

Growing macadamia nut industry poised for future success

Discussion around the growth of macadamia in the global market was more prominent than ever before at the annual International Nut Council (INC) conference, which Green Farms Nut Company (GFNC). "The continued growth of the consumer trend (and understanding of the health and environmental benefits) in consumption of plant-based proteins has once more been emphasised," commented GFNC general manager, Alex Whyte. "We've observed this topic hotly debated at most other food and ingredients events we attend around the world. This is especially relevant in ensuring the industry leverages this trend to absorb astronomic increase in supply."



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According to statistics portal, Statista, on average around 10% of both the US and Europe's population are vegetarian and or vegan. This is significantly higher amongst younger generations demonstrating the growing trend. Some publications go as far as to sight a global vegetarian population by 2050. The estimated \$750m - \$800m macadamia industry seems perfectly poised to answer this.

High in protein, rich in healthy fats and fibres, this luxury product has traditionally been consumed predominantly as a snack. Not because it isn't ideal as an ingredient, but because the industry has been too small to serve the large-scale needs of food manufacturers. However, this looks to change, significantly.

SA the largest producer of macadamia nuts

South Africa has regained its crown as the world's largest producer of macadamia nuts, contributing just 25% (54,000 metric tonnes) to the global crop (210,101 metric tonnes). Followed by Australia (44,500 and Kenya 32,500). Macadamia tree plantings have risen exponentially over the years, and so has the crop and available supply.

GFNC has built the world's largest processing factory in 2017 - creating the infrastructure to support bigger crop volumes. Currently, 70 - 80% of macadamias are consumed as a snack with 20 - 30% being used as an ingredient. Maintaining the past year's lucrative prices to growers developing the ingredient sector is imperative.

World's largest macadamia factory opened in White River

Marike Brits 28 Mar 2018





Delivering on the macadamia value propositions

“Our customers, dominant players in the food industry, are crying out to use macadamias as an ingredient. However, it is up to the industry to make the opportunity tangible through investing in innovation to deliver the macadamia value proposition. Relative to other nuts, the macadamia industry is small, and collaboration in challenging convention around how nuts can be used as an ingredient is more important than ever,” said Whyte.

Nuts are now considered a core part of a healthy diet. Their elongated product life cycle makes them well suited as an ingredient in other foods. More commoditised nuts like almonds and walnuts are widely used as an ingredient and answer a volume proposition. Because of this macadamias need to carve their proposition around their entirely unique taste and texture (a buttery crunch) unmet by other nuts.

“We're excited about the future for our business and the macadamia nut industry at large. The INC has been instrumental in the improved understanding of nuts and their benefits. This goes hand in hand with their professionalism and tireless campaigning. The body has raised awareness through continued research and legislative efforts. This testament to what collaboration can achieve has spurred discussion around forming a global macadamia nut body to represent its interests through research and promotion. South Africa's recent increase in industry body marketing levies is worth noting in support of this notion,” concluded Whyte.

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