

Summer 2026



Fruit *for* Thought



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Schools

Wawona Delivers Healthy, Delicious Frozen Fruit Solutions for School Nutrition Programs

Every school year, Wawona Frozen Foods helps nourish millions of students across the country with wholesome, delicious frozen fruit. As a long-time supplier to the USDA National School Lunch Program, Wawona provides nearly 100 million fruit cups and pops annually, giving students a convenient, nutritious serving of peaches, strawberries, mixed berries, and other premium fruits.

"The USDA school lunch program is near and dear to what we do. It's incredibly important and has been a cornerstone of our business for decades," said Bill Smittcamp, President and CEO of Wawona Frozen Foods.

Wawona has been an innovator in school nutrition since 1988, when it introduced the first frozen peach entrée to the USDA school meal program. Unlike many processed fruit products, Wawona's peaches are never cooked or packed in heavy syrup, helping preserve their natural flavor and nutritional value. Each serving is also fortified with Vitamin C. ➔

School Nutrition Programs

Continued

Wawona Fruits – A Favorite Choice in Odessa

One of Wawona's school district partners is the Ector County Independent School District in Odessa, Texas. Serving approximately 30,000 students across 38 campuses, the district purchases Wawona's strawberry and mixed berry fruit cups as a regular part of its school meal program.

Daniel Ramirez, Lead Dietitian for School Nutrition at Ector County ISD, says Wawona products have become a favorite among both students and cafeteria staff. "We serve about 17,000 breakfasts and 19,000 lunches every day, and our students really enjoy the fruit cups as one of their lunch fruit options," Ramirez said.

He also appreciates how straightforward the products are to manage in a busy school nutrition operation. "Handling them is very easy

because we have walk-in freezers. Pulling the cups and setting them out is simple. Overall, they're one of our staff's favorite products to work with because they're so convenient."

Ramirez added that the district has also served Wawona's Peach Chamango Fruit Pops, which proved to be another popular offering with students.

The Wawona School Menu

In addition to the fruit cups, Wawona offers schools a growing portfolio of nutritious, convenient 100% fruit products designed to simplify foodservice while giving students healthy choices they enjoy.

Wawona's school product lineup includes:

- **100% Real Fruit Pops** – Naturally sweet frozen treats made with real fruit, available in Peach, Strawberry, Mixed Berry, and Peach Chamango flavors.

- **IQF (Individually Quick Frozen) Bagged Fruit** – Ready-to-use frozen fruit for smoothies, parfaits, fruit salads, and other healthy menu applications with minimal preparation and virtually no waste.
- **Açaí Bowls and Cups** – Packed with antioxidants and nutrients, these tasty grab-and-go options are a student favorite.
- **Bakery Favorites** – Including Peach Cobbler and Fruit-A-Roo's, offering delicious fruit-forward dessert options for school menus.

For more than three decades, Wawona Frozen Foods has partnered with school nutrition professionals to make serving healthy fruit easy and cost-effective. By combining premium fruit with innovative frozen food solutions, Wawona continues to help schools provide nutritious meals that students love.



For more information about Wawona's complete line of frozen fruit products for schools, contact:

West Coast

Bradley Smittcamp:
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Southwest

Bob Landes:
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Or visit
wawona.com/market-segments/schools

Wawona Leads the Way in Innovation

An Interview with Maria Ferrell, R&D Sales Manager

Innovation doesn't happen by accident. Behind every new product, customer collaboration, and fresh ideas is a team of people working to bring those concepts to life. At Wawona Frozen Foods, Maria Ferrell plays a key role in making that happen.



As the R&D Sales Manager, Maria connects sales, research and development, and customer partnerships to help transform ideas into products that consumers can enjoy. Whether she's meeting with customers, reviewing products in the lab, or leading her team through the next stage of development, her focus is always on what's next.

