



June 2015

It's a great time of year for locally grown produce! We've increased our grower network and produce offerings. Contact your CCF account representative to learn more.

Dealing With Drought



The epic drought in California will disrupt parts of the produce industry, but it won't deter Capital City Fruit. CCF's supply chain management program is designed to keep your orders filled, even through nature's toughest blows.

"Everyone is talking about the drought right now, but we've been talking about it for two years," says Christian Comito, president and CEO. "You recognize these issues that are coming, and you start to expand your grower network to move it and shift it.

"If we know consumers want this product, and there's going to be a challenge in supply in California," Comito says, "We tell growers in the Midwest, *this year you need to plant more of this.*"

Such flexibility is only possible with a long list of exceptional partners—vendors, growers, and transportation experts. "We partner with people who are the best in the world at what they're doing," Comito says.

Strong partnerships allow CCF to satisfy both ends of the supply chain. For vendors, CCF finds growers who produce exactly what customers want. On the grower end, CCF helps create demand for produce that may not be top of mind with consumers.

By ensuring benefits to their partners, CCF can maintain a strong supply chain and provide the end consumer with the exact produce they were hoping for, rain or shine.

Learn more about CCF's Supply Chain Management [program](#).

Meet our Locally Grown Specialist

Jon Miller, our locally grown specialist, answered a few questions about what he and his team do for CCF—and what it means for you.

Q: What do you do as CCF's locally grown specialist?

A: We look for Midwest growers that have or can produce an adequate volume of product that we're looking for. We also work with growers to determine how many acres of product they can grow to help meet our customers' needs.

Q: How do you make sure CCF's supply needs are met?

A: We diversify product from growers across different regions to ensure we don't have too much of something at once. We are also in constant communication with each of our growers throughout the week about their volume forecast so we can meet buyer and customer expectations.

Q: What criteria does CCF look for when selecting a new grower?

A: When we find a grower that meets our supply and volume needs, we make sure they are well equipped to package and ship their produce. We also look for growers with food safety and traceability programs in place.

CCF added two new growers this season, for a total of 24 growers across the Midwest. Adding growers each season helps us provide you with new products, such as green kale and organic beets.



JON MILLER
Locally Grown Specialist



Organics Taking the Lead

Demand for organic produce is growing. According to the Fresh Trends 2015 report from The Packer, 31 percent of shoppers typically buy organic produce—consumers aged 21-39 and Hispanic shoppers are most likely to exclusively buy organic. "As people become more aware of how their food is sourced, they start looking for ways to improve their health naturally," says Angel Tewell, CCF produce account executive.

Retailers respond

The USDA's Economic Research Service reports that organic products are now available in nearly 20,000 natural food stores and nearly three out of four conventional grocery stores. "Retailers that didn't previously have a health foods section are starting to venture more into natural and homegrown products," Tewell says.

Preferred packaging

Many traditional retailers also prefer that organic and conventional products be packaged separately, rather than in bulk. To meet this need, CCF is now certified to repack several different organic products, including cucumbers, avocados, limes, and squash.

CCF's Most Popular Organic Products

Tomatoes
Zucchini and summer squash
Peppers

Tomatoes Are Tops!

Sliced, diced, or fresh off the vine—however you like your tomatoes, you're not alone. According to the Fresh Trends survey, tomatoes are the top vegetable among consumers. In fact, 75 percent of consumers have purchased a tomato in the last year.

Here's what they love about the juicy red fruit:

- Beefsteak tomatoes are the most-bought variety, followed by Roma tomatoes.
- 76 percent of consumers prefer their tomatoes in a salad.
- Customers feel more confident choosing a ripe tomato versus another vegetable.
- Purchase of organic tomatoes is up nine percent from the 2014 study.
- Shoppers age 59 or older are most likely to buy tomatoes, as are shoppers who earn \$100,000 or more annually.



CCF loves tomatoes, too! Talk to your produce representative about an order of standard or organic tomatoes.



CCF Hosts a Candidate

On April 15, local business leaders—and scores of journalists—gathered at Capital City Fruit for a roundtable discussion with presidential candidate Hillary Clinton. CCO Brendan Comito, who maintains an active role in legislative issues impacting small businesses and the produce industry, described the conversation as open and constructive. "We brought up

some tough challenges—and she really listened," Brendan says. "While she's not in a position to do anything now, she will have a better base of information if she ever is."

Welcome (Back), Charles

Meet Charles Steingrabe, a senior at Iowa State University majoring in agricultural business and economics. He's the locally grown produce intern at CFF—for the second year in a row.

"I really enjoyed the opportunity to chase my own ideas and shape my internship experience last year," Charles explains. "I'm looking forward to returning this summer to perfect my professional skills." Charles will work closely with local produce expert, Jon Miller, to expand CCF's base of local produce growers.



CHARLES STEINGRABE

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We are located in Norwalk, Iowa, just five miles south of Des Moines. Our facility is easily accessible, just east of Hwy. 28 on Colonial Parkway.

We currently service customers within a 350-mile radius.