

\*\*\*\*\*ALTOURK3CH 3-DIGIT 89F  
 #220067/PB/P# UPKR1044J S0201 00003-02  
 COREY HILL  
 DULCINEA FARMS LLC  
 111 CORPORATE DR/STE 200  
 LADERA RANCH, CA 92694-1157



# THE PACKER

thepacker.com Since 1893, the Business Newspaper of the Produce Industry CXVII, No. 42 Oct. 18, 2010

Look for these items on the exposition floor at the Produce Marketing Association's Fresh Summit 2010 on Oct. 15-18 in Orlando, Fla.

**HOLIDAY GREETINGS:** Yamamura & Anle, Salinas, Calif., plans to offer a holiday seasonal package and online contest to promote its Artisan lettuce from Nov. 1 through the end of the year. A new clamshell bears the likeness of a red bow and a message sending consumers to the company's website.



Courtesy Yamamura & Anle

**BURDING A BSTER BERRY:** Well-Pict Inc., Watsonville, Calif., plans to introduce the proprietary Strawberry Variety No. 4033, bred to produce larger berries later in the season without sacrificing flavor. Well-Pict also expects to show off the new proprietary Raspberry Variety No. 2933, bred to produce flavorful, large berries.



► More details Page A2

Crunch Pak calls its new ready-to-eat grape pack Just Grapes.

Courtesy Crunch Pak

## Crunch Pak rolls out grapes, deli tray

By Andy Nelson  
Markets Editor

Sliced-apple specialist Crunch Pak is branching out into grapes and deli trays.

Cashmere, Wash.-based Crunch Pak planned to introduce a ready-to-eat grape pack and a deli tray featuring apples, carrots, dipping sauces, cheeses, meats and crackers at the Produce Marketing Association's Fresh Summit show Oct. 15-18 in Orlando, Fla., said Tony Freytag, the company's marketing director.

The grape pack, called Just Grapes, features de-stemmed and cleaned grapes. Crunch Pak has marketed apple/grape packs the past two years, but the grapes-only product depended on a year-round supply with higher volumes.

"Apples are our core business, and we're not going to get away from that, but we're excited" about the new products, Freytag said. "Grapes are a perfect complement for what we do."

Kingsburg, Calif.-based HMC will supply the grapes and pack the product at its Kingsburg facility, Freytag said. Crunch Pak packs its apple/grape packs at its Cashmere plant. The carrots used in Crunch Pak's new five-compartment trays will be supplied mainly by Bakersfield, Calif.-based Bolthouse Farms.

Both products will be available for widespread distribution in November, Freytag said. He did not supply volume information.

Also at Fresh Summit, Crunch Pak's booth includes a cooking station featuring Chef Tim Putnam, owner of the Smokeblossom restaurant in Wenatchee, Wash.; a new display for Disney Garden Foodie products; and a BK Fresh Apple Fries display.

### What's inside

Strong demand eats into Eastern apple storage. Crops & Markets B1

Package design gets a PMA spotlight.

Handling & Distributing C1

Departments

- Service Index . . . A2
- TradeWatch . . . A2
- Second Front . . . A3
- Opinion . . . . . A3
- Roundup . . . . . A3
- Records . . . . . C8
- Classifieds . . . . . C8

Tell it to THE PACKER

► Core to comment on stories in THE PACKER? Let us hear it at The Packer Online.

thepacker.com

twitter

► Join THE PACKER's 1,146 followers on Twitter.

http://twitter.com/thepacker

facebook

► THE PACKER has 815 Facebook followers.  
 tinyurl.com/packerfacebook

## 'Farmers market' signs draw criticism

Complaints fly when retailers use the term.

By Bruce Blythe  
Business Editor

A farmers market is a market for farmers — unless it isn't.

Precisely what constitutes a farmers market — and who should and should not use the term to promote and sell fruits, vegetables and other fresh products — is a growing debate across the food industry.

The discussion intensified in recent months after two of the biggest U.S. grocery chains, Pleasanton, Calif.-based Safeway Inc., and Albertsons, a unit of Eden Prairie, Minn.-based SuperValu Inc., hung "farmers market" signs and banners at stores in the Pacific Northwest to promote fresh produce.

