

UNITED NATURAL FOODS INC
Form 10-K
September 30, 2015

UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20549
FORM 10-K

ANNUAL REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE
ACT OF 1934

For the fiscal year ended August 1, 2015

or

TRANSITION REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE
ACT OF 1934

For the transition period from _____ to _____

Commission File Number: 0-21531

UNITED NATURAL FOODS, INC.

(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

Delaware

(State or other jurisdiction of
incorporation or organization)

313 Iron Horse Way, Providence, RI 02908

(Address of principal executive offices) (Zip Code)

Registrant's telephone number, including area code: (401) 528-8634

05-0376157

(I.R.S. Employer
Identification No.)

Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(b) of the Act:

Title of each class

Common Stock, par value \$0.01 per share

Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(g) of the Act: None

Name of each exchange on which registered

NASDAQ Global Select Market

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is a well-known seasoned issuer, as defined in Rule 405 of the Securities Act. Yes No

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is not required to file reports pursuant to Section 13 or Section 15(d) of the Act. Yes No

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant (1) has filed all reports required to be filed by Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to file such reports), and (2) has been subject to such filing requirements for the past 90 days. Yes No

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant has submitted electronically and posted on its corporate Web site, if any, every Interactive Data File required to be submitted and posted pursuant to Rule 405 of Regulation S-T during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to submit and post such files). Yes No

Indicate by check mark if disclosure of delinquent filers pursuant to Item 405 of Regulation S-K is not contained herein, and will not be contained, to the best of registrant's knowledge, in definitive proxy or information statements incorporated by reference in Part III of this Form 10-K or any amendment to this Form 10-K

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, a non-accelerated filer or a smaller reporting company. See the definitions of "large accelerated filer," "accelerated filer" and "smaller reporting company" in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act.

Large Accelerated Filer

Accelerated Filer

Smaller Reporting Company

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Non-accelerated Filer (Do not check if a smaller reporting company)

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a shell company (as defined in Rule 12b-2 of the Act). Yes No
The aggregate market value of the common stock held by non-affiliates of the registrant was \$3,869,497,158 based upon the closing price of the registrant's common stock on the Nasdaq Global Select Market® on January 30, 2015. The number of shares of the registrant's common stock, par value \$0.01 per share, outstanding as of September 11, 2015 was 50,100,946.

DOCUMENTS INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE

Portions of the registrant's definitive Proxy Statement for the Annual Meeting of Stockholders to be held on December 16, 2015 are incorporated herein by reference into Part III of this Annual Report on Form 10-K.

UNITED NATURAL FOODS, INC.

FORM 10-K

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PART I.

ITEM 1. BUSINESS

Unless otherwise specified, references to "United Natural Foods," "we," "us," "our" or "the Company" in this Annual Report on Form 10-K ("Annual Report" or "Report") mean United Natural Foods, Inc. and all entities included in our consolidated financial statements. See the consolidated financial statements and notes thereto included in "Item 8. Financial Statements and Supplementary Data" of this Report for information regarding our financial performance.

Overview

We believe we are a leading distributor based on sales of natural, organic and specialty foods and non-food products in the United States and Canada, and that our thirty-one distribution centers, representing approximately 7.7 million square feet of warehouse space, provide us with the largest capacity of any North American-based distributor in the natural, organic and specialty products industry. We offer more than 85,000 high-quality natural, organic and specialty foods and non-food products, consisting of national, regional and private label brands grouped into six product categories: grocery and general merchandise, produce, perishables and frozen foods, nutritional supplements and sports nutrition, bulk and foodservice products and personal care items. We serve more than 40,000 customer locations primarily located across the United States and Canada which can be classified as follows:

- independently owned natural products retailers, which include buying clubs;
- supernatural chains, which consist solely of Whole Foods Market, Inc. ("Whole Foods Market");
- conventional supermarkets, which include mass market chains; and
- other, which includes foodservice and international customers outside of Canada.

We were the first organic food distribution network in the United States designated as a "Certified Organic Distributor" by Quality Assurance International, Inc. ("QAI"), an organic certifying agency accredited by the United States Department of Agriculture ("USDA"). This process involved a comprehensive review by QAI of our operating and purchasing systems and procedures. This certification covers all of our broadline distribution centers in the United States, except our primarily specialty products distribution center in Leicester, Massachusetts and facilities acquired in the acquisition of Tony's Fine Foods ("Tony's"). Although not designated as a "Certified Organic Distributor" by QAI, the four Tony's California locations are certified as Organic by the State of California Departments of Public Health Food and Drug Branch. In addition, three of our Canadian distribution centers are certified organic by either QAI, EcoCert Canada or ProCert Canada, while the remaining Canadian distribution center sells only Kosher foods and is therefore not certified organic.

Since the formation of our predecessor in 1976, we have grown our business both organically and through acquisitions which have expanded our distribution network, product selection and customer base. Since fiscal 2005, our net sales have increased at a compounded annual growth rate of 14.8%. In recent years, our sales to existing and new customers have increased through the continued growth of the natural and organic products industry in general; our efforts to increase the number of conventional supermarket customers to whom we distribute products; increased market share through our high-quality service and broader product selection, including specialty products, the acquisition of, or merger with, natural, organic, and specialty product distributors; the expansion of our existing distribution centers; the construction of new distribution centers; the introduction of new products and the development of our own line of natural and organic branded products. Through these efforts, we believe that we have broadened our geographic penetration, expanded our customer base, enhanced and diversified our product selection and increased our market share.

We have been the primary distributor to Whole Foods Market for more than seventeen years. Under the terms of our agreement with Whole Foods Market, we serve as the primary distributor to Whole Foods Market in all of its regions in the United States. Our agreement with Whole Foods Market expires on September 25, 2020.

In July 2014, we completed the acquisition of all of the outstanding capital stock of Tony's, through our wholly-owned subsidiary UNFI West, Inc. ("UNFI West"), for consideration of approximately \$202.7 million. With the completion of the transaction, Tony's is now a wholly-owned subsidiary and continues to operate as Tony's Fine Foods. Founded in 1934 by the Ingoglia family, Tony's is headquartered in West Sacramento, California and is a leading distributor of perishable food products, including a wide array of specialty protein, cheese, deli, food service and bakery goods to retail and specialty grocers, food service customers and other distribution companies principally located throughout

the Western United States, as well as Alaska and Hawaii. We believe that the acquisition of Tony's accomplished certain of our strategic objectives as Tony's has provided us with a platform for expanding both our high-growth perishable product offerings and our distribution footprint in the Western Region of the United States.

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During fiscal 2015, we began shipping customers both center of the store products and fresh, perishable products. Our customers utilized both UNFI's broadline and Tony's offerings, including grocery, refrigerated, protein, specialty cheese and prepared foods. Our customers' broad utilization supports our belief that there is significant value in UNFI's position as a leading provider of logistics, distribution and category management for both center store and perimeter products. Additionally, we believe that gourmet and ethnic products and fresh foods represent significant incremental growth opportunities for UNFI.

Our ability to distribute specialty food items (including ethnic, kosher and gourmet products) has accelerated our expansion into a number of high-growth business markets and allowed us to establish immediate market share in the fast-growing specialty foods market. We have now integrated specialty food products and natural and organic specialty non-food items into all of our broadline distribution centers across the United States and Canada. Due to our expansion into specialty foods, over the past several fiscal years we have been awarded new business with a number of conventional supermarkets that previously had not done business with us because we did not distribute specialty products. We believe that the distribution of these products enhances our conventional supermarket business channel and that our complementary product lines continue to present opportunities for cross-selling.

In June 2011, we entered into an asset purchase agreement with L&R Distributors, Inc. ("L&R Distributors") pursuant to which we agreed to sell our conventional non-foods and general merchandise lines of business, including certain inventory related to these product lines. This divestiture was completed in the first quarter of fiscal 2012, and has allowed us to concentrate on our core business of the distribution of natural, organic, and specialty foods and non-food products.

We are a Delaware corporation based in Providence, Rhode Island, and we conduct business through our various wholly owned subsidiaries. We operated thirty-one distribution centers at our 2015 fiscal year end, and we believe that our approximately 7.7 million square feet of distribution space provide us with the largest capacity of any distributor that solely distributes natural, organic and specialty products in the United States or Canada.

We operate thirteen natural products retail stores within the United States, located primarily in Florida (with two locations in Maryland and one in Massachusetts), through our subsidiary doing business as Earth Origins Market ("Earth Origins"). We believe that our retail business serves as a natural complement to our distribution business because it enables us to develop new marketing programs and improve customer service. In addition, our subsidiary doing business as Woodstock Farms Manufacturing specializes in the international importation, roasting, packaging and distribution of nuts, dried fruit, seeds, trail mixes, granola, natural and organic snack items and confections for our customers and in branded products of our own.

