



---

**ANDY  
BOY<sup>®</sup>**

*Trust The Original*

# Trust The Original

The story begins in 1907 when Andrea D'Arrigo immigrated to New York from Sicily, through Ellis Island followed by his younger brother Stefano D'Arrigo in 1911. They were teenagers when they left their native hometown of Messina and in the states worked in a shoe factory, woolen mill and a variety of other jobs to make ends meet. The brothers learned English and earned their U.S. citizenship. When the U.S. entered WWI, they both served in the U.S. Army, Andrea overseas in France, and Stefano in the United States.

In 1920, the brothers formed a partnership with their cousins in the Boston Fruit and Grape Company. They wanted to buy and sell fresh grapes that were in demand by first generation Europeans to make their own wine. Stefano moved to California to purchase grapes, and Andrea remained in Boston to sell the product. In 1923, Andrea and Stefano separated from their cousins and formed their own business, D'Arrigo Brothers Company. The simple partnership agreement between the D'Arrigo brothers consisted of half a double spaced 8 ½ x 11 typewritten page that has endured 97 years and three generations of a bicoastal family.

While in Stockton, California, Stefano and his wife Concetta gave birth to Stephen Jr., born on March 8, 1922 followed by Andrew, born on February 1, 1924. Later that year, Stefano moved his family to San Jose as he was attracted to its large Italian population. He noticed that immigrants were growing produce that he remembered from his native Sicily and among these were cactus pears, sweet anise (fennel) and broccoli. Stefano recognized the excellent quality, and this prompted him to undergo a trial planting.

Stefano bought a 24-acre ranch in San Jose, and the company began planting broccoli seeds sent by his father in Italy. The broccoli was railway expressed to Andrea in Boston. In 1924, the first ice packed broccoli was shipped by railway cars as a mixed load, and in 1925 full railway cars were shipped to the East Coast. Stefano was credited as the first person to make a transcontinental shipment of broccoli from the West to the East Coast, a venture the D'Arrigo brothers pioneered.

The D'Arrigo brothers also sold locally grown broccoli in the Boston market but the quality of the California product was superior. In order to distinguish the California broccoli, they began branding it in 1926 with a picture of Andy, Stefano's youngest son who was two and a half years old. In 1927, the "Andy Boy" label became a registered trademark which consisted of a pink wrapper with the photo of the Andy D'Arrigo and highlighted cooking instructions and recipes.

Per a Harvard study,<sup>1</sup> D'Arrigo Brothers Company, was the first company documented to brand fresh vegetables (broccoli and celery) by using the Andy Boy label (hence the use of "Original Brand" on the logo and tagline of "Trust the Original"). Through innovative advertising, the Andy Boy logo placed on a pink wrapper became a well-known symbol of fresh, quality produce to the American consumer. The company believed that advertising gave them the edge they needed to sell their produce and felt that consumers were willing to pay a premium price for the assurance of high quality which the Andy Boy label provided. The company took advantage of being the first to brand fresh vegetables and added the tagline "Original Brand" to the Andy Boy logo and "Trust The Original" to marketing materials.

In the decade of the 1940's, D'Arrigo Brothers Company began buying land and expanding into multiple districts and states. In 1940 Stefano purchased land in San Jose for a new shed and office. This served as the company headquarters until 1961 when the company moved to Salinas.

In 1946, for tax reasons, D'Arrigo Brothers Company, the partnership, was incorporated into D'Arrigo Bros. Co., of Massachusetts and D'Arrigo Bros. Co., of California. The stock in each corporation was equally divided between Andrea's family in the East, and Stefano's family, in the West. After many years with the two sister companies prospering in Boston and California, the D'Arrigo brothers opened their New York operation on July 5, 1948 with Andrea's oldest son, Stephen, in charge.

<sup>1</sup> *Advertising Text and Cases, Neil H. Borden, MBA, Professor of Advertising, Graduate School of Business Administration, Harvard University, 1951.*

In 1951, Stefano purchased 505 acres of land from the Spreckels Sugar Company. The purchase was in partnership with Chet Chesholm, a longtime broccoli grower and this land acquisition was the entry into the Salinas Valley. Later in the year, after a long illness of leukemia, Stefano D'Arrigo (California) passed away at the age of 57. His brother Andrea (Boston) became President of D'Arrigo Bros. Co., of CA and his nephew Andy D'Arrigo (Stefano's son) became Vice President and General Manager and Stephen remained as Secretary and Treasurer. In 1965, with the death of Andrea D'Arrigo (Boston), Andy D'Arrigo (California) assumed the office of President and CEO of D'Arrigo Bros. Co., of CA at the age of 41 and his brother Stephen assumed the role of Vice President and Director of Sales at the age of 43.

The D'Arrigo brothers were visionaries and worked hard to set themselves apart in the produce industry. Early on the brothers understood that quality produce would position the company for success and created a completely vertically integrated company. From the time the seeds go in the ground to the time they closed the doors to their customer's truck, they controlled the entire process. There was no third party involved. Stefano and Andrea knew there was only one way to control the quality of their produce, grow it from the ground up.

Andy D'Arrigo was committed to the legacy of upholding the Andy Boy tenets of quality produce so he started the company's own seed program. D'Arrigo Bros. Co., of California shipped mustard greens starting with wild mustard, harvested from the local hills in the spring which was identified as "mustard" by many Italian immigrants and in 1964 changed the name from mustard to "broccoli rabe." Today D'Arrigo California has four patents covering proprietary rights for broccoli rabe, granted in 1983, 1988, and two in 1996. In addition to broccoli and broccoli rabe, the company grew "sweet anise" a relative of the common wild anise that grew along fences and country roads. The challenge again was the lack of reliable domestic seed so, he first obtained stock from Sicily and thereafter grew his own anise seed supply. In 1993, the company obtained proprietary patents for anise which is now known as fennel and continues to develop and grow its own seed varieties of broccoli rabe and fennel.

This year in 2020, the company is celebrating its 97<sup>th</sup> year of business. The company has grown from farming its first 28 acres in San Jose, California to producing product on 40,000 crop acres throughout California, Arizona and Mexico. Under the Andy Boy label, the company grows 13 different fresh vegetables (conventional and organic) that are shipped domestically and internationally. The company is being led by third generation family member John D'Arrigo (Andy's son), who has been serving as President and CEO since 1992 and as Chairman of the Board since 2014.

In 2015, at the age of 91, Andy celebrated his retirement after working for 64 years at the company. Today in 2020, Andy is 96 years young and when he is not stopping by the office to check in on the business or getting a workout in the company gym, he keeps busy by building intricate wooden model ships.

In August 2006, under the leadership of John D'Arrigo, President/CEO and Chairman of the Board, the company built a state-of-the-art cooling and shipping facility (152,000 sq. ft) on what is known as Ranch 1 in Salinas, CA. In October 2008, the headquarters was built adjacent to the cooling and shipping facility allowing D'Arrigo California to house all business operations under one roof (55-acre business campus). John D'Arrigo was elected in 2004 as president of Western Growers Association and became the first and only grandfather-father-son trio to have held the office in Western Growers Association's history.

In this ever-changing business environment, coupled with multi-generational coastal family members, and current COVID-19 pandemic, it is rare for a company to survive into three generations at the helm. However, by the principals and ethics taught by founders Andrea and Stefano, hard work, families and employees working together, and sound business principles, D'Arrigo California has achieved that enviable position and will continue to build on its solid foundation for generations to come.