

Sweet Mama's Sweet Success

A collaboration and sustainability success story



Environmental Sustainability

The Opportunity

Help a leading watermelon company meet stringent retail expectations, while continually making its supply chain more efficient and sustainable.

The Solution

Partner with CHEP to use pooled pallets, pallet storage and managed recovery to eradicate empty miles and deliver on promises.



Back in 2007, three friends in the produce industry – Carr Hussey, Paul Nuzzo and George Melshenker – were ready for something new. Building on their decades of experience, the men launched the Sweet Mama watermelon company. The success they've enjoyed and knowledge gained is sweet: These industry vets have expanded business while enhancing their supply chain.

Sweet Mama initially shipped its juicy melons on white wood pallets. That worked, until large retail customers required 48x40-inch pooled (shared and reusable) pallets. Based on a retailer's suggestion, Sweet Mama called CHEP.



“With CHEP's storage program, having pallets on site is one detail I don't have to worry about. The pallets we need are right here in our backyard.”

— Carr Hussey
Co-Founder
Sweet Mama Produce

“Early on, I didn't really understand the CHEP program, but two years after we started with CHEP, we went with them 100 percent,” says Hussey, co-founder, Sweet Mama. “The CHEP pallet is simply better to ship on. It's food safe, there's a lot less damage, it stores in the warehouse better, and it's a consistent size.”

In 2018, with the partnership flourishing, Sweet Mama expanded its work with CHEP, joining the CHEP pallet storage program. Sweet Mama now stores more than 30,000 pallets on-site during the off season, so they're ready to go at harvest time.

“We used to have problems estimating how many pallets we'd need and when,” Hussey says. “The storage program has solved all those problems.”

Hussey, also a leader in the Florida Watermelon Association, has been in the produce industry more than 40 years, witnessing a true evolution in the supply chain. The farmers he works with have gone from packing watermelon in bulk, surrounded by straw, to using CHEP's pooled pallets.

Today, the progress continues. In 2019, Sweet Mama started using CHEP's managed recovery program. With this new program, Sweet Mama receives CHEP pallets directly from distribution centers and retailers; sorts them using CHEP quality standards; stores the pallets that pass the test; and returns the rest to CHEP for repair before reuse. With recovered and stored pallets on hand, Sweet Mama is eliminating waste, improving efficiencies and eradicating empty miles.

"We are in an agricultural business," Hussey says. "Our community has always taken care of the environment. I think CHEP does its part to help. When it comes to CHEP pallets, I'm a real believer."



To learn how CHEP's Environmental Sustainability Solutions can help you meet your profitability and sustainability goals, please contact us at:

www.chep.com 1-800-243-7255 goblue@chep.com

In eight years of partnership, Sweet Mama Produce has utilized 537,000 CHEP pallets and generated substantial sustainability savings.

- + Removed 228,235 pounds of carbon emissions from the atmosphere, the equivalent of planting and growing 2,685 trees for 10 years.
 - + Eliminated 302,471 pounds of solid waste from landfill.
 - + Cut out inefficiency and eradicated empty transport miles.
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Benefits customers have received from CHEP's Environmental Sustainability Solutions:

Testing at CHEP's Innovation Center helped Grimmway Farms reduce its CO₂ emissions by more than 1.23 million pounds.

Storing nearly 100,000 CHEP pallets on site, allowed Bottomley Evergreens to reduce waste and create off-season jobs.

Wholesum Harvest used money saved on reduced carbon output to build stoves for 30,000 families in Mexico.