Our Industry

The natural products industry encompasses a wide range of products including organic and non-organic foods, nutritional, herbal and sports supplements, toiletries and personal care items, naturally-based cosmetics, natural/homeopathic medicines, pet products and cleaning agents. According to The Natural Foods Merchandiser, a leading natural products industry trade publication, sales for all types of natural products were \$120.4 billion in calendar 2014, a growth of \$11.6 billion or approximately 10.7% from calendar 2013. According to the National Association for the Specialty Food Trade, a leading specialty food industry trade publication, sales in calendar 2014 were \$109.0 billion, representing growth of 19% from calendar 2012. We believe the growth of the natural products industry is a result of the increasing demand by consumers for a healthy lifestyle, food safety and environmental sustainability.

Our Operating Structure

Our operations are comprised of three principal operating divisions. These operating divisions are: our wholesale division, which includes our broadline natural, organic and specialty distribution business in the United States, our wholly-owned subsidiary, UNFI Canada, Inc. ("UNFI Canada"), which is our natural, organic and specialty distribution business in Canada, Tony's, which is a leading distributor of a wide array of specialty protein, cheese, deli, food service and bakery goods, principally throughout the Western United States, Albert's Organics, Inc. ("Albert's"), which is a leading distributor within the United States of organically grown produce and non-produce perishable items, and Select Nutrition, which distributes vitamins, minerals and supplements;

our retail division, consisting of Earth Origins, which operates our thirteen natural products retail stores within the United States; and

our manufacturing and branded products divisions, consisting of Woodstock Farms Manufacturing, which specializes in the international importation, roasting, packaging and distribution of nuts, dried fruit, seeds, trail mixes, granola, natural and organic snack items and confections, and our Blue Marble Brands product lines.

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Wholesale Division

Our broadline distribution business is organized into three regions—our Eastern Region, Western Region and our Canadian Region. We distribute natural, organic and specialty products in all of our product categories to customers in the Eastern and Midwestern portions of the United States through our Eastern Region and to customers in the Western and Central portions of the United States through our Western Region. Our Canadian Region distributes natural, organic and specialty products in all of our product categories to all of our customers in Canada. As of our 2015 fiscal year end, our Eastern Region operated eleven distribution centers, which provided approximately 3.9 million square feet of warehouse space, our Western Region operated six distribution centers, which provided approximately 2.6 million square feet of warehouse space and our Canadian Region operated four distribution centers, which provided approximately 0.3 million square feet of warehouse space.

Through Tony's, we distribute perishable food products, including a wide array of specialty protein, cheese, deli, food service and bakery goods. Tony's operates out of four distribution centers strategically located on the West coast in California and Washington, providing approximately 0.5 million square feet of warehouse space. The four California locations are certified as Organic by the State of California Departments of Public Health Food and Drug Branch. Through Albert's, we distribute organically grown produce and non-produce perishables, such as organic milk, dressings, eggs, juices, poultry and various other refrigerated specialty items. Albert's operates out of four distribution centers strategically located throughout the United States, providing approximately 0.3 million square feet of warehouse space, and is designated as a "Certified Organic Distributor" by QAI.

Through Select Nutrition, we distribute more than 15,000 health and beauty aids, vitamins, minerals and supplements from distribution centers in Pennsylvania and California.

Certain of our distribution centers are shared by multiple operations within our wholesale division.

Retail Division

We operate thirteen natural products retail stores as Earth Origins within the United States, ten of which are located in Florida, two in Maryland and one in Massachusetts. We believe that our retail business serves as a natural complement to our distribution business because it enables us to see market trends, develop new marketing programs and receive direct customer feedback.

We believe our natural products retail stores have a number of advantages over their competitors, including our financial strength and marketing expertise, the purchasing power resulting from group purchasing by stores within Earth Origins and the breadth of our product selection.

We believe that we benefit from certain advantages in acting as a distributor to our natural products retail stores, including our ability to:

- control the purchases made by these stores;
- expand the number of high-growth, high-margin product categories, such as produce and prepared foods, within these stores; and
- stay abreast of the trends in the retail marketplace, which enables us to better anticipate and serve the needs of our wholesale customers.

Additionally, as the primary natural products distributor to our retail locations, we realize significant economies of scale and operating and buying efficiencies. As an operator of natural products retail stores, we also have the ability to test market select products prior to offering them nationally. We can then evaluate consumer reaction to the product without incurring significant inventory risk. We also are able to test new marketing and promotional programs within our stores prior to offering them to our wholesale customer base.

Manufacturing & Branded Products Divisions

Our subsidiary, Woodstock Farms Manufacturing, specializes in the international importation, roasting, packaging and distribution of nuts, dried fruit, seeds, trail mixes, granola, natural and organic snack items and confections. We sell these items in bulk and through private label packaging arrangements with large health food, supermarket and convenience store chains and independent owners. We operate an organic (USDA and QAI) and kosher (Circle K) certified packaging, roasting, and processing facility in New Jersey that is SQF (Safety Quality Food) level 2 certified.

Our Blue Marble Brands portfolio is a collection of 15 organic, natural and specialty food brands representing more than 650 unique products. We have a dedicated team of marketing, supply chain and sales professionals that have a passion to energize our retail partners and provide consumers with affordable Non-GMO foods. Our unique Blue Marble Brands products are sold

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through our wholesale division, third-party distributors and directly to retailers. Our Field Day® brand is primarily sold to customers in our independent natural products retailer channel ("independent retailers"), and is meant to serve as a private label brand for independent retailers to allow them to compete with conventional supermarkets and supernatural chains which often have their own private label store brands.

Our Competitive Strengths

We believe we distinguish ourselves from our competitors through the following strengths:

We are a market leader with a nationwide presence in the United States and Canada.

We believe that we are the largest distributor of natural, organic and specialty foods and non-food products by sales in the United States and Canada, and one of the few distributors capable of meeting the natural, organic and specialty product needs of regional and local independent retailer customers, conventional supermarket chains, and the supernatural chain. The opening of a new larger Albert's facility in New Jersey in May 2013 and a new facility in Hudson Valley, New York in September 2014 has provided additional space to serve the growing New York City metropolitan market. We believe the consolidation into a new, larger, facility in Aurora, Colorado in May 2013 and the opening of our Racine and Prescott, Wisconsin facilities in June 2014 and April 2015, respectively, will allow us to serve these growing markets with greater operational efficiencies. We believe that our network of thirty-one distribution centers (including four in Canada) creates significant advantages over smaller national and regional distributors. Our nationwide presence across the United States and Canada allows us to in many instances have locations closer to our customers than our competitors, offer marketing and customer service programs across regions, offer a broader product selection and provide operational excellence with high service levels and same day or next day on-time deliveries.

We are an efficient distributor.

We believe that our scale affords us significant benefits within a highly fragmented industry including volume purchasing opportunities and warehouse and distribution efficiencies. Our continued growth has allowed us to expand our existing facilities and open new facilities as we seek to achieve maximum operating efficiencies, including reduced fuel and other transportation costs, and has created sufficient capacity for future growth. Some of the efficiency improvements we have instituted include the centralization of general and administrative functions, the consolidation of systems applications among physical locations and regions and the optimization of customer distribution routes, all of which reduced expenses. We have made significant investments in our people, facilities, equipment and technology to broaden our footprint and enhance the efficiency of our operations. Key examples in the last several years include the following:

In connection with the acquisition of certain Canadian food distribution assets of the SunOpta Distribution Group business of SunOpta, Inc. in June 2010, we acquired five distribution centers which provided a nationwide presence in Canada with approximately 286,000 square feet of distribution space and the ability to serve all major markets in Canada.

In September 2010 we commenced operations at a new facility in Lancaster, Texas serving customers throughout the Southwestern United States, including Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arkansas and Louisiana.

During July 2011 we completed the integration of specialty food products into our nationwide platform.

In May 2013 our Albert's division commenced operations at a new facility in Logan Township, New Jersey with 55,000 square feet of distribution space to more efficiently serve our growing customer base on the East Coast, including the New York City metropolitan market.

In June 2013 we commenced operations at a new 540,000 square foot distribution center in Aurora, Colorado and consolidated all existing Aurora operations including an Albert's location and off-site storage into one building.

In June 2014 we commenced operations at a new 450,000 square foot distribution center in Racine, Wisconsin.

In connection with the acquisition of Tony's in July 2014, we acquired four distribution centers in California and Washington with approximately 500,000 square feet of distribution space.

In September 2014 we commenced operations at a new 510,000 square foot distribution center in Hudson Valley, New York which allows us to service the growing New York City metropolitan market and to transfer certain routes from our York, Pennsylvania, Chesterfield, New Hampshire and Dayville, Connecticut distribution centers.

