

Contact: Lara Grossman (831) 455-4157 larag@taproduce.com
Rick Antle (831) 455-3221 ricka@taproduce.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

After 25 Years, Tanimura & Antle is Still the Produce Industry's Leader in Quality and Innovation

SPRECKELS, Calif. (November 2007) – In 1982, two Salinas, California businessmen, Bob Antle and George Tanimura, shook hands on a deal that would forever impact the fresh vegetable industry, and thus, Tanimura & Antle was born. Referred to locally and by long-standing customers as simply “T&A”, the produce giant has been a leader in quality and innovation ever since.

Tanimura & Antle’s philosophy was deceptively simple: to become the “industry leader in quality, innovation, and grower, customer and employee relations.” In the beginning, this challenge was fairly straightforward. It meant keeping an unwavering eye on the finished product, whether it was a quality head of iceberg lettuce or developing a specialty pack of produce for a valued customer. The unrelenting focus ultimately paid off, for the company quickly earned the reputation for having the best quality fresh vegetables available year-round. Because of this dedication, Tanimura & Antle developed a staunchly loyal following of customers across the United States, Canada, and overseas.

The challenge would not stop there, however. Not one to rest, Tanimura & Antle pursued innovative ideas with passion. Countless farming techniques, from vertically integrated germination methods to water-conserving drip tape irrigation, were ambitiously adopted by the company. Unique vegetable cultivars were experimented with, farmed, and eventually launched with success, such as green cauliflower seed imported from the Netherlands, later marketed as Broccoflower™, and sweet Italian red onions that were bred to achieve sought-after color, size and sweetness. More recently, Tanimura & Antle took action to reduce their carbon footprint by unveiling their first “Clean Sky Blue” tractor.

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Fueled with biodiesel fuel, this brightly colored tractor is a small symbol of the company's ongoing commitment to innovation, the environment and sustainable agriculture. Regardless of any idea's success or failure, Tanimura & Antle has encouraged a culture of learning, tolerant of trial and error in the hopes of perfecting a process or product.

But as in the case in most businesses, it is the day-to-day details and the human interactions within the company's organizational machinery that drive a company's success. The two families' commitment to their business is legendary. Both the Tanimuras and the Antles are heavily involved in the company's daily operations, mentally and physically.

The Tanimura patriarch, 92-year-old George Tanimura, is in the office most days; otherwise, he travels to the fields to check on his crops. His brothers, Tommy, Johnny and Bobby (1929–2006) and Charlie (1916-2000) have always been by his side. Charlie's sons Gary and Keith, along with their uncles, Tommy and Johnny, continue to work actively on the farm. Jeannie and June Tanimura, Johnny's daughters, also work for the company. On the Antle side of the family, Bob Antle serves as co-chairman of the board (along with George Tanimura), and his sons Rick and Mike work as CEO and in harvest operations, respectively. Rick's son Brian is a management trainee currently involved in strategic crop management.

Approachable and supportive, both families expect a high level of commitment from their employees, but the rewards are significant: harvest employees are provided benefits that include 401(k) retirement plans, on-site pre-school child care managed by English-speaking instructors, and an opportunity for advancement unavailable in most other similarly labor-intensive companies. These innovative employment practices are par for the course at Tanimura & Antle, and help to explain the high employee retention rate.

Since 1982, the issues facing the fresh vegetable business sector have become more complex than simply producing a quality carton of head lettuce. Twenty-five years later, the issues are more severe.

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Rising production costs and food safety are at the top of the list. Both are being actively addressed by Tanimura & Antle at various levels, with the optimism of people who have seen more than their fair share of challenges. “It’s been a great twenty-five years, with a lot more excitement than I would have ever predicted,” said Rick Antle, CEO. “There have been many challenges that we’ve overcome. Painful at times, but in the end, we always triumph. I think that the saying about persistence, enthusiasm and horse-sense all contributing to success really summarizes our approach to this business.”

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About Tanimura & Antle:

Tanimura & Antle is an industry leader whose commitment to premium quality produce has remained strong since its formation in 1982. The Tanimura & Antle families combined more than 50 years of experience and knowledge to establish a produce company unrivaled in its quality products, innovation and dedication to growers, customers, consumers and employees. Today, as the largest independent lettuce grower/distributor in the U.S., Tanimura & Antle farms over 60,000 acres of rich, fertile farmland and ships a full line of premium fresh produce products through North America, Europe and Asia.

For more information, or to schedule an interview with a member of the Tanimura or Antle families, please contact Lara Grossman at (831) 455-4157 or larag@taproduce.com

For hi-res files of the below images, please contact Lara Grossman at (831) 455-4157 or larag@taproduce.com



George Tanimura, Bob Antle



George Tanimura, Gary Tanimura



Rick Antle