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PAST ISSUES



Astronaut among ambassadors for Cosmic Crisp

BY KEITH LORIA | DECEMBER 26, 2019

As a cross between the Enterprise and Honeycrisp apple varieties, Cosmic Crisp is one of the most anticipated apple varieties for 2020 thanks to its firm and crisp texture.

Proprietary Variety Management is managing Cosmic Crisp, which come from the WA 38 apple tree cultivar developed at Washington State University. PVM is a commercialization organization focusing on the tree fruit industry. It has its own nursery and test orchard, and has approximately 95 varieties of apples, cherries and pears.

Recently, the Washington-grown Cosmic Crisp launched Imagine the Possibilities, a promotion that partners the branded variety with six ambassadors with diverse backgrounds. One of those is Astronaut Leroy Chiao, a former member of NASA and International Space Station commander.

“He is among our six influencers for social media and our marketing theme surrounds STEM education and following your dreams, whether you’re a child or an adult,” said Kathryn Grandy, director of marketing for Yakima, WA-based PVM. “Bruce Barritt, the inventor and breeder of Cosmic Crisp had this long-term dream of building an apple breeding program, and this is carrying that thought forward.”

Commander Chiao was up in the Space Station for 233 days and is himself an apple lover. Up in space, they get very little fruit and vegetables, but this is a variety that will last.

“We’re very excited about the prospect of apples being the favorite food in space, because of the sweetness and the crunch,” Grandy said. “They are very excited about this apple because it stores well and is very crispy, crunch and juicy.”

Other ambassadors for the Cosmic Crisp include baker Lauren Ko, executive chef Dan Koommoo, sixth-grade earth and space science teacher Nicole Marte, mother and blogger Chantea McIntyre and Lori Taylor, an advocate of fresh produce. Rather than blasting people with advertising, PVM wanted to find a way to deliver the merits of the apple in an authentic way.

“The goal is to offer our ambassadors an authentic harvest experience and immersive education about this truly groundbreaking apple,” Grandy said. “We are laying the groundwork for them to each tell the Cosmic Crisp story in a way that is meaningful to their audience and reinforces our differentiated brand.”

As part of Commander Chiao’s involvement, he did a social media takeover for the brand



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ANAHEIM, CA —The third and final day at the Produce Marketing Association's Fresh Summit Convention & Expo, wh...

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in December. "People were writing in and asking questions about space and apples," Grandy said. "He's been to the orchards and he was great at telling his story. He talked about how they create oxygen on board and everything they do while there, so it was a nice opportunity for the average person to learn about."

PVM looks at partnerships with its members in every growing region in the world, working to help new brands get noticed and also succeed. It not only helps establish these varieties as global brands, but also protect the patents and trademarks around the world.

"On Cosmic Crisp, when we were awarded the contract from WSU, we were able to realize we couldn't propagate all these trees by ourselves based on the demand," Grandy said. "So, our nursery company formulated a partnership with the NW Nursery Improvement Association and those members were given certified plant material and allowed to build trees and in turn sell trees to the growers. That was the only way we were going to be able to have enough trees for growers."

One of the reasons Grandy believes Cosmic Crisp has been and will be very successful in the future is because of the commercialization process and the collaboration of the industry.

"When everyone works together, we win," she said. "We are very much believers that we have to succeed in every step of the process."



SIGHTINGS

New York Produce Show



Raul Millan, Angela Aronica, Tony Mitchell, Yen-Han Wu and Eddie Perez of Vision Import Group.



MARKETS AND TRENDS

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The best chance for rain in the strawberry-growing regions of California will be this Sunday and Monday. As of today, the chance o...

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