In April 2015 we commenced operations at a new 300,000 square foot distribution center in Prescott, Wisconsin which services the Twin Cities market.

We have extensive and long-standing customer relationships and provide superior service.

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Throughout the 39 years of our, and our predecessors' operations, we have developed long-standing customer relationships, which we believe are among the strongest in our industry. In particular, we have been the primary supplier of natural and organic products to the largest supernatural chain in the United States, Whole Foods Market, for more than 17 years. We believe a key driver of our strong customer loyalty is our superior service levels, which include accurate fulfillment of orders, timely product delivery, competitive prices and a high level of product marketing support. Our average broadline distribution in-stock service level for fiscal 2015, measured as the percentage of items ordered by customers that are delivered by the requested delivery date (excluding manufacturer out-of-stocks and discontinued items), was approximately 97%. We believe that our high distribution service levels are attributable to our experienced inventory planning and replenishment department and sophisticated warehousing, inventory control and distribution systems. Furthermore, we offer next-day delivery service to a majority of our active customers and offer multiple deliveries each week to our largest customers, which we believe differentiates us from many of our competitors.

We have an experienced, motivated management team.

Our management team has extensive experience in the retail and distribution business, including the natural, organic and specialty product industries. On average, each of our ten executive officers has over twenty-four years of experience in the retail, natural products or food distribution industry. Furthermore, a significant portion of our management-level employees' compensation is equity based or performance based, and, therefore management is incentivized to seek to, generate strong operating results in the future.

Our Growth Strategy

We seek to maintain and enhance our position within the natural and organic industry in the United States and Canada and to increase our market share in the specialty products industry. Since our formation, we have grown our business organically and through the acquisition of a number of distributors and suppliers, which has expanded our distribution network, product selection and customer base. For example, we acquired our Albert's, UNFI Canada, Earth Origins, Woodstock Farms Manufacturing, Tony's and specialty businesses.

Beginning in fiscal 2009, our strategic plan has focused on increasing market share, particularly in our conventional supermarket channel. This channel typically generates lower gross margins than our independent retailer channel, but also typically has lower operating expenses. With our acquisition of Tony's we have moved more heavily into the growing market of perishable food products. Our strategic plan also includes the roll-out of new technology including a national warehouse management and procurement system and transportation management system upgrade. These steps and others are intended to promote operational efficiencies and further reduce our operating expenses to offset the lower gross margins we expect with increased sales to the conventional supermarket and supernatural channels and from sales of our fresh perishable products, which can sell for a lower gross margin than our other natural, organic and specialty products.

To implement our growth strategy, we intend to continue increasing our market share of the growing natural and organic products industry by expanding our customer base, increasing our share of existing customers' business and continuing to expand and further penetrate new distribution territories. We plan to expand our presence within the specialty industry by offering new and existing customers a single wholesale distributor capable of meeting their specialty and natural and organic product needs on a national or regional basis. Key elements of our strategy include:
Expanding Our Customer Base

As of August 1, 2015, we served more than 40,000 customer locations primarily in the United States and Canada. We plan to expand our coverage of the natural and organic and specialty products industry by cultivating new customer relationships within the industry and by further developing our existing channels of distribution, such as independent natural products retailers, conventional supermarkets, mass market outlets, institutional foodservice providers, buying clubs, restaurants and gourmet stores. With the coordinated distribution of our specialty products with our natural and organic products, including our increased array of specialty protein, cheese, deli, food service and bakery offerings as a result of our acquisition of Tony's, we believe that we have the opportunity to continue gaining market share in the conventional supermarket channel as the result of our ability to offer an integrated and efficient distribution solution for our customers. We have gained new business from a number of conventional supermarket customers, including Giant-Landover, Giant Eagle, Shop-Rite, and Kings, partially as a result of our complementary product selection.

Increasing Our Market Share of Existing Customers' Business

We believe that we are the primary distributor of natural and organic products to the majority of our natural products customer base, including to Whole Foods Market, our largest customer. We intend to maintain our position as the primary supplier for a majority of our customers, and to add to the number of customers for which we serve as primary supplier by offering the broadest product selection in our industry at competitive prices. With the expansion of fresh, perishable and specialty product offerings,

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including proteins, cheeses and deli items as a result of the Tony's acquisition, we believe that we have the ability to further meet our existing customers' needs for specialty foods and non-food products, representing an opportunity to continue to grow within the conventional supermarket, supernatural and independent channels.

Continuing to Improve the Efficiency of Our Nationwide Distribution Network

We have invested more than \$415 million in our distribution network and infrastructure over the past five fiscal years. In fiscal 2013 we began operations at our new Albert's distribution facility in Logan, New Jersey, and we commenced operations at a new 540,000 square foot distribution center in Aurora, Colorado consolidating all existing Aurora operations, including an Albert's location and off-site storage, into one building. In fiscal 2014 we commenced operations at our new distribution center in Racine, Wisconsin. Our multi-year expansion plan continues to progress as we commenced operations at our new distribution center in Hudson Valley, New York in the first quarter of fiscal 2015, our new Prescott, Wisconsin facility in the third quarter of fiscal 2015, and we are currently constructing an additional facility in Gilroy, California, from which we expect to begin operations in the third quarter of fiscal 2016. Further, we will strive to continue to maintain our focus on realizing efficiencies and economies of scale in purchasing, warehousing, transportation and general and administrative functions, which, combined with transportation expense savings and incremental fixed cost leverage, should lead to continued improvements in our operating margin.

Expanding into Other Distribution Channels and Geographic Markets

We believe that we will be successful in continuing to expand into the foodservice channel as well as continuing to develop our presence outside of the United States and Canada through our relationships with brokers primarily in Asia and the Caribbean. We will continue to seek to develop regional relationships and alliances with companies such as Aramark Corporation, the Compass Group North America, and Sodexo Inc. in the foodservice channel and seek other alliances outside the United States and Canada.

Continuing to Selectively Pursue Opportunistic Acquisitions

Throughout our history, we have successfully identified, consummated and integrated multiple acquisitions. Since fiscal 2000, we have successfully completed fifteen acquisitions of distributors, manufacturers and suppliers, the most recent being the acquisition of Tony's in the fourth quarter of fiscal 2014. We intend to continue to selectively pursue opportunistic acquisitions to expand the breadth of our distribution network, increase our efficiency, procure beneficial customer relationships or add additional products and capabilities.

Continuing to Provide the Leading Distribution Solution

We believe that we provide a leading distribution solution to the natural, organic and specialty products industry through our national presence, regional preferences, focus on customer service and breadth of product offerings. Our service levels, which we believe to be the highest in our industry, are attributable to our experienced inventory planning and replenishment department and our sophisticated warehousing, inventory control and distribution systems. See "—Our Focus on Technology" below for more information regarding our use of technology in our warehousing, inventory control and distribution systems.

We also offer our customers a selection of inventory management, merchandising, marketing, promotional and event management services designed to increase sales and enhance customer satisfaction. These marketing services, which primarily are utilized by customers in our independently owned natural products retailers channel and many of which are co-sponsored with suppliers, include monthly and thematic circular programs, in-store signage and assistance in product display.

Our Customers

We maintain long-standing customer relationships with independently-owned natural products retailers, supernatural chains and supermarket chains. In addition, we emphasize our relationships with new customers, such as conventional supermarkets, mass market outlets and gourmet stores, which are continually increasing their natural product offerings. The following were included among our wholesale customers for fiscal 2015:

• Whole Foods Market, the largest supernatural chain in the United States and Canada; and
• conventional supermarket chains, including Kroger, Vitamin Cottage, Wegmans, Sprouts Farmers Market, Giant-Carlisle, Stop & Shop, Giant-Landover, Giant Eagle, Hannaford, Food Lion, Bashas', Shop-Rite, Publix and Fred Meyer.

Whole Foods Market is our only customer that represented more than 10% of total net sales in fiscal 2015, and accounted for approximately 35% of our net sales.

The following table lists the percentage of sales by customer type for the fiscal years ended August 1, 2015, August 2, 2014 and August 3, 2013:

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Customer Type	Percentage of Net Sales			
	2015	2014	2013	
Independently owned natural products retailers	32	% 33	% 34	%
Supernatural chains	35	% 36	% 36	%
Conventional supermarkets and mass market chains	26	% 26	% 25	%
Other	7	% 5	% 5	%

We distribute natural, organic and specialty foods and non-food products to customers located in the United States and Canada, as well as to customers located in other foreign countries. Our total international sales, including those by UNFI Canada, represented approximately four percent of our business in fiscal 2015, compared to five percent in 2014 and 2013. We believe that our sales outside the United States, as a percentage of our total sales, will expand as we seek to continue to grow our Canadian operations.

