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Commissioner Gary Black Praises Royal Food Service as Early Adopter of Georgia Grown's Innovative Programs at Test Kitchen Meeting

Atlanta, Georgia (Thursday, July 23, 2015) - This meeting held at Royal Food Service was a remarkable opportunity for Royal to meet with key leaders at Georgia Grown (Georgia Dept. of Agriculture), the Georgia Dept. of Education, and school nutrition directors from across Georgia, who discussed Georgia Grown's Test Kitchen program. The program will be conducted at selected Georgia schools to help improve nutrition for students and minimize the complexity of meal preparation in school kitchens.

Georgia Grown's school nutrition coordinator, Misty Friedman, and Royal's schools coordinator, Katie Whitehurst, welcomed attendees and conducted the meeting. They discussed a variety of methods for getting responses from students and cafeteria personnel for innovative and time-saving recipes. Misty's husband, Richard Friedman, a former chef spoke about the recipes schools will be presenting as part of the Test Kitchen program and some of the challenges that cafeteria cooks encounter.

Georgia state nutrition director, Nancy Rice spoke briefly about the Farm to School program and the importance of keeping Georgia's farm produce in Georgia to benefit our local economy. Georgia state school superintendent, Richard Wood spoke about the complexities involved in preparing school meals and the need for education and encouragement in learning about growing produce and preparing nutritional meals.

Attendees were thrilled to hear from Georgia's agriculture commissioner, Gary W. Black who emphasized the importance of nutritional foods in Georgia's schools and hinted at a bold new Georgia Grown program soon to be launched. He referred to Rogers' study of the Diffusion of Innovation, describing how new ideas and innovations are accepted first by the innovators themselves (2.5%), early adopters (13%), majority adopters (34%), late adopters (34%), and laggards (16%). He referred to James Madison as an early adopter of the principles found in the U.S. Constitution, saying that Mr. Madison was ahead of his peers in understanding the value of its principles. He recognized Royal Food Service as an early adopter of Georgia Grown programs including Commissioner Black's brainchild program, "Feed My School," and more recently, the Georgia Grown Farmer Showcases and the Farm to Table Source Shows. He thanked Royal for understanding the value of the programs and embracing cultural change.

Finally, the day ended with a tour of Royal's coolers, its recently expanded facilities, and cleanrooms at FreshSense—Royal's new fresh cut processing division. Those who attended were pleased with the information received, the activities, and are looking forward to doing their part in the Test Kitchen

program. Royal stands ready to assist Georgia's school nutrition directors and in working further with Georgia Grown in these new and exciting endeavors.

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About the Georgia Department of Agriculture: The Georgia Department of Agriculture (GDA) is the voice of the state's agriculture community. The department's mission is to provide excellence in services and regulatory functions, to protect and promote agriculture and consumer interests, and to ensure an abundance of safe food and fiber for Georgia, America, and the world by using state-of-the-art technology and a professional workforce. For more information, visit www.agr.georgia.gov.

About Royal Food Service: Royal Food Service, now in its 20th years of business, carries a complete line of perishable products including fresh fruits and vegetables, certified organic, fresh dairy, shelled and liquid eggs, fresh juices, dried fruits and nuts, Kosher pickles, IQF fruits, purées from the Napa Valley, herbs, fresh olives, value-added fruit and vegetables, gourmet foods, a full line of specialty and seasonal produce and more. As a member of PRO*ACT, Royal can provide unparalleled quality and selection and this is supported by a quality control staff that guarantees your product from the "field to the plate."





