

Two Georgia-based produce companies have merged to create what they say is the largest peach and pecan operation in the U.S.



The consolidated entity will pack peaches under the Lane Southern Orchards label, according to a release.

Taylor Orchards currently farms 3,000 acres of peaches and an additional 950 acres of row crops including peanuts and soybeans, and Lane Southern Orchards currently farms 2,000 acres of peaches and 3,500 acres of pecans.

In addition to existing acreage, the company's growth plan includes an additional planting in 2018 of 700 acres of new peach production and 1,000 new acres dedicated to pecans, resulting in more than 10,000 acres under cultivation.

"We couldn't be more excited about opportunities this merger creates. Synergies between our farms create new efficiencies and offer further opportunity for growth," said Mark Sanchez, CEO and Jeff Wainwright, president of farming operations, in a joint statement.

A release said Taylor Orchards' history goes back to the early 1940s, complementing that of Lane Southern Orchards, which dates back to 1908. It added that both operations have been modernized by implementing the cutting-edge technology in growing and packing as well as consumer packaging.

"This additional supply of peaches allows us to be a better supplier to existing customers and expand our customer base as well," said Duke Lane III, partner in Genuine Georgia and sales director Lane Southern Orchards.

"From a sales and marketing perspective, you can engage consumers in creative ways with nearly 6,000 acres of Georgia peaches. It is going to be an exciting summer for Georgia Peaches"



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