



Great grass makes great beef

Bord Bia – The Irish Food Board - Director of Food and Beverage, Padraig Brennan answers questions about what lies behind Bord Bia's new Grass-Fed Standard for Irish beef.

Q. Why was there a need to develop a specific 'Grass-Fed Standard'?

A. When it comes to beef, consumers around the world are increasingly looking for natural, sustainable, high quality products. Thanks to Ireland's lush green pastures, temperate climate and strong farming heritage, Ireland has a reputation for producing some of the world's finest food and is ideally positioned to meet the growing demand for premium grass-fed beef. And now we can independently prove it.

Research from Ernst and Young tells us that almost half of consumers globally associate Ireland with grass-fed, so we have developed a new Grass-Fed Standard in direct response to the growing international consumer and customer demand for premium, healthy and naturally produced products. The Grass-Fed Standard, and its associated logo, will allow customers using qualifying Irish beef to differentiate their product to consumers who are increasingly seeking greater clarity on the provenance of food, as well as the desire to purchase naturally tasty beef from sustainable, grass-fed farming systems.

What sets it apart from other grass-fed claims is that Ireland's new Grass-Fed Standard for Irish Beef is the world's first independently verified Standard that provides proof of the grass-fed status of each and every qualified animal. The Grass-Fed Standard utilises data collected during farm audits as part of Bord Bia national Sustainable Beef and Lamb Assurance Scheme, Ireland's farm assurance scheme.

This gives international customers of Irish beef reassurance on the grass-fed credentials of their beef offering especially as their discerning consumers continue to look for more transparency in the beef they're purchasing.

Furthermore, the development of this Standard highlights the commitment of our Irish farmers to maximising the efficiencies of Ireland's grass-based production system and their dedication to our farm assurance schemes, and enables Ireland to uphold the highest standards in farming production.

Q. What makes Irish beef so special?

A. With over 80% of Ireland's agricultural land being lush green grass, coupled with our mild climate and plentiful rainfall, Ireland is naturally suited to sustainable, grass-fed beef farming. This ideal environmental mix allows Ireland to have the longest grazing season of all countries in the northern hemisphere, with a yearly grass growth rate that exceeds the European average by more than a third.

All of which are natural advantages creating the perfect environment for cattle rearing and allowing grass-fed beef production to flourish across the island. But that is only half the story. Irish farms are traditionally family-owned with care, passion and respect for the cattle and land passed from generation to generation. This all helps to deliver tender, quality beef with a delicious grass-fed taste.

Ireland's reputation for high quality beef has been further enhanced in recent years with glowing accolades received for its tenderness, succulence, depth of flavour and rich colour. Irish grass-fed beef features at many leading restaurants including Michelin-starred restaurants around the world. The CIBC (Chefs Irish Beef Club) has nine chapters in European countries and internationally has circa 100 participating leading chefs who chose (on a voluntary basis) to use and endorse grass-fed Irish beef as their beef of choice.



• Padraig Brennan.

While looking further along the supply chain, our grass-fed Irish beef exports are part of Ireland's national food sustainability programme, Origin Green. This is the only national sustainability programme of its kind, which begins on farm level through Ireland's farm assurance scheme, and then continues throughout the supply chain as Irish processors work on a number of sustainability measures across water, energy and waste management. This all ensures that the Irish industry is reducing its environmental impact while manufacturing to the highest of standards. Origin Green adheres to UN Sustainable Development Goals, a further benefit of sourcing Irish beef for our international customers.

Q. Are you confident that the standard will be of interest to UK customers?

A. For retail and foodservice customers of Irish beef, the Grass-Fed Standard is the newest expression of an enduring national commitment to excellence that makes Ireland one of Europe's leading beef exporting nations and the natural choice for consumers demanding the highest quality, grass-fed beef. It provides reassurance to consumers everywhere, that our qualifying grass-fed herds produce premium quality beef that's both naturally nutritious and tasty.

