



By Maura Maxwell

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Mandarins lead US citrus sales

Peak season is ripe with opportunity to boost retail and foodservice sales says Sunkist



Strong demand for mandarins is driving citrus sales in the US, figures show. According to recent IRI Worldwide data, mandarins lead all citrus categories in dollar sales at retail and are up 17.3 per cent, representing almost 37 per cent of all citrus sales for the last year. Mandarins also lead in volume sales, up just over 19 per cent.

"The rise in popularity of mandarins follows along with consumer demand for healthy, convenient snacks," said Joan Wickham, manager of advertising and public relations for Sunkist. "Easy to peel and high in Vitamin C, mandarins fit the bill for healthy snacking and they are also juicy, sweet and delicious."

Sunkist has developed multiple packaging and point-of-sale options to help retailers merchandise mandarins to continue driving sales and educate consumers about speciality mandarin varieties.

"Providing flavour profiles, nutrition information, recipes and usage tips encourages consumers to experiment and enjoy mandarins in multiple ways," said Julie DeWolf, director of retail marketing.

Mandarins are also trending in foodservice channels, with operators showcasing the versatility of easy-peelers in applications such as adult beverages, salads,

desserts and seafood appetisers. Clementines have shown a particularly strong increase on menus, with a nearly 40 per cent spike over the past year, driven mainly by increased use in beverages.

"Mandarins are great for snacking, but they're also wonderful as an ingredient – and increasing foodservice usage across meal parts demonstrates this," added Wickham.