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Shuman Farms champions Georgia Grown sweet onions

By

Keith Loria

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[Shuman Farms](#), located in Reidsville, GA, is a year-round grower, packer, and shipper of premium sweet onions from Vidalia, Peru, and Texas.

Being situated in Tattnall County, the company is in the heart of the Vidalia onion growing region, where the sandy soil and unique climate, including mild, short winters, contribute to the Vidalia onion's mild, sweet flavor.



“A Vidalia onion is a short-day onion — it grows when the days are short in the winter and then matures in the spring when the days become longer and warmer,” said John Shuman, president and CEO of Shuman Farms. “We average more than 50 inches of rain in southeast Georgia annually and that helps to keep the soil clean. The sandy soils are extremely low in sulfur which keeps the onions sweet and mild with very little heat.”

Shuman Farms' RealSweet brand has become one of the most trusted brands in the industry, providing consistent, premium quality onions to consumers year-round while holding true to the company's core values of quality, service, innovative marketing, sustainability and giving back.

This year, Shuman Farms will harvest 2,350 acres of the 10,000 acres harvested by the Vidalia industry. The company started shipping on April 12, and is looking forward to a successful season.

“Our fresh season will continue through the end of May and then we’ll switch to storage in June,” Shuman said. “One of our foundational pillars is having excellent customer service. We believe in treating our customers like family. We know that it is our integrity and earned reputation that proceeds us when we meet with customers. We value our relationships with our retail partners and consider many of them life-long friends.”

After seeing the growth of the red sweet onion category along with increased consumer demand, Shuman Farms created a unique brand —RealSweet Rubies, that perfectly depicts how special the onion really is.

“Our research showed us that the red sweet onion category continued to grow year over year, especially during the early summer months,” Shuman said. “Consumers love the savory, rich flavor of a red sweet onion without the heat or bite of a traditional red.”

Creating the RealSweet Rubies brand has allowed the company to tell the story of this extraordinary onion while driving incremental sales in the category.

“As their name implies, RealSweet Rubies are certainly a gem in the produce department and with limited availability, only during May and June, consumers eagerly added them to their market basket as soon as they saw them,” Shuman said. “We were very pleased with the reception and positive feedback we received from both retailers and consumers. It’s not every day you see something new in the onion category, so retailers were as excited as we were to bring the Rubies to shelf.”

Along with new packaging, Shuman Farms also created a website, recipes, and in-store signage to promote the brand.

All of Shuman Farms’ retailer partnerships start with its four foundational pillars: superior quality, excellent customer service, innovative marketing and giving back to the communities where its product is sold.

“We pride ourselves on our earned reputation of honest, transparent, real-time communication,” Shuman said. “The entire Shuman Farms team, from operations to sales to marketing, consists of the most experienced, knowledgeable, and innovative people in the industry. We wake up every day committed to regenerative and sustainable farming practices and being good stewards of what we’ve been given.”

Giving back is of great importance to the company and Shuman Farms believes that as farmers and food producers in the U.S., it’s responsible to shed light on hunger in America. Through their various charitable projects and programs, Shuman Farms and its sister company, Healthy Family Project, has donated more than 15 million meals to Feeding America.

Shuman created Healthy Family Project in 2002 as a way to bring the produce industry together to create a healthier generation and raise money for community outreach. Since 2002, Shuman’s Healthy Family Project has partnered with grocery retailers and more than 100 like-minded brands across North America to give back to the communities where their products are sold.

In June 2019, Shuman Farms started to ship its RealSweet Vidalia onions in special Feeding America bags. Summer break can be hard for the estimated 29.6 million students receiving free or reduced-cost meals at school so shipping these special bags, and providing a donation provides much aid during this crucial time of year.

Shuman Farms also ships their RealSweet onions from Peru in Feeding America bags each November and December, another critical time of year.

Locally, the Shuman Farms team regularly volunteers at America's Second Harvest of Coastal Georgia in Savannah, GA.

Through its various charitable efforts, Shuman Farms has raised more than \$8 million to benefit children and families.

[Keith Loria](#)

About Keith Loria |

A graduate of the University of Miami, Keith Loria is a D.C.-based award-winning journalist who has been writing for major publications for close to 20 years on topics as diverse as real estate, food and sports. He started his career with the Associated Press and has held high editorial positions at magazines aimed at healthcare, sports and technology. When not busy writing, he can be found enjoying time with his wife, Patricia, and two daughters, Jordan and Cassidy.

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