



HOW OUR EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE PROGRAM HELPED OUR CLIENT EXPAND THEIR FROZEN FOOD BUSINESS



COMPANY PROFILE



Southeast Pet
100% Employee Owned

Southeast Pet, known initially as Southeast Aquatics, was founded 1975 by Greg and Holly Judge and they are one of the most respected pet supply and food distributors in the nation.

The company is based out of Atlanta and primarily operates in the South-Eastern U.S. Their fleet is comprised of 30 trailers including both dry vans and refrigerated vans.



THE PROBLEM

Southeast Pet used to own their entire fleet and would run their trailers for 10–15 years before getting new ones. In the past, they didn't have a proactive maintenance program to help extend the life of their trailers, which resulted in numerous over-the-road breakdowns. In an effort to improve their trailer life cycle situation, Southeast Pet decided to switch from an equipment ownership model to a lease program. This would allow them to replace their trailers every five to seven years in a cost-efficient way.

Southeast Pet signed a five-year lease agreement on 20 dry vans with a vendor. Historically, they exclusively used dry vans to move loads—even if they had temperature-dependent cargo. The situation wasn't ideal as they would have to carry coolers with dry ice which posed a danger to drivers, didn't keep cargo at the proper temperature and occupied a lot of space.

Aside from a less-than-ideal refrigeration method, the equipment vendor they were using charged them \$10/month per trailer to have an over-the-road breakdown option. For a company that often had breakdowns, it was costly.

THE STAR DIFFERENCE

THE DISCUSSION:

After recognizing that their current vendor was not meeting their needs, Southeast Pet turned to Star. Our team met with their Vice President of Operations and Transportation Manager to discuss an equipment and maintenance solution that truly worked for their business.

During our discovery phase, the Southeast Pet team shared with us that their frozen business was their largest growing segment. This meant that the dry vans with coolers and dry ice were not going to cut it as demand continued to grow.

CURRENT STATUS:

Southeast Pet now has the right equipment, a proactive maintenance program and a reliable over-the-road breakdown service.

They are also no longer having issues with refrigerated/frozen product quality since they switched some of their dry vans to custom refrigerated trailers (reefers).

Our solution has enabled them to expand their business without needing to add unnecessary resources. Star is currently working with the Southeast Pet team on replacing their old equipment by the end of this year.

OUR SOLUTION:

Our primary recommendation was for Southeast Pet to start using reefers for all refrigerated and frozen cargo. This would allow them to not only ensure product quality but it would also help improve cost, efficiency, as well as overall customer and driver satisfaction.

Southeast Pet initially rented five liftgate reefers equipped with a side door for easy access. The reefers improved their frozen/refrigerated operation immensely but they still were not the best fit for Southeast Pet.

To help them find the right reefers, we brought in three manufacturers to discuss equipment specifications including solar liftgates, telematics, and side door options. In addition, we helped them find an optimal lateral ramp solution for the side door—giving drivers the ability to fit trailers in smaller spaces while still being able to easily get in and out of the trailer.

These new trailers are on a full-service lease with Star. Southeast Pet now has a fixed maintenance budget for the entire term and reliable equipment that has all the specifications they need. They also benefit from a comprehensive over-the-road solution and maintenance program for their entire fleet.

Southeast Pet can now manage their business worry-free, knowing we will be taking care of them anytime, anywhere.



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