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State of Onions Update with Keystone Fruit Marketing Commodity Manager, Matthew Gideon

GREENCASTLE, PA – MARCH 10, 2022 --- Keystone Fruit Marketing, a division of Progressive Produce, is known for their year-round onion program. And no one knows onions better than commodity manager, Matthew Gideon. Sales and marketing manager, Andrea Scroggs, sits down to talk to him about the state of the onion market today and the outlook of Keystone's current Mexico onion and upcoming Texas onion seasons.

Before we get into things in south Texas, can you tell us a little bit about what's going on in the onion market in general right now? Talk to us about how the Peru season wrapped up; the challenges you're facing right now; and the challenges you expect to see in the coming months.

The onion market is very strong right now and is projected to remain so through the spring season. The domestic storage crop is at record lows and the domestic Mexican market is extremely strong. The Peruvian season has a few more weeks left. We are winding down our season and should be finished with our Peru crop by the end of March. We have begun transitioning our sweet onion customers from Peru to Mexico and anticipate a smooth transition throughout the month of March. I believe the onion industry was changing pre COVID and COVID only accelerated that evolution. Growers only planting for confirmed sales; labor challenges; the general price of onions in stores... all of these factors have drastically changed the planning procedures and outlook when it comes to our grower partners. At Keystone, we include our growers in all of our decisions regarding our retail partners. One of our biggest concerns is certainty of supply and we want to make sure we can provide our customers with that assurance.

What's the outlook of the Mexican crop so far? How does it compare to last year's?

The crop looks solid! We see no quality issues so far and we expect similar volume to years past.

What about Texas?

We have additional growers in our supply program for 2022 and we are excited about the Texas crop. We should see some volume by mid-March and will in-

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crease volume from there. We expect the Texas supply to go thru April and into May.

Is there anything new or different about your program this year that your customers should know about?

As I mentioned, we have added more supply from Mexico and from Texas with our grower partners. We also have begun to increase our volume of organic Mexican onions and will have them during our spring season. The onion landscape and purchasing habits are changing and we are constantly trying to increase our consumer pack output.

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Keystone Fruit Marketing is a division of Progressive Produce. Progressive Produce is a year-round grower/packer/shipper of fresh produce. We grow thousands of acres throughout North and South America of potatoes, onions, asparagus, citrus, and other fruits and vegetables and provide outstanding service 365 days a year.