



Special to The Herald

For the past four decades, Simmons Farm Raised Catfish has continued to grow in its commitment to give the world a quality product, a product that speaks for itself. And with the majority of its employees hometown folks, Simmons Catfish represents Yazoo pride in every box of its delicious catfish.

Four decades of Simmons Catfish quality

By **JAMIE PATTERSON**
Editor & Publisher

Quality. That is the best word to describe the product and the people behind Simmons Farm Raised Catfish. For the past four decades, the local company has continued to grow in its commitment to give the world a quality product, a product that speaks for itself.

"I am proud and fortunate that something

my family started 40 years ago has grown into a successful business here in our community," said owner Harry Simmons. "We hope our name is the gold standard in the catfish industry for quality, service, and consistent flavor. Our customers know when they see the Simmons name that they are getting the best."

And with the majority of its employees home-

town folks, Simmons Catfish represents Yazoo pride in every box of its delicious catfish.

The local facility handles every aspect of its product from the pond to the plate, covering farming to processing to distribution of the entire operation. Shank fillets, fillet strips, fillet nuggets, whole catfish, catfish steaks, breaded catfish, marinated fillets and even hushpuppies are shipped out.

There are also fresh and frozen packaging options available for any request.

And you can find Simmons Catfish just about anywhere.

"It began with local restaurants here in Yazoo City and surrounding areas that evolved into our product being sold at numerous retail and foodservice operations throughout the Southeast," Simmons said "Some of

these include Kroger, Cracker Barrel, Cock of the Walk, and Moss Creek Fish House, but it can still be found locally here at Kaye's. We have a full list of customers and retailers on our website. We also ship catfish all over the country through our webstore."

Employing about 200 employees, many are from the Yazoo County area. And Simmons added that there are

about 60 positions still available. Employing local people has been one of the biggest rewards for him in the industry.

"We were able to establish a business in my hometown that employed local people that could earn a good wage," he said. "Many people that I went to high school and college with have worked here. These employees are a

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Simmons (from page 7B): 60 positions remain available at facility

huge part of the Simmons Catfish history.”

But Simmons admits there have been challenges in their four-decade history. But perseverance has been the secret to tackling those obstacles.

“Starting in what was a relatively new industry, we were faced with many challenges,” he said. “Some of those being the acquisition of capital, recruiting and training productive employees, developing a market plan, complying with many state

and federal regulations, the competition of imported fish, the fabrication of processing equipment adapted to the catfish species, and the flood of 2011. With each of these challenges, we have found a way to persevere and create a company that is known for its quality.”

And the future looks bright for Simmons Catfish with new products and operation methods.

“We see a strong future with our next gen-

eration of management continuing to build on the brand that we have built,” Simmons said. “We are excited about some of our newer products including fillet bites and fillet portions. Also, we are working on vacuum packing catfish to enhance the shipping in our webstore. Hopefully we can continue to grow our webstore volume.”

Looking back over its history and the future potential, one thing re- See **Simmons**, Page 11B

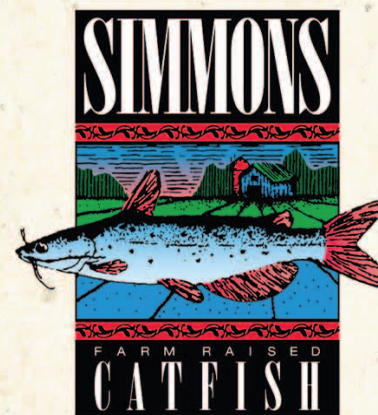


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Simmons (from page 7B): Simmons said he appreciates the community's support

mains steady for Simmons. The level of quality behind every box with its name on it.

"We hope our name is the gold standard in the catfish industry for quality, service, and consistent flavor," Simmons said.

"Our customers know when they see the Sim-

mons name that they are getting the best."

"I have lived in Yazoo my whole life and couldn't be where I am today without the support of the entire community," he added.

"We have been lucky to have a great local bank. Bankplus has guided and assisted us

along the way, plus the support of many local restaurants and retailers promoting our product. We hope that Yazooans have a shared sense of pride when they see a box of our catfish. They can know they played a role in getting this product where it is today."

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