed to increase retail apple sales. "According to AC Nielsen, sales data from September 2011 through April 2012, showed the 'other' category increased over 50 percent in both sales dollars and volume," Director of Marketing Suzanne Wolter told *The Produce News* Nov. 1. "This presents an opportunity for retailers to shift their focus to new varieties and drive additional dollars through the department."



The company is headquartered in Yakima, WA. Its well-rounded manifest of organic and conventional apples includes such winners as the Honeycrisp, Jazz, Junami, Lady Alice and Pink Lady.

In addition to Ms. Wolter, Organic Sales Manager Blake Belknap and Sales Representative Shane Zeutenhorst will be available to talk about the data and ways in which creative marketing programs can boost category sales.

"We're encouraging retailers to do this by featuring a 'variety of the month' such as Jazz, Junami, Lady Alice, Pink Lady and even Honeycrisp if for some strange reason they are seeing the same kind of sales as the rest of the country with Honeycrisp," she said. "Due to the crop devastation in both Michigan and New York, this season specifically presents a unique opportunity to feature these new varieties as their local apple varieties are in short supply."

Both Junami and Lady Alice are exclusive Rainier Fruit varieties. "Junami, which rhymes with 'tuna me,' has had incredible response from retailers and consumers alike," Ms. Wolter said. "It's a refreshing variety that brings the taste buds alive."

Junami is available in late December, and Lady Alice follows in early February. Rainier Fruit has created point-of-sale material for both varieties. According to Ms. Wolter, dedicated display bins create an in-store destination, thereby driving increased sales.

"We support retailer print ads with demos and in-store radio," she added.

New organic and conventional apple packaging will also be featured at the show. "The organic packaging redesign makes it much easier for consumers to identify that the product is organic," Ms.

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Wolter said.

Rainier Fruit is also participating in the Fuel Up to Play 60 program during late winter, setting the stage for a much larger launch the fall of 2013. Fuel Up to Play 60 is an in-school nutritional and physical activity program launched by the National Dairy Council and National Football League, with additional partnership from U.S. Department of Agriculture. "The program encourages youth to consume nutrient-rich foods [such as] low-fat and fat-free dairy, fruits, vegetables and whole grains and achieve 60 minutes of physical activity every day," she added.

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