Southern Produce Distributors finding success with organics

October 13, 2016

Kelley Precythe, vice president for Southern Produce Distributors Inc. based in Faison, NC, is a fourth-generation family member and has seen many changes and innovations through the years. One of the latest involves the company's entry into organics, and in only a short time, it has seen success in the segment.

"We've added an organic line now and are installing a new packing line for them," he said. "We're now fully integrated from field to fork with organics and conventional, offering oriental varieties."

Garret Godwin and Cody Hope of Southern Produce. Elsewhere at the company, it continues to increase its conventional acreage — more than 3 million bushels annually — and it's up around 5 percent this year a few weeks into the harvest.

Precythe said the increase in demand for sweet potatoes has been better than ever.

"It's an amazing super food. I had two meetings this morning with new customers in the U.K. and we ship a lot there and we see the growth continuing," he said. "I honestly think a lot of people are getting tired of white and enjoying sweet potatoes more. There are new ways to prepare them and cook them and people are learning about those and the health benefits are great."

The company continues to update its recipe section on its website, and new entries in the month of September have been Stuffed Sweet Potatoes, Rosemary Roasted Sweet Potatoes, and a new take on Sweet Potato Pie.

Southern Produce Distributors grows and selects only the highest-quality sweet potatoes from leading GlobalGAP-certified farms in North Carolina, Mississippi and Louisiana. Hand picked to protect the product, the sweet potatoes are heat cured and held in computer-monitored, controlled environment storage to ensure optimal quality, nutrition and taste.

Precythe noted that while yields this year are average, the quality is exceptional and that should lead to a strong market for retailers.

[Print](#)