

# Taylor & Fulton packinghouse sold

A trio with deep roots in tomato sales buys the Palmetto, Fla., site.

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PALMETTO, Fla. — Retaining its name and label, Taylor & Fulton's longtime tomato sales manager and a major tomato grower and another grower are buying the company's Palmetto packinghouse.

Ed Angrisani, a 30-year tomato sales veteran who has sold tomatoes for Taylor & Fulton since the early 1980s; Jim Grainger, owner of Grainger Farms and co-owner of Tomatoes of Ruskin Inc., Ruskin; and citrus and vegetable grower Brian Turner, are buying the packing operation.

Though the new owners are changing the Taylor & Fulton Inc. name to Taylor & Fulton Packing LLC, the new partners plan to keep packing mature greens and roma tomatoes in the recognized Taylor & Fulton label.

Neither the new owners nor Jay Taylor, Taylor & Fulton's president, would disclose financial details of the purchase, to become effective March 1.

The sale of Taylor & Fulton's Palmetto packing shed comes as the 54-year-old grower and packer announced it was selling its Immokalee Tomato Man Inc. packinghouse to Immokalee-based Six L's Packing Co. Inc. Six L's had already moved into the building, Taylor said.

Sales of Taylor & Fulton's other packinghouses in Quincy and Mappsville, Va., were also in process, Taylor said.

Angrisani, a self-employed salesman, has also sold tomatoes for Miami-based Gulfstream Tomato Growers Ltd., Tomato Man and Taylor & Fulton's North Florida Tomato Inc., Quincy.

"I'm just happy that Taylor & Fulton is being perpetuated," Angrisani said. "I'm real happy with the people I have partnered up with because they're aggressive people. The tomato business is all I know. This will be a great mix of people."

The new operation plans to pack tomatoes from October through mid-June from

Grainger's and Turner's Palmetto and Immokalee production.

Though he plans to stop packing his tomatoes at Tomatoes of Ruskin after the winter season, Grainger, who has been a stockholder in the company since 1991, said he plans to remain friends but a competitor with that company's Dickman and Diehl family owners.

Turner, a sod grower who expanded to vegetables and recently into tomato production, partners with Wiers Farm Inc. in

Willard, Ohio, in his 1,800 acres of bell peppers, cucumbers, squash, eggplant and other vegetables grown in Manatee and Sarasota counties through Wiers-Turner Farms, Palmetto. Turner separately has 600 acres of tomatoes.

The new company's partners declined to state its tomato acreage or expected volume but said it would be similar to Taylor & Fulton's volume.

Taylor said he's enthused by the sale.

"The guys coming in here are young and ambitious people with good reputations," he said. "They have a good standing in the community. It's quite a compliment that they want to maintain the Taylor & Fulton identity."

Taylor said he was especially pleased that many of the company's key personnel were expected to continue working with the new owners.

The purchase does not involve Taylor & Fulton's East Coast tomato acreage. Taylor said he planned to stop growing tomatoes on that land in February and

transition the land into a property management and leasing company.

Turner, however, is leasing some of Taylor & Fulton's Manatee County acreage for tomato production.

Angrisani has also sold tomatoes for Pacific Tomato Growers Ltd., Palmetto, and the DiMare Co.

In June of 2005, Angrisani and Jay Taylor and his brother, John Taylor, took ownership control of Tomato Man when they together bought the half owned by Tomato Man's retired former co-owner, Bill O'Quinn.



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Tomato sales veteran Ed Angrisani (from right), sales manager for Taylor & Fulton Inc.; Jim Grainger, owner of Grainger Farms and co-owner of Tomatoes of Ruskin Inc., Ruskin, Fla.; and Brian Turner, a Palmetto, Fla., tomato and vegetable grower, have bought Taylor & Fulton's Palmetto packinghouse.