

Our Merchants' Guide  
to the Best Fall and  
Winter Produce PG. 16

16 New Must-Try  
Ingredients For Your  
Menu PG. 7

Why We Support  
Regenerative Farming  
PG. 32



+

*The Influence of  
Baldor President  
**Michael Muzyk:**  
His Impact on the  
Company and  
our Customers*

PG. 54

The background of the entire page is a vibrant collage of fresh produce. In the top left, there are several yellow and orange gourds. Below them are several bright orange oranges with green leaves. In the center, a large pomegranate is cut open, showing its red seeds. To the left of the pomegranate are several ripe persimmons with their characteristic star-shaped caps. In the bottom left, a wooden bowl is filled with dark, bumpy morel mushrooms. On the right side, there are several red and yellow apples, some whole and some sliced. The bottom right corner features a bunch of green leafy herbs. The entire scene is set against a light-colored, textured wooden surface.

2023  
**FALL  
& WINTER  
SEASONAL  
PLANNER**



## MEET FRESH CUTS

Baldor will do the slicing, dicing, and chopping of our premium produce so that you don't have to. With access to our curated selection of fruits and vegetables, we can get you more than 400 items—from carrot matchsticks to zucchini coins to Chateau Squash—and any custom cut you can imagine.



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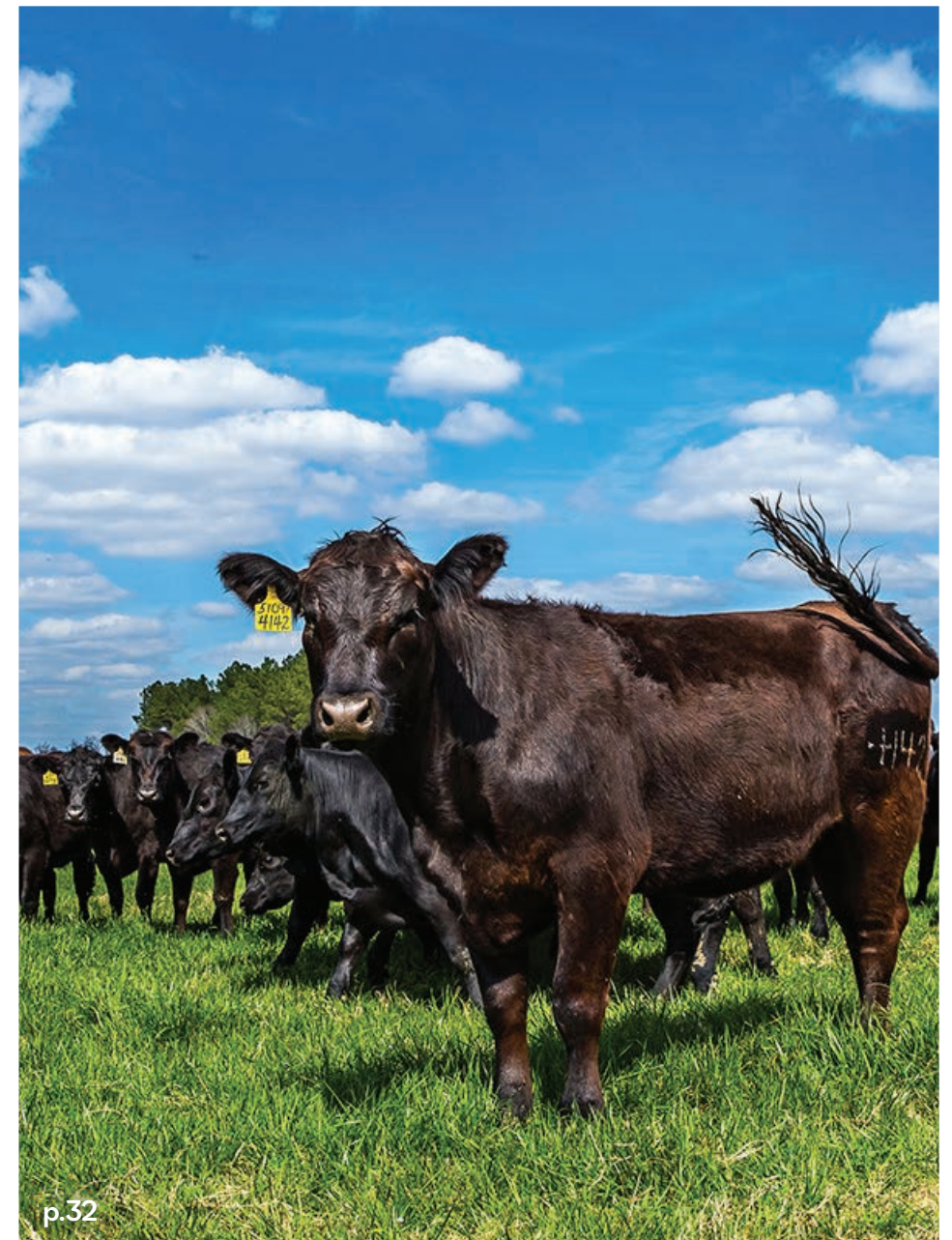
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President Michael Muzyk spent 28 years setting the table for the company's future

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Getting kids' hands in the dirt and vegetables on their plates



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## BECAUSE THE RIGHT SEASONING MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE

Our Baldor private-label spices and seasonings are thoughtfully curated and globally sourced to meet your needs and our quality standards. And our selection is regularly growing. Finish your dish with the best. Finish your dish with Diretta.

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### A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

## A Season of Change



MARGARET  
MAGNARELLI,  
VP, MARKETING &  
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**I HAVE TO ADMIT:** I'm always a little sad when fall arrives.

I love the summer, with its expansive blue skies, blazing hot sun, and ripe melons, tomatoes, and stone fruits bursting with juice. Then September comes rolling up, and the transition begins—in the sun, in the air, and of course, on the plate. The colors of the produce start to shift like the leaves, and the availability of my favorite nectarines starts to wane. Change is hard.

A week or so into autumn, however, I remember that I love the fall/winter bounty too, including sweet-tart pomegranates, blood oranges, and squashes in all shapes and sizes. Fall is not so bad after all. It's just the transition that's tough.

At Baldor, we're experiencing our own change in seasons. As you may have heard, our President, Michael Muzyk, is retiring at the end of 2023, to enjoy some well-earned downtime.

This is bittersweet. We're happy for Michael, but we're also sad to lose him. You can learn more about Michael's legacy and the incredible impact he's had on Baldor on page 54. We hope you'll see that Michael's leadership hasn't just been about growing the company—it was always about caring for people.

There's an analogy in the way Michael has nurtured Baldor to the way regenerative farmers tend to their land, a topic you can read more about on page 32. (I know this may feel like a stretch, but stick with me here!) As I've learned from our super-smart merchandising team, regenerative farming is about feeding the soil to feed the plant to improve the taste of produce and meat. It also makes the land more arable, reduces CO2 in the atmosphere, and creates better economic outcomes for farmers. In other words, by caring for the soil, we create a symbiotic ecosystem. This isn't something that's built overnight; it's a long game that requires investment but then pays dividends.

Over the last three decades, Michael has carefully tended to the soil here at Baldor, ensuring that our culture is rich and that whatever we built had positive outcomes for our customers, partners, and employees. While he moves on to his next adventure, the terroir he created will help us continue to grow.

Speaking of terroir, we hope you'll find lots of seasonal culinary inspo in this issue to help with your fall and winter menu planning—from our New & Exciting items (page 7), to our peak-produce calendar (page 16), to our highlighted vendors (page 40). There's so much deliciousness ahead.

Did I mention how much I love fall?

Yours in food,

*Margaret Magnarelli*

Margaret Magnarelli



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THAT IS  
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# New+Exciting

SPECIALTY  
PROTEIN  
PRODUCE



## Products that should be in your basket

by NINA FRIEND

"LOVE IS AN ingredient in the foods that we source here," says Kevin Lindgren, Director of Protein Merchandising.

At Baldor, we don't only think about the finished product; we vet the growers, farmers, and producers too. "It starts with quality, but it also starts with welfare," Lindgren says. And welfare applies to everything from care of animals and ethical treatment of employees to

compassionate stewardship of the land. Flavor is a big component too, and this fall, the new, exciting products we're offering check all of these boxes.

In the pages that follow, you'll find a range of produce, protein, dairy, bakery, and grocery items that span everyday pantry staples and unique specialty products. Scott Crawford, Vice President of Merchandising, re-

fers to these specialty items as "idea starters." He says they round out the discovery process for chefs, making it easy for them to try the most compelling, innovative products out there.

Chefs count on us for that—they expect Baldor to offer the type of high-quality products that they would pick out themselves. We simply save them the time of having to find them.



SCOTT CRAWFORD,  
VICE PRESIDENT  
OF MERCHANDISING

Photographs by FRANK TIU

# What's New in Specialty (Bakery, Dairy, and Grocery)

WHEN IT COMES TO SOURCING, we take a holistic view of every product we bring on, says Suzy Kang, Grocery Category Manager. At Baldor, that means going to potential vendors' facilities and vetting everything from cleanliness and maintenance, to sustainability and process. "For us, it's not just about price, it's also about the ethics of the vendors that we source and the quality of the products that we bring in." This fall, the new and exciting products in specialty span plant-based pantry staples, cheeses from a legacy cheesemaker, and canned tomatoes from the East Coast.



EMILY MURPHY, DIRECTOR OF SPECIALTY MERCHANDISING



SUZY KANG, GROCERY CATEGORY MANAGER



FRANKLIN ROMERO, DAIRY CATEGORY MANAGER

## BAKERY

1

### Maine Grains

Maine Grains prides itself on milling Northeast-grown grains that are organic, heritage, and zero waste. The company was founded in 2012 by Amber Lambke, a passionate connector of farmers, millers, and bakers, and Michael Scholz, an artist and baker. They're highly community-oriented and sell products such as Organic Course Rye Flour (code: FLOURMG4) and Stone Ground Whole Wheat Flour (code: FLOURMG3) to bakers, chefs, and breweries across the region. "It's a pleasure to engage with partners like Maine Grains who are reinvigorating the breadbasket of the Northeast," says Emily Murphy,

Director of Specialty Merchandising.

2

### Renewal Mill

This female-founded, purpose-driven company based out of San Francisco focuses on upcycling. By using the byproducts of plant-based milk, Renewal Mill creates premium flours that are high in fiber and gluten-free. "Connecting with Claire Schlemme, the founder of Renewal Mill, was a no-brainer," Murphy says. "The 1-to-1 Baking Flour (code: FLOURRM4) is amazing, and the Dark Chocolate Brownie Mix (code: FLOURRM16) is just about one of the easiest solutions for gluten-free and non-GMO baking." By repurposing what might otherwise be food waste, Renewal Mill combats climate





change while also creating high-quality pantry staples that bring baked goods to the next level.

## DAIRY

### 1 Kite Hill

The Kite Hill difference can be summed up in a simple practice: Make plant-based foods that actually taste good. Both their non-dairy cream cheese (code: DACREAMND-KH) and non-dairy ricotta

(code: DACHEESENDKH) use house-made almond milk as a base, made from high-quality, non-GMO almonds from the San Joaquin Valley in California. Whether you mix the cream cheese into frosting for a cake or dollop the ricotta onto a plate of pasta, the rich flavor and creamy texture of these products are a cut above the other vegan options on the market.

2 **Rogue Creamery** Since being founded in 1933, Rogue Creamery has

been dedicated to producing organic blue and cheddar cheeses that strike the balance between Old World traditions and the wild spirit of the Oregon Rogue River Valley. Their award-winning Bluehorn Wine-Soaked Blue Cheese is a perfect example: It's made using classic open-vat methods, then each wheel is cave-aged and soaked in an organic Syrah from Southern Oregon's award-winning Troon Vineyard. And their Smokey Oregon Organic Blue is smoked over Oregon hazelnut shells.

Franklin Romero, Dairy Category Manager, says, "Their sustainability efforts are as impressive as their products. They include a dairy-waste-water recycling program, limited irrigation to conserve water, and packaging options that reduce non-recyclable waste. And their Pedal Power Program is really special: Employees are given a monthly bonus for using more sustainable forms of transportation to get to work, like biking, carpooling, using public transportation, or driving cars that get over 50 mpg."



