

GEM-Pack Berries, LLC and Red Blossom Sales, Inc. are merging to create a "dynamic union, capitalizing on tangible synergies that translate directly to customer benefits and grower success".

The companies will build on more than 150 years of berry farming experience and collective acreage of strawberries, blueberries, blackberries and raspberries in nine regions throughout California, Mexico, Florida and South America.

"We believe the industry is changing and proactive consolidation will benefit our customers with consistency of supply, balanced production curves, improved quality and increased order fill rates for the entire spectrum of berries and seasons," Paul Kawamura, Director of Sales said.

After four years of collaborating on cultivation and sales partnerships, the companies realized their common philosophies and shared production priorities created a productive and powerful team.

"The synergies on all commodities and growing regions were obvious," COO David Lawrence said.

"The shared corporate values and level of mutual trust, as well as the continued success of our grower base and unwavering commitment to customer service, inspired us to join forces."

The merge will combine GEM-Pack's partnership with Healthy Harvest in Watsonville, and GEM-Pack's continued operations in Oxnard, Irvine, Baja and Central Mexico with Red Blossom Farm's acreage in Santa Maria.

Included in the consolidation will be [Red Blossom](#)'s production from the Parkesdale Group in Florida, as well as Red Blossom's long-term, exclusive partnership with Mainland Farms in Central Mexico.

Mainland Farms has grown to be Central Mexico's second-largest strawberry shipper, while also offering a full spectrum berry program.

GEM-Pack's blueberry and bushberry programs in Mexico and South America will round out the company's now year-round berry production.

"As the overall produce industry continues to consolidate, we wanted to stay proactive and flexible," CEO Mike Etchandy said.

"The merger facilitates continued growth and allows us to not only meet but exceed customer expectations."

In 2010, Red Blossom introduced an electronic traceback system that provided traceability to the individual clamshell level. In recent years, GEM-Pack joined forces with others in the berry category to create CBC, LLC, establishing a pathway to develop proprietary varieties throughout several growing regions.

GEM-Pack continues to develop its patented "Earth Made" project focused on 100 percent sustainable growing practices and technologies.