No Two Days Are Alike

"There really isn't a typical day," Maria shared when asked what her role looks like. Her days are a balance of managing customer relationships, overseeing innovation, and keeping projects moving forward. On the sales side, she manages a pipeline of opportunities, especially during the busy peach season – while ensuring accurate planning and forecasting. She also meets regularly with retail partners and customers to discuss product offerings, strengthen relationships, and identify opportunities for future innovation.

Beyond sales, Maria works closely with Wawona's Research & Development team, overseeing formulas being developed in the lab and helping guide projects from concept to commercialization. She also leads the innovation team, providing direction and support while encouraging new ideas that continue to move Wawona forward. ➔

Advantages of Choosing Wawona Fresh Frozen Fruits

Picked at Peak Ripeness for Superior Flavor and Nutrition

Wawona fruit is harvested at its optimal maturity – typically 3–4 days later than fruit picked for the fresh retail market. By freezing the fruit shortly after harvest, Wawona locks in its naturally vibrant flavor, color, texture, and nutrients.

Available Year-Round with No Prep Required

Wawona's ready-to-use frozen fruit is available in every season and eliminates the need for washing, peeling, slicing, or pitting, helping schools and foodservice operations reduce labor while serving consistent, high-quality fruit every day.

Virtually Zero Waste

Unlike fresh fruit, Wawona's frozen fruit won't bruise, over-ripen, or spoil before it's used. Operators can use exactly what they need and then reseal the package, reducing food waste and maximizing their food budget.

Better Taste and Nutrition Than Many Processed Alternatives

Unlike many canned fruit products that are packed in heavy syrup or sugary purée and can lose flavor during processing, Wawona's fresh frozen fruits retain their natural taste, texture, and nutritional value – delivering a fresh-picked fruit experience students and consumers enjoy.

Innovation

Continued

Bringing New Ideas to Life

For Maria, innovation isn't just about creating something new – it's about creating something meaningful.

Her team is currently developing several exciting products, including a protein-enriched smoothie bag designed for big-box retailers, as well as individual peach, pear, and berry crisps that expand Wawona's growing product portfolio. Looking ahead, they're also exploring a functional frozen fruit bite and a line of functional ice pops infused with electrolytes and vitamins, combining convenience with added nutritional benefits.

Collaboration Sparks Innovation

Many people assume new products begin with a brainstorming session in the lab, but Maria says some of the company's best ideas actually begin with its customers. "In my experience, the best ideas come from a true collaborative session with the customer."

Rather than working independently, Maria believes innovation is strongest when ideas are shared. She often introduces an initial concept, then works through customer feedback until the idea evolves into a product that meets both consumer needs and market demand. That collaborative process has become a cornerstone of Wawona's approach to innovation.

Dreaming Big

When asked which product she would create if the sky's the limit – with no equipment or budget limitations. Maria's eyes lit up: "I would love to see Wawona enter the frozen dessert category with a signature peach sorbet or a peaches-and-cream ice cream. These are two products that would showcase our premium fruit in an entirely new way."

Looking toward the future, Maria hopes Wawona continues to be recognized as an industry leader built on innovation and strong partnerships.



Her Peachy Favorite

Outside of work, Maria's favorite way to enjoy peaches is much simpler than the products she develops each day. She loves making a quick peach cobbler with Wawona's Signature Sliced Peaches – a family favorite that's easy to prepare and even easier to enjoy together.

From meetings with customers to product launches, Maria's work is helping to shape the future of Wawona Frozen Foods. Her passion for innovation, commitment to collaboration, and ability to turn ideas into reality continue to strengthen Wawona's partnerships and drive the company forward – one new product at a time.



"Five years from now, I hope Wawona is known for being the most sought-after frozen fruit manufacturing partner because of our cutting-edge innovation and our ability to execute new ideas."

Maria Ferrell

A Conversation with Wawona's Quality Assurance Director



Every bag, cup and package of frozen fruit that leaves Wawona Frozen Foods represents a commitment to safety, consistency, and quality. While much of their work happens behind the scenes, the Quality Assurance team plays a critical role in ensuring every product meets Wawona's high standards, as well as the USDA and government food safety regulations, before it reaches consumers, foodservice operators, industrial customers, etc.