## GROCERY

### 1 First Field

Our lineup of canned tomatoes includes the classic brands imported from Italy as well as Bianco DiNapoli from Northern California, but we've recently been on the hunt for a good quality tomato producer from the East Coast. That's how we found First Field, based out of New Jersey. "This brand is a differentiator," Kang says. First Field makes its products with non-GMO

ingredients, and never uses shortcuts like tomato paste or concentrates. These canned crushed tomatoes (code: VEG1J7) are perfect for everything from sauces to soups. To sweeten the deal even more, the cans we're carrying this fall are no salt added and kettle cooked.

### 2 Chi Kitchen

In the preserved vegetable category of the grocery section, we already offer products from the big national brands, but we wanted to

have a more local program, too. Chi Kitchen, which we currently only sell out of our Boston hub, spotlights a small business with a big impact. This woman-owned, family-run company, founded by chef and culinary educator Minnie Luong, pulls from Luong's heritage and childhood. As a kid, Luong moved to the United States from Vietnam. She and her family grew and preserved their own vegetables—an effort to stay connected to their culture and eat the foods they loved from home, particularly since Asian ingredients were largely

unavailable in the grocery stores of Massachusetts and Rhode Island. That inspired Luong to launch Chi Kitchen, offering a variety of hand-crafted kimchi, like their vegan kimchi (code: CHIKIT1). Her crunchy, sour products add a pop of umami to everything from burgers to pastas.

→ Scan QR code for our newest arrivals.



# What's New in Protein

IN THE WORLD OF PROTEIN, WHILE IT'S MORE DIFFICULT TO BE SEASONAL, WE'RE highly specific and particular about the products we source. "For us, it's really about working with the absolute best. We're trying to get antibiotics out of the supply chain and buy and sell clean, wholesome protein," says Peter Mistretta, Protein Category Manager. In all our protein products, but especially the following three, the farmers take center stage. "Some have five pigs, some have 200, but they're not these big commercial operations," says Kevin Lindgren, who oversees our entire protein category. "They're artists and craftsmen the same way that chefs are."



**KEVIN LINDGREN,**  
DIRECTOR OF PROTEIN  
MERCHANDISING



**PETER MISTRETТА,**  
PROTEIN CATEGORY  
MANAGER

1  
**Joyce Farms Grass Fed Prime Beef Boneless Ribeyes**

Lindgren discovered Joyce Farms by chance. They sent him a few beef samples and he threw them in the freezer. Later he cooked a ribeye (code: **MEBNGFP5**) that was, in his words, "the best beef I'd ever had." Lindgren called Joyce Farms to find out more and learned they were growing their grass through regenerative farming, using a rotational grazing system. This doesn't only produce the best possible taste and quality, but also maintains animal welfare throughout the entire process. Their Choice Ribeye (code: **MEBNGF5M**) is equally excellent. "We found it to be incredibly rich and tender, and then realized that it also checked all of those other boxes," Lindgren says.

2  
**Niman Ranch Boneless Iberian Duroc Pork Collar**

"There have been few new products brought to market in the heritage pork category in recent years," Mistretta says. "So we're lucky to be able to introduce something that's new in the space." These Boneless Iberian Duroc Pork Collars (code: **MEPKNR406AI**) are almost like an artichoke heart in that they're the most tender, delicious, and valuable part of the pig. Niman Ranch, one of the original producers in the certified humane pork space, has the ability to scale this product while still maintaining all of their animal welfare standards. "The advantage of Niman Ranch producing this premium pork line is that we can offer something really exceptional but at a more affordable price point," Mistretta says.

3  
**Joyce Farms Whole Poulet Rouge Chicken**

Joyce Farms leads the industry in everything they do, but their sweet spot is poultry. This antibiotic-free, naturally raised bird (code: **MEPOL-R3M**) is part of their premium line, and it's special for a few reasons. First, the bird's genetics are set and regulated by the French Label Rouge Program. Joyce brings eggs over from France twice a year—the only producer in America to do so. Joyce then oversees the hatching of the eggs and the raising of the chickens to exact specifications, all in service of what Lindgren calls, "their attempt to create the juiciest, most tender chicken in the world."



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# What's New in Produce

“FLAVOR IS ALWAYS TOP PRIORITY, FIRST AND FOREMOST,” SAYS MATTHEW RENDINE, Director of Produce Merchandising, who oversees our fruit category. We also choose to work with farmers whose practices align with Baldor’s values, from focusing on sustainability to paying fair wages. This fall, we’re showcasing best-in-class growers that hit all of our marks while also managing to cultivate produce that’s packed with flavor. From the highest-quality citrus to the very best version of Castelfranco and even a new, proprietary version of baby romaine, each of these products carve a unique niche in the produce marketplace.



**MATTHEW RENDINE,**  
DIRECTOR OF PRODUCE  
MERCHANDISING



**KEN BOWER,**  
DIRECTOR OF PRODUCE  
MERCHANDISING



**DONALD RUSSO,**  
VEGETABLE SR.  
CATEGORY MANAGER

1  
**Bernard Ranches  
Citrus**

At Bernard Ranches, flavor has always been priority. “Vince and Vicky grow varieties that continue to produce great flavor, versus great output,” Rendine says. Vince and Vicky, owners of Bernard Ranches, have been growing citrus since the eighties. Their growing practices are what set them apart. “They take the extra steps,” Rendine says. “Vince is out on the farm, checking fruit, looking at sugar, looking at flavor. They don’t use any synthetic pesticides and they’re using drip irrigation versus sprinkler irrigation, which allows them to control how much water they use.” Although Bernard Ranches grows all kinds of citrus, they focus on specialty citrus that are harder to find. Sweet, tart Oro Blancos (code: ORO1)—which are a cross between a pommelo and a mandarin—are one of their staples. Additionally,

Bernard Ranches doesn’t wax their fruit, which makes it easier to eat and easier to cook with. As Rendine says, “It’s not about what’s on the outside, it’s what’s on the inside.”

2  
**J. Marchini Farms  
Castelfranco  
Radicchio**

In years past, we used to have to rely on Italian imports for chicories like radicchio. Although our program of imported Italian vegetables has always been dynamic, we love supporting US-based farms who are growing Italian products right here at home. At J. Marchini Farms in the San Joaquin Valley, Castelfranco radicchio (code: R4) has gone from expensive seasonal specialty to affordable year-round staple. “We’re able to provide a consistent product aligned with a great family and a great grower,” says Donald Russo, Senior Category

Manager for Vegetables. This hearty chicory can stand alone in a salad, but also works well when paired with a rich protein like pork, where the fat can play off of the Castelfranco’s bitterness. Besides adding texture and depth to any dish, this chicory—with its yellow leaves and red speckles—brings a pop of color to the plate.

3  
**Babe Farms  
Ruby Ro-Minis**

This new, proprietary variety (code: ROM2R) from Babe Farms in Santa Maria Valley, California combines the grassy sweetness of romaine with the hearty crunch of iceberg. The small, tight heads can be used in a variety of ways.

“They’re very versatile,” Russo says. “They can be halved and grilled, or chopped up and added to a salad.” These baby romaine hearts don’t only taste great, they’re beautiful too, with green outer leaves, a bit of red on top, and a yellow speckled pattern on the inside. This unique lettuce makes a statement on the plate and, as Russo says,

“It’s something different that no one else is doing in that space right now—Babe Farms are the only ones who are growing it.”

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arrivals.







YOUR  
MONTHLY  
GUIDE

## Fall & Winter Produce Guide

—————> The start of autumn signals the return of local heirloom and specialty apples, full-flavored squashes, and hardy brassicas. From the West, sweet figs and early wild mushrooms eventually give way to delicate chicories and bright citrus that will see us through until spring. Our expert merchants have curated a guide to the best fall and winter produce to help you plan your seasonal menus and holiday offerings.

# September



**WHAT TO WATCH FOR**

“Saskatchewan chanterelles pack big flavor into a short but delicious season.”

**KEN BOWER,**  
DIRECTOR OF  
PRODUCE  
MERCHANDISING

## Fruit

### SPECIALTY

Baby Kiwi  
Fresh Bahri Date  
Fuyu Persimmon  
Pomegranate  
Quince  
Red Currant

### APPLES

Ashmead's Kernel  
Blondee  
Cortland  
Ludacrisp  
Macoun  
Mollie's Delicious  
Rambour Franc  
Seneca Crisp  
Sweetango  
Zestar!

### BERRIES

Blueberry  
Cranberry  
Wild Huckleberry  
Wild Maine Blueberry

### FIGS

Adriatic  
Black Mission  
Brown Turkey  
Tiger Stripe

### GRAPES

Concord  
Green Himrod  
Green Lakemont  
Gum Drop  
Holiday  
Mars  
Muscat Finger  
Niagara

### MELONS

Canary  
Crenshaw  
Little Flower Watermelon  
Midnight Watermelon  
Orange Flesh  
Piel de Sapo  
Snow Leopard  
Sugar Cube  
Sugar Kiss  
Summer Kiss

Sun Jewel  
Sunshine Watermelon  
Tuscan Canteloupe  
Yellow Mini Watermelon  
Yellow Watermelon

### PEARS

Concorde  
Forelle  
Seckel  
Warren

### STONE FRUIT

Black Plum  
Black Pluot  
Emerald Beaut Pluot  
Flavor King Pluot  
Mottled Pluot  
Peacharine  
Prune Plum  
Red Plum  
Red Pluot  
Velvet Apricot  
White Nectarine  
White Peach  
Yellow Nectarine  
Yellow Peach

## Vegetables

### SPECIALTY

Agretti  
Celtuce  
Fresh Green Olive  
Purslane  
Tomatillo

### BEETS

Badger Flame

### BEANS

Christmas Lima  
Cranberry  
Green Lima

Green Romano  
Yellow Romano

### BRASSICAS

**Flowers**  
Purple Broccoli

### Buds

Red Napa Cabbage

### Leaves

Spigariello

### Roots

Hakurei Turnip  
Hinona Kabu Turnip

### CARROTS

Kyoto  
Nantes

### CORN

Bi-Color  
White  
Yellow

### EGGPLANTS

Fairytale  
Graffiti  
Hansel & Gretel  
Italian  
Japanese  
Rosa Bianca  
Sicilian Mix  
White

### LEAFY GREENS

Ruby Ro-mini

### MUSHROOMS

#### Fresh Truffles

Burgundy

#### Wild

Chicken-of-the-Woods  
Hedgehog  
Lobster  
Matsutake  
Saskatchewan  
Chanterelle

### PEPPERS

Habanada  
Jimmy Nardello 🌶️



Aji Dulce 🌶️  
Biquinho 🌶️  
Grenada 🌶️  
Hatch 🌶️  
Mixed Fish 🌶️  
Cayenne 🌶️  
Sugar Rush Peach 🌶️  
Ghost 🌶️  
Carolina Reaper 🌶️

### RADISHES

Amethyst

### ROOTS

Fresh Ginger  
Fresh Turmeric  
Rutabaga  
Salsify  
Sunchoke

### SQUASH

#### Summer

Haifa's Finest Cousa  
Zucchini  
Summer Mix  
Zephyr

#### Winter

Autumn Frost  
Blue Hubbard  
Candy Roaster  
Carnival  
Honeyboat  
Honeynut

Honeypatch  
Koginut  
Lodi  
Red Kuri  
Scarlet Kabocha

### TOMATOES

Beefsteak  
Campari  
Cherry On-the-Vine  
Heirloom  
Midnight Roma  
Mixed Cherry  
Plum  
Red Cherry  
San Marzano  
Snacking  
Sungold  
Sweet Prince

→  
Scan QR code  
to see our latest  
Peak Season  
arrivals.



# October



**WHAT TO WATCH FOR**

“New from Red Jacket Orchard: the exclusive Seneca Crisp apple, a true native NY variety.”

**MATTHEW RENDINE,**  
DIRECTOR OF PRODUCE MERCHANDISING

## Fruit

### SPECIALTY

Baby Kiwi  
Italian Chestnut  
Morro Bay Avocado  
Pomegranate  
Quince

### APPLES

#### Classic & Specialty

Braeburn  
Cortland  
Crab  
Lemonade  
Ludacrisp  
Macoun  
McIntosh  
Rome  
Seneca Crisp  
SnapDragon  
Sugar Bee  
Sweetango

#### Heirloom

Ashmead's Kernel  
Belle de Boskoop  
Blondee  
Blue Pearmain  
Calville Blanc D'Hiver  
Cox's Orange Pippin  
Esopus Spitzenburg  
Golden Russet

### Hidden Rose

Lamb Abbey Pearmain  
Melrose  
Mollie's Delicious  
Northern Spy  
Rambour Franc  
Shamrock  
Silken  
Zestar!