Furthermore, for our UK customers, having a robust independently verified scheme underpinning their Irish grass-fed beef offering, will help them meet a growing consumer need. Research from Ernst and Young shows that 50% of consumers globally now express a preference for grass-fed beef. Almost two thirds (64%) of consumers are willing to pay more for grass-fed beef, driven by its strong association with terms such as 'natural', 'healthy' and 'premium'.

While Red C research depicts that 87% of UK consumers would purchase Irish beef thanks to Ireland's sustainable and grass-based farming practices which ensure a quality and flavour that UK consumers both enjoy and trust. In addition, thanks to Ireland's close proximity over two thirds of UK consumers consider Irish beef to be local.

"Almost two thirds (64%) of consumers are willing to pay more for grass-fed beef, driven by its strong association with terms such as 'natural,' 'healthy' and 'premium.'"

In 2019 Ireland won more medals than any other country at the esteemed World Steak Challenge, beating competition from Australia, New Zealand, Uruguay, the US, Canada, and other EU Member States. No wonder that it has a global reputation for quality and is the choice of so many of the world's Michelin star chefs and leading retailers and manufacturers globally.

So, when you combine the robustness of the new scheme with the research, it helps demonstrate why UK customers will be interested in this grass-fed Standard.

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Q. How does this scheme work?

A. The new Standard is the perfect blend of nature and science. Fully supported by the Irish government and recognised by the Irish National Accreditation Board, the Standard uses a scientific calculation method to verify beef is sourced from cattle that enjoy a minimum of 90% grass and grass-based forage. Cattle must also be shown to graze in open pastures for an average of 220 days per year, during their lifetime. Ireland's farm assurance scheme is a voluntary scheme operating under Origin Green. Ireland's farm assurance scheme is internationally recognised and is accredited to the International Standard for Product Certification ISO 17065: 20122. Only beef from herds that meet this threshold can bear the Grass-Fed Standard.

The Grass-Fed Standard for beef brings data-based assurance that beef is sourced from farms where cattle enjoy a diet of a minimum 90% grass and grass-based forage and graze in open pastures for an average of 220 days a year during their lifetime, with an allowance of up to 40 days where soil type or weather may prevent longer grazing seasons. However, independently verified data confirms that in some areas of Ireland – those that are favoured with better climate and free draining soils – this figure may be up to 300 days per year and that on average over 95% of Irish animals diets comprise of grass or grass-based forage.

The eligibility of each individual animal will be determined at meat plants using the Grass-Fed Beef Model. Processors will be required to verify conformance with the requirements of the standard during their meat processor quality assurance audit.

Q. Was there a consultation process for the scheme?

A. Yes of course, we worked very closely with our Irish beef stakeholders and colleagues. Fortunately we had all the basic architecture in place to a large extent to develop Grass-Fed, due to the information we have been collecting for over ten years on Quality Assured farms in order to establish the sustainability and carbon footprinting elements of Origin Green. From analysing the data, we could also reassure

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ourselves that the grass-fed criteria around percentage of the animals diet and grazing days stood up.

There was a consultation process with representation from our farming bodies, processing industry associations, the Department of Agriculture, Food & Marine, Teagasc (Ireland's state agency providing research, advisory and education in agriculture, horticulture, food and rural development) and international trade and customers. All of which was underpinned by research demonstrating the consumer need for such a robust independently verified Standard.

However, tying up the market research, the technical aspects of the Standard and how to shape the Standard in order to get as many eligible animals and farms as possible into the scheme has taken time. So all told, the process has taken more than 18 months to bring to the marketplace.

Q. How will it be communicated to consumers in the UK and internationally?

A. The Grass-Fed Standard has an approved associated logo, which will enable Irish beef to differentiate itself to consumers who are increasingly seeking greater clarity on the provenance of food. This on pack label will be complemented with approved in-store POS and on shelf marketing.

For a wider awareness initiative, Bord Bia has undertaken a trade media PR launch to communicate and educate our international customers and trade about the new verified scheme. In addition to the essence of the scheme i.e. Ireland grass-fed production system, Ireland's farm assurance scheme and the dedication of our farmers is communicated in our ongoing digital consumer marketing and recent UK TV campaign – 'It's All Right Here'.

