

The CEO of Mission Produce has said that the fragmented mango industry is ready for a leader, and he expects that the company will be able to one day take that role.

Steve Barnard was speaking on an earnings call for the first quarter, days after the leading avocado company announced it would begin selling mangoes under the Mission Produce label.

He explained that Mission has been in the mango business since 2015 by owning and operating 300 hectares of mangos in Peru, but only recently it had decided to take it to the next level.

"The wonderful thing about mangos is that they have a harvest cycle opposite to that of avocados," he said.

"So, we can employ a workforce year-round, which is a significant operational advantage for us and also for the communities that can thrive and invest behind a consistent regional employer such as Mission. As the trees began to provide higher yields, we saw an opportunity in 2019 to start marketing mangoes under the Mission label in the United States, through a small window our farms provided."

He added that there are "several similarities" in mangoes and avocados, with both requiring ripening technology that the company already possesses, and both are seeing rising consumption trends.

While he doesn't expect it will have any immediate impact on the company's financial profile, it does provide an additional avenue for long-term profitable growth and will strengthen its relationship with retailers.

In addition, Barnard said he believes that although the business has matured greatly with the advent of the National Mango Board, on the supply side it remains fragmented and has been lacking a leader.

"So, I think it's ready for a leader. I think the industry is ready for a leader to come in and really legitimize the category and get value-added out there very much like Mission did 25 years ago," he said.

He added that it's "going to take a little while to get there", but that "if anyone was up for the challenge, I think it's us".

## **Impacts of Peru's Agricultural Promotion Law on avocado sector**

Barnard also spoke about Peru's Agricultural Promotion Law, which is widely seen as having helped spur investment and the sector's development but was recently changed following farmworker protests. Peru's industry body ProHass in February criticized the decision to modify the law, saying it had ["paralyzed" investments](#).

"I think it will slow down future investment from people that aren't there yet," Barnard said. "We're in a situation where we're well down the road and invested already and are now starting to harvest that food in big volume."

"But really that promotion money or that tax program they had, was to create investment, which it did. And I think now they're backing off a little bit and it's creating some social challenges that they weren't able to keep up with -- with the growth."

"So, I think it's probably a time for them to catch their breath. I think it's good for us. It's going to limit new investors to the game and in our case, we'll stick to our plan."