

Keep your ears peeled for a crop full of excitement from Bland Farms

As Bland Farms embarks on a voyage to the Southeast Produce Council's Southern Exposure Show on March 2, they head to the Final Frontier with stars in their eyes. And one southern star, in particular, will be lighting up booth No. 1033.

This year, one of the United States' largest grower/packer/shipper of sweet onions will kick off its presence at the 2023 SEPC Southern Exposure Show with its new Southern Stars Promotion featuring country music star Billy Currington.

"Billy is a Savannah boy. He loves the outdoors. Loves Southern cooking. And his first concert was held at the Vidalia Onion Festival. So, when we were creating a promotion for this year's Vidalia season, teaming up with Billy just seemed like the perfect fit," said Troy Bland, CEO of Bland Farms. The collaboration with the Southern crooner seamlessly aligns with the Glennville, GA, family-owned farm that's 'rooted in tradition.'"

In October, Bland Farms unveiled its upcoming Billy Currington Promotion with a concert at The Global Floral & Produce Show. Currington performed for nearly 100 trade guests of Bland Farms. But that's just the start of what's set to become a sensational promotion between the two Southern Stars.

Bland Farms will be rolling out the promotion nationwide to retailers in April with ticket giveaways promoted on packages of Vidalia Sweet Onions and point-of-sale materials to promote Currington's upcoming tour. Aimed at generating excitement for all ages, Bland said, "Our spring 2023 promo hits all the right notes — a celebrity endorsement by country music superstar Billy Currington, plus high-impact bulk displays and packaging with digital drivers to concert sweepstakes and delicious recipes. We are looking forward to giving retailers the opportunity for a BIG, fun, interactive and memorable shopping experience."

Bland Farms is eager to share more about the upcoming promotion, collaboration, and of course, produce at the SEPC. "We look forward to welcoming attendees to the SEPC show in March at our booth (No. 1033). Between the Southern Stars with Billy Currington Promotion and our new crop of Vidalias, we have a lot of exciting things on the horizon," said Bland.

A new crop of Vidalias looks very promising. "The crop looks great this year, and the onions are available in all sizes. Currently, we continue to bring in onions each week from Peru and Mexico, and they are held fresh and packed to order," said Bland. This year marks the company's 75th anniversary. As they gear up for their biggest season of the year, they continue to rely on what has worked for three generations — innovation through the generations. For Bland Farms, a large part of innovation lies in sustainability. "We understand the importance of taking care of our land and people because it allows us to deliver the highest quality sweet onions and sweet potatoes," said Bland.

"We are constantly asking ourselves, 'how?' How can we deliver a more consistent product? How can we provide a better customer experience? We also challenge our ways of doing things by asking ourselves, 'what?' What do our customers want? What is coming next?" said Bland. For Bland Farms, sustainability and innovation are not just buzzwords. It's what drives their core values. From its state-of-the-art controlled atmosphere facility that changed the way the company processes onions to innovative investments to cut carbon emissions and create sustainable packaging, Bland Farms "Must Be Doin' Somethin' Right!" as they boldly go where produce has never gone before.



In honor of the upcoming Vidalia Sweet Onion season, here's one of Billy Currington's favorite recipes to spark creativity in your kitchen.

BILLY'S SUMMER SHRIMP SHISH KABOBS

INGREDIENTS

- 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 2 lbs. shrimp, peeled and deveined
- Cherry tomatoes
- 1 each green, red and yellow bell peppers, cut in chunks
- 2 Vidalia onions, peeled and cut in chunks
- 8 skewers*
- For basting, Vidalia Brands Creamy Vidalia Sweet Onion Dressing

PREPARATION

1. Coat grill rack with nonstick cooking spray. Preheat grill to high heat.
2. Thread shrimp and veggies on skewers until all ingredients are skewered.
3. Grill kabobs, basting generously with Vidalia Sweet Onion Dressing. Turn kabobs frequently until slightly charred and until shrimp are pink.

**If using bamboo skewers, soak in water at least 30 minutes before grilling to prevent burning.*

