

# FRESH FROM THE VINE



SEPTEMBER 2013

VOLUME 2 NO. 9

## CASEY'S CORNER



In July, I returned from my most recent trip to Guatemala. It was exciting as my vision of how to change the cycle of child hunger in Tactic, was closer than ever before. I've had time to reflect on the trip and have some thoughts I would like to share.

We live in a part of the world where the simple things in life are taken for granted. (Food, equality, education etc.) In Guatemala, you quickly realize how truly blessed we are. It's sad that many people think the world owes them, when in reality, we owe the world positive contributions. Schools teach our kids about their rights, rather than their responsibilities within the world. This raises two questions; what needs are most important and where can we make the biggest impact?

I believe we need to provide today's youth the scholastic skills that give them with an understanding of economics and long-term planning that will help influence them, to rely less on the age old traditions. A glaring example is focusing on improving nutrition and health care, which has a tremendous impact on the well-being of not only ourselves but our kids and their progeny.

I've been immensely impacted by my interaction with the people of Guatemala. Their willingness to learn, listen and look at the long-term so that generational



*Casey and Les and local children*

change can become a reality is inspirational. Change is not something that happens overnight. It takes vision and endurance to make it happen. That is the essence of Impact Ministries' work!

This month, I will be traveling back to Guatemala with my family for the official inauguration and celebration of the greenhouse opening on Sept. 30. It makes me very proud to know that this wouldn't have been possible without the incredible efforts and dedication of our employees, our suppliers, Impact Ministries and most importantly the people of Tactic.

Thank you to all who have contributed large or small with time, money or both. Our combined efforts truly will change the impact of child hunger in Tactic!

*Cruz Houweling*



*Casey lending a helping hand preparing the field*



*The local growing team reviews the planting schedule*



## From the "Eh" Team

In a challenging business such as vegetable propagation, it is rewarding to receive positive feedback from customers.

Here is a quote from Jan Korteland of Village Farms from an article which appeared in Fresh Plaza news.

"All of the plants are being seeded, grafted and propagated in British Columbia, Canada, by Houweling's. We are aware of the fact that it is a big logistical operation, but this is the best option for us. For propagation, the climate in B.C. is far better in the summer than in West Texas. Houweling's has got the knowledge, propagation facilities and the right people to do it, hence a lot of premium growers in North America trust in their services."

- John Skeete



I'd like to take the opportunity to introduce "The Honor Roll" to our monthly newsletter. In various businesses I have been involved in throughout my career, I've always been impressed with organizations that have long-tenured employees. To me it is a sign of a company that treats their people well, and showcases the commitment the employee group has to the company. I was thinking about this the other day and I looked into various length of service our team has under its belt and was blown away.

In Delta alone, our 8 most tenured employees combine for 102 years of employment with Houweling's with John Skeete leading the way in his 20th year! Oxnard is no different with Ben Vazquez celebrating his 17th year with Houweling's this summer. Between both facilities, we have 19 team members that have spent a decade or more; putting their blood, sweat and tears into our farms. While a small mention in the company newsletter pales in comparison to the commitment these individuals have made, it is certainly worth celebrating.

With that said, congratulations to all of our colleagues celebrating an anniversary this month!

- 12 yrs – Jorge Arreola, Oxnard, Maintenance Technician Supervisor
- 9 yrs – Gurdeep Tatra, Delta, Head Mechanic
- 8 yrs – Eldon Peters, Delta, Propagation Assistant Manager
- 6 yrs – Shane Boivin, Delta, Grower Assistant
- 5 yrs – Martin Hurtado, Oxnard, Maintenance Technician
- 2 yrs – John Singh, Oxnard, Runner
- 2 yrs – Jackie Rodriguez, Oxnard, Logistics Manager
- 2 yrs – Bill Wilber, Oxnard, Vice President Sales

- David Bell

## Linton's Tech Talk:

Among calls for improved food safety and security, many farms have focused on improving the traceability of their produce. At Houweling's, we've utilized simple processes to capture the information necessary to track and trace our products. Tracing our products from the greenhouse, right to the customer is key to producing a quality product and improving food safety initiatives. Our systems are designed so that we can harvest the product in the morning and associate or link the product, variety and location to the person that harvested them in the greenhouse.



Operations captures where, what, who, how much, and when the fruit was harvested. The Packhouse gathers the lot number and the unique pallet number that the fruit is stored on. This prepares the fruit for the logistics team to assign it to a pallet location where it is immediately visible to and available for our Sales team to allocate to our customers.

Everyone's timely and accurate capturing of all information throughout this process makes it possible to trace our product many different ways.

- Linton Clarke



I bought my first Houweling's Tomatoes today. I always look for local produce and was glad to see yours there on my supermarket shelf. Looked you up on the website (wonderful website by the way) and am duly impressed. I bet those tomatoes are going to taste even better now that I know how dedicated you all are. Thank you for such a great product grown and raised with love in the state of California!

Julianna F.

## Main & Vine: Processes behind the Produce

To many, the processes behind Houweling's tomatoes may seem simple — from growing to selling. Yet, to my surprise, there are dozens of complex processes that are involved in the overall business, which require careful integration and communication. The ability to manage, monitor and communicate information allows us to carefully grow tomatoes and provide high-quality fresh produce to our customers.

I've enjoyed having the opportunity to get an understanding of forecasting, quality management, food safety, inventory management and the other complex processes that are specific to the greenhouse industry. I am constantly surprised at the amount of thought and analysis that go into every decision at Houweling's to ensure we provide high quality produce to our customers.

- Rishi Moorjani



## BEN'S BUZZ

Houweling's pack houses are the epicenter between the greenhouses, pack-lines and the shipping departments; and in order for these departments to function properly it requires the maintenance of the many different types of machinery on-site. The job of keeping our machinery running at peak performance is performed by our excellent maintenance crew, consisting of Gregorio "Goyo" Gonzalez (supervisor), Jose Ojeda (pack house #1), Martin Hurtado (pack house #2), and Ricardo Castro (pack house #3.)



The maintenance team constantly has their hands full, as all sorts of equipment from box making machines, MOF machine, automatic palletizer, PowerBees, and many other pieces of equipment require maintenance to keep the company operating. They have continually gone above and beyond their job duties to identify potential problems and fix them regardless of location. A special thank you to each one of you for the great work that you have done in the pack houses and the additional work done on the CO2 for the Co-Gen, the boilers in phase 1 and 2 and helping with the installation of the grow lights.

We are all very fortunate to have such a dedicated maintenance department at Houweling's and I am thankful for such a great team.

- Curtis Fixen  
Electrical Maintenance Manager

## Casey's Recipe Corner Dill and Shrimp Cucumber Cups



Crunchy and refreshing, cucumbers are the ultimate base for a lemon and dill shrimp salad. Cucumber cups are easy and are perfect for a neat, one bite appetizer.

Yield: 14-16 cucumber cups

1 Houwelings Long English Cucumber  
1 cup cooked and peeled baby shrimp  
2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice  
zest of half a lemon  
1 1/2 tablespoons mayonnaise  
2 teaspoons fresh dill, roughly  
chopped  
salt and pepper

Cut off the tips of the cucumber. Peel the cucumber skin using a vegetable peeler. Cut the cucumber into about 3/4 inch slices. Use a melon baller to scoop out half the flesh from the centre of each slice. Make sure you leave a bit of base intact to create a cup.

Mix together the mayonnaise, lemon juice, dill and lemon zest. Gently stir in the shrimp. Season with salt and pepper to taste and scoop into cucumber cups.

