

Field Finesse and Marketing Success

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SATUR FARMS

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Satur Farms was started 11 years ago by me and my husband, Chef Eberhard Mueller, on ¼ of an acre of land in the wine country of eastern Long Island. We are currently farming 180-acres of specialty vegetables there, along with an additional 150 acres in Florida for our winter production.

Our broad theory is that if we can grow it and grow it well, the marketing takes care of itself. However, we can break down our success in marketing into several distinct reasons:

1. Location. Location. Location. We are near the most densely populated city in the U.S. Growing and processing in close proximity to NYC or any other large metropolitan area is a huge benefit no matter your size. Trucking costs are significant, and closeness to market becomes extremely important as fuel costs rise.

Our trucks can make many efficient stops in NYC, all the while touting our brand on the sides of our delivery trucks. Our boxes carry the same logo and are visible from a distance and are very clear when photographed. As our brand has become known, customers request us, and distributors want and need to carry us.



2. Make an Impact with your Brand. We grow a large variety of specialty crops because we believe you can't base your business on nor make an impact with only ½ dozen items. To make an impact in a store or restaurant you need to have many SKUs on the shelves or menus. Our retail labels were professionally designed but we can add new item names, pack sizes, UPC Codes and expiration dates

ourselves. In order to increase our line and exposure, we contract with our neighboring farms to grow the crops that we do not. Our customers appreciate this access to a large variety of locally-grown produce.

3. Carrot vs. Stick. The mix of items you grow and offer is very important to both marketing success and the bottom line. We entice customers to buy from us by offering specialty or intriguing items they cannot get elsewhere, or at least, not of the quality we offer. Because they need us, they then also order the commodity-type crops that we have.
4. Sell Everything but the Quack. We offer many of the items we grow in different sizes and packs for benefit of our food service and retail customers. For example, we grow and offer mizuna as a microgreen, as a 3 lb box of baby leaf for restaurants, as a 5 oz retail pack for stores, as a component in our mesclun, and as a component in our

braising/stir fry greens. Although we have many SKUs, we are not actually growing each SKU, we're just using them in many ways. We find it impossible to stretch too far with the number of items grown; the quality invariably suffers. Look at what you're growing and find ways to streamline and market that.

5. Jump! We try to be the first farm to have items available and the last to harvest. We experiment with season extension techniques so that we are harvesting baby leaf the end of April and can usually continue through most all of November. When we enter the market very early spring with brilliant baby leaf after everyone's winter version, we capture attention. Customers clamor after us and stay with us. We also grow in Florida in the off-season so that our brand is always available for our customers.

6. Know What You're Aiming For. We are constantly sourcing new seed varieties and equipment from Europe and other countries overseas, so that we have the most exciting varieties available and the best equipment to grow them for quality. The trade shows in Europe and Asia are phenomenal; we go routinely to keep our standards high and to stay on top. We dine out whenever possible to see what's happening and to talk to the chefs. Growers should be instructing customers on the newest and best.



7. Be Better than the Average Bear. Grading, sizing, washing, and packing to the highest industry standards are crucial for marketing success. We train our fieldworkers to grade and judge quality, and pay them piecework rates. We pay higher rates than most farms because we expect a high-quality pack from them. This way, they deliver that without continuous supervision. Immediately after harvest, our products are washed and chilled to guarantee excellent freshness and appearance. Not only are we GAP certified, but our refrigerated packing facility is HACCP certified. We solicit a yearly independent audit by a third-party certifying company to insure that our program standards are being met. This gives our customers confidence that our vegetables are produced professionally in a safe and sanitary manner.