Some farmers markets have a problem with that, saying large corporations shouldn't be moving in on what's traditionally been a means for small- to medium-sized growers to sell directly to consumers in their geographic vicinity.

### Co-opted phrase

"We are seeing increasing interest on the part of large retailers trying to align themselves with farmers markets," said Stacy Miller, executive director of Cocksaysville, Md.-based Farmers Market Coalition.

There have been "a lot of complaints coming to us where people really feel the integrity of farmers market is being compromised by these efforts," she said.

"There is certainly a risk of co-opting the term 'farmers

market'" and potentially misleading consumers, Miller said.

Much like the debate over what is and isn't "locally grown," growers, shippers and retailers are wrangling over definitions and proper use of farmers markets terminology as the popularity of the formats surged in recent years.

Nationwide, there are 6,132 operational farmers markets this year, up 16% from 2009 and more than triple the number during the mid-1990s, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture figures released in August.

Farmers markets generated more than \$1 billion in revenue in 2005, the most recent year with available sales data.

At the federal level, the USDA provides information on starting and running farmers markets but doesn't regulate the business or provide a specific definition.

That's left it to states or state farmers market organizations to add clarity. California's agriculture department certifies farmers markets, performing checks to ensure that growers are selling their own crops.

The Washington State Farmers Market Association, Sequim, says the markets should include at least five growers selling their own products.

In May, the Farmers Market Coalition approved a baseline that focuses on the "mission of a farmers market rather than the specific logistics."

A farmers market, according to the coalition, "operates multiple times per year and is organized for the purpose of

There is certainly a risk of co-opting the term 'farmers market' and potentially misleading consumers.

Stacy Miller  
Farmers Market Coalition



Photo by Harold Korman/istock

Produce on display at the Dallas Farmers Market is a mixed bag of local, wholesale and retail during the winter months.



facilitating personal connections that create mutual benefits for local farmers, shoppers and communities."

The coalition's objective is to "ensure that the farmers market consists principally of farms selling directly to the public products that the farms have produced," according to the statement.

Still, that hasn't prevented some grocery chains from trying to latch on to the popularity of farmers markets.

### Stung by summer's criticism

In June, Safeway posted "Farmers Market" signs above fresh produce displays in front of several stores in the Seattle area, and then

changed the wording to "Outdoor Market" after local farmers market groups complained, the *Wall Street Journal* reported in September.

Over Labor Day weekend, Albertsons placed "Farmers Market" signs next to produce stands at about 200 stores in Idaho, Oregon and Washington, prompting complaints from the same groups, the *Wall Street Journal* reported.

Albertsons spokeswoman Lilia Rodriguez said the company will not use the term "farmers market" in future promotions but will continue to promote locally grown produce.

Market A2 ►

## California expects more volume, smaller navels

By Don Schraack  
Staff Writer

California's 2010-11 navel crop, expected to be bigger than last season, has not escaped the late start encountered by spring and summer commodities.

Depending on the region, picking could begin as much as two weeks later than normal, grower-shippers said.

"We're anticipating about a 10% increase in volume," said Al Imbimbo, vice president of sales for Suntrek Packing & Shipping Co., Lindsay, Calif. "Sizes through the end of the year will probably peak at 88s-teens (113s), but will be 72s-88s after December."

Sugar content tests indicate shipping will begin the first week of November, Imbimbo said.

The start of the navel season will probably overlap with the last week or so of the Valencia crop at Paramount Citrus Association, Delano, Calif., said Scott Owens, vice president of sales and marketing.

"We'll be wrapping up the valencias by early November, and the navel harvest could start before the end of this month," he said.

"The deal may have a little bit smaller piece count, but everything else is real positive," Owens said.

Sequoia Orange Co., Exeter, Calif., is looking at the first week in November to start the navel harvest, said Ross Bailey, sales manager.

Sequoia's volume is projected to be about 10% larger than the 2009-10 deal, with sizes slightly smaller.

While some grower-shippers had their fingers crossed that the fruit would gain in size after December, Bailey said Sequoia expects slightly smaller sizes to prevail throughout the season.

"But the quality is dynamic," he said.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture forecast California navel volume at 90 million cartons, up from the 83-million-pickout of last season.

The Chuck Olsen Co., Visalia, Calif.,

is scheduled to begin shipping the first week in November, said Jeff Olsen, vice president.

