



Media Release

December 1, 2006

QUEENSLAND'S GOURMET GARDEN IS AUSTRALIA'S TOP AGRIBUSINESS EXPORTER

Queensland herb and spice producer, the Sunshine Coast's Gourmet Garden, was named the 2006 Australian Exporter of the Year in the Agribusiness category at a gala event held at Melbourne's Sofitel Hotel last night (November 30).

Gourmet Garden was among 12 export winners that topped various industry categories with Gourmet Garden general manager, Craig Agnew, accepting the award from the Federal Trade Minister, Warren Truss.

The awards are organized by Austrade and the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry to recognise the achievements of Australia's top exporters.

Employing 90 Queenslanders and sourcing fresh herbs and spices from many Queensland farms, Gourmet Garden was nominated as the QLD entrant in the Agribusiness category early in November. In total there were eight state and territory nominees, with Gourmet Garden last night named the most outstanding performer in agriculture nationally for 2006.

Gourmet Garden's revolutionary range of fresh herbs and spices in transparent tubes are exported globally and are now sold in the fresh produce section of over 14 000 supermarkets worldwide. It is the most widely distributed, branded and processed food export in Australia's history and is now sold in the United State, Canada, the UK, Europe, New Zealand and Australia.

Agnew said Gourmet Garden's export business was growing 50% year on year, and had surpassed the company's initial projections. Export represented 70% of the company's business.

"Our medium term objective was to be in 10 000 of the major supermarkets in the US and we have already achieved that goal in less than three years," said Agnew.

"Our sales growth is far better than we forecast, and there has been international acceptance of our product. No matter where people are situated, whether Australia, Europe or the US, Gourmet Garden has consumer relevance. People want fresh herbs and spices that are conveniently packaged."

The fresh culinary herbs and spice industry is Australia's fastest growing agribusiness sector (measured by AZTEC Retail Scan Sales Data), and Gourmet Garden holds 18% of the domestic market.



Fresh herbs and spices are driving growth in the category. Fresh currently commands \$75 million in retail sales of an Australian grocery herbs and spice market worth \$200 million per annum.

Agnew said Gourmet Garden is preparing for accelerated sales growth.

“We recently invested in a new facility, expanding product development, laboratories and packaging and allowing a further three fold growth.”

Gourmet Garden is in the process of moving into their new facility, based at their existing Palmwoods site, and Agnew expects the site to be fully operational within weeks.

Agnew said his company’s goal was to position Australia as the world leader of culinary herb and spice production.

“Australia’s diverse and fertile conditions as well as our advanced agricultural practices position us to lead the world in culinary herbs and spices. Gourmet Garden’s success globally goes hand in hand with the expansion of this sector,” said Agnew.

About Gourmet Garden

The Gourmet Garden range was first launched in Australia in 1999. The short season for fresh herbs, together with the compromised flavour of dried herbs, led two leading Australian food scientists in the mid 1990’s to discover a unique process to capture and store fresh chopped herbs and spices under refrigeration.

Gourmet Garden is the global patent holder for the processing technology which allows the fresh herbs and spices to be blended and packaged without cooking or drying, which may diminish the flavour, texture, colour and nutritional value.

The process relies on the natural anti-oxidant properties of the herbs and spices being boosted by a finely balanced blend of ingredients. There is no equivalent product on the market with is neither cooked or dried.

Gourmet Garden now markets a range of 14 herbs and spices including Basil, Mild Chilli, Hot Chilli, Chives, Oregano, Dill, Rosemary, Garlic, Lemon Grass, Italian Herbs, Mint, Parsley, Coriander and Ginger.

Gourmet Garden is a retail division of the Botanical Food Company, a privately owned Australian company.

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