Hydroponic Fruits and Vegetables

Michael DeGiglio, CEO of Village Farms, explains the company's leadership position in growing and marketing fresh produce in its greenhouses across North America.

How is Village Farms able to meet the changing needs of consumers for high-quality, sustainable produce?

Michael DeGiglio: We are steadfast in sustainability and quality. We strive to combine nature's best with advanced technical know-how to grow tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers that burst with old-fashioned taste and respect for 21st century environmental principles. Our expertise in hydroperfect farming allows us to produce yields that are 20 to 30 times higher per acre than conventional methods, and 50 times higher in our applied research facility, while utilizing less water and limiting pest management to natural biological controls.

With Village Farms' produce, there is no ground water contamination and no soil erosion, which reflects the growing methods we have utilized for 19 years. Even our packaging—two-color, non-bleached, recyclable corrugated boxes—reflects this commitment to sustainability. And our state-of-the-art greenhouses and distribution facilities are positioned closer to local markets, so our products don't have to travel as far, which provides us with a significantly reduced carbon footprint.

Along with Village Farms' best practices in sustainability, how is the company able to meet retailers' year-round demand for high-quality produce?

Village Farms is a year-round supplier, with year-round production capabilities from our 240-acre, company-owned, certified greenhouses, representing over $150 million in capital investments. Balanced production acreage in the U.S. and Canada enhances seamless, year-round supplies of quality produce.

What varieties of tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers are grown in Village Farms' greenhouses?

Village Farms' tomato varieties include red, yellow and orange on-the-vine, Beefsteak, Triana Beefsteak on-the-vine, Baby Beefs, Mini Sensations Cherry on-the-vine, Roma on-the-vine and Sinfully Sweet Campari. They are vine-ripened, which results in fully developed flavor, maximized sugars, balanced acidity, thin skins and no mealy texture.

Our red, yellow and orange bell peppers have a sweet taste, vibrant color, firm skin that is free of spots and blemishes, and stems that are green and fresh. Our Long English Cucumbers are seedless and have thin, deep green skin that is unwaxed.

How has Village Farms demonstrated its commitment to the highest standards in product quality and food safety?

Food safety is an integral part of the Village Farms' culture. Good agricultural practices are modeled after the U.S. Food & Drug Administration's Good Manufacturing Practices using the Primus Labs format and third-party auditors. Over the past 20 years, Village Farms has maintained the highest documented Primus Food Safety scores in the industry, and we are an industry leader in food safety.

How is Village Farms able to meet the needs of its retail partners and consumers throughout North America?

Village Farms stays connected with its retail partners and consumers through our remarkable network of greenhouses and transportation/logistics facilities. In the U.S., for example, Village Farms-owned assets include four greenhouses that encompass 130 total acres, in addition to six distribution facilities, with peak production adjusted for seasonal needs. In Canada, our four greenhouses include 110 acres, in addition to a distribution center. All of these facilities are GAP compliant.

In addition, our North American marketing partners in Canada and Mexico also provide us with impressive resources, including more than 160 acres and nine individual facilities to match seasonal production needs January through November and August through May. All of these facilities are also GAP compliant.

How would you describe Village Farms' commitment to high-quality customer service?

Village Farms is on call 24-hours a day, seven days a week and has maintained a 98.2% on-time delivery record for four consecutive years. Our seven strategically located distribution centers enable us to provide nationwide on-time delivery. Our system also allows us to double check the quality of the product before delivery, which improves our delivery capabilities and promotes rapid recovery. *ff*