

Peri & Sons go extra step with NutriClean audit

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Peri & Sons Farming Inc. hangs its hat on year-round supplies of Nevada- and California-grown onions with a nod to Mother Nature.

The Yerington, N.V.-based company has nearly 3,000 acres in Nevada and California and is preparing for its second season in its new California facility.

"The one thing that sets us apart as an onion grower, packer and shipper is that our quality is consistent from year to year," said Tim Cummings, sales and marketing manager. "We work tirelessly at providing the best pack available 12 months of the year.

The company also has its onions certified 100% pesticide residue free by NutriClean, a process by Scientific Certification Systems, Emeryville, Calif.

That extra step is due to David Peri, president and chief executive officer, Cummings said.

"(He) has always believed in responsible farming and practicing sustainability," Cummings said. "It is not as much of a social responsibility as it is a practical method of growing consistently premium produce."

Cummings said Peri & Sons finds a competitive advantage to offering conventionally grown pesticide-free onions.

"In fact, many of our retail partners are now promoting our onions as pesticide-free on their shelves as a merchandising strategy," he said.

"Due to this marketing benefit and consistent year-round growth, we have experienced considerable growth in the number of retailers that have adopted our Onions All Year program."

The company took its pesticide-free conventional programs a step

further and added organic production. It was a natural fit, Cummings said.

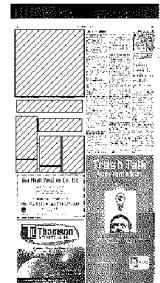
"We already practiced sustainable farming methods that were similar to organic farming methods, so getting started was a relatively seamless transition," he said.

A large number of conventional clients were asking for organically grown onions as well.

"Once we realized that there was an opportunity to gain organic market share, then we decided to make the commitment," he said.

Peri & Sons has had organic onions since 2005.

The company started farming in California in 2007 and finished work on a new storage and packing facility for its operations about 40 miles west of Fresno. The facility is designed to store, package and stage more than 1.5 million packages of onions and is in operation June through September.





Courtesy Peri & Sons Farming Inc.

David Peri (left), president and chief executive officer of Yerington, N.V.-based Peri & Sons Farming Inc., and Salvador Flores, field operations manager, show off a field of onions near the company's headquarters.

