



Doug Pearce, 33
President
Pier-C Produce Inc.
Leamington, Ontario, Canada

Pearce has been involved in the produce industry since he was 16 years old, following in the footsteps of many family members. He is known as a highly motivated individual who loves his work and the industry as a whole. Upon graduating from high school, he started work full time in the family business. Over the years, he gained a great deal of insightful information and experience that led to his development of his own produce company. His company now runs two packaging facilities and several farm operations employing over 100 individuals. Pier-C has been able to successfully meet a steady increase of 10 to 12 percent annual growth.

His company now sells 5,400 acres of product in various regions of Ontario, offering year-round availability of onions, carrots, parsnips and beets. It is a seasonal supplier of peppers, pumpkins, and cabbage. Pearce's leadership has pushed for development of markets in the United States, Canada and Mexico. In the past year, he has helped extend markets to Barbados, Trinidad, Costa Rica, Ghana, Puerto Rico and areas in the Middle East. Pier-C has been a supplier for Metro Stores in Ontario and Quebec for the past few years, as well as Sobeys stores in Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia. He credits these retailers as being tremendous businesses to partner with, while also being a great aid in the growth of his company.

He is a member of the Produce Marketing Association, National Onion Association, Quebec Produce Marketing Association, The Ontario Produce Marketing Association and The Canadian Produce Marketing Association. He is a strong supporter of the Ontario Association of Food Banks and provides up to a tractor trailer load of product to them on a weekly basis.

He names the rising freight costs due to fuel spikes and the rising minimum wages in Canada as major challenges to staying competitive. "Minimum wages in Canada are higher than any other country and that makes it tough for us to compete when exporting our product," he explains. "Our exchange rate against the U.S. dollar has definitely shrunk profit margins in a way that has forced us to more aggressively cut costs at our facility in order to stay competitive. Some of the things that inspire me to work in this industry are the new relationships that I have developed with customers, the traveling and the new challenges that arise daily to keep me on my toes."