We sat down with Ben Rodriguez, the Director of Quality Assurance to learn more about what the team does, why it matters, and how their work helps deliver products customers can trust.



Ben Rodriguez

For somebody outside of the food industry, what exactly does the quality assurance team do?

Ben said the Quality Assurance team is responsible for ensuring every product is safe by the time it reaches store shelves and ultimately reaches consumers.

He added that food safety is the team's top priority, but consistency is just as important. The Quality Assurance team works to ensure every product meets Wawona's specifications, so customers receive the same high-quality product every time. This includes inspecting factors such as size, color, and defects to verify that each batch meets company standards. By carefully monitoring these details throughout production, the team helps provide customers with a reliable product they can trust.

What does quality mean to you?

Ben described it as maintaining the highest standards in every product Wawona produces. That means that quality begins with food safety, which is always the team's top priority. Beyond food safety, he believes quality means delivering a product customers can depend on every time.

What are some common misconceptions people make about food safety or frozen foods?

Ben explained that many consumers believe freezing kills harmful pathogens. In reality, freezing doesn't eliminate them – it simply slows their growth. That's why food safety practices remain just as important with frozen products as they are with fresh ones.

Another common misconception, Ben said, is that frozen fruit is less nutritious than fresh fruit. He explained that the freezing process helps lock in nutrients, allowing frozen fruit to maintain much of its nutritional value while significantly extending its shelf life. Because of this, frozen fruit serves as a convenient, affordable, and nutritious alternative to fresh fruit. ➔

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"Quality for me is that reliability – that we're doing the same thing, using the same processes, following the same procedures, and making a recognizable product every single time for our customers."

Ben Rodriguez

Quality Assurance

Continued

What are some of the certifications or audits Wawona maintains and why are they important?

Ben explained that Wawona follows several important food safety and quality standards. The company is certified under SQF (Safe Quality Food), which is part of the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) and serves as a recognized food safety standard for food manufacturers around the world.

In addition, Wawona is certified organic through QAI (Quality Assurance International) and certified kosher through the Orthodox Union (OU). Ben also shared that the company has recently begun expanding its efforts in social compliance, including work with SEDEX (Supplier Ethical Data Exchange), as part of its continued commitment to responsible business practices.

How do you think food safety has changed over the last 10 to 20 years?

Ben said the most dramatic changes in food safety occurred after the implementation of the Food Safety Modernization Act in 2016. These regulations require manufacturers to focus on every stage of the production process, ensuring food safety is built into each step rather than addressed after problems occur.

He said the other big change is due to higher customer expectations, which are demanding more audits that are even more rigorous than

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“These programs can be a selling point helping companies to stand out from the competition. They show customers that you are going above and beyond.”

Ben Rodriguez

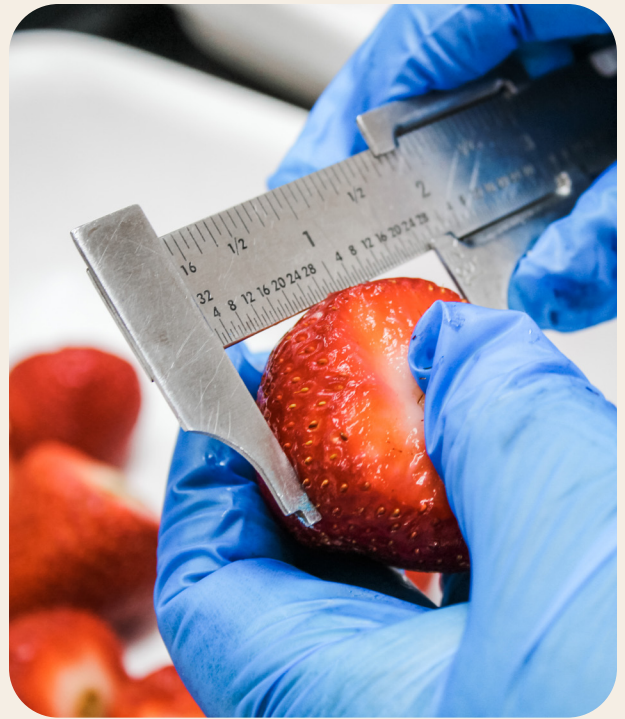
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national certification standards. As expectations continue to evolve, Wawona remains committed to meeting and exceeding both regulatory and customer requirements.

