



Riverdale Farms: 40 years of floral success

This Miami-based company thrives by offering quality, service and environmental and social stewardship.

Founded in 1973, Riverdale Farms was one of the first flower trading companies in the United States. Today, with access to 500+ acres of floral crops and growing, Riverdale celebrates its 40th anniversary this year.

How does a company succeed for 40 years?

“You don’t thrive in this industry by taking shortcuts,” says **Luis Balcazar**, president of Riverdale Farms. “You do it the hard way—customer by customer, flower by flower, employee by employee—with an unyielding determination and a frequent hard look in the mirror, asking, ‘What can

we do better?’ and learning from our successes and mistakes.”

And what does Riverdale Farms do better?

quality

Riverdale Farms started as a carnation importer, and later expanded its line to include a wide range of products. In the beginning, it focused on sales to leading wholesalers in the United States and Canada, then expanded to serve the mass market.

Today, Riverdale Farms’ signature *Alstroemeria*, carnation and mini carnation crops are produced in Colombia, while the group’s diverse line of roses, fillers and novelty flowers are produced in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Costa Rica, Holland and other countries. Partnerships with carefully selected third-party farms give Riverdale Farms access to hundreds of additional acres of floral crops.

Luis says Riverdale Farms also offers one of the widest selections of novelty carna-



The company considers its employees its greatest asset.

President Luis Balcazar is shown with award-winning Alstroemeria from Riverdale Farms.





HEADQUARTERS Miami, Fla.

PRODUCTS *Alstroemerias, roses, carnations, mini carnations, fillers, novelty flowers, bouquets and consumer bunches*

PRESIDENT Luis Balcazar

DIRECTOR, SALES & MARKETING

Sandy Jahnke

CONTACT 1401 NW 84th Ave.

Miami, Fla. 33126

(800) 833-3161

WEBSITE www.riverdalefarms.com

tions and mini carnations in the industry.

The company's farms have experts with PhD's in post harvest on contract. Together with the farms, they've implemented next generation chain-of-life pre and post harvest practices. The company's related farms also follow these same rigorous quality control practices. In addition, the Riverdale group maintains complete control of farm-to-Miami distribution and transport, and invests additional labor and resources into specialized packing methods designed to minimize potential damage and product loss.

personalization

Each customer has a dedicated account manager to coordinate all the necessary support groups in Miami and at the farm level. These groups include custom-designed sales and marketing programs; custom-designed packs, bouquets and consumer bunches; custom packaging; in-store training; point-of-purchase materials; category management; and merchandising.

Products can be cut at the stage of development preferred by each customer, packed in any color or variety assortment and shipped in any size box. Riverdale Farms also personalizes the number of stems per bunch based on customers' requirements. Flexible customer service allows supermarkets and wholesalers to

design their own boxes based on the needs of their customers and various markets they serve.

environmental awareness

The Riverdale group puts a strong emphasis on protecting the environment and did so long before it became the trend. Luis says it is one of only two floral companies in the United States to receive an EPA award (in 2007) for environmental excellence.

Today, the Riverdale group continues to run an environmentally conscious operation:

- More than 60 percent of water used in the farms' greenhouses is reclaimed and recycled. Technology designed to better control soil humidity and watering needs decreases water consumption by 30 percent.

- Carnation and *Alstroemeria* farms recycle wood cuttings and organic materials from flower beds and convert them to pulp for manufacturing packing and shipping boxes.

- The rose farms reclaim organic waste and convert it to compost for flower beds.

- Other Riverdale programs include soil management, reduced energy consumption and organic biological controls to reduce pesticides.

social responsibility

The Riverdale group considers its more than 3,000 employees in Colombia and the United States its greatest asset. "We believe the equation is simple: If our people aren't thriving, then we're not thriving," Luis says.

Farm workers are paid more than what is required by law, Luis explains. Workers have family benefits, full health care and day care, education for their children, occupational therapy, mental health benefits, physicians, dentists, psychologists and social workers. They have recreation, sports centers and activities, learning centers for general interest education, workplace training,

continuing education, leadership training and professional skills training. The farms also provide cooperative shops, savings plans and home acquisition aid programs.

Riverdale Farms has dedicated decades to building a company that supplies not only a personalized, quality product produced in environmentally friendly conditions but also one that ensures its customers feel good about where their dollars go next.

Company Profile



Riverdale Farms offers one of the widest selections of novelty carnations and mini carnations in the industry.



The farm reintroduced native grasses and plants to create this multiacre bird sanctuary, which has attracted flocks of native birds.



Carnations are grown in this state-of-the-art greenhouse.