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Giddings Fruit expands in US

Leading global supplier of conventional and organic berries and cherries opens new office in Monterey, California



Giddings Fruit, a leading global supplier of conventional and organic berries, cherries and more, through its subsidiary Giddings Berries has opened an office in Monterey, California.

The vertically integrated supplier has an extensive breeding programme, with growing and packing operations ranging throughout North and South America.

According to a company press release, Giddings' presence in the US responds to the need to be closer to the customer and will help the company simplify its supply chain. The office in California will also help it better manage large volumes and ensure consistent quality that meets and exceeds US market standards.

Giddings' primary products are conventional and organic blueberries, blackberries and raspberries, with additional volumes of strawberries, cherries and red currants.

The company has consistently been among the top four exporters of berries

from Chile, Peru and Mexico, with production shipped to the US, Asia and Europe. Giddings is also one of the top exporters of premium cherries from Chile.

Through its subsidiary Black Venture Farms, Giddings is investing heavily in proprietary blackberry and raspberry genetics as well as participating with other world-class berry genetic development (blueberry, strawberry, blackberry and raspberry) programmes.

An increasing percentage of the company's overall production is with new genetics, bred specifically for extended shelf life and flavour.

Julio Giddings, founder and chief executive of Giddings Fruit, said the opening of the new office signals the company's intent.

"We have assembled a great US team and anticipate significant expansion opportunities in the North American market for our premium fruit," said Giddings.

"We will be starting the 2020/21 season

with our new proprietary jumbo (XL) blueberry brand, in addition to our conventional, organic and biodynamic blueberries.

"Our mission is to provide premium-quality fruit with the greatest level of customer care, to integrate our growing operations with the US market, and to work closely with our customers ensuring consistent quality, agility and commitment. We look forward to working with US buyers," he added.

Ian Grigg takes on the role of chief operating officer for Giddings Berries US, and is joined by Helena Beckett, director of sales.

Grigg spent 15 years working in the fresh cut flower industry with responsibilities for growing, importing, operations, costing and sales. Prior to joining Giddings Berries US, in addition to running a start-up in Colombia, Grigg spent five years in berry category management, genetic programme development, international business development and was active in fresh produce industry associations.

<http://www.fruitnet.com/americafruit/article/1474/parts-of-san-diego-quarantined-as-psyllid-count-mounts>

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"I am absolutely energised with this opportunity that Julio has provided us and truly excited to reconnect with all of the great growers, retailers and friends from the past," said Grigg.

Helena Beckett has been in the fresh produce industry for 17 years, working with leading growers to

represent their brands to national retailers. She is a graduate of the United Fresh Produce Industry Leadership Programme (Class 18), and has been an active industry volunteer, including serving on the Leadership Alumni board, Tour de Fresh and several United Fresh committees.

"It's invigorating to be a part of an innovative company that will have a remarkable impact on how consumers experience the berry category," said Beckett.