Q. Is there scientific evidence that grass-fed beef equals better quality?

A. According to Teagasc, grass-fed beef is both visually distinctive and has specific, positive nutritional properties. Grass-fed beef has (i) low overall fat levels, (ii) an even distribution of fat (as intermuscular marbling), (iii) a pronounced 'cherry red' meat colour and (iv) a high degree of 'creaminess/'yellowness' of fat, due to the high beta-carotene content of 'grazed grass' diets. It has been established that grazed grass has a significantly higher beta-carotene content than cut grass.

The findings of the Teagasc study into the different effect of cattle diets show that grass-fed beef has low overall fat levels, it is naturally rich in protein, contains essential amino acids, and has eight essential vitamins and minerals including B12, iron, niacin, B6 and phosphorous. Together, this combination can help to reduce tiredness and support normal function of the immune system as well as general good health and well-being.

Environment and animal welfare are also very important to UK consumers when it comes to their choice of beef. A grass-fed outdoor approach puts the health and welfare of the cattle and the sustainability of the green pastures that they are reared on at the heart of a positive approach to farming.

Q. What has been involved in developing the standard and how long has it taken?

A. Farmer engagement is a priority for Bord Bia and we have been working continuously to engage with Irish farm organisations on the new standard. The principle

behind the development of the grass-fed standard was that the farm-level information used in the grass-fed models was drawn from data already collected through Bord Bia's farm assurance scheme farm audits and therefore didn't place any additional data burden on farmers. The Grass Fed Standard is a processor standard – and what that means is there are no additional T&Cs for farmers to comply with other than being members of Ireland's farm assurance scheme.

There is also a Grass-Fed Standard Technical Advisory Committee for beef, comprising representatives from industry, Teagasc, Bord Bia and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. The Grass-Fed Standard was officially introduced to Irish stakeholders on 30th January 2020, with the key message that the purpose of the Standard is to facilitate the marketing of Irish grass-fed beef products. There was ongoing consultation with farm organisations throughout the entire stages of development and there are farmer representatives on Bord Bia's Quality Assurance Board and on each Technical Advisory Committee, which reviews livestock standards against which farmers are audited and certified under.

The message to industry is clear - that the introduction of an approved Standard for beef underpins Ireland's position as a leader in grass-fed production and that through the Grass-Fed Standard industry can provide verifiable proof and a point of differentiation in a competitive market for grass-fed products. ■



Developing new markets and new products

We take a look at Frontmatec Accles & Shevoke a year on from the business joining the Frontmatec portfolio.

The last 18 months have been a period of consolidation, investment and development for the manufacturers of captive bolt stunners, Frontmatec Accles & Shelvoke.

In May last year, Accles & Shelvoke became part of the Frontmatec family – a Danish company supplying the global red meat and pork slaughter and processing sector through companies such as Attec, ITEC, Carometec, Frontmatec and SFK LEBLANC.

Having previously been part of a group whose main focus was outside the meat processing sector, Frontmatec Accles & Shelvoke has now found itself within a company with aspirations to be the number one supplier in the red meat and pork processing industry.

And with this support, Frontmatec Accles & Shelvoke has been able to invest in its Birmingham factory, develop new products, seek out new markets and distributors and find marketing support at trade shows around the world.

Global growth

The company already has 44 distributors worldwide and ships its products to 60 countries with markets in the US, Australia and China as well as Europe.

However, it is now targeting the growth markets across the globe.

“We have gone south and east targeting the growth markets,” said Frontmatec Accles & Shelvoke’s vice president of bolt stunning, Joe Holland.

“We are going into Brazil, which has taken over from the US as the biggest beef producer and we are investing in the infrastructure there.”

Holland said that while the US has been the company’s largest market with millions of pounds’ worth of sales, the developing markets have until now seen low sales.

However, by investing in these countries and seeking distributors in places such as Brazil, China and Russia, Frontmatec Accles & Shelvoke aims to increase its sales base.

Holland explained that being part of Frontmatec was helping the business to establish itself in these new markets.



