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Service is special for Southern Specialties

By

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With the news that PMA Fresh Summit would be cancelled this year, [Southern Specialties](#) wanted to send special words of encouragement to those behind the show and the residents of New Orleans.

“Like others in our industry, Southern Specialties was looking forward to ‘spreading our wings’ some and meeting and greeting customers, growers and industry peers face to face in New Orleans, one of the great cities in our nation,” said Charlie Eagle, vice president of business and development for the Pompano Beach, FL-based company. “Our hearts go out to residents in that area, first and foremost. We have many customers and friends who were affected by the hurricane and have to deal with the double whammy caused by the storm’s destruction and COVID-19.”

The company also shared its admiration for PMA in making the tough decision to pull the plug on the event.

“We have participated in PMA’s premier event for almost 30 years and will miss the opportunity to showcase all that Southern Specialties brings to the table, as well as the comradery the event offers,” Eagle said. “We hope exhibitors realize the importance of this show to the organization, and the industry, and opt to find a way to provide some financial support to this PMA and the new association.”



With a menu of more than 250 SKUs, Southern Specialties has lots to show retailers, club stores, foodservice distributors, home menu providers and wholesalers this year.

That's why it was planning a presentation for every consumer, which includes its Southern Selects branded line of value-added produce, as well as its bulk specialty products grown in the Americas," Eagle said. "This year's Fresh Ideas Showcase was to include our Southern Selects organic French beans and organic asparagus line."

Sweet baby broccoli, Brussels sprouts, broccoli florets, butternut squash and a line of processed products are just some of the newer offerings the company would have had on display in its exhibit space.

"Of course, our green, white and purple asparagus, authentic heirloom tomatoes and lineup of specialty peas are among the products customers seek us out for," Eagle said. "Our team was ready to be on hand to meet, greet and inform but we will have to wait until next year's Fresh Summit to put on the 'big splash.'"

Southern Specialties is looking forward to what it feels will be a strong upcoming season.

"The foodservice sector is coming back, some, and we are hopeful that COVID-19 will start to slow," Eagle said. "Investments we made pre-COVID-19 are bringing opportunities for our customers. Our consolidation services have spiked as customers gain efficiencies through our one-stop shopping capabilities."

Over the years, the company has used the tag lines, "Service is our specialty. Specialty is our service," and "Let's grow something special."

“We are a relationship- and customer-driven company,” Eagle said. “Our goal is to provide customers with consistent quality and innovative solutions while sustainably supporting our growers and consumers.”

The Southern Specialties team is embracing new software programs that provide enhanced tools for conducting and managing business today.

“We have increased production of a menu of products consumers look for today, including sweet baby broccoli, sweet peppers, trimmed green beans, Brussels sprouts and more,” Eagle said. “We’d say we are cautiously optimistic. Our industry is dealing with COVID-19, labor shortages, supply chain issues, political uncertainties and the threat of inflation. Having a reliable forecast schedule that enables us to prepare land, lay plastic and plant seeds without having to turn around and disc everything six months later would be very gratifying.”

Thanks to Southern Specialties’ south Florida location acting as a gateway to the U.S. for many products, including some grown in the west, it enables the company to create savings to companies up and down the East Coast by maximizing logistics efficiencies and offsetting some of the skyrocketing trucking costs from out west.

“We project sales comps in the 15-20 percent growth range,” Eagle said. “We are also striving to keep our team, and their families, safe and healthy.”

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