

SOUTHERN ROOTS, GLOBAL REACH WITH MUSCADINE PRODUCTS CORPORATION

In the heart of South Georgia, nestled among 800 acres of vineyard in Irwin County, Muscadine Products Corporation (MPC) is turning a uniquely Southern grape into a global commodity.

Led by fifth-generation-farmer Chris Paulk, the family-run business has evolved from selling fresh produce to grocery stores into an innovative supplier of ingredients for cosmetics, supplements, and wellness products. Thanks to support from the Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD) and its Trade team, MPC is now taking antioxidant-rich muscadines to the world.

"What's commonplace around my house is exotic to these guys," says Paulk, who has introduced muscadine extract to ingredient buyers from Atlanta to Toronto. "They've never heard of a muscadine, but usually they are looking for something that's unique, new, and different, with anti-aging benefits or that formulates well."

Recognizing the potential in international markets, Paulk recalled thinking, "Well, I'm not going to find anybody by just sitting here." After joining the Trade team's email list, attending a few events, and learning more about trade opportunities, Paulk was hooked. "It's always a joy working with them," he said.

Although Paulk no longer remember how or when he first connected with GDEcD, he has leaned on GDEcD to navigate what can be a complex export process. For instance, when a customer needed a specific certificate of origin format, Paulk turned to the Trade team. "They said, 'Oh, I remember someone else had that issue, too. Go see these guys – they can help you with that particular kind of format.'"

Though MPC has already shipped to companies in Asia and North America, Paulk sees even

greater opportunity ahead. "One day the volume will be sufficient to put in a container – we want to ship container loads to those guys," he explains. "That's how much we can fill domestically."

The path hasn't been without challenges. "It's a long sales cycle. My products are formulated into other products – not direct-to-consumer sales," Paulk notes. Despite these hurdles, MPC's future is full of promise.

"On the local and regional front, we'd love to see our wine business expand – more distribution, more stores throughout the South," Paulk says. "In the ingredient business, I can see us working with companies making healthy natural products around the world."

Learn more about the services Georgia offers to local business at **Georgia.org/trade**.



Muscadine Extract Powder / MUSCADINEPRODUCTS.COM



The Georgia Department of Economic Development's nationally recognized Trade team works with Georgia-based small businesses like American Dakota to expand their global sales, making companies more resilient and creating opportunities for growth. The Trade team's services, ranging from market research to international connections, are provided at no cost to eligible Georgia businesses. **To learn more or connect with one of our trade team members, visit Georgia.org/trade.**