One aspect that has to be addressed in the Russian market is that while there is not a problem in exporting stunners into Russia there are difficulties with cartridges. However as there are already existing trade routes between China and Russia, and Frontmatec Accles & Shelvoke has some expertise already in China, there are opportunities to ease the problem.

The company is in discussions to establish a distributorship in China and is also in discussions in Argentina. It has recently just signed a new distributorship in Canada.

New products

Part of the recent investment in the company has seen Frontmatec Accles & Shelvoke develop and launch several new products.

One of the developments is a long handled tool that clamps on to the stunner.

The CASH Magnum Long Handle provides reach and accessibility and has been designed to be used with all new and old CASH Magnum stunning tools.

The robust construction of the handle comes from its all metallic body and the hexagonal cap screws provide secure fixing of the CASH Magnum tool, which gives a reliable long-lasting accessory for the stunning tool.

The firing operation is achieved through a trigger mechanism located at the base of the handle.

Holland said that the tool is designed to be used if an animal has fallen in the stunning box and it enables the operator to stun the animal without having to lean into the stun box.

The long hand attachment improves the welfare for the animal as well as making the operation safer and easier for the operator.

Another development that has recently reached the market is the CASH Special XL stunner, which is an ergonomic pistol shaped cartridge powered humane stunning tool suitable for use on heavy animals.

The Magnum XL stunner, with its none-retracting free flight bolt, delivers the strongest possible stun using the 6 grain .25 calibre red cartridge produce 667 joules of energy. This combination can stun the largest livestock, including cattle such as large bulls ,buffalo, bison and very heavy sows and boars.

The Cash Special XL pistol shaped tool with trigger fired tool is easily operated and designed to withstand the greater performance and pressures involved.



• Vice president of bolt stunning, Joe Holland.

Holland explained that the more grains that the stunner has improves the velocity of the stunner and by using a 4.5 grain cartridge, it increases the speed of the stun, significantly reducing the pain and improving the animal welfare aspects of the slaughter process as well as increasing the production efficiency on the line.

While improving the animal welfare and reducing the stress to the animal, it will also help to improve the meat quality.

One UK based slaughterer that is using the CASH Special XL stunner said: “This new tool is the .25 Cash Special XL and is specifically intended for use on very heavy cattle, bulls and sows in conjunction with the newly-developed .25 Green 4.5 grain power load.

“This stunning tool delivers 100 per cent knockout on every stun and gives the slaughterer complete confidence in its application.

“The new ergonomic pistol grip is a definite improvement on earlier models with excellent grip characteristics ensuring minimal hand slippage at point of stun.

“The introduction of this new stunning tool proves that Frontmatec Accles & Shelvoke is fully committed to product development and demonstrates level of performance expected of a world leader in their field.” said Holland.

A third new development to come on to the market is the CASH Captive Bolt Stun Check.

• Accurate stunning performance is measured and validated with the CASH Captive Bolt Stun Check.





- CASH Captive Bolt Stun Check is compatible with all CASH Captive Stunners.

The CASH Captive Bolt Stun Check measures the precise velocity of the penetrative captive bolt to determine its effectiveness within specified tolerances.

The device ensures that the stunner meets animal welfare regulations that require the stunning tools are working efficiently and effectively every time and are compliant with the legislation.

The stun check device supports all existing CASH penetrative stunning tools and produces measurable data for the requirements of an animal welfare audit.

The device is designed to be used wirelessly via Bluetooth with a tablet and PC and is provided with an Android tablet pre-loaded with the compatible software and Microsoft Windows compatible PC software; both pre-configured for the CASH Stunning Tool of the user's choice. It also comes with on-device visual indication of stun check.

With global growth in the pipeline, new products and a fresh online presence the future is looking nothing but positive for Frontmatec Accles & Shelvoke.

Holland said that the device enables the slaughterer to be able to tell the vet the velocity of the stunner before stunning.

It will also be able to help the operator recognise whether the stunner needs to be cleaned or whether there are worn parts according to the speed and efficiency of the stunner seen in the check.

One further development that Frontmatec Accles & Shelvoke is currently looking at is a multi-stunner, where the cartridges

are on a belt. The new stunner is expected to be launched in January and could fit in with other aspects of the Frontmatec developments, which are focused on robotics.

