

Business Profile: Kialla Pure Foods

Organic grain icon undergoes change

Kialla Pure Foods (KPF), situated on the Darling Downs west of Brisbane, is Australia's largest dedicated organic cereal grain manufacturer.

The Kialla company was established about 18 years ago by Graham and Sandy McNally, early pioneers of the organic industry and life-long organic farmers. It grew from a small processing plant located on the McNallys' farm to the purpose-built operation it is today.

It now employs more than 25 people, mostly from the local Greenmount area, thus contributing in a major way to the local economy.

The Kennedy family recently bought shares in Kialla Pure Foods, with Quentin Kennedy becoming managing director of the Kialla group. Kennedy has been involved in the organic industry for some years, having previously worked for Biological Farmers of Australia (BFA) and Australian Certified Organic (ACO) and is currently a director of BFA.

The McNallys will continue as shareholders in the company. A key consideration for them was that the buyer of their business share their passion and vision for the organic industry.

This merger of the McNally and Kennedy families will propel KPF into a new phase of its business life, with many new development options being considered.

MILLING OPERATION

An efficient modern complex prepares and manufactures a wide range of cereal grains, specialty flours, semolinas, pre-mixes and other value-added products. These are sold direct to consumers, as well as to industrial, institutional and breakfast cereal markets.

The milling processes, based on using traditional solid mill-stones, incorporate the best of modern technology. These mill-stones generate minimal heat, thus causing less damage to grain enzymes.

Very little refinement is performed, so throughout the whole production system optimum nutrition and flavour are maintained. A new grading plant was installed last September and the completion of a new soy processing line is imminent.

Kialla has more than 6000 tonnes of on-site sealed storage, with bulk carbon dioxide (CO₂) gas piped to each one for insect control. After milling, product is packaged and stored in a controlled temperature warehouse at 10°C.

The on-site warehouse can accommodate up to 700 tonnes of product, which is dispatched on a daily basis to destinations all over the world.

KIALLA PRODUCTS

More than 23 different cereal grains and pulses are graded or

milled through the operation. A large variety of products are sold to retail, wholesale and manufacturing industries.

This range encompasses products from muesli, cake and bread mixes through to traditional flours such as spelt and buckwheat. Recent infrastructure developments have enabled the company to produce corn and soybean grits, which are sold to food processors for further value-adding.

SUPPLY CHAIN

Supply of organic raw materials is a critical success factor in this industry. Over the years, Kialla's network of suppliers has grown into a database of about 400 farmers.

A major advantage the company offers growers is the ability to buy all crops grown in a crop rotation cycle as the mill requires a broad range of cereal and bean crops.

Kialla is starting to provide farmers with a grain analysis feedback to help them with rotation management. This initiative was implemented by national grain buyer Rob Wilson, an organic farmer himself.

Wilson's experience as a farmer proves priceless as he can provide advice and assistance on issues such as organic audits, grain specifications, storage and logistics, plant breeds and rates or just machinery solutions in day-to-day farming.

Kialla holds several grower field days each year, with speakers on different topics such as biodynamics or fertility management being invited along to give different perspectives.

Growers have indicated this is a great opportunity to share information and knowledge about their industry. The next grower day will be held in late June/early July. Growers are invited to register their interest at <grainbuyer@kiallafoods.com.au>; or phone Rob Wilson on 0427 634 467.

THE FUTURE

The Kialla business was started by a farmer and will continue to promote the principles of organic farming into the future. The Kennedy family also has its origins in agriculture and thus understands the vagaries of life on the land.

Kialla prides itself on paying a fair price to its supply network and hopes to continue developing supply networks throughout Australia. ■

