

NEWS RELEASE



Contact name: Lauren Smith
Phone number: 814-349-9856, ext 22
E-mail address: lauren@pasafarming.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A Team for All Seasons

PASA Names Produce Company Its First "Summer Farm Start Kickoff Partner"

EPHRATA, Pa. – Over the past few years, Four Seasons Produce has become a steady partner to the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture.

This spring the fruit and vegetable wholesale distribution company in Ephrata, Lancaster County, hosted its fourth annual Earth Week celebration to benefit PASA and draw attention to the strides Four Seasons is taking toward being a good global citizen.

Since 2006, Four Seasons has become nationally known as a model of energy efficiency in its cold storage facilities. The company also works with local and regional farmers as much as possible during the growing season.

Those kinds of business practices are in line with PASA's mission to promote sustainability in farm and food businesses in Pennsylvania and beyond. Recognizing their common ground, Four Seasons has started a yearly tradition of giving PASA a portion of the profit from each case of organic produce it ships during Earth Week.

Earth Week "gives us an opportunity to celebrate," Four Seasons President Ron Carkoski said. And that celebration "helps our people be aware of our responsibility in the food supply chain."

Because of their shared vision for an agriculture and food system that both nourishes people and improves the planet, PASA decided this year to name Four Seasons its Summer Farm Start Kick Off Partner.

PASA is heralding the coming of summer with a series of happenings to celebrate farmers and the start of the growing season. Dozens of "Summer Farm Start" events across the state will highlight a variety of farmers as they welcome the promise of summer.

"It's our effort to draw attention to what's happening on Pennsylvania farms at the beginning of the season," said Brian Snyder, PASA executive director.

A growing number of people are getting versed in the stories behind how food makes its way onto their plates, according to Snyder.

“People are actually paying attention to how their food is grown,” he said. This awareness is also leading people to probe how their food is distributed and how the entire system impacts the environment.

The trend is good news for PASA – and a large part of its mission. Through initiatives like Summer Farm Start, PASA members are working hard to keep farm and food awareness strong and growing.

Summer Farm Start will feature everything from farm tours to cheese tastings, weed walks and even talks on food and the environment. While harvest celebrations are more commonplace, PASA decided the beginning of the growing season is an equally great time to heighten awareness around farming and food.

May 10 marked the official launch of Summer Farm Start as Four Seasons presented PASA with a check for \$16,211.25. Other farm and food businesses that contributed include Lady Moon Farms, Mother Earth Organic Mushrooms and First Fruits Marketing of Washington. The check was the largest yet garnered from Four Season’s Earth Week initiative.

Four Seasons is one of the largest independent produce distributors in the U.S., shipping millions of cases of fruit and veggies throughout the year. A portion of that produce comes from growers in the Mid-Atlantic area, including more than 100 farmers from Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Virginia, according to Jason Hollinger, Four Seasons director of procurement.

The company has proven itself a leader in a variety of energy-saving strategies. Last summer, Four Seasons was featured in an extensive article in High Performing Buildings magazine, which noted the company “has emerged as an example in reducing energy use in cold storage facilities.”

Four Seasons moved into its current 200,000 square-foot cold storage distribution center in 2004, and started new initiatives to improve energy efficiency and sustainability in 2006. This resulted in huge savings, including a 1.4 million reduction in annual kilowatt-hours from 2006 to 2009. Not only is that good for the company’s bottom line, it has also resulted in 2,400 tons less carbon dioxide being emitted annually.

In the last five years, the company has also made significant advances in water savings and waste recycling. For more information about Four Seasons Produce, visit www.fsproduce.com.

For more information on this event and PASA’s entire Summer Farm Start series, see www.pasafarming.org. Summer Farm Start features a variety of events across the state, ranging from farm tours to picnics to artisan cheese tastings and even talks about how to foster a thriving local food system.

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About PASA

With nearly 6,000 members, the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA) is one of the largest and most active sustainable agriculture organizations in the U.S. Through business support and regional marketing assistance for farmers, advocacy, and public education, PASA seeks to promote profitable farms that produce healthy food for all people while respecting the natural environment. PASA’s hallmark event, the *Farming for the Future* conference, draws thousands of participants from more than 30 states and six countries each February. For more information, visit www.pasafarming.org.