Holland said that a stunner on a robotic arm could be seen as friendlier as an animal will see a man as a predator but will not be so alarmed by a robotic arm, reducing stress and improving animal welfare.

Since becoming part of Frontmatec, Accles & Shelvoke has also seen around £100,000 worth of investment at its Birmingham factory in Sutton Coldfield. The investment has been in a diamond turning grinding machine that gives the parts an ultra-smooth finish.

The company has also invested in making the plant more accessible to its 22 employees, easing communication for the staff.


Refreshed website

Another development has been in the company's website, moving from a UK based website to Frontmatec's global site. The site now houses not only all the product information, but also sales sheets, training manuals, training videos, CE certificates as well as information about the history of the company and staff.

And as part of the push into the growth markets the product information has been translated into the languages of those markets – Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese and Russian.

"The website keeps our customers and distributors up to date with all the shows we have been going to," said Holland.

"It re-establishes us with our distributors."

From speaking to Holland it is clear that, with global growth in the pipeline, new products and a fresh online presence the future is looking nothing but positive for Frontmatec Accles & Shelvoke. 

‘Meat’^{the} innovation engineers



Fast approaching its 85th year in business G. White & Co has had sizzling success in sausage production, but as Meat Management discovered this is a company keeping pace with product change in today's fast-moving protein sector.

It seems that whilst the taste for red meat seems to ebb and flow the demand for sausages remains high on consumer's shopping list, at both retail and foodservice level. The Porky Whites range, manufactured by G. White & Co, has kept pace with that change too and it's hard to believe it first appeared on supermarket shelves almost fifteen years ago. However, this award-winning family-run business has not sat on its laurels and knows full well that innovation is what customers want and it has not failed to deliver.

“Sausages evoke strong emotional ties to our childhoods,” said Fran White, a director at G White & Co. That's no surprise when you learn that her father, Graham White and his father and uncle before him, began the business by setting out to create the best sausage money could buy. “In our case happy family occasions included dad achieving his success in getting Porky Whites into Selfridges Food Hall, eaten on Concorde, served to British Airways First Class and Virgin Upper Class passengers. We liked it so much that my sisters, Carla, Alix and I joined the business and we have been flying high ever since.”

An example of how the team has evolved, but stayed true to its heritage is the Porky Whites Collection. “The sausage we built our name on is the ‘Surrey,’” explained G. White & Co's managing director, Chris Price, “It's made from the finest cuts of British pork. The taste experience is peppery with a hint of real honey and lemon juice, making for a meaty and satisfying breakfast, lunch or dinner. We wanted to give the Cumberland

a run for its money! We then took that taste and designed Chipolatas ‘Surreys’ for smaller mouths, picnic food, pigs in blankets and kids of all ages.”

The Porky Whites ‘Original’ is a richer, fuller flavoured product made with the White family's secret seasoning and, according to Chris, “makes for a sublime sausage sarnie or a great Sunday brunch.”

Aware that not everyone likes a rich tasting banger the innovation engineers came up with ‘Traditionals,’ which are a more subtle flavour but a strong contender as a breakfast banger. This range is not just sausages though. Mediterranean-style pork and beef meatballs were added to the collection recently.

Healthy concern

Conscious that health and nutrition concerns are rising up the political and personal agenda Porky Lights was a natural fit to the premium collection. Not only were these British pork sausages designed with lower fat content but are also lower in salt and are gluten-free. Sitting alongside them are Porky Lights Premium British Chuck Steak Burgers – an extra lean gourmet product. The latter's packaging won Food Management Today's Most Innovative Packaging Award in 2018. “We are constantly striving to bring new products to the market, which will excite our strong and constantly growing consumer following,” said Chris Price. “It hasn't stopped with the products either, our packaging designs are constantly evolving too, whilst importantly maintaining the brand's heritage. We have now dropped the difficult to recycle black plastic trays and replaced them with transparent recyclable ones. We also hope the new



• Chris Price.

look for Porky Whites will appeal to an even younger audience. We've swapped the family heritage on-pack images for a softer colour palette, which I think is easier on the eye, with a more modern feel.” This rebrand, moving away from the sepia heritage images on its packs was a major departure for the company. The old brand had a fanatical following from consumers and, unbeknown to G.