### BERRIES

Autumn  
Cranberry  
Green Gooseberry  
Huckleberry

### CITRUS

Buddha's Hand  
Etrog Citron  
Kaffir Lime  
Satsuma  
Yuzu

### FIGS

Black Mission  
Brown Turkey  
Tiger Stripe

### GRAPES

Concord

### Green Himrod

Green Lakemont  
Gum Drop  
Holiday  
Marquis  
Mars  
Moon Drop  
Niagara  
Thomcord

### MELONS

Canary

### PEARS

Anjou  
Bartlett  
Bosc  
Comice  
Concorde  
Forelle  
Hosui  
Red  
Seckel  
Warren

### PERSIMMONS

Fuyu  
Hachiya

## Vegetables

### SPECIALTY

Fresh Green Olive

### BEETS

Badger Flame

### BEANS

Christmas Lima  
Cranberry  
Green Lima

### BRASSICAS

#### Flowers

Broccoli di Ciccio  
Green Sprouting Broccoli

Purple Sprouting Broccoli

#### Buds

On-the-Stalk Brussels Sprouts  
Purple Brussels Sprouts  
Red Napa Cabbage

#### Leaves

Casper Kale  
Red Russian Kale  
Spigariello

#### Roots

Hakurei Turnip  
Hinona Kabu Turnip

### CARROTS

Kyoto  
Mixed Heirloom

### CHICORIES

Puntarella  
Red Dandelion

### EGGPLANTS

Fairytale  
Graffiti  
Hansel & Gretel  
Italian  
Japanese  
Sicilian Mix  
White

### LEAFY GREENS

Dragon Tongue  
Arugula  
Ruby Ro-mini

### MUSHROOMS

#### Fresh Truffles

Burgundy  
White  
**Wild**  
Chanterelle  
Chicken-of-the-Woods



Fried Chicken  
Hedgehog  
Matsutake

### PEPPERS

Habanada  
Jimmy Nardello 🌿  
Aji Dulce 🌿  
Biquinho 🌿  
Grenada 🌿  
Hatch 🌶️  
Mixed Fish 🌶️  
Cayenne 🌶️  
Sugar Rush Peach 🌶️  
Ghost 🌶️  
Carolina Reaper 🌶️

### POTATOES

#### Specialty

Amarosa Fingerling  
Blue Adirondack  
German Butterball  
La Ratte Fingerling  
Laker Baker  
Magic Molly  
Magic Myrna

Red Adirondack  
Red Norland  
Upstate Abundance

### RADISHES

Amethyst

### ROOTS

Burdock  
Celeriac  
Ginger  
Parsley Root  
Salsify  
Sunchoke  
Turmeric

### SQUASH

Autumn Frost  
Blue Hubbard  
Candy Roaster  
Carnival  
Honeyboat  
Honeynut  
Koginut  
Lodi

Red Kuri  
Scarlet Kabocha  
Turban

### TOMATOES

Beefsteak  
Cherry On-the-Vine  
Heirloom  
Mixed Cherry  
San Marzano  
Snacking  
Sungold  
Yellow Beefsteak

### FALL DÉCOR

Corn Stalks  
Hay Bale  
Heirloom Pumpkin  
Mixed Gourds  
Ornamental Corn  
White Pumpkin

→  
Scan QR code to see our latest Peak Season arrivals.



# November



**WHAT TO WATCH FOR**

“The sweet-spice of Kingsburg Orchards’ Cali-grown Percinnamon, a variety of the traditional persimmon.”

**MATTHEW RENDINE,**  
DIRECTOR OF  
PRODUCE  
MERCHANDISING

## Fruit

### SPECIALTY

Italian Chestnut  
Pomegranate  
Quince

### APPLES

#### Classic & Specialty

Braeburn  
Cortland  
Crab  
Evercrisp  
Honeycrisp  
Hunnyz  
Lemonade  
Lucy Glo  
Lucy Rose  
Ludacrisp  
Macoun  
McIntosh  
Opal  
Rome

Seneca Crisp  
SnapDragon  
Sugar Bee  
Sweetango

#### Heirloom

Ashmead's Kernel  
Baldwin  
Belle de Boskoop  
Blondee  
Calville Blanc D'Hiver  
Cox's Orange Pippin  
Esopus Spitzenburg  
Hidden Rose  
Lamb Abbey Pearmain  
Melrose  
Mollie's Delicious  
Northern Spy  
Rambour Franc

Shamrock  
Silken  
Zestar!

### BERRIES

Cranberry  
Sweetest Batch  
Blackberry  
Sweetest Batch  
Blueberry  
Sweetest Batch  
Strawberry

### CITRUS

**Grapefruit**  
Star Ruby  
White Marsh  
**Lemons**  
Pink Variegated  
Seedless

#### Limes

Kaffir Lime  
Sweet

#### Mandarins

Clementine  
Pixie  
Satsuma  
**Specialty**  
Autumn Honey Tangerine  
Blood Orange  
Buddha's Hand  
Calamondin  
Etrog Citron  
Green Yuzu  
Kumquat  
Limequat  
Navel  
Yellow Yuzu

### FIGS

Brown Turkey

### GRAPES

Candy Dreams  
Candy Snaps  
Carnival  
Concord  
Green Himrod  
Green Muscat  
Holiday  
Jam  
Lakemont  
Moon Drop  
Niagara  
Purple Mars

### MELONS

Dino

### PEARS

Anjou  
Bartlett  
Bosc  
Comice  
Concorde  
Forelle  
Hosui  
Red  
Seckel

### PERSIMMONS

Fuyu  
Hachiya



## Vegetables

### SPECIALTY

Cardoon  
Crosnes  
Sassafras Root

### BEETS

Badger Flame

### BRASSICAS

#### Flowers

Broccoli di Ciccio  
Green Sprouting  
Purple Sprouting  
Broccoli

#### Buds

On-the-Stalk Brussels  
Sprouts  
Purple Brussels Sprouts

#### Leaves

Casper Kale  
Red Russian Kale  
Spigariello

#### Roots

Hakurei Turnip  
Hinona Kabu Turnip  
Scarlet Turnip

### CARROTS

Kyoto  
Nantes

### CHICORIES

#### Domestic

Heirloom Mix

#### Italian

Castelfranco  
Escarole

Frisée

Grumolo  
Puntarella  
Radicchio del Veneto  
Tardivo

### LEAFY GREENS

Dragon Tongue  
Arugula  
Ruby Ro-mini

### MUSHROOMS

#### Fresh Truffles

Burgundy  
White

#### Wild

Black Trumpet  
Chanterelle  
Hedgehog

Matsutake  
South African Porcini  
Yellowfoot

### POTATOES

#### Specialty

Blue Adirondack  
German Butterball  
La Ratte Fingerling  
Red Adirondack  
Red Norland  
Upstate Abundance

### ROOTS

Burdock  
Celeriac  
Ginger  
Parsley Root  
Red Sunchoke  
Rutabaga  
Salsify  
White Sunchoke

### SQUASH

Autumn Frost  
Blue Hubbard  
Candy Roaster  
Carnival  
Honeyboat  
Honeynut  
Honeypatch  
Koginut  
Lodi  
Long Island Cheese  
Pumpkin Pie  
Red Kuri  
Scarlet Kabocha  
Turban



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# December



**WHAT TO WATCH FOR**

“All the specialty Brussels sprouts for the holidays: baby, purple, on-the-stalk, and beyond.”

**KEN BOWER,**  
DIRECTOR OF  
PRODUCE  
MERCHANDISING

## Fruit

### SPECIALTY

Italian Chestnut  
Pomegranate  
Quince  
White Pomegranate

### APPLES

Braeburn  
Cortland  
Cosmic Crisp  
Crab  
Envy  
Evercrisp  
Hunnyz  
Lemonade  
Lucy Glo  
Lucy Rose  
Ludacrisp  
Macoun  
McIntosh  
Opal  
Rome  
RubyFrost  
Seneca Crisp  
SnapDragon  
Sugar Bee

### BERRIES

Cranberry  
Green Gooseberry  
Sweetest Batch  
Blackberry

Sweetest Batch  
Blueberry  
Sweetest Batch  
Raspberry  
Sweetest Batch  
Strawberry

### CITRUS

**Grapefruit**  
Melogold  
Oro Blanco  
Star Ruby  
White Marsh

### Lemons

Eureka  
Pink Variegated  
Seedless

### Limes

Sweet

### Mandarins

Clementine  
Kishu  
Murcott  
Pixie

### Satsuma

### Oranges

Heirloom Navel  
Navel  
**Specialty**  
Buddha's Hand  
Fukushu Kumquat  
Kumquat

Pomelo  
**Tangerine**  
Autumn Honey  
Honeybell  
Sunburst

### GRAPES

Candy Dreams  
Candy Hearts  
Candy Snaps  
Carnival  
Jam  
Sweet Sapphire

### MELONS

Dino  
Galia  
Mag

### PEARS

Anjou  
Bartlett  
Bosc  
Concorde  
Red  
Seckel

### PERSIMMONS

Fuyu  
Hachiya  
Kaki

## Vegetables

### SPECIALTY

Cardoon

Crosne  
Sassafras Root

### BEETS

Badger Flame

## BRASSICAS

### Flowers

Broccoli di Ciccio  
Green Sprouting Broccoli  
Purple Sprouting  
Broccoli

### Buds

On-the-Stalk  
Brussels Sprouts  
Purple Brussels Sprouts

### Leaves

Casper Kale  
Red Russian Kale  
Spigariello

### Roots

Hakurei Turnip  
Hinona Kabu Turnip  
Scarlet Turnip

## CARROTS

Kyoto

## CHICORIES

### Domestic

Heirloom Mix  
Puntarella

### Italian

Castelfranco  
Escarole  
Frisée  
Grumolo  
Puntarella  
Radicchio del Veneto  
Rosa di Gorizia  
Tardivo

## LEAFY GREENS

Dragon Tongue  
Arugula  
Ruby Ro-mini

## MUSHROOMS

**Fresh Truffles**  
Black Winter



### Wild

Black Trumpet  
Chanterelle  
Hedgehog  
Matsutake  
South African Porcini  
Yellowfoot

## POTATOES

**Specialty**  
Blue Adirondack  
La Ratte Fingerling  
Red Adirondack  
Red Norland

### ROOTS

Burdock  
Celeriac  
Parsley Root  
Red Sunchoke  
Rutabaga  
Salsify  
White Sunchoke

## SQUASH

Autumn Frost  
Blue Hubbard  
Carnival  
Honeynut

### Honeypatch

Koginut  
Lodi  
Red Kuri  
Scarlet Kabocha  
Turban

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# January



**WHAT TO WATCH FOR**

“Buck Brand specialty citrus grown in Porterville, CA’s unique microclimate.”

**MATTHEW RENDINE,**  
DIRECTOR OF  
PRODUCE  
MERCHANDISING

## Fruit

### SPECIALTY

Italian Chestnut  
Pomegranate  
Quince  
Red Currant

### APPLES

Braeburn  
Cortland  
Cosmic Crisp  
Crab  
Envy  
Evearcrisp  
Hunnyz  
Ludacrisp  
Macoun  
McIntosh  
Opal  
Rome  
RubyFrost  
Seneca Crisp  
SnapDragon  
Sugar Bee  
Wild Twist

### BERRIES

Sweetest Batch  
Blackberry  
Sweetest Batch  
Blueberry  
Sweetest Batch  
Raspberry  
Sweetest Batch  
Strawberry  
White Strawberry

### CITRUS

**Grapefruit**  
Cocktail

Melogold  
Oro Blanco  
Star Ruby  
White Marsh  
**Lemons**  
Pink Variegated  
Seedless  
**Limes**  
Sweet  
**Mandarins**  
Algerian Clementine  
Clementine  
Daisy Mandarin  
Kishu  
Minneola Tangelo  
Murcott  
Page  
Pixie  
Satsuma  
Sumo  
**Tangerine**  
Autumn Honey  
Honeybell  
Sunburst  
**Oranges**  
Heirloom Navel  
Mango Orange  
Navel  
**Specialty**  
Bergamot  
Buddha's Hand  
Fukushu Kumquat  
Limequat  
Mandarinquat  
Meiwa Kumquat  
Pomelo  
Seville Sour Orange  
Ugli Fruit



### GRAPES

Candy Dreams  
Candy Snaps  
Jam  
Pink Muscat

### MELONS

Galia  
Mag  
Orange Candy

### PEARS

Anjou  
Bartlett  
Bosc  
Red  
Seckel

### PERSIMMONS

Fuyu  
Kaki  
Sharon Fruit

## Vegetables

### SPECIALTY

Crosne

### BRASSICAS

#### Flowers

Broccoli di Ciccio

#### Buds

Baby Brussels Sprouts  
On-the-Stalk Brussels Sprouts  
Purple Brussels Sprouts

#### Leaves

Casper Kale  
Red Russian Kale  
Spigariello

### Roots

Hakurei Turnip  
Hinona Kabu Turnip  
Scarlet Turnip

### CARROTS

Kyoto

### CHICORIES

#### Domestic

Dandelion  
Puntarella  
Rosa  
Winter Chicory Mix

#### Italian

Castelfranco  
Escarole

### Frisée

Grumolo  
Puntarella  
Radicchio del Veneto  
Rosa di Gorizia  
Tardivo

### LEAFY GREENS

Bloomsdale Spinach  
Dragon Tongue  
Arugula  
Ruby Ro-mini

### MUSHROOMS

#### Fresh Truffles

Black Winter  
Burgundy

### Wild

Black Trumpet  
Chanterelle  
Hedgehog  
South African Porcini  
Yellowfoot

### POTATOES

#### Specialty

Blue Adirondack  
Magic Myrna  
Red Adirondack  
Red Norland

### ROOTS

Burdock  
Celeriac  
Chervil Root  
Galangal  
Lotus  
Parsley Root  
Red Sunchoke  
Rutabaga  
Salsify  
Sunchoke

### SQUASH

Calabaza  
Lodi  
Red Kuri  
Sweet Delica



Scan QR code to see our latest Peak Season arrivals.