Our Marketing Services

We offer a variety of marketing services designed to increase sales for our customers and suppliers, including consumer and trade marketing programs, as well as programs to support suppliers in understanding our markets. Trade and consumer marketing programs are supplier-sponsored programs which cater to a broad range of retail formats. These programs are designed to educate consumers, profile suppliers and increase sales for retailers, many of which do not have the resources necessary to conduct such marketing programs independently.

Our consumer marketing programs include:

- multiple monthly, region-specific, consumer circular programs, which feature the logo and address of the participating retailer imprinted on a circular that advertises products sold by the retailer to its customers. The monthly circular programs are structured to pass through the benefit of our negotiated discounts and advertising allowances to the retailer, and also provide retailers with posters and shelf tags to coincide with each month's promotions. We also offer a web-based tool which retailers can use to produce highly customized circulars and other marketing materials for their stores.

- quarterly coupon programs featuring supplier sponsored coupons, for display and distribution by participating retailers.

- themed "Celebration" sales and educational brochures to drive sales and educate consumers. Brochures are imprinted with participating retailers' store logo and information.

- a truck advertising program that allows our suppliers to purchase advertising space on the sides of our hundreds of trailers traveling throughout the United States and Canada, increasing brand exposure to consumers.

Our trade marketing programs include:

- wholesale tri-annual catalogs, which serve as a primary reference guide and ordering tool for retailers.

- a website for retailers with category management tools, retail staff development resources and other resources designed to help our customers succeed.

- a web advertising program that allows our suppliers to purchase advertising space on the customer section of our web site, increasing brand exposure to retailers.

- a variety of programs with advertising focus on foodservice options designed to support accounts in that category.

- a variety of programs designed to feature suppliers and generate volume sales.

- monthly specials catalogs that highlight promotions and new product introductions.

- specialized catalogs for holiday promotions and to serve other customer needs.

Our supplier marketing programs include:

- ClearVue®, an information sharing program designed to improve the transparency of information and drive efficiency within the supply chain. With the availability of in-depth data and tailored reporting tools, participants are able to reduce inventory balances with the elimination of forward buys, while improving service levels.

- Supply Chain by ClearVue®, an information sharing program designed to provide heightened transparency to suppliers through demand planning, forecasting and procurement insights. This program offers weekly and monthly reporting enabling suppliers to identify areas of sales growth while pinpointing specific focuses in which the supplier can become more profitable.

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SIS, an information-sharing program that helps our suppliers better understand our customers' businesses, in order to generate mutually beneficial incremental sales in an efficient manner.

• Growth incentive programs, supplier-focused high-level sales and marketing support for selected brands, which foster our partnership by building incremental, mutually profitable sales for suppliers and us.

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We keep current with the latest trends in the industry. Periodically, we conduct focus group sessions with certain key retailers and suppliers to ascertain their needs and allow us to better service them. We also:

- produce a quarterly report of trends in the natural and organic industry;
- provide product data information such as best seller lists, store usage reports and easy-to-use product catalogs;
- provide assistance with store layout designs; new store design and equipment procurement;
- provide planogramming, shelf and category management support;
- offer in-store signage and promotional materials, including shopping bags and end-cap displays;
- provide assistance with planning and setting up product displays;
- provide shelf tags for products; and
- provide a website on which retailers can access various individual retailer-specific reports and product information.

Our Products

Our extensive selection of high-quality natural, organic and specialty foods and non-food products enables us to provide a primary source of supply to a diverse base of customers whose product needs vary significantly. We offer more than 85,000 high-quality natural, organic and specialty foods and non-food products, consisting of national brand, regional brand, private label and master distribution products, in six product categories: grocery and general merchandise, produce, perishables and frozen foods, nutritional supplements and sports nutrition, bulk and food service products and personal care items. Our branded product lines address certain needs of our customers, including providing a lower-cost label known as Field Day.

We continuously evaluate potential new products based on both existing and anticipated trends in consumer preferences and buying patterns. Our Retail Category Management and Supplier Relationship Management teams regularly attend regional and national natural, organic, specialty, ethnic and gourmet product shows to review the latest products that are likely to be of interest to retailers and consumers. We also utilize syndicated data as a compass to ensure that we are carrying the right mix of products in each of our distribution centers. We make the majority of our new product decisions at the regional level and look to carry those items through national distribution as we begin to spot an emerging trend or brand. We believe that our category review practices at the local distribution center level allow our supplier relationship managers to react quickly to changing consumer preferences and to evaluate new products and new product categories regionally. Additionally, as many of the new products that we offer are marketed on a regional basis or in our own natural products retail stores prior to being offered nationally, this enables us to evaluate consumer reaction to the products without incurring significant inventory risk. Furthermore, by exchanging regional product sales information between our regions, we are able to make more informed and timely new product decisions in each region.

We maintain a comprehensive quality assurance program. All of the products we sell that are represented as "organic" are required to be certified as such by an independent third-party agency. We maintain current certification affidavits on most organic commodities and produce in order to verify the authenticity of the product. Most potential suppliers of organic products are required to provide such third-party certifications to us before they are approved as suppliers.

Our Suppliers

We purchase our products from more than 9,000 suppliers. The majority of our suppliers are based in the United States and Canada, but we also source products from suppliers throughout Europe, Asia, Central America, South America, Africa and Australia. We believe suppliers of natural and organic products seek to distribute their products through us because we provide access to a large and growing customer base across the United States and Canada, distribute the majority of the suppliers' products and offer a wide variety of marketing programs to our customers to help sell the suppliers' products. Substantially all product categories that we distribute are available from a number of suppliers and, therefore, we are not dependent on any single source of supply for any product category. In addition, although we have exclusive distribution arrangements and vendor support programs with several suppliers, none of our suppliers account for more than 10% of our total purchases in fiscal 2015. Our largest supplier, Hain Celestial Group, Inc. ("Hain"), accounted for approximately 5% of our total purchases in fiscal 2015. However, the product categories we purchase from Hain can be purchased from a number of other suppliers.

We have positioned ourselves as one of the largest purchasers of organically grown bulk products in the natural and organic products industry by centralizing our purchase of nuts, seeds, grains, flours and dried foods. As a result, we

are able to negotiate purchases from suppliers on the basis of volume and other considerations that may include discounted pricing or prompt payment discounts. Furthermore, some of our purchase arrangements include the right of return to the supplier with respect to products that we do not sell in a certain period of time. As described under "Our Products" above, each region is responsible for placing its own orders and can select the products that it believes will most appeal to its customers, although each region is able to participate in our company-wide purchasing programs. Our outstanding commitments for the purchase of inventory were approximately \$17.5 million as of August 1, 2015.

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Our Distribution System

We have carefully chosen the sites for our distribution centers to provide direct access to our regional markets. This proximity allows us to reduce our transportation costs relative to those of our competitors that seek to service these customers from locations that are often several hundred miles away. We believe that we incur lower inbound freight expense than our regional competitors, because our scale allows us to buy full and partial truckloads of products. Products are delivered to our distribution centers primarily by our fleet of leased trucks, contract carriers and the suppliers themselves. When financially advantageous, we backhaul between vendors or satellite, staging facilities and our distribution centers using our own trucks. Additionally, we generally can redistribute overstocks and inventory imbalances between distribution centers if needed, which helps to reduce out of stocks and to sell perishable products prior to their expiration date.

We lease our trucks from national leasing companies such as Ryder Truck Leasing and Penske Truck Leasing, which in some cases maintain facilities on our premises for the maintenance and service of these vehicles. Other trucks are leased from regional firms that offer competitive services.

We ship certain orders for supplements or for items that are destined for areas outside of regular delivery routes through United Parcel Service and other independent carriers. Deliveries to areas outside the continental United States and Canada are typically shipped by ocean-going containers on a weekly basis.

Our Focus on Technology

We have made significant investments in distribution, financial, information and warehouse management systems. We continually evaluate and upgrade our management information systems at our regional operations in an effort to make the systems more efficient, cost-effective and responsive to customer needs. These systems include functionality in radio frequency inventory control, pick-to-voice systems, pick-to-light systems, computer-assisted order processing and slot locator/retrieval assignment systems. At our receiving docks, warehouse associates attach computer-generated, preprinted locator tags to inbound products. These tags contain the expiration date, locations, quantity, lot number and other information about the products in bar code format. Customer returns are processed by scanning the UPC bar codes. We also employ a management information system that enables us to lower our inbound transportation costs by making optimum use of our own fleet of trucks or by consolidating deliveries into full truckloads. Orders from multiple suppliers and multiple distribution centers are consolidated into single truckloads for efficient use of available vehicle capacity and return-haul trips. In addition, we utilize route efficiency software that assists us in developing the most efficient routes for our outbound trucks. We are in the process of rolling out a national warehouse management and procurement system to convert our existing facilities into a single warehouse management and supply chain platform ("WMS"). We have completed WMS system conversions at our Lancaster, Texas, Ridgefield, Washington, Auburn, Washington, Prescott, Wisconsin, Racine, Wisconsin, Hudson Valley, New York and Auburn, California facilities, and we expect to complete the roll-out to all existing facilities by the end of fiscal 2018.

