



Scott Hudson
HUDSON PECAN
hudsonpecan.com



“FAMILY OWNED — GEORGIA GROWN.” THAT’S THE MOTTO

of the Hudson Pecan Company, the family owned business which has been around for 150 years in one form or another. What started out as a passion project now occupies a considerable expanse of Irwin County, Georgia, where the city of Ocilla is the county seat. Still very much a family business, the current enterprise is run by the founder’s grandson, Scott Hudson.

According to the University of Georgia Extension, Georgia is the nation’s largest producer of pecans, going back to the 1800s, accounting for at least a third of domestic production. An average pecan harvest in Georgia is about 88 million pounds, with which you could make 176 million pecan pies. Georgia’s pecans are considered part of the fruit industry; it supports approximately 13,000 jobs and contributes \$1.9 billion to the state’s economy each year.

Pecan pies are of course the most famous of the kernel’s by-products, but the nuts themselves are actually teeming with nutrients, containing about 19 vitamins and minerals. Pecan trees are native to North America, but it was French settlers who first baked pecan pies. Thank you, French settlers.

The pecan season runs from October through November, when pecans fall from trees in advance of the autumnal leaf drop. The nuts can be harvested as early as late September and occasionally as late as January. The timing depends on the variety of pecan as well as factors such as weather.

When did the company start?

The company was started by my dad in 1980; the former operation started with my grandfather. Originally the pecan trees that started the family tradition were dug up out of the creek bottoms surrounding the family farm. The nuts from those trees were used to help feed the livestock. My grandfather and dad began growing the business in the late ‘70s and early ‘80s into what it is today. As the export market has grown so have the farms as the need to export more pecans for the business became obvious.

Tell us about your business.

Our company processes, cleans, and prepares the product for export.

What are the upsides of exporting your product?

Exporting allows us to reach new, growing global markets. We can expand our brand and strategic reach by growing it outside of the USA.

How has exporting impacted your employees and your business outlook?

Exporting has allowed us to grow in ways never imagined. Our growth has allowed us to take on more employees and become a better corporate partner for our community and state.

Can you share any numbers and/or percentages of export sales versus domestic?

Export sales make up approximately 80 percent of our total sales.

How much land do you occupy?

We have approximately 2500 acres of farmland.

How much competition do you have?

Oh man... worldwide competition.

Are you strictly wholesale, or do you have retail sites as well?

We have a very small retail presence. (In August, Hudson Pecan posted on social media: “We are excited to announce our big news: We are expanding our storefront to offer home and gift items. Don’t worry — we will also still have all of our delicious pecans!”)

How difficult is exports?

I think it’s probably wise to take a look at why we export. We started to move a great deal of volume outside the country to try to help with the domestic price for our friends and family in the farming business. But a litany of things had to be overcome to successfully export. One of the ruling guidelines for customers going into this is how do you schedule a truck, what do you do with customs control, do you need fumigation... There are a mountain of hurdles that have to be overcome.

What is it like to work with the State of Georgia’s Economic Development Trade team?

They help put us in touch with people and customers that we can talk to in different countries. They have a business plan and ideas on how to reach tough markets that may have been off limits before.

Exporting pecans opens new global markets for Hudson Pecan, enhancing its brand presence and delivering high-quality, Georgia-grown products around the world. Despite this year’s harvest being interrupted by the unwelcome arrival of Hurricane Helene, Hudson Pecan looks to rise stronger than before side-by-side with the Ocilla-Irwin County community.



The Georgia Department of Economic Development’s nationally recognized Trade team works with Georgia-based small businesses like Hudson Pecans 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.**