# February



↓  
**WHAT TO WATCH FOR**

“Beautiful, bold Italian chicories imported directly from our overseas grower partners.”

**KEN BOWER,**  
DIRECTOR OF  
PRODUCE  
MERCHANDISING

## Fruit

### SPECIALTY

Baby Kiwi  
Greengage Plum  
Pomegranate

### APPLES

Aura  
Braeburn  
Cortland  
Cosmic Crisp  
Crab  
Envy  
Evercrisp  
February  
Hunnyz  
Ludacrisp  
Macoun  
McIntosh  
Opal  
Rome  
RubyFrost  
Seneca Crisp  
SnapDragon  
Sugar Bee  
Wild Twist

### BERRIES

Harry's Berries  
Sweetest Batch  
Blackberry  
Sweetest Batch  
Blueberry  
Sweetest Batch  
Raspberry  
Sweetest Batch  
Strawberry  
White Strawberry

### CITRUS

**Grapefruit**  
Cocktail  
Oro Blanco  
Red  
Star Ruby  
White Marsh  
**Lemons**  
Seedless  
Sorrento  
**Limes**  
Rangpur  
**Mandarins**  
Algerian Clementine  
Clementine  
Gold Nugget  
Minneola Tangelo  
Page  
Pixie  
Red MandaRosa  
Sumo  
Tango  
**Oranges**  
Mango Orange  
Navel  
Sanguinelli Blood  
Tarocco Blood  
**Specialty**  
Bergamot  
Honeybell Tangerine  
Kumquat  
Limequat  
Mandarinquat  
Pomelo  
Seville Sour Orange  
Sunburst Tangerine  
Valentine's Pomelo

### GRAPES

Candy Dreams  
Candy Snaps  
Jam  
Pink Muscat

### MELONS

Mag  
Orange Candy

### PEARS

Anjou  
Bartlett  
Bosc  
Red  
Seckel

## Vegetables

### BRASSICAS

**Flowers**  
Broccoli di Ciccio  
**Buds**  
Baby Brussels Sprouts  
On-the-Stalk Brussels Sprouts  
Purple Brussels Sprouts  
**Leaves**  
Casper Kale  
Red Russian Kale  
Spigariello  
**Roots**  
Hakurei Turnip  
Hinona Kabu Turnip

Scarlet Turnip

### CHICORIES

**Domestic**  
Dandelion  
Rosa  
Winter Chicory Mix  
**Italian**  
Castelfranco  
Escarole  
Frisée  
Grumolo  
Puntarella  
Radicchio del Veneto  
Rosa di Gorizia  
Tardivo

### LEAFY GREENS

Bloomsdale Spinach  
Dragon Tongue  
Arugula  
Red Leaf Spinach  
Red Watercress  
Ruby Ro-mini

### MUSHROOMS

**Fresh Truffles**  
Black Winter  
**Wild**  
Black Trumpet  
Chanterelle  
Hedgehog  
South African Porcini

Yellowfoot

### POTATOES

**Specialty**  
Blue Adirondack  
Magic Myrna  
Red Adirondack  
Red Norland

### ROOTS

Burdock  
Celeriac  
Galangal  
Lotus  
Parsley Root  
Rutabaga  
Salsify  
Sunchoke

### SQUASH

Calabaza  
Lodi  
Red Kuri  
Sweet Delica



Scan QR code to see our latest Peak Season arrivals.



# Year-Round



**WHAT TO WATCH FOR**

“Our elevated and expanding year-round mushroom category.”

**KEN BOWER,**  
DIRECTOR OF  
PRODUCE  
MERCHANDISING

## Fruit

### SPECIALTY

Cherimoya  
Dragon Fruit  
Gold Kiwi  
Passionfruit  
South African Baby  
Pineapple  
Star Fruit

### APPLES

Gala  
Honeycrisp  
Lady

### BERRIES

Blackberry  
Blueberry  
Cape Gooseberry  
Raspberry  
Stemerry  
Strawberry

### CITRUS

Cara Cara  
Finger Lime  
Juicing Orange  
Key  
Meyer Lemon

Moro Blood Orange

### FIGS

Black Mission

### GRAPES

Cotton Candy

### MELONS

French Orange  
Cavaillon

### PEARS

Asian

## Vegetables

### SPECIALTY

Baby Artichoke  
Italian Fennel

### BEETS

Chioggia  
Golden  
Mixed  
Red

### BEANS

Dutch Runner  
English Pea  
Yellow Wax

### BRASSICAS

#### Flowers

Carnival Cauliflower  
Caulilini  
Florentino

Orange Cauliflower  
Purple Cauliflower  
Romanesco Cauliflower

#### Buds

Caraflex Cabbage  
Lollipop Kale Sprouts

#### Leaves

Bright Lights Chard  
Mizuna  
Mustard

#### Stems

Green Kohlrabi  
Purple Kohlrabi

### CARROTS

Baby French  
Baby Mixed Rainbow  
Baby Peeled  
Baby Rainbow  
Peeled

Mixed Heirloom  
Thumbelina

### CHICORIES

#### Domestic

Castelfranco  
Chicory  
Escarole  
Frisée

Radicchio  
Trevisano

#### Imported

Belgian Endive  
Friseline  
Spanish Frisée

### EGGPLANTS

Holland Eggplant  
Holland Graffiti  
Eggplant

## LEAFY GREENS

### Chard

Green  
Rainbow  
Red

### Lettuce & Salads

Artisan Mix  
Baby Chard Mix  
Baby Green Oak  
Baby Green Romaine  
Baby Green Tango  
Baby Lolla Rosa  
Baby Mix  
Baby Mustard Mix  
Baby Red Oak  
Baby Red Romaine  
Baby Romaine  
Little Gem  
Red Little Gem  
Winter Salad Mix

### Specialty

Atlantic Harvest Mix  
Baby Watercress  
Green Dandelion  
Mache  
Pepperpress  
Red Dandelion  
Red Frill Mustard  
Red-Veined Arugula  
Swiss Chard  
Upland Cress  
Watercress  
Wild Arugula

### MUSHROOMS

Beech  
Chefs Mix  
Exotic Blend  
Hen-of-the-Woods  
Maitake  
Oakwood Shiitake  
Oyster  
Pioppino  
Pom Pom



Royal Trumpet  
Shiitake

### PEPPERS

Mini Veggie Sweet  
Shishito 🌿  
Cubanelle 🌿  
Italian Long Hot 🌶️  
Anaheim 🌿  
Poblano 🌿  
Jalapeño 🌶️  
Red Fresno 🌶️  
Serrano 🌶️  
Thai Bird 🌶️  
Habanero 🌶️🌶️

### POTATOES

Chipperbec

Creamer  
GPOD  
Kennebec  
Marble  
Norwis Frying Potato  
Purple Peruvian  
Red Chile  
Russian Banana  
**Sweet Potatoes**  
Beauregard  
Fingerling  
Garnet  
Okinawa  
Purple

### RADISHES

Black  
French Breakfast

Green Meat  
Mixed Purple Radish  
Purple Daikon  
Purple Ninja  
Watermelon

### ROOTS

Celery Root  
Horseradish  
Parsnip  
Turnip  
Yucca

### SQUASH

#### Summer

Baby Zucchini  
Imported Gold Bar  
Patty Pan  
Squash Blossom

#### Winter

Acorn  
Butternut  
Delicata  
Kabocha  
Spaghetti

### TOMATOES

Beefsteak  
Cherry On-the-Vine  
Cocktail Mix  
Heirloom  
Mixed Cherry  
Plum  
Red Cherry  
Red Grape  
Flavor Bomb  
Honey Bomb  
Lolli Bomb  
Sugar Bomb

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arrivals.







Regenerative agriculture—used at Blue Moon Acres—emphasizes soil health, which starts with establishing a living root.



# This Land Is Our Land

An increasing number of our farm and rancher partners are focusing on improving soil health—for sustainability of the planet, of the farm industry, and of flavor. Learn what regenerative agriculture is and why it matters to your plate.

By Mahira Rivers

Jim Lyons stands on the deck of a two-story wooden house overlooking Blue Moon Acres, his 63-acre farm in Pennington, New Jersey. Wearing a khaki button-down shirt, Carhart jeans, and sturdy brown boots, he is perfectly dressed to navigate the farm's grassy terrain. He is deep in the weeds, metaphorically speaking, discussing the finer points of a new composting method. "This is just so cool," he pauses to say before launching into an analysis of fungal-to-bacterial ratios.

Composting is just one component of a broader farming strategy that's implemented at Blue Moon Acres. The approach is known as regenerative agriculture, and it focuses on promoting a natural, balanced ecosystem. It goes one step further to acknowledge the harm that industrial agriculture has caused and consequently aims to restore the soil—and everything tied to it—to optimal health for the next generation.

At Blue Moon Acres, this results in salad greens bursting with flavor, carrots that taste like the best versions of themselves, and rice that is arsenic-free and unbeatably fresh.

Baldor has long recognized the importance of investing in foodways of the future and providing the best food possible with the least environmental impact. That's why Blue Moon Acres is part of a growing portfolio

of farms supplying us with regeneratively grown products. Others include pioneers like Frog Hollow Farms, a stone fruit farm in California since 1976; Joyce Farms, a North Carolina-based heritage meat and poultry farm; King Grove, a boutique blueberry farm; Origin Milk, one of the country's few regenerative dairies; and Maine Grains, which seeks to restore America's grain belt via regenerative methods.

They're not alone in this care—regenerative agriculture is one of the most dynamic areas of farming. It's expected to grow 14% annually, reaching an \$8 billion market valuation globally by 2027. It has emerged as a top trend for retailers like Whole Foods and a key investment strategy for corporations like General Mills and Unilever. In 2022, the US government committed \$2.8 billion for climate-smart projects, including regenerative agriculture.

Baldor's partner farms each have a slightly different approach to regenerative, but the end result is the same: a new standard of quality. These farmers and ranchers are going beyond the status quo to regenerate their soil for the best-tasting ingredients. And they're producing a healthier, more resilient farming system and a healthier, more resilient planet while they're at it. "It's a win, win, win," says Lyons.

Blue Moon Acres owner Jim Lyons has been nurturing the soil back to optimal health for over ten years at his 63-acre farm in Pennington, New Jersey.



## Beyond Organic and Sustainable

When asked to define regenerative agriculture, experts and practitioners agree that it's an approach that regenerates, or restores, an environment. Explaining what that approach entails, however, is not quite as simple. According to the National Resources Defense Council (NRDC), an environmental advocacy group, regenerative agriculture takes into account soil health, the welfare of plant and animal life, and the overall human impact. "Relationships are at the core of regenerative agriculture," says Arohi Sharma, a Deputy Director at the NRDC.