"We think the navels will be peaking more on 88s-teens, rather than the 72s we saw last season," he said.

"We could harvest the last week of October, but that would be the earliest," said Ken Collins, general manager for Reedley, Calif.-based Bravante Produce.

The company's Kern County groves tend to reflect greater volume growth.

"We're going to be up in the northern region, too, but the biggest gains in cartons per tree seem to be down south," Collins said.

The lack of wind during the growing season is another advantage this year.

"In the south, we typically have fruit that suffers some wind scarring, and we're just not seeing the amount of scarring we usually find," Collins said.



Sink Your Teeth Into Something Juicy At

# Chef's Garden picks up niche business

By Ashley Bentley  
Staff Writer

Americans are certainly treating growers more like celebrities in recent years, but one grower is working on making his overalls famous.

Lee Jones, co-owner of Chef's Garden, Huron, Ohio, is famous among chefs of fine dining restaurants and even some chains, and has made three appearances on TV's Food Network as a judge on "Iron Chef America."

Jones' 300-acre farm grows specialty fruits and vegetables it ships directly to chefs across the country. It got its start in the mid-1980s after high interest rates and a hailstorm left his parents' farm out of business, but a local chef asking for specialty produce sparked an idea for a new business for Jones, his brother and his father.

"We recognized an opportunity for quality produce at the top end of the market, heirlooms chosen for flavor," Jones said. "Many growers were growing for disease resistance, turn per acre and how it will ship 3,000 miles rather than flavor."

Although the farm has expanded in recent years, up 50 acres, it also noticed the effects of the economy, especially for its target market.

"With the downturn we saw it affect the higher end of the market, and it was a softer market," Jones said. "A lot of that was corporate business. Vegas saw a lot of that."

### Catering to chefs

A majority of Chef's Garden's customers are individual chefs at high-end restaurants, but Jones said his company is starting to work with more chains, including Darden's Capital Grille, and restaurants at Ritz Carlton and Four Seasons hotels and resorts. The company works with 1,500 chefs across the country, and even a few outside of U.S. borders.

Jones said the company has seen business return to 2008 levels. It had started to trail off in the fall of '08.

The company sells most of its vegetables in a variety of stages of development.

"Chefs can buy cucumbers at eight different stages of growth, each on offering a different texture, a different flavor," Jones said. "We do a 1-inch cucumber with a flower blossom. I think it's really looking at a product in an entirely different way than it has before."

### Ice spinach

The company's main products are lettuces, carrots, beets, tomatoes and trademarked ice spinach that sells in the early spring and during the winter when temperatures creep above freezing during the day, but fall below at night. The spinach has been frozen and thawed 60 times through its growth cycle, causing the plant to have a higher sugar content.

"We had ice spinach this spring that tested higher than a red delicious apple in brix," Jones said.

Jones said his business is a proponent of eating with the seasons — Chef's Garden won't be supplying asparagus to restaurants in January — but not focused on local.

"We're not the proponents of local," Jones said. "Local does not define quality. Local is not really a model that works if you're in a rural area."

Jones said he does benefit from the increasing demand for knowledge about where products come from.

"We certainly try to emphasize the fact that our product comes direct from the farm to your restaurant," Jones said.

But Chef's Garden certainly isn't the average small family farm specialty grower. The farm hosts up to 500 chefs per year on tours, has a research and development kitchen where corporate chefs work on new menu



Courtesy Chef's Garden

Lee Jones co-owns a 300-acre farm called Chef's Garden that grows specialty fruits and vegetables it ships directly to chefs across the country.

items, has an advanced food safety testing protocol that allows it to get results of E. coli and other pathogen screenings before its products are shipped and runs an education program that has been used in more than 1,800 schools.

### New Item R&D

Jones said the company has up to 300 new items in research and development every year, but that everyone is an heirloom variety.

"Our goal is to get the highest flavor, color and texture on the plate, the sexiest thing we can find to put out there," Jones said. "Out of those 250 to 300, if we can find 25 varieties we can use, it's a good year."

Jones said that doesn't mean he has 25 new products a year. The company is constantly eliminating from the bottom half and adding to the top, he said.

In lieu of offering its products at retail, the company has recently opened up its system to accept orders from consumers just this year. Just as the business got its start — Chef's Garden had an unlisted number its first 20 years in business — consumers can only find out through word-of-mouth.

