

“Addressing American’s Supply Chain Crisis”

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2021 has been a challenging year for all Americans but from my perspective I would like to express some of the problems and difficulties we have faced and are continuing to face. In the beginning of the year we experienced increasing prices on most all of our inputs due to the increase oil prices this includes our mulch, drip, green house covers, also the increase cost of propane, diesel fuel, gasoline, and ag chemicals and fertilizer. We were forced to order our packaging supplies: boxes, pallets, wrap, foam and any other shipping type supplies, several months in advance in order to be able to have them when we start harvest. This is difficult to do not know what kind of crop and what the weather condition hold for the upcoming season. Packaging cost went up an approximately 25 percent. After ordering months in advance we had difficulty getting the inputs as ordered we would have to wait days-weeks to get our products. By having to do this it left me with an inventory of \$100,000, this money could have been used for upkeep or salaries. Many of the products we use in our operation is not available until long after we needed it, we had to resort to other ways and products to make our operation run to fit the FDA, USDA, and OSHA standards. When harvest time arrived we had trouble with transportation of our produce to the produce markets and distribution centers. My business partner and I determined the only way to help insure our tomatoes and pepper be delivered was to get into the trucking business. We made this decision based upon 1. No Trucks available to haul produce, 2. No drivers willing to work even though there may have been trucks available to haul, 3. Freight rates got so out of hand us or our customers could not afford to pay what some of the truckers were asking.

Fast forward to the 2022 crop year still facing the same issues , increase prices of almost all our inputs, long time wait for delivery, the uncertainty of being able to obtain our products when needed. I have had a tractor in the shop for 2 months trying to get it fixed but unable to get it repaired because they were unable to get the parts that is needed (a common make and model tractor). My son has been trying for several months to purchase a farm truck but none are available. A local mechanic ordered a radiator for one of our tractors and said it would be May before he could get it from that distributor. Fertilizer purchased this fall is close to 500/ton more than this time last year, the reason giving to me can’t get the inputs delivered and oil prices are higher. All of this and the price we receive for our products are not going up. We have to compete with the greenhouse industry and foreign producers that don’t have to be put to the same standards we have.

In general we are over regulated to a breaking point. Labor issues, Food Safety regulations, Supply chain and distribution issues are putting us out of business. Do we want all our food supply chain in the hands of foreign governments, and large corporations that will dictate what we must pay? Wake up before it is too late!