

INTRODUCING 3 NEW TAKES ON THE CLASSIC LABEL



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Quality and service are staples of Bushmans' success

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[Bushmans' Inc.](#) is a farmer-owned potato producer that has been offering product to grocers, retailers and foodservice providers since 1909.

“I believe success in the potato category is dependent on quality and service,” said Mike Carter, CEO of the Rosholt, WI-based company. “People expect their produce to look a certain way — clean, fresh and appealing to the eye. Produce buyers expect impeccable service. They want us to supply them quickly and want us to have the flexibility to get product to them on short notice. We are committed to that service and are geographically located in a way that allows us to get product to population centers very quickly, with lower shipping costs than other areas.”



Mike Carter

During 2021, Bushmans' business was “closer to whatever normal is,” compared to 2020 according to Carter.

“We saw good movement in 2021, which was down from 2020, when consumers relied on retail purchases more heavily because of COVID-19 but was still up compared to a normalized trend line,” he said. “I think that COVID-19 reintroduced people to cooking at home, which benefited the category. We are still seeing people try new things, including different types of potatoes and looking for new ways to prepare potatoes. That has increased interest and demand in the specialty categories like yellows and fingerlings; however, the Russet still remains the king of the category.”

On Jan. 7, the company was looking at eight inches of snow on the farm, so it's hard to predict what the new growing season might entail. Carter noted that Mother Nature will have a big impact on that.

“Our crop from last fall is storing well, and our quality has been very good this year, despite some growing challenges last summer, which included heat and above normal rains,” Carter said. “Despite those challenges, harvest season was almost perfect and we were able to get the crop in storage

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without incident. We saw great movement during the holidays, which is typical for us, and look forward to the remainder of the storage season, which lasts until next summer.”

Bushmans’ is happy to work with its retail partners to help move more product and Carter has some thoughts on what retailers could be doing to improve business.

“The best thing stores can do at store level is rotating product and getting rid of product that has turned green under the store lights,” he said. “Making sure the product is displayed in a way that is appealing to the consumer is critical for customers looking to make a purchase. I would also encourage stores to consider the placement of potatoes. Studies have been done that show impulse buys of potatoes can be very strong if displayed in the meat section.”

Looking to the rest of the year ahead, Bushmans’ has some exciting things in the works. For one, the company has partnered with the famous spice company, Tony Chachere’s.

“We will also be rolling out three new potato items in 2022,” Carter said.

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