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R.C. Hatton and Hugh Branch continue beneficial partnership

By

Keith Loria

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[R.C. Hatton Inc.](#) has long been committed to providing high-quality produce and sugar cane from farm-to-table thanks to a top-notch team approach, which understands the importance of the future while being focused on today.

The company's philosophy comes down to improving the community through hard work and honest business practices and care for its Florida and Georgia soils so future generations may enjoy the finest fresh sweet corn, green beans, sugar cane and more.

R.C. Hatton Farms is situated on the eastern shore of Pahokee, FL, which is known for having some of the most fertile ground in the United States. The company's produce is distributed nationwide through its longstanding partnership with Hugh Branch Inc. of South Bay, FL.

As the holidays approach, the company is thankful for having survived a somewhat tumultuous spring and looks forward to better days to come.

"Our crops survived the torrential September rains in Florida and the Hurricane in Georgia, so we will have product for Thanksgiving," said Paul Allen, co-owner and president of R.C. Hatton. "Prices were moderate in the Florida spring season, with the most difficult harvest in Georgia that we have ever had anywhere. The rain was relentless, but so were we. Our team worked hard and long hours. We prevailed."

Hugh Branch and Roger Hatton started their business relationship in the early '70s, and that still stands today with Allen and Brett Bergman having a trusted partnership.

"We also have a long-standing relationship with Publix that they started that still stands today," Allen said, explaining that much of its corn is marketed in tray packs under the Branch-A Family of Farms/ Gourmet Extra Sweet brand throughout the Publix Super Markets chain.

"They have been our marketing agent for decades," Allen said. "Our tray pack has really taken off at Publix and they are a good partner to have."

The company grows between 10,000-13,000 acres a year and tries to support the community as best it can throughout the year. While the crops for the past few months have been "beat up" from the bad weather, the younger crops are looking strong and Allen expects to have good months to close out 2023.

He credits Florida's long production season with helping the company continue to succeed, even when the weather doesn't cooperate.

Heavy rains and hurricanes are not the only challenge in today's produce industry and R.C. Hatton is dealing with other issues as well.

Allen points to increased costs of production as being one of the main challenges, and the company has been able to combat this with some savvy innovation on the farm level.

R.C. Hatton Farms will continue to think of the future and do what it can to help its customers. Among the plans for next year are to increase its tray pack and foodservice business.

[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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