Intellectual Property

We do not own or have the right to use any patent, trademark, trade name, license, franchise, or concession which upon loss would have a material adverse effect on our results of operations or financial condition.

Competition

Our largest competition comes from direct distribution, whereby a customer reaches a product volume level that justifies distribution directly from the manufacturer in order to obtain a lower price. Our major wholesale distribution competitor in both the United States and Canada is KeHE Distributors, LLC ("Kehe"). In addition to its natural and organic products, Kehe distributes specialty food products and markets its own private label program. Kehe's subsidiary, Tree of Life, has also earned QAI certification. We also compete in the United States and Canada with numerous smaller regional and local distributors of natural, organic, ethnic, kosher, gourmet and other specialty foods that focus on niche or regional markets, and with national, regional and local distributors of conventional groceries and companies that distribute to their own retail facilities.

We believe that distributors in the natural and specialty products industries primarily compete on distribution service levels, product quality, depth of inventory selection, price and quality of customer service. We believe that we currently compete effectively with respect to each of these factors.

Our natural products retail stores compete against other natural products outlets, conventional supermarkets and specialty stores. We believe that retailers of natural products compete principally on product quality and selection, price, customer service, knowledge of personnel and convenience of location. We believe that we currently compete effectively with respect to each of these factors.

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Government Regulation

Our operations and many of the products that we distribute in the United States are subject to regulation by state and local health departments, the USDA and the United States Food and Drug Administration (the "FDA"), which generally impose standards for product quality and sanitation and are responsible for the administration of bioterrorism legislation. In the United States, our facilities generally are inspected at least once annually by state or federal authorities. For certain product lines, we are also subject to the Federal Meat Inspection Act, the Poultry Products Inspection Act, the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act, the Packers and Stockyard Act and regulations promulgated by the USDA to interpret and implement these statutory provisions. The USDA imposes standards for product safety, quality and sanitation through the federal meat and poultry inspection program.

In late 2010, the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act ("FSMA") was enacted. The FSMA represents a significant expansion of food safety requirements and FDA food safety authorities and, among other things, requires that the FDA impose comprehensive, prevention-based controls across the food supply chain, further regulates food products imported into the United States, and provides the FDA with mandatory recall authority. The FSMA requires the FDA to undertake numerous rulemakings and to issue numerous guidance documents, as well as reports, plans, standards, notices, and other tasks. As a result, implementation of the legislation is ongoing and likely to take several years. The Surface Transportation Board and the Federal Highway Administration regulate our trucking operations. In addition, interstate motor carrier operations are subject to safety requirements prescribed by the United States Department of Transportation and other relevant federal and state agencies. Such matters as weight and dimension of equipment are also subject to federal and state regulations.

Many of our facilities in the U.S. and in Canada are subject to various environmental protection statutes and regulations, including those relating to the use of water resources and the discharge of wastewater. Further, many of our distribution facilities have ammonia-based refrigeration systems and tanks for the storage of diesel fuel, hydrogen fuel and other petroleum products which are subject to laws regulating such systems and storage tanks. Moreover, in some of our facilities we, or third parties with whom we contract, perform vehicle maintenance. Our policy is to comply with all applicable environmental and safety legal requirements. We are subject to other federal, state, provincial and local provisions relating to the protection of the environment or the discharge of materials; however, these provisions do not materially impact the use or operation of our facilities.

The failure to comply with applicable regulatory requirements could result in, among other things, administrative, civil, or criminal penalties or fines, mandatory or voluntary product recalls, warning or untitled letters, cease and desist orders against operations that are not in compliance, closure of facilities or operations, the loss, revocation, or modification of any existing licenses, permits, registrations, or approvals, or the failure to obtain additional licenses, permits, registrations, or approvals in new jurisdictions where we intend to do business, any of which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition, or results of operations. These laws and regulations may change in the future and we may incur material costs in our efforts to comply with current or future laws and regulations or in any required product recalls.

We believe that we are in material compliance with all federal, provincial, state and local laws applicable to our operations.

Employees

As of August 1, 2015, we had approximately 8,700 full and part-time employees, 428 of whom (approximately 4.9%) are covered by collective bargaining agreements at our Edison, New Jersey, Leicester, Massachusetts, Iowa City, Iowa, Dayville, Connecticut and Auburn, Washington facilities. The Edison, New Jersey, Leicester, Massachusetts, Iowa City, Iowa, Auburn, Washington and Dayville, Connecticut agreements expire in June 2017, March 2017, June 2017, February 2017 and July 2019, respectively. We continue to believe that our relations with our employees are good.

Seasonality

Generally, we do not experience any material seasonality. However, our sales and operating results may vary significantly from quarter to quarter due to factors such as changes in our operating expenses, management's ability to execute our operating and growth strategies, personnel changes, demand for our products, supply shortages and general economic conditions.

Available Information

Our internet address is <http://www.unfi.com>. The contents of our website are not part of this Annual Report on Form 10-K, and our internet address is included in this document as an inactive textual reference only. We make our Annual Report on Form 10-K, Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q, Current Reports on Form 8-K and all amendments to those reports filed or furnished pursuant to Section 13(a) or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the "Exchange Act") available free of charge through

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our website as soon as reasonably practicable after we file such reports with, or furnish such reports to, the Securities and Exchange Commission.

We have adopted a code of conduct and ethics that applies to our Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer and employees within our finance operations, and sales departments. Our code of conduct and ethics is publicly available on our website at www.unfi.com and is available free of charge by writing to United Natural Foods, Inc., 313 Iron Horse Way, Providence, Rhode Island 02908, Attn: Investor Relations. We intend to make any legally required disclosures regarding amendments to, or waivers of, the provisions of the code of conduct and ethics on our website at www.unfi.com. Please note that our website address is provided as an inactive textual reference only.

Executive Officers of the Registrant

Our executive officers are elected on an annual basis and serve at the discretion of our Board of Directors. Our executive officers and their ages as of September 30, 2015 are listed below:

Name	Age	Position
Steven L. Spinner	55	President and Chief Executive Officer
Mark E. Shamber	46	Senior Vice President, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer
Joseph J. Traficanti	64	Senior Vice President, General Counsel, Chief Compliance Officer and Corporate Secretary
Sean F. Griffin	56	Chief Operating Officer
Eric A. Dorne	54	Senior Vice President, Chief Information Officer
Thomas A. Dziki	54	Senior Vice President, Chief Human Resource and Sustainability Officer
Craig H. Smith	56	Senior Vice President, National Sales and Service and President of the Eastern Region
Donald P. McIntyre	60	Senior Vice President, National Supply Chain and Strategy and President of the Western Region
Christopher P. Testa	45	President, Woodstock Farms Manufacturing and Blue Marble Brands
Michael P. Zechmeister	48	Senior Vice President

Steven L. Spinner has served as our President and Chief Executive Officer and as a member of our Board of Directors since September 2008. Mr. Spinner served as the Interim President of our Eastern Region, after David Matthews became President of UNFI International in September 2010 and prior to the hiring of Craig H. Smith in December 2010. Prior to joining us in September 2008, Mr. Spinner served as a director and as Chief Executive Officer of Performance Food Group Company ("PFG") from October 2006 to May 2008, when PFG was acquired by affiliates of The Blackstone Group and Wellspring Capital Management. Mr. Spinner previously had served as PFG's President and Chief Operating Officer beginning in May 2005. Mr. Spinner served as PFG's Senior Vice President and Chief Executive Officer—Broadline Division from February 2002 to May 2005 and as PFG's Broadline Division President from August 2001 to February 2002.

Mark E. Shamber has served as Senior Vice President, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer since October 2006. Mr. Shamber previously served as our Vice President, Chief Accounting Officer and Acting Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer from January 2006 until October 2006, as Vice President and Corporate Controller from August 2005 to October 2006 and as our Corporate Controller from June 2003 until August 2005. From February 1995 until June 2003, Mr. Shamber served in various positions of increasing responsibility up to and including senior manager within the assurance and advisory business systems practice at the international accounting firm of Ernst & Young LLP.