Unlike USDA-certified organic—a one-size-fits-all model focused on reducing synthetic chemicals and GMOs—regenerative solutions are tailored to the needs of each farm. And because every farm is different, every regenerative plan is unique. Still, there are some universal principles. Kiss the Ground, an educational nonprofit, lists these as: minimizing disturbance of the soil, establishing a living root, cover cropping, incorporating animals or organic fertilizer, and encouraging biodiversity.

The USDA reports that just 1% of arable land in the US is certified organic, leading experts to believe that the share of regenerative land is even smaller. As a result, there is a lack of familiarity among both farmers and consumers. "Years ago, when I said 'regenerative,' people would look at me like I was wearing a tin-foil hat," says Kevin Lindgren, Baldor's Director of Meat, Poultry, and Seafood Merchandising. "You know things are changing when huge companies like Walmart are mentioning regenerative in their ads. And farms of all size are starting to embrace at least some aspects of regenerative."

The word regenerative may sound new wave, but the practice is rooted in ancient traditions. Indigenous communities have been farming this way since the earliest days of agriculture.

When industrialization reached American farming in the 20th century, regenerative practices fell out of fashion. Industrial agriculture favors large-scale farms growing a limited number of crops for the cheapest price possible. Popular practices like overgrazing and tilling deplete the soil, which reduces natural productivity and cultivates an unhealthy, pest-ridden growing environment. To make up for this, synthetic chemicals are used to keep plants alive and boost yields but are ultimately just masking the problem.

In response to these damaging effects of "Big Ag" and monocrop culture, The Rodale Institute published a series of papers in the late 1980s asserting the importance of regenerative farming.

In 2002, the USDA set up the first national organic certification program, which overshadowed regenerative agri-

culture and became the gold standard in farming. But as environmental concerns like desertification and climate change continue to mount, the government's definition of organic has proven to be limited. "Consumers recognize the USDA organic stamp on a package, but that's just not enough anymore," says Matthew Rendine, Director of Produce Merchandising at Baldor. "Organic methods help the crop but not the land, yet the health of the soil is critical to the long-term health of the crops." In 2017, a group of farmers and business owners established the Regenerative Organic Certification (ROC) program to streamline and promote regenerative farming.

More recently, farmers have also begun to challenge the idea of sustainability in farming. "Why do you want to keep things as they are, instead of improving it?" asks Stuart Joyce, Executive Vice President & COO of Joyce Farms, a ranch that supplies Baldor with high-quality heritage breeds like Poulet Rouge chicken and Aberdeen Angus beef raised on regenerative farms in the Carolinas and Georgia.

The world's population is growing, arable land is declining, and there are unprecedented levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Faced with these dire circumstances, regenerative has the power to fix the problem, rather than to merely sustain it.

## Better Soil, Better Flavor

Jim Lyons crouches in front of a bed of arugula at Blue Moon Acres and scoops up a handful of soil. It is a fudgy chocolate brown color and as fluffy as cake crumbs.

Lyons has spent the past ten years rehabilitating his soil through organic composting, cover cropping, and minimal tilling. Now, it is absolutely teeming with life. "Microbiology is a game changer," Lyons says.

Infusing soil with a diverse array of microbial life unlocks a plant's ability to absorb micronutrients. Healthy soil results in healthy plants, which stay fresher for longer and naturally reduce the need for pesticides.

But most importantly for Baldor customers, healthy soil leads to great tasting ingredients. "When you talk about cooking, fat is flavor," says Kevin Lindgren. "But in farming, soil is the flavor."

Joyce Farms, founded in 1962, began transitioning to regenerative farming more than ten years ago. Through testing, they found that their animals thrived in a regenerative ecosystem, resulting in a superior product. "The pursuit of flavor has really guided us to regenerative agriculture," says Ryan Joyce, President and CEO of Joyce Farms. "The fat on our animals is amazing, that's the short and sweet answer," he adds.

“Advocates of regenerative agriculture want to expand our definition of good food. For the sake of our future, these farmers, ranchers, and entrepreneurs want people to think beyond the plate when deciding what to buy and eat.”

Guernsey cows graze freely on regeneratively-grown grasses at Origin Milk farms, resulting in richer, more nutritious milk.



At the heart of Joyce's operation is the soil. "If you don't start at the foundation, you cannot reach that ultimate peak flavor," says Nate Morgan, Sales Manager at Joyce. On the farms, heritage Angus cows graze rotationally, which not only keeps the soil healthy and productive, but gives herds access to over 20 varieties of grass, which provides an array of minerals and nutrients leading to a more robust flavor. The animals are healthier, too, and don't require antibiotics or hormones. "You don't have to be a health nut to appreciate that," says Morgan.

No matter what the final product is, regenerative farmers all agree that better flavor begins with the soil. Adrian and Lauren Bota founded Origin Milk in 2015 with the goal

of upending conventional dairy at their regenerative farms in Colorado, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. When asked, Adrian sees himself as a grass farmer first and foremost. After all, grass is what feeds the cows, which then impacts the quality of the milk. It's a you-are-what-you-eat state of mind. "We like to think of this as an entire ecosystem" says Adrian.

Origin specializes in A2 milk from heritage, grass-fed Guernsey cows (A2 milk is more easily digestible than Holstein cow milk, which represents most dairy in America). By sight, the milk has a unique golden hue, thanks to a higher level of butterfat and beta-carotin. And because of Origin's rich soil and regenerative practices, the milk is bursting with nutrition—more Omega-3s, more protein, and

more calcium. Ultimately, it is a richer, more luscious glass of milk. "We're talking about food, so taste has to lead the way," says Adrian.

### Redefining Good for The Future

The impact of regenerative agriculture on the plate is major, but the impact to the planet is even more significant. The most obvious of these is how regenerative agriculture can actually help combat climate change.

Healthy, living soil is known as a carbon sink—it has the potential to sequester vast amounts of carbon, reducing greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

To illustrate how this works, imagine an intricate network of roots, like microscopic branches of an underground tree. This is called a rhizosphere. The roots, microbes, and mycorrhizal fungi that make up a healthy rhizosphere need carbon to survive. The deeper and more diverse this underfoot ecosystem, the more carbon is stored. In contrast, barren, over-tilled soil has no rhizosphere and therefore nothing to hold on to that carbon.

According to the Journal of Soil and Water Conservation, farms with regenerative practices sequester over two times more carbon than conventional farms.

Healthy soil with a robust network of roots is also better at holding on to water, which prevents runoff and topsoil depletion. This means farms can be more resilient in floods and draughts.

Other, less obvious benefits are the nutritional benefits of regeneratively-grown ingredients, from higher levels of vitamins and minerals to healthier fats and protein. And fewer synthetic chemicals like fertilizers, pesticides, and antibiotics means less potential cross-contamination, not to mention cost savings for the farmer.

A key tenet of regenerative agriculture that is harder to quantify is the positive impact that food systems have on human life. Per the NRDC, part of the regenerative framework includes "nurturing communities and reimagining economies" to address inequity. As such, Baldor partners with companies that are equally concerned with the people working on the farms and in the factories. "The farmer is at the core of what we are doing, just like soil is at the core of grass," says Adrian Bota, who puts this into action by paying his farmers a higher wage than many organic dairies.

American farmers are in trouble—farm debt is forecasted to reach an all-time high in 2023 and more farmers are filing for bankruptcy than ever. Regenerative agriculture aims to fix these economic woes, too. Regenerative methods not only salvage dead, inert soil to expand arable land, but can also be more productive, with stronger and bigger yields. This helps farmers save money in the long run—reducing

the need for costly inputs like fertilizers, tilling equipment, or irrigation. It also helps establish economic security with a steady, long-term supply of high-quality products.

Unlike fast fads in the food industry, regenerative agriculture is a long game. In some cases, it can take decades to regenerate soil and to see the fruits of that labor. "There's an easier way to grow and harvest chickens, but we want to do it the better way," says Nate Morgan of Joyce Farms. The reward for being patient, in addition to everything already discussed, is an assurance that these products and businesses won't disappear at a moment's notice.

When it comes down to it, advocates of regenerative agriculture want to expand our definition of good food. For the sake of our future, and for generations to follow, these farmers, ranchers, and entrepreneurs want people

“  
Unlike fast fads in the food industry, regenerative agriculture is a long game. In some cases, it can take decades to regenerate soil and to see the fruits of that labor.”

to think beyond the plate when deciding what to buy and eat. "If you're going to drink dairy, you should drink the best," says Adrian Bota, adding, "it's the best because of the flavor, nutrition, genetics, and because of the environmental impact."

The future of regenerative agriculture is both exciting and urgent. There is an abundance of farmland in need of regeneration in this country, not to mention the number of farmers struggling to make a wage. At the same time, the environmental incentives have never been greater.

And if the pandemic taught us anything, it's that our food system is one intricately connected web. What's good for our farmers is inevitably good for us all. At Baldor, we see the critical role our

customers play in this ecosystem. "Chefs have been the linchpin," says Jim Lyons. "Without them, we wouldn't be here." By partnering with farms like Blue Moon Acres, Baldor wants to enable our customers to be a part of the regenerative solution. Our collective investment today guarantees a better, healthier, more delicious tomorrow for everyone.

*Mahira Rivers is a restaurant critic and freelance journalist based in New York. She writes about restaurants and food culture at large for publications such as The New York Times, New York Magazine, and Food & Wine. She also writes a column for Resy on trends in the restaurant industry, informed by her experience as a former Michelin Guides inspector; her work there was nominated for a James Beard Media Award in 2022.*

→  
Scan QR code to see products from our regenerative farming partners.



BEHIND  
THE  
BRANDS

# From Their Passion To Your Plate

What do a fruit orchard, an olive grower, a tahini producer, a cattle ranch, and a pastry company have in common? Outstanding products that win the loyalty of chefs, retailers, and all their customers. Learn about the dedication and devotion that make these purveyors special.



## FIRSTFRUITS FARMS

Opal apples  
with a heart  
of gold

By Cheryl Brown

**IF YOU'VE NEVER TASTED AN OPAL** apple—grown exclusively by FirstFruits Farms in Prescott, Washington—you're about to experience something special. The bright yellow beauty is a cross between a Topaz and a Golden Delicious—it has a distinctly crunchy texture, a perfect balance of sweet and tart with hints of pear, and a slightly floral aroma. They lend themselves beautifully to sweet or savory dishes, whether baked, sauteed, or roasted, and won't brown after cutting so you can slice or dice them ahead of time without worrying about discoloration.

There's something else that makes the Opal special: Each year, FirstFruits Farms donates a portion of the fruit's proceeds to youth-led organizations that focus on solving food, farming, and sustainability issues in their own communities. We love this commitment to community, as well as their dedication to their employees, which they demonstrate by providing housing for up to 800 employees, on-site childcare, and educational programs and scholarships that help employees better their lives and enrich their skills.

"At FirstFruits Farms, we believe in nourishing families and communities by growing exceptional fruit," says Emily Autrey, FirstFruits Marketing Manager.

FirstFruits Farms' values really resonated for our Baldor team. As Matthew Rendine, our Director of Produce Merchandising, notes: "FirstFruits Farms consistently puts quality and flavor first. Their proprietary Opal variety is consistently a customer favorite for this reason. In addition, their commitment to sustainable farming practices, along with their stewardship of their employees, orchards, and community aligns with Baldor's core values. We are proud to have them as part of our portfolio."

→  
Scan QR code  
to shop  
FirstFruits  
Farms' products.





## MIGHTY SESAME CO.

A tahini that's mighty good

By Julie Weil

**IT'S IMPRESSIVE THAT** something as simple and pure as tahini—a Middle Eastern sesame paste rooted in centuries of tradition—can inspire creativity in kitchens and communities across the country.

“Our tahini is carefully crafted to achieve a delicious nutty flavor, yet it’s nut-free,” explains Laura Morris, Mighty Sesame Marketing Director. “It contains only one ingredient: roasted hulled organic sesame seeds. Our exclusive manufacturing process gives our tahini an exceptionally smooth texture and creates minimal separation with little to no settling.”

The culinary applications are endless. It could be a creamy condiment for sandwiches and burgers, a healthy-yet-rich base for vinaigrettes and sauces, or even a complement to desserts.

Suzy Kang, Baldor’s Grocery Category Manager, is always looking for a product that offers something beyond superior flavor. “Not only is Mighty Sesame tahini delicious and incredibly versatile,” says Kang, “but it’s sustainably traded with producers to ensure fair wages for farmers. They also have best in class operations and multiple certifications to ensure the highest quality product.”

