



Put the Pedal to the Metal Retailers, **Springtime is for Big Apple Promotions.**

WENATCHEE, Wash. – Don't take your foot off the promotion pedal yet retailers, spring is the last chance to take advantage of big apple promotions before summer! Stemilt's marketing director, Brianna Shales, explains the most important thing to remember is to have the right mix of apples in your store on full display to contribute to bottom line apple dollars.

"Apples are available and contribute to produce department performance year-round, but they start to take a back seat when summer produce becomes available," Shales stated. "Springtime is the last chance to get behind a lot of big apple promotions. It is a transition time in the produce department and a good time to keep that shelf space for apples."

Apples account for 5.4% of total produce department dollars for the U.S during the springtime. In the Midwest, apples beat the average by accounting for 6% of total produce dollars from March through May. When apples make up 6% of your produce department dollars, it's important to focus on multiple monthly promotions for multiple varieties on add at one time to help the category as a whole move forward.

"Spring will be a great time for multiple variety promotions," said Shales enthusiastically. "The flavor and quality of Granny Smith, Pink Lady®, Fuji, and Cosmic Crisp® are fantastic. We've reserved them for long term storage, and they're coming out with great eating qualities and we're packing fresh to order. This year, we were fortunate to have good growing conditions in the fall, so that will lend to the quality retailers can promote in the spring."

Quality is one reason to focus on the four core varieties this spring. It's going to be important for retailers to set the right mix of apples and follow the market opportunities so they can make promotions around these core varieties.

"Fuji and Cosmic Crisp® lean more to the sweeter profile, where Granny Smith and Pink Lady® balance out the tart side," said Shales. "All together, you could have a really nice promotion that focuses on all the flavor pallets that people have. For retailers who have ever wanted to promote Pink Lady®, this is the year to do it. The crop is aligning with what consumers want and they are a really fun springtime apple for its color and display."

Remember, Cosmic Crisp® is creeping its way further up the list of top apple varieties and it will be important to build momentum around this variety. The first year Cosmic Crisp® was available, there were no spring promotions. This year, they need to be grand. Cosmic Crisp® displays should stand out or have a call to action in ads. Once people try it, the quality and flavor will be there to drive repeat purchases. It needs to keep building momentum at retail now that the supply is there.

“Bulk is really going to be the primary way to buy,” stated Shales. “Last spring, bulk was 58% of apple volume pounds and 64% of sales, while bags were 42% of volume and 36% of sales. Bag demand has been good and there are great opportunities within these four varieties to promote a larger bag size. Utilizing 3 lb. bags and pushing to a 5 lb. bag may drive more volume. Our Apple Lover bags and Cosmic Crisp® 4lb. branded bag open up good opportunities. Plan those bulk promotions and drive sales by the pound.”

If retailers can act quick, make sure these four core varieties are incorporated in promotion plans if they aren't already. Long-term retail planners should line these varieties up with the four Ps: Price, promotion, product, and placement. Place these varieties in a prominent position in the produce department and keep those big robust display sizes in the spring.

“The best advice I have to give retailers is to make sure to align their plans with the season, so they see the best results in their stores,” explained Shales. “With inflation affecting food prices, apples are a great item to be at the top of the consumer mind. Use promotions and provide customers with price discounts even though they won't be as steep as they once were. We have some fruit that is beautiful, delicious, and ready to promote!”

Lucky for retailers, spring is a great time to center promotions around upcoming holidays like St. Patrick's Day, Easter, Earth Day, Cinco de Mayo, Mother's Day, and Father's Day. Don't forget to include Granny Smith, Pink Lady®, Fuji, and Cosmic Crisp® in your spring promotion plan this year to capture those last-minute apple dollars!

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About Stemilt

Stemilt is a family-owned grower, packer, and shipper of tree fruit. Owned and operated by the Mathison family, Stemilt's mission is to cultivate people and delight consumers with its World Famous Fruits. Stemilt is a leader in sweet cherries and organic tree fruits, and a key supplier of apples and pears. The company stewards an environmentally sustainable and socially responsible business through its Responsible Choice® program, which has been in place since 1989. For more information about Stemilt, visit www.stemilt.com.