

THE HISTORY OF PATTERSON FARM, INC.

The Patterson Family has been growing produce since 1919 when James A. Patterson began growing vegetables. By 1941, James' crop consisted of about 30 acres of cotton and about three acres of tomatoes. That year boll weevils damaged most of his cotton crop. The following year, James decided to grow all 30 acres in tomatoes. In 1946, the family began growing tomatoes commercially under the name, James A. Patterson & Sons.

James and his wife, Berta Catherine Cauble, had 5 children, Betty Lou, Frank, Carl, Ann and Nancy. Sons Frank and Carl decided to continue the family business after each graduated from NC State and served in the Army.

On August 17, 1957 Carl married his sweetheart, Phyllis A. Graham. Her father Harold Graham was one of 13 Graham children that were in the dairy business. The current market and tour locations are on part of the original Harold Graham dairy farm.

Carl and Frank farmed together until 1979 when they decided to divide the farm. Carl and Phyllis formed Patterson Produce and Plant Farm. They raised tomatoes, strawberries, corn watermelons and cantaloupes as well as four children; Lisa, Randall, Douglas and Michael.

In 1982, son Randall returned to help the family farm after graduating from NC State with a degree in Agricultural Engineering. He helped implement on the farm the new procedures developed by NC State called "Plastic Culture" which involves growing crops on raised beds using drip irrigation with black plastic. Randall is primarily responsible for all field operations on the farm.

In 1992, the farm incorporated and became Patterson Farm, Inc.

In 1994, son Douglas and his wife, Michelle, decided to move back to the farm to help with the family business. Doug graduated in 1987 from NC State with a degree in Mechanical Engineering and had worked for 6 years in this field. Doug is currently responsible for overseeing the office, sales and packing house operations. Michelle worked in the office and began doing farm tours for groups and other marketing events for the farm. Doug and Michelle have 3 children, twins Claudia and Victoria, and Chloe.

In 1999, Randall's wife, Nora, gave up her nursing career to also help the family business. Nora assists in the office and handles insurance and workers compensations for the farm. Randall and Nora have two children, a son Taylor and a daughter Madisyn.

Carl and Phyllis officially retired in 1999 turning the farm operation over to Doug and Randall. They enjoyed staying active in their church and could often be found at the lake. Sadly, Carl passed away on June 11, 2004.

Currently, Patterson Farm, Inc. grows about 350 acres of tomatoes including mature green, vine ripe, cherry and roma tomatoes. In addition to growing tomatoes, we grade, pack and ship our tomatoes across the United States and Canada. Patterson Farm, Inc. is currently the largest tomato grower in the state of North Carolina. Our tomatoes are also sold at our market on Caldwell Road. We open some of our fields to the public to pick their own tomatoes. We offer educational tours during April and during the summer to teach children about the importance of farms as our food source and specifically about how tomatoes grow.

Patterson Farm, Inc. also grows about 25 acres of strawberries each year. Primarily, our strawberries are sold at local grocery stores, produce and farmer's markets, our roadside satellite locations and our market and pick your own strawberry field on Caldwell Road. Our strawberry season typically last from late April until early June. During the month of May we offer school tours that teach how we grow strawberries. We also offer many weekend events during the month of May that provide fun and entertainment for the entire family.

Fall is a very busy time on the farm! Patterson Farm, Inc. currently grows about 40 acres of pumpkins that are primarily used for our educational Pumpkin Patch tours and our fall weekend family events.

We also grow about 15,000 poinsettias each year that are available at our greenhouses on Millbridge Road. Most of our poinsettias are sold to local churches and businesses.

In 2003, Patterson Farm added a Farm Market at our pick your own fields on Caldwell Road. The market is open from April until mid-November. Hours vary by season. The market offers our seasonal produce as well as other local seasonal produce. In addition, the market has jams and jellies, dressings, salsas, unique gift items and baskets, and hand-dipped ice cream.

Throughout its history, Patterson Farm, Inc. has adapted to keep up with technology and the ever-changing consumer demands to keep it a viable farming operation. In a day that we see many family farms having to sell out, we are more determined than ever to insure the future of Patterson Farm, Inc. and its 250+ employees (during peak season).