

## Green Giant rights sold

By Bob Luder  
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LAS VEGAS — Growers Express LLC has purchased the licensing rights for the Green Giant Fresh line.

Woody Johnson, senior vice president of sales and marketing for Salinas, Calif.-based Growers Express, said agreements with fruit and vegetable shippers that pack under the Green Giant Fresh label will remain intact and retailers and consumers won't see changes to what's offered in the line.

The key element of the transaction was a master trademark license agreement with General Mills Inc., the owner of the Green Giant brand.

The company announced the

agreement April 23 at the United Fresh Produce Association convention.

Growers Express formed a new affiliate, Growers Marketing LLC, to oversee the venture.

Johnson said retail data from The Perishables Group shows the brand performs well even in an economic recession.

Growers Express has packed under the Green Giant Fresh label for 12 years and will continue to supply mixed leaf lettuce and vegetables, adding artichokes this year.

The Sholl Group II, Eden Prairie, Minn., which had owned the Green Giant Fresh licensing rights, will continue offering value-added products under a new sublicensing agreement with Growers Marketing.

The company's current co-packing agreements, employees and network of regional processors will remain in place with no interruption in service, said Darci Eckermann, senior vice president of The Sholl Group.

The Green Giant Fresh value-added line includes microwaveable vegetables and fresh-cut vegetables.

Johnson said Idaho Falls, Idaho-based Potandon Produce LLC, a sister company of The Sholl Group II, which has a licensing agreement with General Mills for Green Giant Fresh potatoes and onions, was not involved in the transaction.

