



- Advertisement -

Genuine Georgia Group expects best year yet

By

Keith Loria

April 27, 2021

Genuine Georgia Group is well prepared to meet customers' needs when it comes to peaches because of its relationships with all five of Georgia's commercial peach farms — Pearson Farm and Lane Southern Orchards in Fort Valley, Taylor Orchards in Reynolds, Dickey Farms in Musella and Fitzgerald Fruit Farms in Woodbury.

Genuine Georgia's focused efforts also center around pecans and Southern satsumas, and the company sees big growth on the horizon for all three of these segments.

"All three of those items are super special and chocked full of flavor," said Duke Lane, one of the partners in the Fort Valley, GA-based company. "That is what keeps our excitement each year. On top of those amazing commodities, the growers we work with do a phenomenal job on the growing side."

Most of the company's business happens during Q2-Q4 so the beginning of 2021 has been quiet. However, Lane noted it has been prepping for what he sees as the "best peach crop in years," during these first few months of the year.

"Interest has been exciting and overwhelming," he said. "It's the best peach crop Georgia has seen in more than 20 years. The peach harvest is projected to increase 72 percent over 2020, Satsuma volume will double due solely to maturing of young trees, and pecans are very consistent each season."

For Lane, growing up on a peach and pecan farm in Peach County, GA, made for an amazing childhood full of hard lessons along the way.

"Agriculture in Georgia is growing at a record pace and we are fortunate to be in the middle of it," he said.

Working with retailers across the U.S., Georgia Grown has learned how to be on top of the industry.

"Our secret is that farming and growing produce is our life," Lane said. "We are obsessed with becoming a better supplier. How can we enhance what we are doing on the farms to deliver flavor to our customers? If you don't have flavor, you have nothing. Streamlined marketing programs, on-time logistics, accurate projections and promotions that hit supply spikes all add to the success."

Naturally, the company had to overcome the challenges of the pandemic, but the coronavirus was not its only issue over the past year, with labor, packaging, sanitization, liability and inflation of costs all problematic.

“We are trying hard to balance value of our produce and the insane rise in our costs,” Lane said. “We also need to understand and adjust to new consumer trends.”

For instance, at Southeast Produce Council’s Southern Exposure last week, during the Power of Produce presentation, Lane learned that in America the highest percent of fruit is consumed for breakfast and snacks.

“We have to do our part to market to the customer and provide Georgia peach, satsuma and pecan solutions for those eating occasions,” he said.

Based on 2020 and projected 2021 volumes, Genuine Georgia anticipates doubling its satsuma volume in 2021, while Georgia peach volume is projected to increase by 72 percent and Pecan Nation has sales projected at 34 percent this year.

“All of this growth is on the supply side,” Lane said. “We have an omni-channel marketing approach to handle the increase in supply, with retail, direct to consumer and store pick-up marketing strategies.”

[Print](#)