

South Africa's and world's largest macadamia kernel supplier turns 25

Green Farms Nut Company maintains industry leadership by giving suppliers better returns and customers better choice

In celebrating 25 years of leadership both in South Africa and globally, Green Farms Nut Company (GFNC) proves that innovation is the key to sustainability.

South Africa is the world's largest producer of macadamias. Through its joint venture with Australia-based Green and Gold Nuts, GFNC processes and markets 25% of the local market's output. It already has the largest cracking capacity in South Africa, but is preparing to double its capacity to accommodate the increased output expected from the industry by 2020.

This forward-looking approach has been GFNC's hallmark from day one.

"We've always believed there's a better way to do things," says one of GFNC's founders and current CEO, Jill Whyte. "We remain the only processor that doesn't lock suppliers into contracts or force them to supply only us. We don't have to. Producers return to us year after year because we use a profit sharing model that consistently gives them the best prices – and the best service. In our history we have never turned a grower away. Attracting the best producers also enables us to give our end customers superb quality – and that makes the whole value chain sustainable."

GFNC offers its suppliers 100% of all sales and exchange rate benefits earned by their crop over and above the offer GFNC makes at the beginning of the season. The offer is based on detailed planning of the marketing to be done to the world's leading retailers and food producers. It is, therefore, realistic – and invariably results in farmers making more.

"Something else we understood when we started out is that being successful comes down not just to being fair but to being fearless. It costs us money to keep our facilities constantly at the cutting edge. But, for instance, being the first macadamia processor in the world to obtain FSSC food safety accreditation and the first in South Africa to achieve ISO 22000 certification has enabled us to open up new markets in the food and beverage ingredient sector. This reduces our reliance on the snack industry, spreads our risk and that of our suppliers, enables us to charge the kind of prices that keep us and our suppliers more profitable, and gives suppliers long term security.

"In addition, our economies of scale, efficiencies, and technological leadership in dicing, roasting, and micro control benefit our suppliers directly.

“Being part of the largest global macadamia marketer, with dedicated consultants in the USA, South America, Europe, China, Singapore, and Australia, enables us to give our suppliers the best possible options in terms of take-off and price.”

Whyte points out that GFNC’s very sophisticated marketing systems give the company the kind of market intelligence that enables it to grab opportunities its competitors don’t even know exist. “So, all round, there’s every reason for our next 25 years to create even more success for our suppliers and customers,” she says.

Word count - 499