“We source our sesame seeds from the most responsible growing region in the world—Ethiopia,” adds Morris. Mighty Sesame products are packed with protein and calcium, and are proudly non-GMO, vegan, gluten-free, kosher, and halal. With 16-oz and 6.6-lb containers, Baldor has what you need to make your tahini-inspired creations come to life.



## JOYCE FARMS

Exceptional heritage meats for memorable meals

By Jasmin Guleria

**JOYCE FARMS WAS FOUNDED IN 1962**, and by 1981, Ron Joyce noticed that modern farming methods didn’t always result in the best tasting meat and decided to return to the traditional ways of ranching. Located in North Carolina, Joyce Farms specializes in slow-growing heritage breeds of cattle, poultry, and hogs, which offer superior flavor and nutrition. The animals are pasture-raised, humanely treated, and are never given hormones, animal by-products, growth stimulators, or antibiotics.

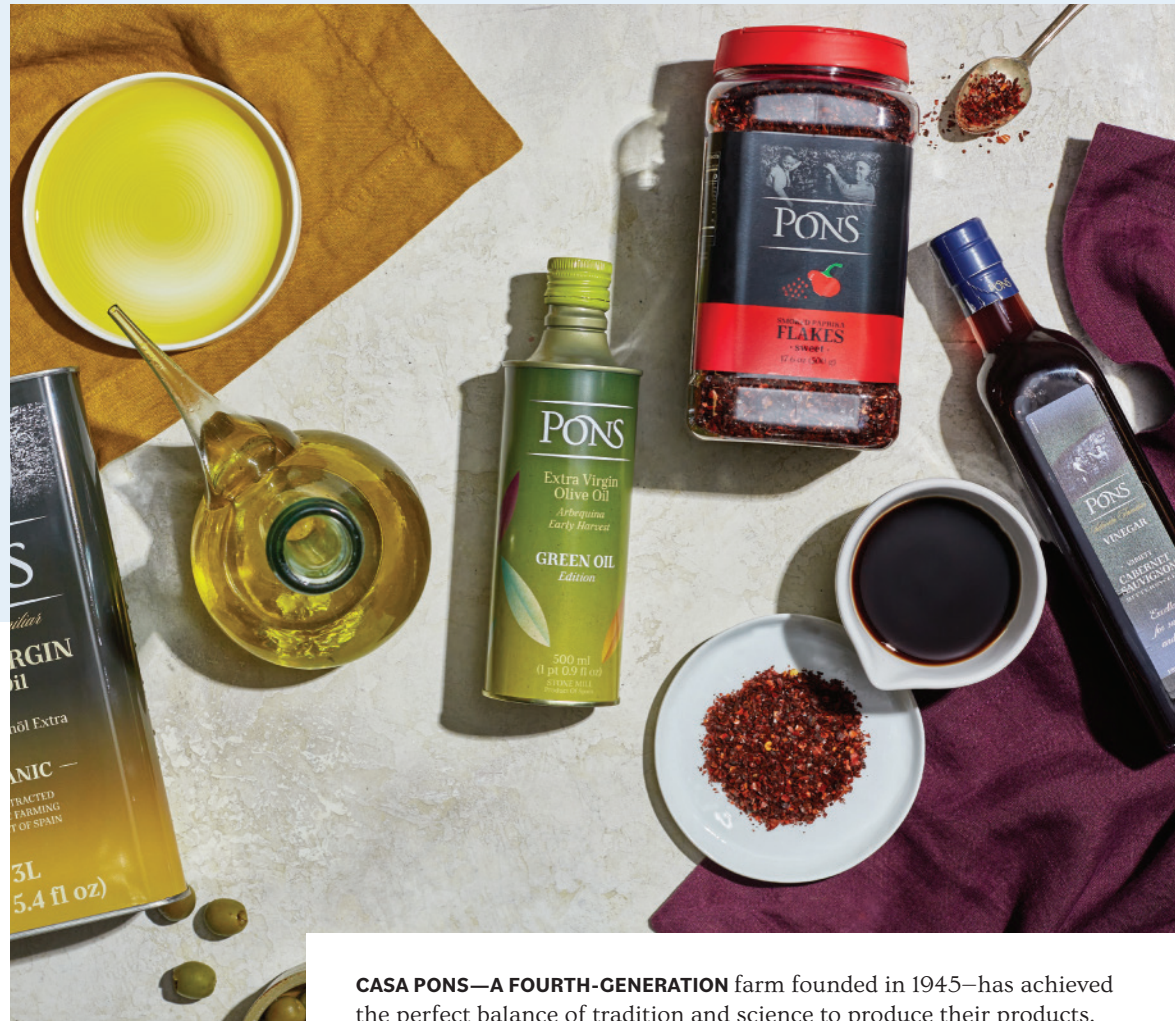
We admire Joyce Farms’ commitment to the highest animal welfare standards, which fosters a natural environment where animals can roam, play, and socialize freely. The humane treatment of animals not only promotes their well-being, but also enhances the taste and quality of the meat.

Regenerative agriculture is another key aspect of a radical approach to traditional farming methods that Joyce Farms takes seriously and Ron, along with his sons, Ryan and Stuart, are leaders in the field. “Regenerative agriculture restores carbon back into the soil. As we build carbon into the soil, the soil produces more nutrient-dense plants, which produces a healthier animal, which produces better flavor,” says Ron.

Kevin Lindgren, Director of Protein Merchandising at Baldor, shared this memory of trying Joyce meat for the first time: “I remember thinking that this was the best beef I’d ever had, and the more I learned about heritage breeds and regenerative agriculture, the more I realized that this wasn’t an accident. The care and passion the Joyce Farms team has for their products is second to none—you can literally taste the difference.”

Explore the Joyce Farms product line and unlock a world where heritage, sustainability, and animal welfare come together to create delicious products and memorable meals.





## CASA PONS

Embracing technology to bring Spain's bold flavors to global tables

By Cheryl Brown

**CASA PONS—A FOURTH-GENERATION** farm founded in 1945—has achieved the perfect balance of tradition and science to produce their products. While they import many Spanish pantry items such as smoked paprika, Calasparra rice, and Marcona almonds, they're renowned for the olive oils and vinegars they produce themselves.

In 2001, one of their farms was devastated by frost and lost 100 hectares of olive trees. The incident prompted Casa PONS to think about the future and how climate change could impact their most valuable asset. That was the beginning of the Varietal Garden, a first-of-its-kind testing site in L'Albages, a serene village in the Spanish countryside. Here, over 200 types of olive trees from all over the world are grown, presenting a unique research opportunity on how different varieties could withstand and adapt to more volatile weather.

The family leans into technology to protect the quality of their olive oils, too. They use a state-of-the-art mill that maintains the correct temperature during every phase of processing their green oil. To provide chefs with the freshest product possible, they flash-freeze oils throughout the year and thaw them as needed. Eduard Pons wisely believes that these forward-thinking processes will keep Casa PONS thriving for decades to come.

Suzy Kang, Baldor's Grocery Category Manager, is thrilled to have Casa PONS as a partner. "Their Arbequina olives are harvested both manually and with a mechanical comb, following all the parameters of ecological farming and respecting the environment. Their methods and their passion yield a top-quality olive oil that satisfies even the most demanding customers."



Scan QR code to shop Casa PONS' products.



## DUFOUR PASTRY KITCHENS

Tradition meets innovation with this dairy-free pie shell

By Julie Weil

**KNOWN AS THE GOLD STANDARD** for luxurious frozen puff pastry, hand-crafted savory hors d'oeuvres, and ready-to-bake tart shells, Dufour Pastry Kitchens saves chefs and home cooks time and labor without compromise on quality. "We want to inspire creativity and innovation in kitchens everywhere," says Dufour co-founder Carla Krasner, "by creating the highest-quality pastry 'cannasses' commercially available."

Inspired by Julia Child's cookbooks, Krasner co-founded Dufour Pastry Kitchens in 1984 with Judi Arnold, who died last January at 86. The relationship between Dufour and Baldor began in those early years: Dufour's savory hors d'oeuvres were featured in Balducci's first-ever mail-order catalogue.

Forty years later, the women-owned, Bronx-based company's legacy of innovation remains strong. "Last summer, there was very limited availability of mass-market pie shells," recalls Emily Murphy, Baldor's Director of Specialty Merchandising. "Our friends at Dufour pulled together a dairy-free, hand-pressed, 10-inch pie shell so Baldor could keep up with holiday demand. They also helped us expand to a new base of customers who were looking for dairy-free items." Krasner was happy to develop a new product to meet the needs of the baking community.

The flaky, decadent pie shell is made of natural ingredients, which means no gums, stabilizers, or preservatives. Made only of organic flour, responsibly sourced palm fruit oil, water, and salt, this unique pie crust is also certified plant-based and non-GMO.



Scan QR code to shop Dufour Pastry Kitchens' products.





**WONDER MEATS—A LEADING MANUFACTURER** of processed meats based in Carlstadt, NJ—is known for their outstanding ground beef and burgers that eat like steak. But their authentic, New York-style deli meats should be on everyone’s radar, too, because they elevate the simplest sandwich into something special. There’s oven roasted turkey breast that tastes like you made it yourself, roast beef crafted from carefully selected top rounds, hand-trimmed pastrami rubbed with a proprietary spice blend, and corned beef with big, garlicky flavor.

“Our deli meats reflect the core process of Wonder Meats products,” says Ty Walter, Vice President of Wonder Meats. “They are all made in small batches with no added filler. Our team of experts collectively has over 100 years of experience, and they use it create the highest quality New York-style deli meats on the market.

Flavor is just part of the reason Baldor partners with Wonder Meats. Kevin Lindgren, Director of Protein Merchandising, says, “We pride ourselves on sourcing proteins from the best farmers and ranchers, and it doesn’t stop there—we also look to partner with artisans and processors whose values align with ours, and Wonder Meats is one of them.”

The company has maintained their excellence because they’re committed to quality and have maintained a core set of values that have guided their business practices since they opened as a family butcher shop 40 years ago: quality, flavor, safety, consistency, fair pricing, and never becoming so modern that you lose touch with the old-fashioned ways.

## WONDER MEATS

A commitment to excellence in every bite

By Cheryl Brown



Scan QR code to shop Wonder Meats’ products.



## THE HIGHEST QUALITY SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD IN THE NORTHEAST

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We offer 60+ varieties, everything from tuna and salmon for your everyday menu to seasonal items that make for exciting specials. All our products are sustainably sourced—usually Monterey Bay Aquarium or Marine Stewardship Council-certified—and 70% are local. Our fish comes in and goes out the same day for maximum freshness, and travels from our Brooklyn facility to your kitchen on ice. Buy it whole, boned, or portioned—our cutters have a century’s worth of experience maximizing yield and delivering consistent filets. And our sales executives are on call 24-7, and backed by culinary training, so you know they’re looking out for you.

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Early mornings, late nights, weekends, holidays—no matter when you call, our Inside Sales Team is here to help. They're the rockstars that provide world-class service you can trust. "Our Inside Sales Team does an excellent job of providing real customer interaction with a real person in real time, whether it's simply inputting an order over the phone or collaborative problem solving that customers just can't get elsewhere," says Scott T. King, Vice President of Sales. "That human touch is an important part of Baldor's DNA." Meet some of the legendary Inside Sales Team who make it happen for our chefs every day. • BY JILL COSTA

# Yes, Chef! This Team Has Your Back Day or Night

MEET  
THE  
TEAM

## ANGEL SANCHEZ

**Years with Baldor:** 9

**Role and Region:** Inside Sales Representative for New York City

### How did you start your career with Baldor?

When I was a teenager, I first earned money by selling candy on the subways, then dancing on the subways, which I did for a while. Eventually, I knew I needed to find a job. I was introduced to Baldor through an ex-girlfriend's family member who worked here, and the rest is history.

### What's your favorite Baldor memory?

I always loved having my dance crew perform at Baldor events. My favorite memory would have to be at one of our holiday parties where one of

my crew members did a flip over Mike [Muzyk, Baldor's President.] Another former dance-crew member has passed away since then, so I always hold the memory of that performance especially dear.

### What's your favorite customer story?

I'll be real with you—my first interaction with a customer is often when something isn't right with their order. But every time, I work with them to find a solution and earn their trust. My customers know that I'm here for them, and they'll even call me directly when they need something. We become fast friends!

### What is something you're most proud of from your time at Baldor?

When we all had our backs

against the wall [during a system outage in early 2023], I was able to hold it down when it was most needed. I always work hard regardless—not for any recognition, just because that's what I do—but when I was recognized by the team for my hard work, it was one of my proudest moments. [Editor's note: That week, Angel was the team member who manually entered the most orders for our customers—over 1,000 orders!]

