



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Melinda Goodman  
FullTilt Marketing  
414-469-5524  
[melinda@fulltiltmarketing.net](mailto:melinda@fulltiltmarketing.net)

### **G&R Farms Expands Growing America's Farmers with New Retailers & Partners** Raises nearly \$113,000 for FFA Students in 22 States

**GLENVILLE, Ga., September 23, 2022:** During the months of May & June, G&R Farms partnered with Virginia Produce and Bushman's Inc., along with twelve regional and national retail operators throughout the United States to raise nearly \$113,000 in scholarship and grant funds for FFA students in 22 states through the Growing America's Farmer's (GAF) promotional program.

GAF is the brainchild of Walt Dasher, a third-generation southeast Georgia farmer and a strong advocate of Future Farmers of America (FFA). During the past five years the GAF program has already raised nearly \$263,000 for FFA member scholarships surpassing last year's record-breaking amount by over \$20,000.

Now more than ever, production agriculture is at a crossroads that requires all areas of the supply chain to be engaged and support future agriculture leaders that will grow the food needed to support a growing population that will need 70% more food by 2050.

Georgia Agriculture Commissioner Gary W. Black, a long-time supporter of the GAF program remarked, "The incredible growth we've seen in support for the Growing America's Farmers program highlights the importance of business partnerships at all levels and retailers' willingness to foster and create opportunities for students by supporting endeavors that could ultimately have a significant impact on our local, state, national, and global economy. The security of our food systems is central to this program so more we can highlight and encourage these types of partnerships, the more likely we are to maintain that security."

That food security in production agriculture is what Dasher is so passionate about when he talks about the next generation of farmers. "The average age of today's American farmer is close to retirement. If we don't invest in future farmers, who will we turn to, to grow our food in 20 years?" commented Dasher, vice president of G&R Farms. "We continue to attract, support and train tomorrow's agriculture leaders to fill this void and the FFA is one of the best resources to do this effectively."

Across the country, FFA is attracting and training those leaders. In fact, the National FFA Organization announced a record-high student membership number of 850,823, an increase of 15%



from last year. In addition, chapter numbers increased by 178, resulting in 8,995 chapters in the United States, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

“Our Team at Harris Teeter is proud to support local growers such as G&R Farms and Virginia Produce Company to help further our mutual mission of advancing produce consumption, agriculture development and the success of future generations of leaders. Harris Teeter is pleased to assist in providing access to our stores to enable and develop our FFA students into successful young adults, and to partner to provide resources to encourage the future generation of leaders to study agriculture locally. said Karin Humanik, Director of Produce for Harris Teeter.

Dasher closed by saying, “This year’s growth was incredible and the number of lives we can touch is extremely motivating! I’m humbled by our 2022 results and know that my family who started this farm generations ago, would be proud of our efforts and accomplishments as well.” Dasher continued, “The fact that other suppliers like Bushman’s, Virginia Produce and soon to come, a national poultry brand, also support this mission, proves we can change the course of food production and be part of the solution.”

Planning for the 2023 GAF program will begin in October and will include a promotion with a national retail poultry brand with events leading into National Farmers Day on October 12. Any retailer or grower-shippers interested in participating in the 2023 program should contact the G&R Sales team at (912) 654-2100 to discuss participating in the GAF program.

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### **About G&R Farms**

As a third-generation family farm, G&R Farms began in Southeast Georgia with a small farm in 1945. Today, the organization has grown to over 5,000 acres encompassing several crops with a main focus on sweet onions. G&R Farms has been growing, packing, marketing and shipping sweet onions for nearly seven decades. The company is dedicated to providing consistent quality year-round while perfecting the quality and flavor of sweet onions through research and development. For more information visit [www.grfarmsonions.com](http://www.grfarmsonions.com).

### **About National FFA Organization**

The National FFA Organization is a school-based national youth leadership development organization of more than 760,000 student members as part of 8,700 local FFA chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The FFA mission is to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education. For more, visit the National FFA Organization online at [FFA.org](http://FFA.org) and on Facebook and Twitter.