

Vitalis Organic Seeds, the organic division of Enza Zaden

As Vitalis prepares for its 25th anniversary, the company is proud to reflect on its many achievements. Since entering the U.S. and Canadian markets in 2007, Vitalis has become the principal trusted supplier of organic vegetable and herb seed in North America. A pioneer and innovator in organic seed breeding, Vitalis produces nearly 500 certified organic varieties distributed in over 35 countries. In North America, Vitalis produces more than 150 certified organic varieties, including vegetables and culinary herbs, all of which are regionally adapted through selections performed at two U.S. research stations. Researchers work with local growers, market experts and the global Vitalis research operation to provide these markets with the most diverse and highest quality certified-organic vegetable and herb assortment available.

Founded in 1994 by Netherlands breeder Jan Velema, Vitalis Organic Seeds is the organic division of Enza Zaden, the global leader in organic seed production and breeding. Regional Business Manager (North America), Erica Renaud says, “There is no other comparable professional seed company invested in breeding and producing certified organic seed for the professional grower. We believe in building organic production systems with organically produced seed. Conventionally produced seed cannot be used to fully accomplish the goals of organic agriculture, based on subsection of the seeds to chemical-based inputs including synthetic fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides.” Vitalis seeds complement organic production techniques that work with biological systems such as crop rotation, intercropping, organic fertilization, natural pest control and mechanical cultivation for weed control to manage organic seed production.



Today Vitalis offers a broad assortment of certified organic vegetable and herb varieties developed for organic agriculture and its unique markets. Those crops include arugula, basil, cauliflower, chives, coriander, cucumber, dill, endive, fennel, head lettuce, hot pepper, leek, onion, parsley, sweet pepper, spring mix lettuce, rootstock, summer squash and tomato.

Renaud says, “With the organic market in the U.S. now estimated at \$50 billion, consumer expectations are on the rise, motivated by factors including enhanced nutrition and flavor, product uniqueness, environmental responsibility and community development through the support of local food systems.” Organic agriculture systems value efficiency in the use of nutrients, broad resistance to pests and disease, outstanding flavor and appearance and varietal seed quality and viability.

“At Vitalis, we meld our breeding initiatives and varietal development with the extensive breeding programs of Enza Zaden,” says Renaud. “This collaboration allows us to continually offer new, innovative varieties that are ideally suited to organic agriculture practices, and to the needs and expectation of the ever-expanding organic

consumer market.” In the future, Vitalis will continue to add new crops and varieties to its assortment. New crops under development include organic watermelon, broccoli and winter squash.

To help protect the integrity of organic produce and fortify the

growth of the organic sector, Vitalis actively participates in policy dialogue. Associations Vitalis is active in include National Organic Standards Board, American Seed Trade Association, Organic Seed Alliance, Organic Trade Association, Oregon Organic Council, Canadian Organic

Regime and Mexico Organic Commission.

To honor its 25th Anniversary, Vitalis will host an Organic Variety Showcase at the San Juan Bautista Research Station in California on August 15, highlighting its lettuce, endive, zucchini, winter squash, and culinary herb and heirloom tomato assortments. A local chef will create innovative dishes from Vitalis varieties and have a tomato tasting from its heirloom breeding trial. Onion breeders will discuss breeding tips for organic agriculture. Vitalis will also host a welcome reception on August 14 to honor its internal team, key organic growers and its distribution network. Dr. Bill Tracy, Endowed Chair of Organic Breeding from the University of Wisconsin will speak at the reception on “Plant Breeding for Organic Agriculture: A Complementary Approach.”



**Adrienne Shelton,
Product Specialist**



usa.vitalisorganic.com



www.enzazaden.us