

# Tru Difference

Foods that Make a Difference



## **Truitt Bros. Partners with Stahlbush Farms to Help Culver's Restaurants Add Seasonal Selections**

By Truitt Bros. staff  
January 19, 2012

Adding seasonal items to a restaurant menu can be a daunting task, especially if the menu is offered at hundreds of locations. If the necessary ingredients aren't readily and steadily available - at a reasonable price - restaurant operators can't afford to gamble.

Yet, by working with reliable partners, restaurants can expand their menus with seasonal and sustainable selections that tantalize diners' tastebuds and keep them coming back for more.

[Culver's](#), which operates almost 450 restaurants across the U.S., decided several years ago to add some seasonal flair to its popular frozen custard desserts by offering Pumpkin Spice Shakes, Pumpkin Cheesecake Concrete Mixers and Pumpkin Pecan Concrete Mixers during the holidays.

Unfortunately, heavy rains in the Midwest in recent years led to pumpkin shortages for many producers, making it challenging for Culver's to find a steady source. When the restaurant chain approached Truitt Brothers in 2010, Truitt's Midwest-based sales manager, Laurie Eckstein, knew exactly where to turn for pumpkins: [Stahlbush Island Farms](#), a 5,000-acre family farm and processing plant located near Truitt Bros. in Oregon's Willamette Valley.

Founded in 1985 by Bill and Karla Chambers, Stahlbush has grown pumpkins for about 20 years and is recognized as a leader in sustainable agriculture. In 1997, Stahlbush became the first farm to be Certified Sustainable by the Food Alliance. In 2009, Stahlbush completed construction of the first-of-its-kind biogas plant in North America, which produces approximately twice as much electricity as the farm and food processing plant use in a year.

As pioneers in sustainability, Truitt Bros., Stahlbush Island Farms and Culver's were ideal partners, but the success of their venture relied on one key factor: communication.

"Truitt Bros. has been doing this for so long that they know how important it is to communicate and plan ahead so that we could schedule planting and harvesting to accommodate Culver's needs," said Tina Galloway, director of agriculture operations at Stahlbush Island Farms. "Truitt Bros. also understands the importance of caring for the resources, for the land."

By collaborating with Stahlbush, Truitt Bros. was able to establish a new Food Alliance-certified supply chain for pumpkin. With Food Alliance certification and its state-of-the-art manufacturing equipment and packaging facility, Truitt's Special Products Division processed the pumpkin, which was seasoned with cane sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, cloves, allspice, and no additives or preservatives. The mix was packed in 104-ounce shelf-stable pouches, which is ideal for restaurants like Culver's.

"Preserving products for year-round use through safe natural methods and no additives or preservatives means that the product remains true to its real flavor and texture," said Peter Truitt, president and co-founder of Truitt Bros.

The pumpkin mix was shipped to Culver's restaurants across the country, where it was a big hit with customers during the fall season.

"Pumpkin has always been a popular flavor and guests are excited each fall when pumpkin-flavored items show up on the menu," said Jim Doak, executive chef and director of menu development for Culver Franchising System, Inc. "When Culver's experienced a shortage of pumpkin from our previous supplier, Truitt Bros. stepped in and saved the day. If you want to expand your menu, it's vital to establish strong partnerships and to think strategically when sourcing ingredients."

Truitt Bros. Pumpkin Pie & Shake Mix is available year-round. For more information, click [here](#).

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