



MARCEL ADEGEEST

OWNER TVA GROWERS

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They are Full of vitamins, low in calories and come in the festive colors red, yellow and orange; these are the snack tomatoes by TVA Growers. Marcel Adegeest, the owner of TVA Growers, says: “We used to grow 'traditional tomatoes' until the market demanded change. As a member of The Van Nature (By Nature) foundation, a foundation by growers and chain cooperation between growers and trading companies. We were asked if we could switch from traditional to snack tomatoes. We followed up on this request!” The switch proved to be a success and TVA Growers – which stands for Tomatoes by Adegeest – expands every year. Currently, TVA Growers uses 30 acres, divided over four fields of land, to grow their snack tomatoes on. The tomatoes are packed with a vertical packaging machine from JASA.



THIRD GENERATION

Tomato growing is passed from generation to generation in the Adegeest family. "my grandfather started the tomato growing business without a greenhouse. Back in 1971, my father, Guus Adegeest, took over the business and started to grow tomatoes and salad in a greenhouse." However, growing salads during winter and tomatoes in the summer proved to be quite trying and labor-intensive. Guus decides to focus on one product only, and from the '80s on, tomatoes became TVA Grower's choice product. In 2001 the next generation growers announced themselves, the brothers Marcel and Ferry join the company.

BROTHERS IN THE LEAD

"At the present time, my brother and I run the company together. We have four sites, our main location rests under my control, on this site we grow and pack our products. My brother Ferry takes responsibility for the remaining three production sites. Our dad still checks in daily, the love for the business and our company will never fade! When he feels up to it, he will even mow the grass." Even though Marcel runs a single location, his days are very diverse. "My role as a business owner is complemented by being a complete all-rounder, haha. One moment I'm in the field checking the growing process while the next moment I'm directing the warehouse and from there, take place behind my desk to take care of the necessary paperwork.

DELICATE VARIETIES

For years the business flourishes, leading up to the purchasing of yet another location by the brothers in 2009. Shortly after that, the business declined, as consumer demands changed. "Around 2013 we experienced a couple of dire years, caused by the decline in the demand of regular tomatoes. Delicate varieties became more popular. That is when the question arose by 'Van Nature' to grow the snack tomato. We decided to follow up on the request and made the change over to the snack tomato in 2014." These alluring varieties are still trendy and can be found abundantly in every supermarket.

LABOR-INTENSIVE

The shift to growing smaller tomatoes becomes a fact. However, the growing process did not change much. Other than being more labor-intensive, everything remained the same. The snack tomatoes barely reach a weight of 0.35 ounces, which means a lot of tomatoes need to be picked to box a pound. At a weight of 5 ounces for a regular tomato, that obviously is a different story. However, as labor-intensive, as it is, it also is very successful. Ever since we made the changeover, we have grown our business every year, and currently, we have 30 acres of snack tomatoes.

THE JASA FIT

Tomatoes are ordinarily packed and shipped in boxes containing 13 Lbs. However, snack tomatoes are directly packed for retail, making it a different ball game. This requires Marcel and his brother Ferry to look for a packaging partner in consultation with Van Nature. "Back in 2014, we searched the market and visited various packaging companies; eventually, we found Piet Pannekeet, the JASA director. JASA was able to pack our snack tomatoes in consumer units, leading up to packaging our tomatoes in shakers, triangle bowls, and buckets. From the start, our cooperation was pleasant and satisfying. JASA really pays attention to my needs, subsequently transforming those into drawings and designs to come up with a workable concept!"

THE SUSTAINABLE DOYPACK

After producing snack tomatoes for several years, Marcel and Ferry are confronted with the uprise of the sustainability challenge. "Our customers started to ask for packaging with less plastic than the shaker or bucket contains, and we like to keep our customers happy!" Since 2017 we use a JASA vertical packing machine for that reason. This machine packs our tomatoes in a Doypack with a tear strip. "An additional sustainability benefit comes from the smaller package size, Thanks to this, we can fit more packaging's into a crate which reduces transportation needs." The Doypack comes in a variety of sizes suiting all tastes, while all sizes are packed by the same machine. "We now pack 9 and 18-ounce Doypacks as these are currently in high demand. In the past, we also packed 5- and 10-ounce packs, it all depends on customer demand, the customer is king."



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