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GEM-Pack Berries, Red Blossom Sales combine forces

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[GEM-Pack Berries LLC](#) and [Red Blossom Sales Inc.](#) are combining forces to create a dynamic union, capitalizing on tangible synergies that translate directly to customer benefits and grower success.

GEM-Pack and Red Blossom build on more than 150 years of berry farming experience and collective acreage of strawberries, blueberries, blackberries and raspberries in nine berry-growing regions throughout California, Mexico, Florida and South America. "We believe the industry is changing and proactive consolidation will benefit our customers with consistency of supply, balanced production curves, improved quality and increased order fill rates for the entire spectrum of berries and seasons," said Director of Sales Paul Kawamura.

After four years of quietly collaborating on cultivation and sales partnerships, GEM-Pack and Red Blossom realized their common philosophies and shared production priorities created a productive and powerful team. According to COO David Lawrence, "The synergies on all commodities and growing regions were obvious. The shared corporate values and level of mutual trust, as well as the continued success of our grower base and unwavering commitment to customer service, inspired us to join forces."

The consolidation will combine GEM-Pack's partnership with Healthy Harvest in Watsonville, and GEM-Pack's continued operations in Oxnard, Irvine, Baja and Central Mexico, with Red Blossom Farm's acreage in Santa Maria. Included in the consolidation will be Red Blossom's production from the Parkesdale Group in Florida, as well as Red Blossom's long term, exclusive partnership with Mainland Farms in Central Mexico. Mainland Farms has grown to be Central Mexico's second largest strawberry shipper, while also offering a full-spectrum berry program with blueberries, blackberries and raspberries. GEM-Pack's blueberry and bushberry programs in Mexico and South America will round out the company's now year-round berry production.

Red Blossom and GEM-Pack complement each other's strengths, adding deeper access to services in all departments. "As the overall produce industry continues to consolidate, we wanted to stay proactive and flexible. The merger facilitates continued growth and allows us to not only meet, but exceed customer expectations," said CEO Mike Etchandy.

While working together, both companies discovered a shared commitment to innovation, stewardship and sustainability. In 2010, Red Blossom introduced the first electronic traceback system which provided traceability to the individual clamshell level. The success of this program encouraged other shippers in the industry to follow their lead. In recent years, GEM-Pack joined forces with other leaders in the berry category to create CBC LLC, establishing a pathway to develop proprietary varieties throughout several growing regions. As part of their commitment to sustainability, GEM-Pack continues to develop their patented "Earth Made," project focused on 100-percent sustainable growing practices and technologies.

"After working quietly together for four years, we have seen how well we work as a team," said CMO Craig Casca. "It's time for us to be one amazing company that customers can rely on 365/24/7!"

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