

Stepping Up! for Our Communities



California Northern Railroad's Role in the Nation's Food Supply Chain

As restaurants remain closed and people ramp up food purchases to eat at home during the coronavirus pandemic, the logistics of foodstuff and grocery distribution become more complex. Genesee & Wyoming's California Northern Railroad (CFNR) plays an important role in keeping store shelves and freezers stocked.

California-produced food products, including beans, diced tomatoes, malt, olives, rice, sugar, and tomato paste and sauce, encompass the majority of commodities transported by the CFNR.

"Approximately 75 percent of our carloads fall into the food and kindred category, in fact," says Eric Kreutzberg, CFNR sales and marketing manager, "with tomato paste, diced tomatoes and tomato sauce comprising nearly half of them."

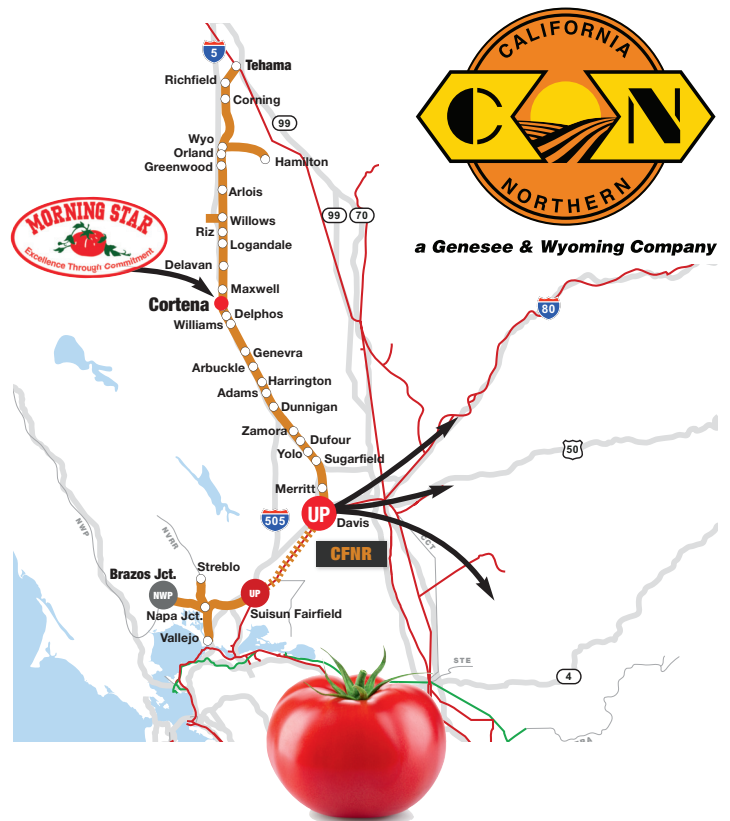
CFNR hauls boxcars of those tomato products from northern California's Morning Star Company to the national rail network, bound for producers and distributors of shelf-ready products to markets throughout the Midwest, Northeast and Southeast. Morning Star is a behemoth in the tomato industry, not only as California's number-one tomato processor but also accounting for 94 percent of the total U.S. output of processing tomatoes.

"Our relationship with Morning Star dates back to 1982," Kreutzberg explains. "Today, we serve three of their plants. Other tomato-products customers include Ingomar; Johnston Trading Post, which warehouses and ships paste for Campbell's; and Paradise Tomato Kitchens."

Kreutzberg notes that demand has increased amid emptying supermarket shelves.

"CFNR has been critically important to the success of our overall business," says Morning Star's Bob Henry, who works closely with CFNR. "We have a tremendous relationship with them, based on daily communication. What sets them apart from others is their willingness to be flexible with scheduling, and that's key for us."

CFNR General Manager Jake Harrison says that his team is in frequent communication with customers in the food products sector and is not only keeping trains moving during the pandemic but ready to step up service if necessary. Precautions are being



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—Bob Henry, Morning Star

taken to keep the team safe and healthy – including discussing health measures in job briefings, limiting the number of people in a crew room at a time, and sanitizing offices, locomotives and other high-touch areas regularly.

CFNR serves communities and customers along 256 miles through northern and central California. It hauls primarily food products as well as beer and wine, construction products and lumber. The railroad was acquired by G&W in 2012 and has an outstanding safety record, now more than three years injury-free.