
- Advertisement -

Bland Farms finds success from roots to retail

March 27, 2017

Bland Farms has been growing onions for almost three decades, and the Glennville, GA-based company has seen a jump in the demand for Vidalia onions ever since increasing its presence in the sweet onion category.

“Vidalia onions are grown by several farms but only a very few do their own marketing, and I’ve always done that,” said Delbert Bland, president of Bland Farms. “I thought that was crucial to communicating with the buyer. When we go in the door and sit down with a customer, we can explain that not only do we plant the seed and do the growing, we do the harvesting, the sorting, the packing and the sales. We call this Roots to Retail and we believe that’s what separates us from everyone else in the industry.”

Despite a rise in technology and changes in the way people do things in the industry, Bland feels the relationship with consumers is still the key to success.



Delbert Bland “With all the consolidation going on, people have more to do than ever before so when you ship to a store, you have to make sure you’re giving them what they want,” he said. “When they put in the system that they want a load of onions delivered, you need to get them there on time and at the right price. The customers need to be able to trust that.”

In 2016, Bland Farms saw an uptick in its Vidalia onions, and it was up in sales company-wide. After looking at the Vidalia crop in early March, Bland doesn’t see any reason why 2017 won’t register similar numbers.

“We’re running about two weeks ahead, which has been the trend with sweet onions; Peru came off pretty quick, Mexico was two weeks early and Texas will be as well,” he said. “I think it will help. We’re all excited about the way the crop looks right now, it looks absolutely perfect and nothing seems to be an issue at this point.”

The Vidalia season is important in dictating whether or not Bland Farms has a successful year, Bland said. That’s why the company is glad that the season is starting early, in time for the Easter holiday.

Of course, the company also has a big role in sweet potatoes.

“I don’t think people realize how big a part of our operation and how heavy we are in sweet potatoes and we will be in 2,000 acres this year and it’s becoming a larger part of our land,” Bland said. “We’re continuing to ship out of Mississippi and North Carolina now. Over the last year or so we have increased drastically tenfold in sweet potato.”

[Print](#)