

A.V. THOMAS PRODUCE

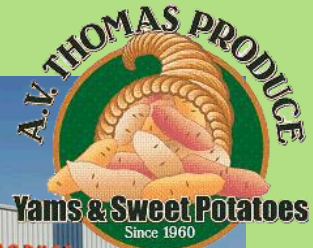


LIVINGSTON, CA

SINCE 1960

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**YAMS &
SWEET POTATOES**



A.V. Thomas Produce is one of America's leading suppliers of fresh conventional and certified organic sweet potatoes and yams in the United States. The company **was founded by Antonio Vieira Tomas**, who immigrated to the United States from the Azores Island of Pico in Portugal in 1920 and **settled in Livingston, California**.

Livingston is one of the special places in the country with the warm climate and light, sandy soil necessary to grow sweet potatoes, and **Mr. Tomas began growing them here in 1960**. (Today more than 90 percent of California's sweet potato crop is grown right in this area.) Mr. Tomas founded A.V. Thomas Produce with 10 acres in production and one small packing shed in downtown Livingston.

Twelve years later, his nephew, Manuel Eduardo Vieira, joined the business. Also from the Island of Pico in the Azores, Mr. Vieira had just spent 10 years in Rio de Janeiro, earning a degree in Business Administration. He would spend the next five years learning the sweet potato trade at his uncle's side.

In 1977, Manuel E. Vieira bought A.V. Thomas Produce and began a new chapter in its history, investing in, growing and expanding the business into the industry leader it is today.

*This is part of a series of Local Grower Profiles by
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