



SERVICE AND MANAGEMENT OF RETURNABLE CONTAINERS

MEDIA NOTE:

Industry experts available for interviews

“Curly Leaf” Savoy Spinach Ready to be Shipped

Challenge is to let retailers & consumers know that this type of spinach is not grown in California

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(Green Bay, WI) Less than 24 hours after the Food and Drug Administration said it is safe to eat spinach grown outside of California’s Salinas Valley, the Savoy Spinach industry is working to make sure wholesalers, retailers and consumers know its product is grown in the near west, southeast and northeast United States. Savoy Spinach, also known as curly leaf spinach, is used by restaurants throughout the U.S., but many consumers are not aware of the alternative to flat leaf spinach.

“The challenge is to make sure people understand that there is a choice,” said Michael Fechter, vice president of sales for Tosca Ltd., which supplies containers to 95% of the Savoy Spinach market nationally. “Savoy growers are ready to start shipping and we are working with them, along with processors and re-packers, to develop labeling that clearly identifies the origin of the product.” A variety of labeling options and point of sale signs are being considered. “Growers are ready to go, ready to ship, and we’re going to make sure they can get their product to market and that consumers understand this is a safe spinach to eat,” added Fechter. He estimates shipments could resume within a few days.

In addition to being grown outside of California, Savoy Spinach is also handled differently than the flat leaf spinach that was found to contain e-coli, spurring the ban on all spinach sales late last week. Once harvested, Savoy Spinach is placed in highly sophisticated, ice-packed, sanitized containers designed specifically to handle Savoy Spinach as it is sent to re-packers in the produce industry. “Safety and nutrition are key focus areas for us,” said Jennifer Verdelli, director of sales for Verdelli Farms of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The containers the Savoy industry uses helps ensure the safety and the quality of the product.

While Savoy Spinach growers were seriously impacted by the ban on spinach sales, Dondee Lindenborn of Pentagon Produce in Uvalde, Texas says he believes that as consumers now realize there are options, they will choose Savoy Spinach. “We offer a high quality, great tasting product that offers consumers a choice over flat leaf spinach.” David and Martha Schreck of Action Produce LLC in Center, Colorado echoed Lindenborn’s statement saying, “This is a great opportunity for the Savoy Spinach industry to educate the public about what we have to offer.”

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