In addition to its nonprofit program called Veggie U, which funds educational programs in schools, Chef's Garden has also branched out into training for wait staff and other front-of-the-house restaurant employees.

# K.C. grocer expands local program

By Ashley Bentley  
Staff Writer

RICH HILL, Mo. — In the last seven years, Independence-based Balls Food Stores' local produce program has gone from a small piece of its business to 70% of its produce sales during peak season.

To handle the change in business, 30-year Balls Food veteran buyer Del Housworth is in a new role with the company as local product coordinator. This summer marked his first full season in the role.

Throughout the seasons, Balls Food's 29 Hen House and Price Chopper stores carry more than 300 items that are produced within 200 miles of the greater Kansas City area, or anywhere in Kansas or Missouri.

"What my job entails is not only working with everybody we work with to make sure quantity, quality and the variety we need are there, but to search for new growers to expand the program," Housworth said. "When we have local, our stores only carry local."

Housworth is also off the national trade show circuit, instead attending trade shows for local produce.

"There's one that's like the PMA (Fresh Summit trade show) of local in Wisconsin in December," Housworth said.

That doesn't mean Housworth is free of travel. In fact, he spends more time in the car or at a farm than he does in his office, visiting each of the growers Balls Food works with each year, many of them multiple times.

### Many more growers

Seven years ago, there was only a very small group



Ashley Bentley

Twin County Family Farms in eastern Missouri is a own cooperative of 78 growers who grow raspberries and an assortment of other locally grown items and supplies Balls Foods in the Kansas City, Mo., area.

of growers Balls Food dealt with. In 2010, the company is working with 24 primary growing partners, many of which are cooperatives of many other growers.

Twin County Family Farms, a Mennonite community in eastern Missouri, is its own cooperative of 78 growers, for example.

In many cases, getting local produce to Balls Food's stores has to happen in an unconventional way.

"Some are in and out," Housworth said. "Greenwood Farms in Northville (Mo.) only has okra for 12-14 weeks, so the grower delivers it to my house every morning, and I take it into the warehouse with me."

At Twin County, because they grower doesn't use electricity, Balls Food keeps its own refrigerated trucks parked at the packinghouse ready for loading. It also coordinates with other area produce wholesalers and distributors to supply Twin County's produce through Balls' warehouse.

"Sysco (Corp., Houston) has a program, and they're doing a pretty good job of supplying local produce to

schools and restaurants," Housworth said. "I source all the produce for them, give them an availability list each week, and they pick up two to three times each week from our warehouse."

Balls Food also coordinates some local produce for Liberty Fruit and Associated Wholesale Grocers, both based in Kansas

City, Kan.

Housworth said during the peak season he keeps a runner on call who can drive out to the farms and check on the trucks and on production and get back to him, since the growers themselves don't use telephones or computers.

### Fall and winter

Fall brings varieties, squash and pumpkins to the Midwest, but Housworth said by mid-October he'll have leaf lettuce for the second time this year.

Housworth said he is able to get a few tomatoes, cucumbers and some leaf lettuce year-round, but during the winter months local produce drops to less than 1% of sales.

Housworth said more than half of the growers Balls Food works with are good agricultural practices certified, and his goal is to have 90% certified over the next year, during their respective growing seasons. Until GAP certification is federal law, though, he said he expects to always have a few that are not certified, as he looks for new partners.



Housworth

PureHeart

Tuscan-Style

Always Ripe

Distinctive Grooves

- 1. Green
- 2. Light Green
- 3. Golden

Visit us at  
Booth 4757

## Year-Round Value Starts With Dulcinea.

At the heart of Dulcinea Farms' lies true passion, innovation and quality you won't find anywhere else. Our passion drives us everyday to provide the freshest produce and the taste consumers absolutely love. And with passion comes dedication making sure that every bite of a Dulcinea product tastes simply amazing year-round. In order to deliver on our promise, we commit to securing the best growing locations, shortening our supply chain, implementing a continuous cold chain, adhering to strict quality standards, providing excellent customer support and having partners that share in our vision.

PRODUCT. INNOVATION. QUALITY. MARKETING. CONSUMER SATISFACTION.

800.495.4561 • dulcinea.com