Joseph J. Traficanti has served as our Senior Vice President, General Counsel, Chief Compliance Officer and Corporate Secretary since April 2009. Prior to joining us, Mr. Traficanti served as Senior Vice President, General Counsel, Chief Compliance Officer and Corporate Secretary of PFG from November 2004 until April 2009.

Sean F. Griffin has served as our Chief Operating Officer since September 2014. Mr. Griffin previously served as our Senior Vice President, Group President from June 2012 to September 2014 and as our Senior Vice President, National Distribution from January 2010 to June 2012. Prior to joining us, Mr. Griffin was East Region Broadline President of PFG. Previously he served as President of PFG—Springfield, MA from 2003 until 2008. He began his career with Sysco Corporation in 1986 and has held various leadership positions in the foodservice distribution industry with U.S. Foodservice, Alliant Foodservice and Sysco Corporation.

Eric A. Dorne has served as our Senior Vice President, Chief Information Officer since September 2011. Prior to joining us, Mr. Dorne was Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer for The Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company, Inc., the parent

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company of the A&P, Pathmark, SuperFresh, Food Emporium and Waldbaum's supermarket chains located in the Eastern United States from January 2011 to August 2011, and Vice President and Chief Information Officer from August 2005 to January 2011. In his more than thirty years at The Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company, Mr. Dorne held various executive positions including Vice President of Enterprise IT Application Management and Development, Vice President of Store Operations Systems and Director of Retail Support Services.

Thomas A. Dziki has served as our Senior Vice President, Chief Human Resource and Sustainability Officer since August 2010. Prior to August 2010, Mr. Dziki served as our Senior Vice President of Sustainable Development since January 2010, as our Vice President of Sustainable Development since June 2009, and as National Vice President of Real Estate and Construction since August 2006. Prior to that time, Mr. Dziki had served as President of Woodstock Farms Manufacturing and Select Nutrition from December 2004 until August 2006, Corporate Vice President of Special Projects from December 2003 to November 2004 and as our Manager of Special Projects from May 2002 to December 2003. Prior to joining us, Mr. Dziki served as a private consultant to our company, our subsidiaries, Woodstock Farms Manufacturing, Earth Origins, Albert's, and our predecessor company, Cornucopia Natural Foods, Inc., from 1995 to May 2002.

Craig H. Smith has served as our Senior Vice President, National Sales and Service since September 2013 and was reappointed as President of the Eastern Region in August 2014, a position he previously held from December 2010 to August 2013. Prior to joining us, Mr. Smith was Atlantic Region President of U.S. Foodservice, a leading broadline foodservice distributor of national, private label, and signature brand items in the United States from May 2008 to December 2010. In his seventeen years at U.S. Foodservice, Mr. Smith held various executive positions including Senior Vice President Street Sales, North Region Zone President, Detroit Market President and Boston Market President. Prior to U.S. Foodservice, Mr. Smith held several positions at food service industry manufacturer and distributor Rykoff-Sexton, Inc. from 1982 until 1993.

Donald P. McIntyre has served as our Senior Vice President, National Supply Chain and Strategy since September 2013 and was reappointed as our President of the Western Region in August 2014, a position previously held from July 2012 to August 2013. Prior to joining us, Mr. McIntyre served as President and CEO of Claridge Foods from March 2006 to January 2012. Mr. McIntyre also held several senior positions within subsidiaries of Sara Lee Corporation, including President and CEO of Sara Lee Coffee & Tea from April 2004 to March 2006, and CFO of Sara Lee Coffee & Tea from August 2002 to March 2004.

Christopher P. Testa has served as our President, Woodstock Farms Manufacturing since September 2012 and President, Blue Marble Brands since August 2009. Prior to joining us, Mr. Testa served as Vice President of Marketing for Cadbury Schweppes Americas Beverages from August 2002 to May 2005 and as CEO of Wild Waters, Inc. from May 2005 to August 2009.

Michael P. Zechmeister has served as our Senior Vice President since September 2015. Prior to joining us, Mr. Zechmeister served in a variety of senior finance roles with General Mills, Inc., including most recently as Vice President, Finance Yoplait USA from 2012 to September 2015. In addition, Mr. Zechmeister was Vice President and Treasurer from 2010 to 2012, Vice President, Finance US Retail Sales from 2007 to 2010 and Vice President, Finance, Pillsbury Division from 2005 to 2007.

ITEM 1A. RISK FACTORS

Our business, financial condition and results of operations are subject to various risks and uncertainties, including those described below and elsewhere in this Annual Report on Form 10-K. This section discusses factors that, individually or in the aggregate, we think could cause our actual results to differ materially from expected and historical results. Our business, financial condition or results of operations could be materially adversely affected by any of these risks.

We note these factors for investors as permitted by the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. You should understand that it is not possible to predict or identify all such factors. Consequently, you should not consider the following to be a complete discussion of all potential risks or uncertainties applicable to our business. See "Item 7. Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations—Forward-Looking Statements."

We depend heavily on our principal customers and our success is heavily dependent on our principal customers' ability to grow their business.

Whole Foods Market accounted for approximately 35% of our net sales in fiscal 2015. We serve as the primary distributor of natural, organic and specialty non-perishable products to Whole Foods Market in all of its regions in the United States under the terms of our distribution agreement which expires on September 25, 2020. Through our Tony's subsidiary, we also sell certain specialty protein, cheese, and deli items to certain Whole Foods Market stores in California and other states in the Western United States. Whole Foods Market was Tony's largest customer in fiscal 2015. Our ability to maintain a close mutually beneficial relationship with Whole Foods Market is an important element to our continued growth.

The loss or cancellation of business from Whole Foods Market, including from increased distribution to their own facilities or closures of stores, could materially and adversely affect our business, financial condition or results of operations. Similarly, if

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Whole Foods Market is not able to grow its business, including as a result of a reduction in the level of discretionary spending by its customers or competition from other retailers, our business, financial condition or results of operations may be materially and adversely affected.

In addition to our dependence on Whole Foods Market, we are also dependent upon sales to our conventional supermarket customers. Net sales to these customers accounted for approximately 26% of our total net sales in fiscal 2015, and the recent notification to us by the Albertsons/Safeway group of stores that they intended to change the source of purchases of natural and organic products from us to another distributor demonstrated both the importance of this customer group to our results and operations as well as to the public perception of our business in the investor and analyst community. To the extent that customers in this group make decisions to utilize alternative sources of products, whether other distributors or self distribution, our results of operations and stock price may be materially or adversely affected.

Our operations are sensitive to economic downturns.

The grocery industry is sensitive to national and regional economic conditions and the demand for the products that we distribute, particularly our specialty products, may be adversely affected from time to time by economic downturns that impact consumer spending, including discretionary spending. Future economic conditions such as employment levels, business conditions, housing starts, interest rates, inflation rates, energy and fuel costs, fund costs and tax rates could reduce consumer spending or change consumer purchasing habits. Among these changes could be a reduction in the number of natural and organic products that consumers purchase where there are non-organic, which we refer to as conventional, alternatives, given that many natural and organic products, and particularly natural and organic foods, often have higher retail prices than do their conventional counterparts.

Our business is a low margin business and our profit margins may decrease due to consolidation in the grocery industry and our increased focus on sales to the conventional supermarket channel.

The grocery distribution industry generally is characterized by relatively high volume of sales with relatively low profit margins. The continuing consolidation of retailers in the natural products industry and the growth of supernatural chains may reduce our profit margins in the future as more customers qualify for greater volume discounts, and we experience pricing pressures from suppliers and retailers. Over the last three fiscal years, when excluding the impact that acquisitions may have had, we have increased our sales to our supernatural chain and conventional supermarket customers in relation to our total net sales. Sales to customers within our supernatural chain and conventional supermarket channels generate a lower gross margin than do sales to our independent customers. Many of these customers, including our largest customer, have agreements with us that include volume discounts. As the amounts these customers purchase from us increase, the price that they pay for the products they purchase is reduced, putting downward pressure on our gross margins on these sales. To compensate for these lower gross margins, we must reduce the expenses we incur to service these customers. If we are unable to reduce our expenses as a percentage of net sales, including our expenses related to servicing this lower gross margin business, our business, financial condition or results of operations could be adversely impacted.

Our business may be sensitive to inflationary and deflationary pressures.

Many of our sales are at prices that are based on our product cost plus a percentage markup. As a result, volatile food costs have a direct impact upon our profitability. Prolonged periods of product cost inflation and periods of rapidly increasing inflation may have a negative impact on our profit margins and results of operations to the extent that we are unable to pass on all or a portion of such product cost increases to our customers. In addition, product cost inflation may negatively impact the consumer discretionary spending trends of our customers' customers, which could adversely affect our sales. Conversely, because many of our sales are at prices that are based upon product cost plus a percentage markup, our profit levels may be negatively impacted during periods of product cost deflation even though our gross profit as a percentage of net sales may remain relatively constant. To compensate for lower gross margins, we, in turn, must reduce expenses that we incur to service our customers. If we are unable to reduce our expenses as a percentage of net sales, our business, financial condition or results of operations could be adversely impacted.