### What's your hype-up song?

"Come Down" by Anderson .Paak. I'm a dancer, right? Between the words and the acoustics, it makes me want to dance.



**THERESA MURRAY**

**Years with Baldor:** 23

**Role and Region:** Inside Sales Representative for Retail and Wholesale, all regions

**How did you start your career with Baldor?**

I started at the Hunts Point Produce Market before going to work for a distributor in Bethlehem, PA for six years. Eventually, I wanted to move back to NY to be near family. I was close with Charlie Balducci, and he got me an interview with Kevin [Murphy, Baldor’s founder]. I didn’t even need a resume—I told him, “Do you want someone who knows produce or not?”

I started entering orders at night, and at the end of the shift, I’d help load the trucks with pump jacks. They weren’t even electric at the time! Eventually, I transferred to days in the purchasing department. From there, I moved over to foodservice sales, and in 2009, we created the Retail team, where I’ve been ever since. I take care of my customers and always make sure they’re stocked up nicey-nice!

**What’s your favorite Baldor memory?**

When we had the big black-out in 2003, we still needed to make sure we were able to deliver to the hospitals. We were entering orders by candlelight, and Jared [Walton, Director of National Accounts] and I were pulling orders with a lantern. We had to get generators to make sure the coolers stayed cold. I worked 20 hours that day, but that’s what you do for Baldor. No matter how big we get, Baldor is family. If you

take care of Baldor, Baldor takes care of you.

**What is something you’re most proud of from your time at Baldor?**

In 2016, I was named Employee of the Year at our holiday party. My daughter was my guest that night, and I was so honored to receive it with her there. I put a lot of time

and effort into Baldor, and my kids were practically raised at Baldor. They know their produce, too!

**What’s your hype-up song?**

Anything by Chris Stapleton—I’m a big fan! “You Should Probably Leave” is my ultimate favorite. I pick up Candice [Diaz, Inside Sales Manager] in the morning,

and we rock out to it in the car. And it has to be loud! Windows open!



**GRACE PARKS**

**Years with Baldor:** 1

**Role and Region:** Customer Onboarding Specialist for all regions

**How did you start your career with Baldor?**

It’s a long story! I moved to the Bronx from Vermont in 2019. I worked as a nanny and preschool teacher through COVID. And because I have my Bachelors in Social Work, I worked as a case manager, too. Eventually, I wanted a change. My friend had worked at Baldor for a few months—he told me a lot about the company and thought it was a perfect place for my transferrable skills. I saw that there would be opportunities to do new things and grow within the company—plus, I was interested in healthy eating and nutrition. It ended up being a great fit!

**What’s your favorite customer story?**

When our system was down earlier this year, I jumped in to help the team as an Inside

Sales Representative by helping field calls and emails from customers. During that time, I came to know one of our customers really well, and she said, “Any time I need help, I’m calling you!” It was great knowing that she trusted me to help her.

**What is something you’re most proud of from your time at Baldor?**

I’ve been working on an onboarding process and doing trainings with our sales team in all the regions. I saw the need and had the freedom to address it. We’ve gotten great feedback and have been able to implement changes to help the process be more seamless. We’re working on improving the application, and I’m really proud of that.

**What’s your hype-up song?**

I have so many! “Higher” by Tems, “One Second” by Stormzy featuring H.E.R., and “Just Us” by DJ Khaled featuring SZA are just a few that give me great energy.



**CHRIS YOUNG**

**Years with Baldor:** 1

**Role and Region:** Inside Sales Representative for Philadelphia

**How did you start your career with Baldor?**

I was in restaurants for 15 years—I’d been in front of house doing everything from serving to bartending to managing. I loved working with people, but I eventually wanted more regular hours. A buddy of mine had told me about the opportunity to work with Baldor—the Philadelphia location wasn’t even built yet when I heard about it! I worked construction for a bit while I was waiting for the new warehouse to open. That’s how it happened!

**What’s your favorite Baldor memory?**

I went to the Camp Baldor

Sales Retreat, which was an awesome couple days. I also had a great time with the team in New York as the representative from Philadelphia when we rolled out the new system earlier this year.

**What is something you’re most proud of from your time at Baldor?**

I was proud to help the Philadelphia team throughout the system rollout and, later, the system outage earlier this year. We teamed up and got through it! I’m also proud that over the past few months I’ve built a good relationship with our customers out here in Philly, like Hilton. I like that they know they can call me at any time with questions.

**What’s your hype-up song?**

“Enter Sandman” by Metallica. The heavy metal gives me energy and gets me going!



**JENN MASINO**

**Years with Baldor:** 8

**Role and Region:** Inside Sales Supervisor for Baldor DC

**How did you start your career with Baldor?**

I worked for a dairy distributor in Baltimore for over ten years. One of my colleagues at another company had come to work for Baldor, and she let one of my coworkers know that she was looking for a customer service rep. She suggested

the role to me, and put me in touch with Bill [Hodge, Director of Sales]. Bill asked if I could come in that day for an interview. I got the job, and I started the next Monday. In my eight years, I've done pretty much everything except load a truck. I started in customer service, but I've done routing and transportation and been a part of the driver hiring process. Bill really encouraged us to train across departments. There were days when I would train

customer service upstairs during the day, then head down to the warehouse at night where I'd check in the drivers as they returned from their routes.

**What's your favorite customer story?**

I've worked with Chef Wesley Fields [Chef de Cuisine at Sfoglina Van Ness] for years—we initially bonded over Oaxaca queso because I didn't know how to pronounce it at the time [laughs]. He would order it every day, and if there was a day he didn't, I'd ask, "No Oaxaca?" He's worked with us at several restaurants over the years, even when he moved to Philadelphia. Occasionally, while in Philly, he'd call me if he needed something in a pinch, and I was always happy to help. He's back in D.C. now, and I talk to him every day!

**What is something you're most proud of from your time at Baldor?**

I'm most proud of building our customer service team from scratch. Before COVID, we had an amazing team of people; it took us years to find the right people that really loved the job. Now that we're back on our feet, we're working on building up a strong team again. We've found some people who are really good, who understand Baldor and what we stand for.

**What's your hype-up song?**

A song I always look forward to hearing in the morning is "Three Little Birds" by Bob Marley. It's good motivation, and it always reminds me that [sings] every little thing is gonna be alright!

**JEFF THIBEAU**

**Years with Baldor:** 8

**Role and Region:** Inside Sales Supervisor for Baldor Boston

**How did you start your career with Baldor?**

I worked at a coffeehouse in Charlestown for five years, first as a barista and then as a manager, and during that time, I got to know Shane [Brunette], who was our Baldor rep. One night, I went out for a drink with Shane, and he suggested that I apply to be his sales assistant, the position was open. That was the start of my journey.

After working with Shane for five or six years, I wanted to grow, so Tedd [Rama, Director of Operations in Boston] and I created the Merchandising Operations Coordinator role, to be the liaison between the Boston Sales team and the New York Merchandising team. During that time, I helped schedule vendor demos, coordinated ride-alongs, and ordered samples. I got more involved with day and night Inside Sales, and I've since stepped up into the Inside Sales Supervisor role.

**What's your favorite customer story?**

I've worked with Jackie at Cooking Together for five or six years now. She places her orders online, but if she's trying to find a particular product, she calls me and I'll help her out. Over the years and on countless phone calls, we've gotten to know each other, chatting about our weekend plans and favorite local wineries. When she was planning a trip to Iceland, I sent her recommendations of places to

visit, and she shared photos of her trip when she came back. Even though we've never met in person, we've built a great relationship over the years that I cherish.

**What is something you're most proud of from your time at Baldor?**

During our system rollout in January, I was asked to go to

New York on New Year's Day to represent Boston and help the team if they needed anything. As questions came up, I was able to help answer them quickly, find solutions, and get involved with the training. I really felt the appreciation from the team—so much so that they even asked me to stay an extra day!

**What's your hype-up song?**

It changes all the time. My music tastes tend to lean folk-y—think Fleet Foxes or Bon Iver—which I love to listen to while I'm on the bus or walking to work. Lately, though, it's been a mix of Taylor Swift's "Anti-hero" and "Padam Padam" by Kylie Minogue.





# SAYING GOODBYE TO A BALDOR LEGEND

After 28 years with Baldor Specialty Foods, President **Michael Muzyk** will be retiring from the company at the end of 2023. But he has set the table for the company's future.

By Margaret Magnarelli

**I F YOU'VE NEVER MET** Baldor President Michael Muzyk, you're missing out.

He's a personality with a capital P.

Michael walks the building of our Bronx HQ twice a day, greeting every single employee by name, with a fist bump and a "How are you?" Chances are, he'll also ask about your new baby, your upcoming wedding or your sick family member. His booming voice echoes through the halls, whether he's singing "Empire State of Mind" (Alicia Keys' part, naturally) or encouraging everyone to clap for an employee who's leaving for the day. And if you're not smiling in a meeting, he might just interrupt the agenda—no matter how important—to make sure you're ok.

Coming to Baldor from the corporate world, where every employee was a cog in the price-earnings ratio, I found this a little shocking at first. Michael is a unique executive, in the best ways possible.

But he's more than just the company mascot—he's a shrewd business leader, whose imprint on this company is indelible.

When he started here, Baldor had just a handful of trucks. Today, we're 2,400 employees strong, with 420 routes, serving 13,000 customers, from Maine to Virginia. And the road to getting us here is paved with stories, some

tear jerkers (like leading the company after the death of Baldor founder Kevin Murphy) and some knee-slappers (like the company's weird aversion to the number 13).

Before he announced his decision to retire at the end of the year, I sat down with him to learn about what it took to make Baldor the company it is today, and what's next for him—and us.

**Q: I've heard you talk about starting out as a chef, and you mentioned cooking alongside big names like Charlie Palmer and Daniel Boulud. What brought you to Baldor? Where were you before that?**

**A:** I graduated from the Culinary Institute of America in 1980 and went on to work as a chef—on cruise ships, then at Harrah's Hotel & Casino in Lake Tahoe, in NYC on Restaurant Row and at La Côte Basque, as well as in restaurants in Belgium and Atlanta. While I was in Atlanta, my children Zachary and Victoria were born, Zachary with serious disabilities. I knew I couldn't keep working chef hours, so I got a job in sales at a food distributor down there. A few years later, after my divorce, I moved back here to be closer to family. In 1995, I joined Baldor as a sales executive.

**Q: That was just four years after Kevin Murphy founded the company. What was Baldor like back then?**

**A:** At the time, we were operating out of a 25K-square-foot space in a Friendship sour cream distribution center in Maspeth, Queens, and we had a dozen or so trucks. It was a hodge-podge operation, with military

surplus desks that didn't match and a single lamp.

**Q: How did you start building relationships with chefs? Did you have to fight to win business?**

**A:** I think it's important to know what you're selling and take the fear out of the ingredients. Having been a chef, I understood what to do with our ingredients. I also knew what they were up against, so if I went in for a meeting and I saw they were down a person in the kitchen, I would jump on the line and help expedite lunch.

For me, it was always about how to solve problems for people. I built trust because I delivered. I remember meeting with the chef at the Plaza Hotel, and him telling me that he needed portobello mushroom caps scooped out. We didn't have processing facilities then. So, I got in a truck and went to Delancey Street, got a prep table, a cutting board, and a three compartment sink to prep the mushroom caps. In that moment, our Fresh Cuts operation was born—now we have 300 people and state-of-the-art machines to process fruits and vegetables. But it started with hearing what the customer needed.

**Q: I heard TJ once say, "Regardless of his title, Mike has always been a leader at this company." When did you start advancing from sales?**

**A:** I always saw it as my job to take work off Kevin's plate. I did that and he began bringing me into more decisions, starting with helping to find our first dedicated warehouse on Barry Street in the Bronx. After that, I was involved in everything. I

moved up to manager, then VP, and eventually became president—mostly because Kevin was advised by our attorneys to elevate his own title to CEO!

**Q: As someone who's relatively new here, I'm fascinated by how much this company has grown in such a short time, and all the decisions that led to that growth. What are some of the milestones you're proudest of?**

**A:** I don't reflect much on the past because I've always been so focused on the future. But looking back, I'm proud of what we've done. What makes me happiest is hearing people say that Baldor has delivered for them, because that means we've done our job. I'm also happy when I hear from employees on how Baldor has impacted their life.

