

PRESS RELEASE

WENATCHEE, Wash. – With spring in the air and summer quickly approaching, Stemilt is ramping up for one of the most exciting seasons of the year: cherries! With California cherry production in motion and Washington cherries quick to follow, Stemilt’s senior marketing manager, Brianna Shales, is excited for the many opportunities that Stemilt’s branded cherry products can offer retailers.

“While there is a lot of uncertainty in today’s world, one thing is certain and that is large, dessert-quality cherries from Stemilt,” explains Shales. “We strive to grow for flavor, size and firmness and this year’s crop is going to bring just that.”

While frost impacted Washington State cherry orchards to reduce crop volumes, Shales wants retailers to instead focus on the size of the cherries that will come off the trees. Due to the smaller crop load on the trees, the tree will generally bear bigger cherries.

“Bigger cherries are appealing, sweeter, and help drive consumers to indulge in cherries,” says Shales. “Stemilt has long been ‘Home of the Big Cherry’ with advanced pruning strategies in place to produce large cherries. This year, we’re expecting peak sizing of 9-9.5 row.

Washington cherries are projected to start in early June with the peak to hit in July and carry into August. To make the most of cherry sales this season, Shales encourages retailers to utilize Stemilt’s high-graphic displays as well as their digital resources to get consumer’s excited about the arrival of this summer fruit.

“Cherries are and will continue to be an impulse purchase and it is necessary to make this seasonal fruit standout,” says Shales. “Retailers should display cherries in high-traffic areas and build large, hard-to-miss displays. If store trip frequency is down, retailers can remind shoppers about cherry season through digital ads, social media, and their online shopping platforms. Stemilt has the resources to help retailers with all their digital needs.”

Starting in July, retailers can look to Kyle’s Pick®, a brand dedicated to packing the biggest and the best cherries that meet the criteria set by fourth generation grower, Kyle Mathison himself. Varieties that can be found in this pack include Bing, Sweetheart, Skeena and Staccato®.

A Half Mile Closer to the Moon Cherries™ follow in August and features cherries grown at elevations of 2,640 feet and higher – or literally, a half mile closer to the moon. This brand includes Skeena, Staccato® and Sentennial™, all late season varieties with exceptional

quality, size, color, and flavor.

“Branded packaging offers a transparency to the customer that they don’t get from a non-branded package,” explains Shales. “We try to bring as much transparency to the table as possible. Then we let our product do the talking. In the end, our hope is that the consumer will remember their eating experience with our cherries and come back looking for more.”

Retailers can also get excited for Skylar Rae®, the sweetest cherry you’ll ever eat and the third SKU in the cherry category. This beautiful, bi-colored cherry has the highest brix (sugar) levels of any cherry variety. It was discovered by chance in the early 2000s. Stemilt expects a larger crop of Skylar Rae® compared to last year with new acreage now in production. Skylar Rae® cherries are available from early June to mid July.

“Our cherry program runs from start to finish and offers a true differentiation point for retailers through signature items like Skylar Rae® to organics, Rainiers and our story-telling brands,” said Shales. “We’re looking forward to sharing World Famous Cherries with shoppers all summer long.”