White & Co its own Facebook Appreciation Society too. So, when the company launched its online shop and invested heavily in its website it decided to engage them and in the end had to cap the membership at 500. The group now has over 9,000 followers.

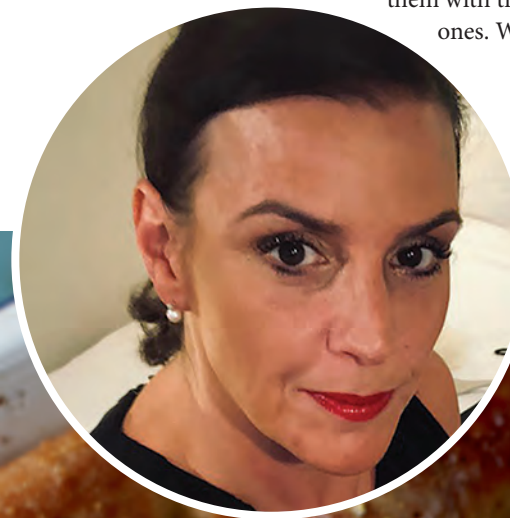
Sunday roast in a sausage

Expanding on the theme of childhood and happy family occasions Whites also now offer Chickolatas, premium chicken sausages, which Fran describes as evocative of that: “Sunday roast feeling. These are made from British chicken breast and thigh meat, seasoned with sage, onion and pepper.

“However, we didn't want to stop there and chicken is such a versatile protein, which can accommodate a whole range of flavours so our innovation engineers came up trumps again and now we have Italian style Chickolatas having added mozzarella, sun-dried tomatoes, basil and garlic for a classic taste.”

Did they stop there? Of course not, Chickolatas Piri Piri Chicken Burgers came next and are described as being lean in everything, except the flavour!

“Once again,” explained Price, “these products appeal to those wanting a leaner option to red meat. We wanted to offer a premium product that delivered on taste but was also gluten-free and low in salt and fat.”



• Fran White.



There are of course Seasonal Summer Specials including Smoky Barbecue Hot Dogs, Chilli Cheese Hot Dogs, Lamb Burgers, Lamb & Pork Kebabs and Mini Beef Burgers. For winter there are various sausage and sausagemeat offerings cleverly labelled as 'A White Christmas Special'.

The two retailers who started G. White & Co, Harry & Jim White, may be gone but are not forgotten as they have their own range of Harry & Jim Butchers Sausages in three varieties – Pork, Cumberland and Lincolnshire. They would be proud as punch to know that the business now has listings in major supermarkets including Asda, Waitrose, Aldi, Lidl, Budgens, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Morrisons, but it's not wanting to stop there.

Not only but also...

Not only is G. White and Co the UK's biggest independent, family-owned sausage manufacturing business it is also has a wholesaling, own label and foodservice offering. Chris explained: "We have a great NPD Department and state of the art facilities and are doing an increasing amount of own label work. We have had lines in the Booker Retail Partners Group, namely Londis and Budgens, for over six years and we are working with Lidl on own label too. There are some exciting barbecue ranges coming out next month.

"Sausages and burgers are now premium and classic products in pubs and restaurants," Chris continued. "Our products are perfect for that arena too and in a way is returning to our roots, having evolved dramatically along the way."

NPD comes in all shapes and sizes at G White & Co's sausages can be supplied as standard, chipolatas, flat patties, skewered rings, bite size or jumbo. Whilst sausage is at the heart of the business there is more beyond in the form of meatballs, sausagemeat and kebabs. "We have a huge range of flavour profiles available so we are confident we can accommodate all customer's tastes," added Fran. "We also understand the importance of packaging at every level so we offer trays or flow wrap and distribution is of course offered nationally.



- Chickolatas from G. White & Co go from strength to strength as an innovative brand.


