

# THE PRODUCE NEWS

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COVERING FRESH PRODUCE AROUND THE GLOBE SINCE 1897 Weeks of Feb. 28 - March 14, 2011

VILLAGE FARMS

## Southern Exposure's atmosphere allows for one-on-one connections with customers, notes Steve Poklemba

BY CHRISTINA DIMARTINO

"The Southeast Produce Council's Southern Exposure Retail and Foodservice Conference & Expo is a great opportunity for a number of reasons," said Steve Poklemba, regional sales manager for Village Farms LP, headquartered in Eatontown, NJ. "The conference and expo is a small show in comparison to some of the other national shows, and as a regional show it facilitates a more intimate atmosphere with our customers. Because of this, the overall environment is relaxed. It provides the opportunity to engage in more one-on-one, in-depth discussions that allow us to really get to know our customers as well as their individual needs. I look forward to this show every year for this reason. The Southeast Produce Council does a great job with the conference's venue."

Mr. Poklemba said that Village Farms has been involved with the Southeast Produce Council as a member, a conference attendee and exhibitor for the past seven years. He will be

at the company's booth, No. 508 — along with Doug Kling, senior vice president and chief marketing officer, Bret Wiley, vice president of sales operations, and Alan Kleinman, eastern district sales manager — to greet customers.

"At this year's conference and expo, Village Farms will be promoting all of our great varieties of greenhouse-grown tomatoes, sweet Bell peppers and cucumbers," said Mr. Poklemba. "Our customers are expressing a lot of interest in the new value-added pack sizes and the specialty items that we offer."

Village Farms recently opened a new distribution facility in New Castle, DE, which also has a new value-added packaging operation. It allows for greater innovation and more timely service into the New England and mid-Atlantic markets.

Village Farms grows an as-

sortment of hydroponic tomato varieties such as red, yellow and orange tomatoes on the vine, as well as Campari cocktail-size, Roma, Beefsteak, cherry and grape tomatoes. It also offers red, yellow and orange sweet Bell peppers. Its long English cucumbers are available in a number of pack sizes. It is also currently promoting value packs in peppers and in a number of tomato varieties.

The company owns and operates 230 acres of greenhouses

Marfa, TX, Fort Davis, TX, and Delta, BC. It also partners with numerous growers located in New York, Pennsylvania and Mexico. The company distributes greenhouse produce year round.

### Social networking

Village Farms has become highly visible on the social networks to increase its exposure to consumers by offering recipe ideas. It now offers daily take-aways on FaceBook, Twitter and

its own web site on the latest health information about the fruits and vegetables it grows and on the environmentally sustainable methods it employs.

The company is also developing monthly newsletters for its customers and for consumers. All of these social channels aid in the information exchange about what the company is and what it does while providing transparency in a perfect venue to tell its story.



From Village Farms: Bret Wiley, vice president of sales operations; Steve Poklemba, regional sales manager; and Doug Kling, senior vice president and chief marketing officer.