



Recognition is hereby granted to  
**WILL WEDGE**  
of Hannaford Brothers Company  
as Winner of the 4th Annual  
**RETAILER OF THE YEAR AWARD**  
Presented at the New England Produce Council Expo  
April 9, 2008  
by PRODUCE BUSINESS and the New England Produce Council  
Excerpt from the speech by Ken Whitacre, publisher of PRODUCE BUSINESS

*This year, PRODUCE BUSINESS is pleased to present its fourth annual New England Produce Retailer of the Year Award. The winner was chosen by you – the members of the New England Produce Council.*

*Like the first three recipients of the award — Paul Kneeland, Jack Salamon and Domenic D'Antuono — this year's honoree has spent his entire career with the same retailer and, over a 20-year period, has climbed the corporate ladder from a part-time bag boy to director of produce.*

*Our honoree worked his way through college bagging groceries and joined a retail management-training program after he graduated.*

*Now how's this for upward mobility? He has been an assistant store manager, held several positions in retail operations, been a center-store category manager, a dairy category manager and is presently director of produce.*

*It is this diverse background in other departments of his company that makes this year's honoree unique. As one vendor observed: "His background and training in other departments give him a keen understanding of the consumer. When other retailers simply talk about serving the consumer, this person acts as a true representative and advocate. He knows how the consumer shops, and he enthusiastically communicates that extensive knowledge with his suppliers."*

*Passion: If there is one word that best describes this year's honoree, it is that word.*

*What clearly stands out is the passion this honoree has for his position and the opportunity it gives him to serve his company and the consumers of New England.*

*As another nominator put it: "This tireless worker walks and talks produce... he walks and talks his company's mission — he believes in what he and his company are doing — 100%."*

*Our honoree has been described as a leader in merchandising concepts that drive innovation and growth, as a man whose passion shines through in any position he holds, and as someone with whom everyone else tries to keep up.*

*He has been commended for his ability to work collaboratively with his vendor partners to deliver new products to the marketplace.*

*He supports his team of category managers and buyers by allowing them the autonomy to make key decisions.*

*And the vice president to whom he reports has this to say about our honoree: "I have complete confidence that he will accomplish any project or assignment completely and in a timely manner."*

*One vendor praises him by saying that when he took over a department that had many experienced professionals before him, he knew how to use his own unique experience and blend it with new resources: "to create one of the best produce programs in the country."*

*On the personal front, our honoree is a devoted husband and father of two daughters.*

*Even though he and Melissa, his wife of 21 years, grew up in the same town, they did not meet until they were in college at the University of Maine. They have two teenage daughters — Emily and Abby.*

*Today the family spends as much free time as they can at their extended family's camp on Lake Ambajesus in Maine, where they enjoy boating, kayaking and hiking.*

*And since we're in New England, it goes without saying that he is a fan of the Red Sox and the Patriots.*

*Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in congratulating the 2008 New England Produce Retailer of the year — Will Wedge of Hannaford Brothers.*