"We have been supplying the foodservice sector for many years and we can offer a 10-day shelf life on all our fresh products. In addition to those mentioned earlier we have worked with Mitchells & Butlers, Fullers, Youngs, Fortnum & Mason, Bill's and Costco plus Harvey Nicholls and Gate Gourmet to name but a few!"

Light and healthy marketing

The White family is fun-loving, positive thinking and its enthusiasm for what it does is infectious. It has been a great supporter of UK Sausage Week, since Meat Management took it on and lifted it to new levels in 2017.

One such example is the light-hearted approach to last year's event when Porky Whites revealed who it believed to be the ten 'tastiest' British celebrities during the week long celebration – and which sausage the business would pair each celebrity with! Online public votes were cast to reveal the 'tastiest celebrities from TV and radio, through to sport and politics.

The idea was a great success and got some great TV and radio coverage and was all over social media – the stars needed to take delivery of their sausage partners of course! All great publicity for G. White & Co and Fran did get to meet Ronan Keating! It was so successful that the agency they used is now up for a national award for the campaign.

So from a single, small Surrey shop the G. White & Co product innovation engineers took a great old banger, which is still going strong, and have built up a tremendous business with new offerings to appeal across the board. 

If you're not listing them already, make sure you get in on the action and contact:

Porkywhites.co.uk
Tel: 01483 727000





• The Vemag HP20E, FM250 and Process Check.

Reiser: needs of customers are central

Meat Management profiles major machinery supplier Reiser as the company celebrates a double anniversary with a brand new site.

The customer always comes first is a mantra often declared by businesses of all descriptions around the world.

However, for meat and food processing equipment supplier, Reiser, the needs of the customer are central to its philosophy.

In fact, the first paragraphs of the company's vision statement demonstrate how important serving the client's needs are to the company.

"Robert Reiser & Co. will serve the food industry and other selected markets by selling and supporting equipment that provides solutions to customer needs," it states.

"Every customer contact will result in an improved relationship with that customer."

Anniversary celebrations

The company that was founded in the USA will be celebrating its 60th birthday next year. Over the space of more than half a century, it has built up a unique network of suppliers to be able to provide everything from whole line solutions to individual pieces of equipment for meat and wider food processors in the USA, Canada and the UK.

In these regions, Reiser supplies customers with equipment and processing solutions from well-established and respected suppliers such as Vemag, Holac, Ross and Seydelmann, as well as food packaging equipment from companies including Ross, Supervac, Variovac, and JLS with their robotics and automation.

While Reiser acts as a sole and exclusive agent for some of these suppliers, over the years the company has also acquired several of these equipment manufacturers, which operate independently with a global reach.

A new and improved premises

For Reiser UK, this year is also special as the business is celebrating its 25th anniversary and, to mark the occasion, the UK division will be moving into improved and larger premises across the road from the company's current headquarters in Milton Keynes.

The opening of the new facility will offer Reiser UK the opportunity to grow while also enhancing the company's ability to service the customer's needs.

Reiser UK managing director Richard Watson said: "We can't fit another desk in our present building! However, the aim of the new facility is to secure customer satisfaction – it is a larger facility for future growth."

"The move offers us the room to grow and gives us the opportunity to increase local future employment."

The new headquarters will house a test area for the whole range of equipment Reiser sells and will be geared up to run customers' own products as well as allow for product development and test.

Reiser customers will be able to work with the Reiser consultants both in the new facility and test kitchens as well as working with them in their own plants when equipment is installed.

The site will also house a training facility to allow customers to train operators to use the new equipment and processing lines.

Watson said that customers come to Reiser to supply entire lines and the company employs consultants, who are specialists in the meat industry to advise them.

The company also has specialists in the bakery sector able to advise on both large-scale and artisan production and it also employs specialist advisors in packaging.

Reiser UK also employs a growing team of 'meat heads' that are specialists in meat and therefore able to work with customers on their products and advise on the making of the customers' product and also the best equipment to achieve the required result.

"We sell full line solutions and we have specialists here to help and advise, but we are equally happy to work with stand-alone machines," Watson explained.