Is there one thing you wish every employee knew about quality assurance?

Ben said he hopes people understand that food safety starts with the small, everyday habits. He believes products should be handled with the same level of care employees would use in their own homes – washing hands, keeping equipment clean, and ensuring food never comes into contact with anything that could compromise its safety.

Ben emphasized that while Wawona processes millions of pounds of fruit each year, every bag is ultimately destined for someone’s table. “It’s easy to forget that all those millions



of pounds of fruit are going through somebody,” he shared. “Everything you touch, somebody else is going to eat.” Keeping that perspective helps the team stay focused on producing safe, high-quality products that families can trust.

Conclusion

Although much of their work takes place behind the scenes, the Quality Assurance team is involved in every step of the process. From maintaining rigorous food safety standards to ensuring every bag of fruit meets Wawona’s quality expectations, Ben and the entire QA team help deliver products customers can trust. Their commitment serves as a reminder that quality isn’t just a department, it’s a responsibility shared throughout the company.





A Presidential Passion for Peaches

Then and Now

In honor of America's 250th anniversary, we're looking back at two U.S. presidents with a documented love of peaches, before introducing another president who knows a thing or two about great fruit: Wawona Frozen Foods President & CEO Bill Smittcamp.



Theodore Roosevelt: A Presidential-Sized Appetite

Theodore Roosevelt, 26th U.S. President, was known for his larger-than-life personality, adventurous spirit and, apparently, an impressive appetite for peaches.

In 1872, a teenage Roosevelt wrote home about a trip to Lenox, Mass., where he polished off 24 peaches and eight sandwiches along the way. His appreciation for the fruit clearly stuck with him. Years later, Roosevelt referenced his fondness for California peaches in his own writing, and peach trees were among the fruits grown at Sagamore Hill, his longtime home in New York.



Thomas Jefferson: A Peach Pioneer

Long before Roosevelt, Thomas Jefferson was cultivating his own passion for peaches at his home in Monticello, Va. Jefferson, the 3rd U.S. President was an enthusiastic gardener and fruit grower who experimented with hundreds of fruit trees.

Peaches held a particularly special place in his orchard. His South Orchard included 38 varieties of peaches, more varieties than any other fruit grown there, and Jefferson actively sought out new and exceptional peach varieties from around the world. In an 1815 letter, Jefferson summed up the abundance at Monticello perfectly: "We abound in the luxury of the peach." More than two centuries later, we can certainly appreciate the sentiment.



**"Wawona's best item is our
Signature Sliced Peaches, packed
in the best peach fruit syrup that
makes the flavor POP!"**

Bill Smittcamp, President & CEO
Wawona Frozen Foods



And Then There's Wawona's Own President... Bill Smittcamp

Of course, you do not have to look all the way back through American history to find a president who loves peaches. Wawona's President Bill Smittcamp has spent a lifetime surrounded by them. A second-generation leader of the family business, Bill grew up in the orchards founded by his father, Earl Smittcamp, and has helped grow Wawona into one of the nation's leading frozen fruit producers.

So, after a lifetime of peaches, which one earns the president's seal of approval? Bill doesn't hesitate: Wawona's Signature Sliced Peaches.

From Jefferson's orchards to Roosevelt's legendary appetite to generations of the Smittcamp family, one thing is clear: Great peaches have always had a way of winning over presidents.

Premium Frozen Fruit Solutions

*From Our Orchard
to Your Table*



View Wawona's Produce
Brochures, Sell Sheets & More

(559) 299-2901

Wawona.com



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