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Del Rey Avocado's New Jersey plant adding more cold storage

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VINELAND, NJ: When Del Rey Avocado Co. Inc. purchased its new facility in Vineland, NJ, back in January 2017, the company did not expect to have to double its capacity so quickly. But thanks to consumers in the eastern United States, and their growing appetite for quality avocados from Del Rey Avocado (which include conventionally grown, organically grown and the highly sought-after Fair Trade product line), volume has steadily increased over the past 18 months, necessitating an immediate plan to add an additional 30,000 square feet of cold storage and ripening rooms.



The Vineland facility services as far north as Maine, south to the Carolinas and west to the Missouri Valley. The market in the Northeast is less mature than that of the western and southwestern United States. However, more and more retailers are adding additional SKUs where they traditionally carried only bulk avocados.

Many retailers are carrying at least three different pack

options, which research has shown increases consumer purchases. The addition of the SKUs has not taken away from the bulk sales; rather it has increased the overall sales of avocados. This is a proven merchandising strategy in produce departments as evidenced by Nielsen market research conducted on "berry patch" merchandising and other specialty commodities like artichokes.

As a result of increased demand on bags, Del Rey Avocado recently added two additional bagging lines in New Jersey. At the same time, a plan to add two additional ripening rooms, increasing capacity, has been put in motion. The new rooms are expected to be finished by July. Product for this facility comes primarily from Mexico, but Del Rey also sources fruit from Chile, Peru, and California when in season.

"With the addition of state-of-the-art cooling, ripening and bagging facilities out of Vineland, we feel well positioned to service all avocados needs in the growing Northeast

region," Donny Lucy, the company's vice president of the East Coast region, said in a June 9 press release.

Del Rey Avocado is one of the few California-based companies that owns its facilities on the East Coast, which gives the company total control over operations. The company employs seven full-time professionals who are experts in avocado ripening and handling out of the Vineland facility. The Vineland facility is led by industry veteran and avocado expert Joe Heinz, who has over 25 years of experience in the avocado industry.

Del Rey Avocado expects the demand for its fruit to continue to increase over the next five to seven years and is well positioned with strong growers and international procurement to keep up with the demand from Northeast retailers, foodservice and ultimately consumers who love avocados.

In operation since 1969, Del Rey Avocado is a family-owned business located in Fallbrook, CA. Del Rey packs California avocados grown from San Diego to San Luis Obispo County.