"We do not limit ourselves in meat, we employee bakery specialists to who are able to work closely with bakeries of all scale and in a wide variety of baked goods. Our packaging specialist also focuses on achieving the right and best packaging machine solution for the customers' needs."

He continued: "We want to help people get into the market. We operate throughout the market and we have the specialists to help people get into that market."

Watson added that Reiser aims to help meat and food processing companies from the grass roots to those larger companies that are growing organically and through merger or acquisition.

He states: "A lot of that is done through trust. We want to help people get their businesses up and running and have a very experienced team on hand to help them and start what we hope will be a very long relationship and help them grow over many years."

Reiser not only helps customers enter the market, assisting both small companies starting up and large companies develop new products in new areas, it also offers full service, training and back up as part of its after sales service.

Reiser will work with customers through research and development, installation, training and service to telephone support and application specialists.

Its specialist team offers a dedicated technical help desk, a network of field service technicians, a comprehensive spare parts inventory, food technologists, product support specialists, operation and maintenance training, a product development facility and test kitchen and a research and development team.

Its internal team offers a dedicated technical help desk which will provide phone assistance around the clock and if a problem, cannot be solved over the phone a team will be dispatched to the plant in 24 hours.

For training, Reiser will either work in the customer's own plant or bring operators into their own training facility or, if necessary, take the customer's staff to one of their suppliers.



• Richard Watson.



• The Vemag VDP230 Dough Divider.

The name that is perhaps most intrinsically associated with Reiser is Vemag, the German manufacturer of stuffers, grinders, formers, fillers, portioners, depositors, extruders and coextruders as well as hot smoking, cooking and cooling installations and installations for maturing and thawing.

The company's past, present and future

When Robert Reiser and Co launched in 1959, it started by importing German food processing equipment for North American meat packers and food processors and Vemag was in the forefront as the company became the exclusive agent for the German processing equipment manufacturer.

As the years went by, Reiser became the exclusive agent in North America for other German equipment manufacturers such as Seydelmann and Holac, but it was in 2001 that Reiser took the major step in acquiring Vemag outright.

Reiser had already expanded in North America by opening offices in Canada in 1987 and then in the UK in 1993.

And it had started to acquire ownership of several equipment manufacturers in the US, but the acquisition of Vemag has been a pivotal point in the growth and development of Reiser.

In the UK, USA and Canada, the relationship between Reiser and other equipment manufacturers it owns, remains the same as that of an exclusive representative of those manufacturers.

"We treat them as a customer and we treat them all the same," Watson said.

Despite the growth, the company still has the personal feel of a family business and is still run by two brothers.

However, while Vemag is represented by Reiser as an agent in North America and the UK, it is a company with a global reach selling its range of sausage and food processing equipment in many countries across Europe and around the world.

As with Reiser, Vemag has also gone through a period of growth and it also offers full customer support at its new research and development centre in Verden, Germany, which has quadrupled in size in recent years.

• Variovac Primus and Optimus Thermoformer.



• The Vemag HP30E Automatic Meatball Loader.

Next May will see the largest meat processing exhibition in the world staged at IFFA in Frankfurt, where new innovations in the product range will be unveiled that serve the main markets of focus.

Reiser representatives will be joining its colleagues from Vemag on its stand, where two new innovations in sausage and red meat processing and one in bakery equipment are expected to be unveiled.

For Reiser and the UK market in particular, Watson sees the future developments for the sector will be in robotics and smart conveying, as well as increased product variety and quality.

He said that the industry is looking for anything that can eliminate human contact with the product to improve overall hygiene and food safety as well as reliability.

However, while there is a drive to more robotics, making equipment more complex is not always for the best.

As the workforce is becoming less skilled there is a growing demand for equipment that is simpler and easier to understand.

Watson highlighted the development of the LL335 sausage link loader that recently featured in the television programme Inside the Factory, when the programme featured sausage production at the Heck plant in North Yorkshire. The machine automatically loads the sausages into pack trays removing the need for labour to do it by hand.

"It is all about the customer and sometimes it might seem we go beyond where it makes common sense," Watson said.

"But we are here to help the customer and sell the right solution at the right time and we are here to give advice."

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