In terms of the business milestones, some of the most meaningful were moving from Maspeth to Barry Street and then to Food Center Drive, and then expanding our footprint here. And, of course, opening our distribution centers in Boston, DC, and Philadelphia.

Creating Fresh Cuts was big. I knew any chef in the world would love to add another table in their dining room if they could, and the only way to do that is to remove space in the kitchen, which is what Fresh Cuts helped them do.

Developing our import/export and wholesale divisions was also a milestone. We were the largest importers of shallots, Belgian endive, Cavaillon melons, and white asparagus to the US. Realizing we had more than we could use, we started selling to other

distributors outside our region. Today our wholesale division goes as far south as Florida and as far west as St. Louis.

**Q: Any funny stories from those early days?**

**A:** Too many to talk about here! One of my favorites was at the Maspeth facility in the '90s, when we decided to move from reel-to-reel tape to voicemail for after-hour orders. This new voicemail system was supposed to be amazing! We were told it would have unlimited storage capacity. So, we switched over on a holiday weekend, when we were closed. But then Kevin being Kevin, he called to check on it—and the voicemail was full. So I ended up having to spend my holiday going through the trash to rescue the reel-to-reel and set it back up!

Another funny one was when we signed a lease for Boston—the initial contract was for 13,000 square feet. Kevin being superstitious, never signed any document with the number 13 on it. The deal almost fell through! I ended up having to go back and work with the landlord to change the terms to 12,995 square feet and then pay the balance in rent over the term of the lease to The Police Athletic League (PAL) of Chelsea.



Michael showing the love for Baldor team players Alcides Izquierdo (left) and Juan Burgos (right).

**Q: Growing from a New York distributor to one that serves the whole Northeast and Mid-Atlantic must have been a big inflection point. How did you end up expanding out of New York City?**

**A:** Again, it was listening to customers. One of our largest contracted accounts in New York asked us to open in Boston, with the potential for millions in sales annually. So we went. In what was initially a very competitive market, we were able to quickly gain

market share and become one of the biggest distributors there.

DC followed—we had already been selling to other distributors, so we knew there was demand. With Philly, we were already serving the area from the Bronx but we wanted to move distribution closer to that growing restaurant scene for the benefit of our customers.

**Q: You've also managed through a lot of crises...**

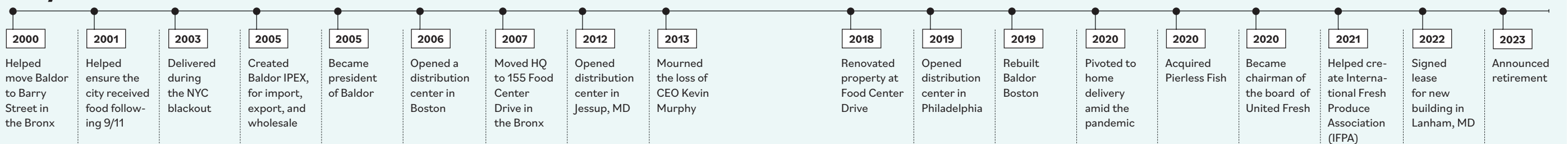
**A:** So many, but each one has made us stronger.

Losing Kevin [to cancer, in 2013] was really tough for me and for everyone. He was my best friend, but I didn't really have time to mourn because I had to keep it together for everyone else. In the last few years of his life, Kevin and I spoke a lot about the future of the

company, and I committed to doing everything I could to make Baldor successful. So I focused on that. I think I've lived up to the promise. I hope he's looking down from heaven and saying "Spike, we did it."

I'll also never forget September 11th, making sure our trucks got out of the city and our staff got home safely, and then standing on the roof of our building with Kevin, watching the smoke and the F-14 fighter jets circling Manhattan and wondering

## Muzyk's Milestones





**MICHAEL AT WORK (AND PLAY)**

Clockwise from top: Michael in *Crain's New York Business* magazine; having a laugh with Baldor CEO TJ Murphy; raising a glass with Melissa Ruiz (left), Joi Moreno (center), and Christina Bronne (right); connecting with Benjamin Walker, SVP of Marketing, Sales, and Merchandising; and celebrating the recognition of Candice Diaz in *Produce Business* magazine.

what was next. We ended up being one of the only distributors able to get food out to hospitals, nursing homes, and hotels on 9/12.

The NYC blackout, the 2008 financial debacle, Hurricane Sandy, the pandemic, and a cyber-attack were other challenges we faced...and got through.

**Q: I know you've said that the COVID-19 pandemic was a major stress, with a huge share of our customers being forced to shut down. What was it like being at Baldor then?**

**A:** It was rough. We saw our business dry up in a single day. But I'm so impressed at how our team pivoted. Realizing that some of our greatest assets were our website, our fleet, and our people, and that consumers were having trouble getting food, we decided to launch home delivery. The first day we took two orders, and we messed them both up, but by day three, we were at 500 orders, and it kept growing. We also expanded our retail customer base, since grocery stores were having supply chain issues as well. All of this helped us keep our team employed.

**Q: What led you to make the decision to retire right now? What are your plans after this?**

**A:** I've been thinking about this for some time, but I didn't want to leave until the company was positioned for the next chapter. The last few years have been about setting up the right people, processes, and technologies to get us here.

Being a parent to a disabled child and running a company that is a 24-hour operation has been like having Baldor attached to one hip and Zachary attached to the other hip. I'm looking forward to having a little bit of peace and enjoying retirement while I still have my health. I want to be able to spend more time with my kids, my stepkids, and my beautiful wife. We'd like to eventually relocate to South Carolina.

**Q: What will you miss the most about Baldor?**

**A:** The people, for sure. I'm going to miss the customers and vendors whom I've built special relationships with, and most of all, our employees. From the bottom to the top, every region and across this business, the warehouse to the drivers to the sales team, to the buyers, our employees are top notch.

I come from the streets of the Bronx. It was not a privileged life and I think that's given me a lot of empathy for everyone who works here. Like the warehouse pickers who might seem tough but really need a hug or the Fresh Cuts workers who endure hard work in cold temperatures to meet sanitary guidelines or the drivers who are getting out of their beds at 3 am to get here. They're the reason I get up at 5 am every day.

**Q: Who will be assuming your responsibilities?**

**A:** When TJ [Kevin Murphy's son and current CEO] and I first started discussing my plans to retire, we decided that the future would not include another president. TJ—who was still a young man when his father died—has found his voice as CEO, which has included setting a strategic vision and holding us accountable to the customer.

Also, knowing that my retirement was on the horizon, TJ and I have been bolstering our leadership team. The eight hires we've made in the last two years have brought incredible subject matter expertise, and most come from bigger companies so they can help us scale. I've also passed more responsibility for revenue operations to Ben Walker, SVP of Sales, Marketing & Merchandising. In addition, we'll be adding a handful of new seats to our executive team.

It was important to me to provide the company with significant runway with this notice to retire. Over the next six months, I'll be making sure we have continuity of knowledge, while making room for others to step up. I'm confident I am leaving the team in a position to win.

**A Few Words from TJ**

*Our CEO reflects on Michael's legacy*

"I've known Michael my whole life, and regardless of his title, he's always been a leader at Baldor. He's a true representative of how we want to be as a company.

Over his 28 years here, he's impacted thousands of lives, including mine.

The greatest gift he gave to me—and Baldor—was enabling the transition from my dad to me. When my father passed in 2013, I wasn't ready to be a CEO. Mike stepped in, while allowing me to gain experience. It was an unusual arrangement, but it worked for us. I'm sincerely grateful for Mike's support.

When he and I first started talking about his plans to retire, I knew right away that we could not hire another president. Mike is a very special person. To replace him would be an impossible task.

But with the support of our growing leadership team around me, we'll continue to evolve the company in ways that will make Michael and my father proud. And I promise to continually look for ways to make this company better for our staff, following in Mike's model.

No matter what, we will maintain the north star of ensuring the success of our partners—and by keeping that front and center, there is endless potential for what Baldor can become."



BALDOR CARES



Growing fruits and vegetables is about more than gardening: It teaches kids to care about what they eat and to think about where food comes from.

# Edible Schoolyard NYC: Getting Kids' Hands in the Dirt, Vegetables on Their Plates

Baldor is proud to support this nonprofit, which focuses on teaching young people that nutrition starts from the ground up.

By Brooke Herman

**INSIDE A CLASSROOM** in a New York City school, children are about to bite into something new: A veggie-topped homemade pizza, kale salad, just-picked tomatoes, and a stir-fry.

There's not a turned-up nose or skeptical look in the bunch. That's because these students grew and harvested the vegetables they're about to eat and prepared the dishes them-

selves. Before they dig in, they shout "Thank you, gardeners! Thank you, cooks!" to show their appreciation for each other's efforts.

This is the beauty of Edible Schoolyard NYC. Allison Marino, Director of Public Affairs, explains that the non-profit is committed to building and maintaining interactive school gardens and providing students with educational programming. Edible

Schoolyard NYC started in 2010, inspired by Alice Waters' Edible Schoolyard Project in Berkeley, California. It's now grown to serve nearly 4,000 students in 16 New York City schools, ranging from pre-K to 8th grade, in underserved communities where nutrition can be an issue.

Establishing gardens on NYC public-school property has obvious challenges, among them the need

for funding and lack of indoor and outdoor space. But Marino says those restrictions have often prompted the most creative solutions, thoughtfully tailored to each school. At some schools, they have rooftop gardens, while others are built on under-utilized spaces, like an old basketball court. If space is really at a premium, windowsill gardens are an option. At one Brooklyn school, the garden climbs the wall of an alleyway.

Regardless of what kind of garden they build, the goal is always to give kids the best food foundation.

"We want to make sure that students are afforded a solid level of knowledge, experience, and skills when it comes to interacting with food," Marino says. "It's important to us that they not only receive the education now, but that it contributes to their future, helping them develop relationships with

food that includes their backgrounds, culture, needs, and preferences."

Just as no two school's gardens are the same, each curriculum and recipe plan is also unique. It's vital that children recognize themselves in the ingredients they grow and dishes they make, so understanding the students is a priority to Edible Schoolyard NYC's menu planning.

For instance, in one school children recently prepared salsa and esquites

using the fresh tomatoes and chiles they harvested from their hydroponic station. In another school, they prepared roti and dal; in yet another, sweet potato empanadas.

Edible Schoolyard NYC also works with school administrators to incorporate items that tie into what they're studying in the classroom. If the kids are learning about eye function in science class, they'll cook with carrots. Talking about the environment? It's time to build a compost bin.

Another goal is to reach as many students as possible, something that's been limited by the number of schools they can serve. But this past June, NYC Mayor Eric Adams released an exciting new roadmap: *Prioritizing Food Education in our Public Schools: A Path to Developing a Healthy Next Generation*. The plan will ultimately be used to implement food education,

Edible Schoolyard NYC knows that children will experience a different food future when they grow, cook, and learn about food.



Think kids are picky eaters? Not when they grow and prepare food themselves.

introduce healthy eating habits, and create healthier communities beyond the schools that have physical gardens.

"This will allow us to shift from advocating for the students within Edible Schoolyard NYC schools to advocating for *all* students," Marino told us.

At Baldor, we're proud of our partnership with Edible Schoolyard NYC. We support them by lending a hand in the gardens, donating food to supplement their menus, and contributing to their annual fundraising gala.

"It's deeply rewarding to see changes for the children in our community, not only within their classrooms but in their homes with families, too," says Benjamin Walker, SVP of Sales, Marketing, and Merchandising at Baldor.

Edible Schoolyard NYC knows that children will experience a different food future when they grow, cook, and learn about food.

"The myth of third graders hating Brussels sprouts is going to disappear with the Edible Schoolyard NYC generation," promises Marino.



## HOW TO GET INVOLVED

### #EatUpSummer

Each summer, restaurants, coffee houses, ice cream parlors, and bars can contribute proceeds to Edible Schoolyard. Some choose to donate a set percentage of a certain item sold, others choose to donate a percentage from one day, or a week.

### Dinner Fundraising Events

Throughout the year, Edible Schoolyard hosts culinary events, and they'd love to include you. If you're interested in lending time, talent, or space, they're grateful.

### In the Garden

Bring your team to help complete, repair, or provide general maintenance to an established garden. Short on time? Sponsor another group, like volunteer college or high school students, to complete the work.

### In the Field

Give students the opportunity to see a food career in action. They love to go on field trips and are true sponges, soaking up everything they hear and see. Alternatively, arrange to visit their classrooms and demo recipes.



Scan QR code to learn more about Edible Schoolyard NYC.



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