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A Giant Team Effort Brings Strawberries to Costco's First China Warehouse Club

WATSONVILLE, Calif. (AUGUST 27, 2019) – Working together: a key component of California Giant's strategic plan implemented over a year ago when COO, Joe Barsi began leading the company's operations. This week, Costco Wholesale opened the doors to its first China warehouse club location, but not without fresh California Giant berries on display – a task accepted with diligence from the berry company.

"We were honored that Costco chose California Giant Berry Farms to pack, ship and deliver fresh strawberries for their new Shanghai grand opening," says Joe Barsi, COO for California Giant Berry Farms. "One of California Giant's strategic pillars is **Working Together**. A lot of dedicated employees within California Giant and Costco worked together behind the scenes so that Costco could offer fresh California strawberries to their members. We stepped up to the challenge and I'm confident their members enjoyed the berries."

The berry company's longtime partner opened the doors to its first-ever warehouse location in China on Monday. With about a week's notice to prepare various inspections, phytosanitary certificates, logistical processes and documentation with the Santa Maria Ag Commission and USDA before exporting 90 crates of fresh California Giant strawberries to Shanghai – the team assured that berries would arrive in a timely manner for the grand opening – *they did*, and the quality overseas did not disappoint.

"Today marks a banner day in which our partner California Giant assisted Costco Wholesale in navigating through the rigors of testing protocol to successfully launch the opening of Costco's first warehouse club in China," says Frank Padilla, Vice President, GMM Produce and Meat at Costco Wholesale. "We're grateful to be able to offer high quality California strawberries to our Chinese members with the assistance of California Giant."

The berry company harvested, packed and shipped their latest Santa Maria fall crop to Shanghai over the weekend with the combined effort from various members of the sales, operations and field teams.

“It takes a village,” says Juanita Delgado, Office Coordinator and Southern Region Food Safety Coordinator for California Giant. “We always strive to execute for our partners and deliver the best quality and consistency that we can. When our partners at Costco asked for berries for their first China warehouse grand opening - we were eager and excited to accept the challenge. Communication was key, and both the California Giant and Costco teams worked seamlessly together, despite some logistical hurdles, to ensure berries arrived in Shanghai with quality and flavor reflective of our standards.”

Exports are not new to the international berry company, and a venture with the potential to expand in the future. With a driven team, quality berries and unrelenting attention to their partners, time will only tell what’s next for California Giant Berry Farms.

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