Our customers generally are not obligated to continue purchasing products from us and larger customers that do have multiyear contracts with us may terminate these contracts early in certain situations or choose not to renew or extend the contract at its expiration.

Many of our customers buy from us under purchase orders, and we generally do not have agreements with or commitments from these customers for the purchase of products. We cannot assure you that these customers will maintain or increase their sales volumes or orders for the products supplied by us or that we will be able to maintain or add to our existing customer base. Decreases in our volumes or orders for products supplied by us for these customers with whom we do not have a long-term contract may have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition or results of operations.

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We may have contracts with certain of our customers (as is the case with many of our conventional supermarket customers) that obligate the customer to buy products from us for a particular period of time. Even in this case, the contracts may not require the customer to purchase a minimum amount of products from us or the contracts may afford the customer better pricing in the event that the volume of the customer's purchases exceeds certain levels. If these customers were to terminate these contracts prior to their scheduled termination, or if we or the customer elected not to renew or extend the term of the contract at its expiration, it may have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition or results of operations, including additional operational expenses to transition out of the business or to adjust our staffing levels to account for the reduction in net sales.

We have significant competition from a variety of sources.

We operate in competitive markets and our future success will be largely dependent on our ability to provide quality products and services at competitive prices. Bidding for contracts or arrangements with customers, particularly within the supernatural chain and conventional supermarket channels, is highly competitive and distributors may market their services to a particular customer over a long period of time before they are invited to bid. Our competition comes from a variety of sources, including other distributors of natural products as well as specialty grocery and mass market grocery distributors and retail customers that have their own distribution channels. Mass market grocery distributors in recent years have increased their emphasis on natural and organic products and are now competing more directly with us and many conventional supermarket chains have increased self-distribution of particular items or have increased their purchases of particular items directly from suppliers. New competitors are also entering our markets as barriers to entry for new competitors are relatively low. Some of the mass market grocery distributors with whom we compete may have been in business longer than we have, may have substantially greater financial and other resources than we have and may be better established in their markets. We cannot assure you that our current or potential competitors will not provide products or services comparable or superior to those provided by us or adapt more quickly than we do to evolving industry trends or changing market requirements. It is also possible that alliances among competitors may develop and rapidly acquire significant market share or that certain of our customers will increase distribution to their own retail facilities. Increased competition may result in price reductions, reduced gross margins, lost business and loss of market share, any of which could materially and adversely affect our business, financial condition or results of operations.

We cannot assure you that we will be able to compete effectively against current and future competitors.

Our investment in information technology may not result in the anticipated benefits.

Much of our sales growth is occurring in our lower gross margin supernatural and conventional supermarket channels. In our attempt to reduce operating expenses and increase operating efficiencies, we have aggressively invested in the development and implementation of new information technology. Based on our currently anticipated timeline, we expect to complete the roll-out of our warehouse management system and transportation management system by the end of fiscal 2018. While we currently believe this revised timeline will be met, we may not be able to implement these technological changes in the time frame that we have planned and delays in implementation could negatively impact our business, financial condition or results of operations. In addition, the costs to make these changes may exceed our estimates and will exceed the benefits during the early stages of implementation. Even if we are able to implement the changes in accordance with our revised plans, and within our current cost estimates, we may not be able to achieve the expected efficiencies and cost savings from this investment, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition or results of operations. Moreover, as we implement information technology enhancements, disruptions in our business may be created (including disruption with our customers) which may have an adverse effect on our business, financial condition or results of operations.

Failure by us to develop and operate a reliable technology platform could negatively impact our business.

Our ability to decrease costs and increase profits, as well as our ability to serve customers most effectively, depends on the reliability of our technology platform. We use software and other technology systems, among other things, to generate and select orders, to load and route trucks and to monitor and manage our business on a day-to-day basis.

Any disruption to these computer systems could adversely impact our customer service, decrease the volume of our business and result in increased costs negatively affecting our business, financial condition or results of operations.

We have experienced losses due to the uncollectability of accounts receivable in the past and could experience increases in such losses in the future if our customers are unable to timely pay their debts to us.

Certain of our customers have from time to time experienced bankruptcy, insolvency and/or an inability to pay their debts to us as they come due. If our customers suffer significant financial difficulty, they may be unable to pay their debts to us timely or at all, which could have a material adverse effect on our results of operations. It is possible that customers may reject their contractual obligations to us under bankruptcy laws or otherwise. Significant customer bankruptcies could further adversely affect our revenues and increase our operating expenses by requiring larger provisions for bad debt. In addition, even when our contracts with these customers are not rejected, if customers are unable to meet their obligations on a timely basis, it could adversely affect

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our ability to collect receivables. Further, we may have to negotiate significant discounts and/or extended financing terms with these customers in such a situation, each of which could have material adverse effect on our business, financial condition, results of operations or cash flows. During periods of economic weakness, small to medium-sized businesses, like many of our independently owned natural products retailer customers, may be impacted more severely and more quickly than larger businesses. Similarly, these smaller businesses may be more likely to be more severely impacted by events outside of their control, like significant weather events. Consequently, the ability of such businesses to repay their obligations to us may deteriorate, and in some cases this deterioration may occur quickly, which could adversely impact our business, financial condition or results of operations.

Our acquisition strategy may adversely affect our business.

A portion of our past growth has been achieved through acquisitions of, or mergers with, other distributors of natural, organic and specialty products. We also continually evaluate opportunities to acquire other companies. We believe that there are risks related to acquiring companies, including an inability to successfully identify suitable acquisition candidates or consummate such potential acquisitions. To the extent that our future growth includes acquisitions, we cannot assure you that we will not overpay for acquisitions, lose key employees of acquired companies, or fail to achieve potential synergies or expansion into new markets as a result of our acquisitions. Therefore, future acquisitions, if any, may have a material adverse effect on our results of operations, particularly in periods immediately following the consummation of those transactions while the operations of the acquired business are being integrated with our operations. Achieving the benefits of acquisitions depends on timely, efficient and successful execution of a number of post-acquisition events, including, among other things:

- maintaining the customer and supplier base;
- optimizing delivery routes;
- coordinating administrative, distribution and finance functions; and
- integrating management information systems and personnel.

The integration process could divert the attention of management and any difficulties or problems encountered in the transition process could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition or results of operations. In particular, the integration process may temporarily redirect resources previously focused on reducing product cost and operating expenses, resulting in lower gross profits in relation to sales. In addition, the process of combining companies could cause the interruption of, or a loss of momentum and operating profits in, the activities of the respective businesses, which could have an adverse effect on their combined operations.

In connection with acquisitions of businesses in the future, if any, we may decide to consolidate the operations of any acquired businesses with our existing operations or make other changes with respect to the acquired businesses, which could result in special charges or other expenses. Our results of operations also may be adversely affected by expenses we incur in making acquisitions, by amortization of acquisition-related intangible assets with definite lives and by additional depreciation attributable to acquired assets. Any of the businesses we acquire may also have liabilities or adverse operating issues, including some that we fail to discover before the acquisition, and our indemnity for such liabilities may also be limited. Additionally, our ability to make any future acquisitions may depend upon obtaining additional financing. We may not be able to obtain additional financing on acceptable terms or at all. To the extent that we seek to acquire other businesses in exchange for our common stock, fluctuations in our stock price could have a material adverse effect on our ability to complete acquisitions.

Our business strategy of increasing our sales of fresh, perishable items, that we accelerated with our acquisition of Tony's, may not produce the results that we expect.

A key element of our current growth strategy is to increase the amount of fresh, perishable products that we distribute. We believe that the ability to distribute these products that are typically found in the perimeter of our customers' stores, in addition to the products we have historically distributed, will differentiate us from our competitors and increase demand for our products. We accelerated this strategy with our acquisition of Tony's. If we are unable to grow this portion of our business and manage that growth effectively, our business, financial condition and results of operations may be materially and adversely affected.

We may have difficulty managing our growth.

