

It's official: Everything's coming up Rose Bowl at Passion Growers

By JOHN S. NIBLOCK

It came like a bolt out of the blue. The Rose Bowl folks were on the phone with a question: Did Passion Growers want its product to be the first official rose of the Rose Bowl Stadium in its 100-year-plus history?

Jaime Peisach, one of the founders of the Miami firm, was "honored and humbled" at being selected, he said in a phone interview with *The Produce News* Aug. 13.

"They had done their research, and they knew all about us," Mr. Peisach said. "So we did our research and checked them out. Then we went to the Rose Bowl to discuss the offer with them, and we said yes."

Mr. Peisach said that the match up seemed logical. "It was a natural," he said. "The Rose Bowl, an American sports icon, embodies all the traditions and values we admire and emulate at Passion Growers, where we specialize in roses."

The Rose Bowl Stadium in Pasadena, CA, has hosted five Super Bowls, the 1984 Summer Olympics, the 1994 World Cup Soccer Finals and many other storied sporting events. *Forbes* magazine has ranked the Rose Bowl one of the five most valuable sporting brands in the world.

The stadium typically hosts a capacity crowd of 89,000 college football fans for an annual championship game between winners of the PAC 12 (formerly PAC 10) conference on the West Coast and the Big Ten in the Midwest. A parade on New Year's Day precedes the game.

Because this is a first for both companies, the possibilities are wide open, Mr. Peisach said.

"We know we're going to do something with our roses at the Rose Bowl football game," he stated. "And we're going to have a setting of some sort before the Parade of Roses begins. We're feeling our way along right now." At an August media day for the Rose Bowl game, Passion Growers had the setting bedecked with its roses.

Response among vendors and customers has equaled the excitement among his associates, Mr. Peisach said.

"All up and down the supply chain, they're thinking about ways they can promote our sponsorship with the Rose Bowl. Supermarkets have talked to us about branding and promotion possibilities. Once the teams are chosen, their home territory will be a key promotion target. We may even name specific varieties for the game."

Passion Growers has started the branding with a special new line on its flower tags about the firm's product being

named the official rose for the game and parade.

Founded in 2001, Passion Growers specializes in roses and spray roses from Colombia. Its roses are sold in 5,000 supermarkets and other retail stores across the nation.


An exclusive grower, Ipanema Farms, and other suppliers near Bogotá, Colombia, grow more than 150 different varieties year-round and test more than 100 new varieties every day. Ipanema holds several voluntary certifications for environmentally and socio-economic practices, including GlobalGAP, Veriflora, ISO 9000, BASC and Rainforest Alliance.

Another exclusive supplier, Wayuu Farms, was named one of the top five places to work in Colombia by the Great Places to Work Institute.




Posing in the Rose Bowl Stadium is the Passion Growers team for the selection of its product as the official rose of the 2011 Rose Bowl game and parade: Brandon Hamm, Eugenia Barth, Jaime Peisach, Cheryl Peisach, Sam Ferrara, Sharon Mikulinski and Ben Pauley.


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