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## Uesugi Farms Inc. adds eggplant and winter Napa programs

by Joel Gebet

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Uesugi Farms Inc., a Gilroy, CA-based grower-packer-shipper of Bell peppers, chili peppers, Napa cabbage, bok choy, strawberries and pumpkins, has added eggplant and winter Napa cabbage to its list of commodities.

Pete Aiello, general manager of Uesugi Farms, told The Produce News Oct. 7 that the firm later this month will start to harvest two varieties of eggplants, Italian and Japanese, which it is growing on approximately six acres in California's Coachella Valley.

He said that it will also offer winter Napa and bok choy, which will be grown on 50 acres in Holtville, CA, from December to early or mid-March.

With the holiday season just around the corner, Mr. Aiello noted that Uesugi Farms offers a full line of pumpkins that it grows on 60 acres.

"We have all the kinds that you would buy and put at your door and the kinds that you'd have on your table," Mr. Aiello said, noting that about half of its acreage is for its clients, while the remainder is utilized for a pumpkin patch for the public that drew about 150,000 visitors last year.

Due to the increase in its green Bell pepper business with Raley's Supermarkets, Uesugi Farms received the Sacramento, CA-based retailer's proprietary AgriCheck certification from Scientific Certification Systems.

This certification, according to Scientific Certification System's web site, "ensures [that] fruits and vegetables meet the highest standards of lab-test purity [and are] pesticide and residue free," something that Uesugi Farms offers to its clientele, which include retailers, wholesalers and foodservice distributors across North America.



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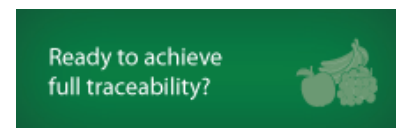
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