The growth in the size of our business and operations has placed, and is expected to continue to place, a significant strain on our management. Our future growth may be limited by our inability to make acquisitions, successfully integrate acquired entities or significant new customers, implement information systems initiatives, acquire or timely construct new distribution centers or expand our existing distribution centers, or adequately manage our personnel. Our future growth is limited in part by the size and location of our distribution centers. As we near maximum utilization of a given facility or maximize our processing capacity, operations may be constrained and inefficiencies have been and may be created, which could adversely affect our results of operations unless the facility is expanded, volume is shifted to another facility or additional processing capacity is added. Conversely, as we add additional facilities or expand existing operations or facilities, excess capacity may be created. Any excess

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capacity may also create inefficiencies and adversely affect our results of operations, including as a result of incurring additional operating costs for these facilities before demand for products to be supplied from these facilities rises to a sufficient level. We cannot assure you that we will be able to successfully expand our existing distribution centers or open new distribution centers in new or existing markets as needed to accommodate or facilitate growth. Even if we are able to expand our distribution network, our ability to compete effectively and to manage future growth, if any, will depend on our ability to continue to implement and improve operational, financial and management information systems, including our warehouse management systems, on a timely basis and to expand, train, motivate and manage our work force. We cannot assure you that our existing personnel, systems, procedures and controls will be adequate to support the future growth of our operations. Our inability to manage our growth effectively could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition or results of operations.

Increased fuel costs may adversely affect our results of operations.

Increased fuel costs may have a negative impact on our results of operations. The high cost of diesel fuel can increase the price we pay for products as well as the costs we incur to deliver products to our customers. These factors, in turn, may negatively impact our net sales, margins, operating expenses and operating results. To manage this risk, we have in the past periodically entered, and may in the future periodically enter, into heating oil derivative contracts to hedge a portion of our projected diesel fuel requirements. Heating crude oil prices have a highly correlated relationship to fuel prices, making these derivatives effective in offsetting changes in the cost of diesel fuel. We are not party to any commodity swap agreements and, as a result, our exposure to volatility in the price of diesel fuel has increased relative to our exposure to volatility in prior periods in which we had outstanding heating oil derivative contracts. We do not enter into fuel hedge contracts for speculative purposes. We have in the past, and may in the future, periodically enter into forward purchase commitments for a portion of our projected monthly diesel fuel requirements at fixed prices. As of August 1, 2015, we had forward diesel fuel commitments totaling approximately \$11.3 million and \$10.4 million through December 2015 and December 2016, respectively. Our commitments were entered into at prevailing rates throughout the fiscal year. If fuel prices decrease significantly, these forward purchases may prove ineffective and result in us paying higher than the then market costs for a portion of our diesel fuel. We also maintain a fuel surcharge program which allows us to pass some of our higher fuel costs through to our customers. We cannot guarantee that we will continue to be able to pass a comparable proportion or any of our higher fuel costs to our customers in the future, which may adversely affect our business, financial condition or results of operations.

Disruption of our distribution network could adversely affect our business.

Damage or disruption to our distribution capabilities due to weather, natural disaster, fire, terrorism, pandemic, strikes, the financial and/or operational instability of key suppliers, or other reasons could impair our ability to distribute our products. To the extent that we are unable, or it is not financially feasible, to mitigate the likelihood or potential impact of such events, or to manage effectively such events if they occur, there could be an adverse effect on our business, financial condition or results of operations.

The cost of the capital available to us and any limitations on our ability to access additional capital may have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition or results of operations.

In May 2014, we entered into a First Amendment Agreement (the "Amendment") to our amended and restated revolving credit facility, which increased the maximum borrowings under the amended and restated revolving credit facility to \$600.0 million and extended the maturity date to May 21, 2019. Up to \$550.0 million is available to our U.S. subsidiaries and up to \$50.0 million is available to UNFI Canada. After giving effect to the Amendment, the amended and restated revolving credit facility provides a one-time option to increase the borrowing base by up to an additional \$150.0 million (but in not less than \$10.0 million increments) subject to certain customary conditions and the lenders committing to provide the increase in funding, and also permits the Company to enter into a real-estate backed term loan facility which shall not exceed \$200.0 million. The borrowings of the US portion of the amended and restated credit facility, prior to and after giving effect to the Amendment, accrue interest, at our option, at either (i) a base rate (generally defined as the highest of (x) the Bank of America Business Capital prime rate, (y) the average overnight federal funds effective rate plus one-half percent (0.50%) per annum and (z) one-month London Interbank Offered Rate ("LIBOR") plus one percent (1%) per annum) plus an initial margin of 0.50%, or (ii) the LIBOR for one, two, three or six months or, if approved by all affected lenders, nine months plus an initial margin of 1.50%. The

borrowings on the Canadian portion of the credit facility for Canadian swing-line loans, Canadian overadvance loans or Canadian protective advances accrue interest, at the Company's option, at either (i) a prime rate (generally defined as the highest of (x) 0.50% over 30-day Reuters Canadian Deposit Offering Rate for bankers' acceptances, (y) the prime rate of Bank of America, N.A.'s Canada branch, and (z) a bankers' acceptance equivalent rate for a one month interest period plus 1.00%) plus an initial margin of 0.50%, or (ii) a bankers' acceptance equivalent rate of the rate of interest per annum equal to the annual rates applicable to Canadian Dollar bankers' acceptances on the "CDOR Page" of Reuter Monitor Money Rates Service, plus five basis points (the "CDOR rate"), and an initial margin of 1.50%. All other borrowings on the Canadian portion of the amended and restated credit facility, prior to and after giving effect to the Amendment, must exclusively accrue interest under the CDOR rate plus the applicable margin. The amended and restated revolving credit facility includes an annual commitment fee in the amount of 0.30% if the average daily balance of amounts actually used (other

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than swing-line loans) is less than 40% of the aggregate commitments, or 0.25% if such average daily balance is 40% or more of the aggregate commitments.

As of August 1, 2015, our borrowing base, based on accounts receivable and inventory levels and described more completely below under "Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations—Liquidity and Capital Resources," was \$581.4 million, with remaining availability of \$180.6 million. In August 2014, we and our Albert's subsidiary entered into a \$150.0 million Term Loan Agreement (the "Term Loan Agreement"), with the financial institutions that are parties thereto and Bank of America, N.A., as the administrative agent. The Term Loan Agreement requires us to make quarterly principal payments of \$2.5 million commencing on November 1, 2014, with the remaining principal balance to be paid at maturity. The Term Loan Agreement terminates on the earlier of (a) August 14, 2022 and (b) the date that is ninety days prior to the termination date of our amended and restated revolving credit facility. The term loan facility is secured by certain parcels of our and certain of our subsidiaries' real property. Additionally, the Term Loan Agreement is guaranteed by most of our subsidiaries. The borrowings under the Term Loan Agreement accrue interest, at our option, at either (i) a base rate (generally defined as the highest of (x) the Bank of America's prime rate, (y) the average overnight federal funds effective rate plus one-half percent (0.50%) per annum and (z) one-month LIBOR plus one percent (1%) per annum) plus a margin of 1.50%, or (ii) the LIBOR for one, two, three or six months or, if approved by all affected lenders, nine months plus a margin of 2.50%.

In an effort to maximize our profit margins, we rely on strategic investment buying initiatives, such as discounted bulk purchases, which require spending significant amounts of working capital up front to purchase products that we will sell over a multi-month time period. In the event that our cost of capital increases, such as during a period in which we are not in compliance with the fixed charge coverage ratio covenants under our amended and restated revolving credit facility, or our ability to borrow funds or raise equity capital is limited, we could suffer reduced profit margins and be unable to grow our business organically or through acquisitions, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition or results of operations.

Our debt agreements contain restrictive covenants that may limit our operating flexibility.

Our debt agreements underlying our amended and restated revolving credit facility and Term Loan Agreement contain financial covenants and other restrictions that limit our operating flexibility, limit our flexibility in planning for or reacting to changes in our business and make us more vulnerable to economic downturns and competitive pressures.

Our indebtedness could have significant negative consequences, including:

- increasing our vulnerability to general adverse economic and industry conditions;
- limiting our ability to obtain additional financing;
- limiting our ability to pursue certain acquisitions;
- limiting our flexibility in planning for or reacting to changes in our business and the industry in which we compete; and
- placing us at a competitive disadvantage compared to competitors with less leverage or better access to capital resources.

In addition, our amended and restated revolving credit facility and the Term Loan Agreement each require that we comply with various financial tests and impose certain restrictions on us, including among other things, restrictions on our ability to incur additional indebtedness, create liens on assets, make loans or investments or pay dividends. Failure to comply with these covenants could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition or results of operations.

Our operating results are subject to significant fluctuations.

Our operating results may vary significantly from period to period due to:

- demand for our products, including as a result of seasonal fluctuations;
- changes in our operating expenses, including fuel and insurance expenses;
- management's ability to execute our business and growth strategies;
- changes in customer preferences, including levels of enthusiasm for health, fitness and environmental issues;
- public perception of the benefits of natural and organic products when compared to similar conventional products;
- fluctuation of natural product prices due to competitive pressures;

