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R.C. Hatton has shown reliability for nearly a century

By

Seth Mendelson

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From farm-to-table. That, along with providing high-quality produce and sugar cane and a big emphasis on sustainability, is the key to the longevity of R.C. Hatton Inc. and its long and successful relationship with retailers, foodservice operators and schools over the years.

With an 8,000-acre farm located beside Lake Okeechobee in Florida, an area known for its rich and fertile black gold soil, officials at R.C Hatton can safely say that their customers can be assured their food is carefully and safely grown. “First, all of our corn is non-GMO,” the company said on its corporate website. “Also, R.C. Hatton Inc. is involved in the entire process, from planting the corn seed to loading the delivery truck.”

“We are unique in that we are vertically-integrated with our products, market direct from the farm to school systems and foodservice along with normal bulk shipments to retailers,” added Paul Allen, the president of the Pahokee, FL-based company.

Allen joined the company as a foreman in 1994, bought into ownership in 2002 and is now a co-owner and the president. “We are proud to be producing much of our crops in Florida,” he said. “It is a good place to be, with the growing population in the state. We want all newcomers to eat our fresh produce while it is in their backyard.”

Since the 1960s, the company., which was founded by R.C. Hatton in 1932 in the midst of the depression, has been a pioneer in developing crop production methods, as well as a leader in developing many sweet corn varieties. Today, R.C. Hatton is co-owned by Roger Hatton and Allen. The company is a member of the Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association, Sunshine Sweet Corn Farmers of Florida, Fresh From Florida, Florida Farm Bureau, Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative and the United States Sugar Corporation. R.C. Hatton vegetables are marketed by long-standing business associate Hugh Branch Inc.

The fertile soil of the Lake Okeechobee region, as well as in areas in south Georgia, where the company grows sweet corn and green beans, allows R.C. Hatton to sustainably produce sweet corn, sugar cane and green beans, among other items, in the area.

Company officials say that protected by the warmth of the giant lake in the middle of the Sunshine State, the nutrient-rich soil is perfect for growing these items. “Also, during the winter, the lake creates a mild microclimate, and frost concerns are minimal — this allows for a long growing season and our famous, delicious sweet corn, green beans, and cabbage in the winter,” the company’s website states.

Allen is excited for the spring season. “Spring will have ample supplies of sweet corn but not an oversupply of product,” he noted, adding that the company has recently doubled its capacity in its

tray pack corn business. "The warmer weather early on in Florida has spread the season out to a longer marketing period."

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