

The sunshine state shows resilience in the face of natural disasters



▼ Gourmet Garden's state-of-the-art processing facility.



▼ Jacqui Wilson-Smith and Peter Currie with recent awards.

The growing herb market and playing it safe and secure with freight.

By David Burton.

Gourmet Garden has a modern state-of-the-art environmentally friendly processing facility at Palmswood north of Brisbane in the Glass House Mountains area. From this facility Gourmet Garden takes in its organically grown fresh herbs and, using a patented process, turns them into little tubes of flavour that your customers like to purchase. The simple explanation for the top secret patented process is that it retains the natural oils in the herbs and that is where the flavour comes from.

Gourmet Garden Marketing Manager Jacqueline Wilson-Smith told *Retail World* that the company found trading conditions during the summer favourable for two key reasons: continuous national supply because Gourmet Garden has been in a position to deliver continuously fresh chopped Australian herbs nationally due to the patented technology throughout a somewhat difficult summer season for the fresh market, not to mention growing consumer demand

New marketing campaign

In December, Gourmet Garden launched a new consumer marketing campaign that focuses on growing confidence in cooking with herbs and, in particular, encouraging consumers to incorporate herbs in their mid-week cooking.

The insight is based on focus groups, who found that busy people are not confident cooking with herbs during the week. The campaign shows consumers how easy and tasty mid-week meals can be to make by using the convenience and great taste of Gourmet Garden.

The integrated campaign includes six different 60-second recipe advertorials hosted by either TV chef Dominique Rizzo or cookbook author Kim McCosker. Gourmet Garden has also

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embarked on a fruitful joint venture promotion with the authors of the best-selling cookbooks *4 Ingredients* by launching a new book featuring 250 easy recipes all using four or fewer ingredients and featuring Gourmet Garden herbs and spices.

Both online and in-store promotions featuring the book have had record-breaking sales results for the company.

New packaging

Gourmet Garden has completed a packaging upgrade to ensure easy herb and spice identification. The new packs clearly differentiate each SKU and reinforce the value proposition. Each pack now explains what it contains in equivalent fresh values. For instance, Gourmet Garden's 115g basil tube states 'Contains three bunches of chopped fresh basil'. The banner 'Fresh Made Easy' is on the front of the pack and clearly states Gourmet Garden's key consumer benefit.

The new packaging was launched last year in the US market and is now consistently delivering sales exceeding 20 per cent growth year on year. The company is expecting a similar pattern to follow in the Australian market.

Gourmet Garden is also adding thyme to its stable of herbs and spices in a conveniently sized 80g tube – the product launched in March. According to Ms Wilson-Smith, thyme is an essential herb in Mediterranean cuisine and pairs beautifully with lamb, fish, chicken, turkey and roasted vegetables and she expects to drive increased awareness and more sales for retailers.

"Gourmet Garden will be supporting the launch of thyme

with a number of marketing initiatives including sampling via word-of-mouth conversation starters to 50,000 women across the eastern seaboard and a fun joint venture promotion with Ingham's themed 'Thyme for Turkey', which will include inspiring recipes, competitions, PR, banner advertising and online newsletters," Ms Wilson-Smith said.

Always in stock

With all the concern about the Queensland floods, Gourmet Garden's growers were luckily not to be too adversely affected. The company took the decision to harvest crops prior to Christmas with the predicted monsoon season imminent. Due to this approach, Gourmet Garden has been able to manage consistent supply and stable pricing for both the trade and consumers, even in light of additional demand.

In the near future the independents will see a number of innovations from Gourmet Garden, specifically for the independent channel addressing the independent segment's consumer needs directly.

Awards for Gourmet Garden

Gourmet Garden's Thai 'Fresh Made Easy' Spices won Best Australian Savoury Grocery Product at SIAL Paris, Global Food Expo, October 2010, while Andrew Eves-Brown, Chief Operating Officer of Gourmet Garden received the Medal of Management Excellence at the AIM – Management Excellence Awards, September 2010. The prime criteria for the award is vision, innovation and leadership, which Andrew demonstrated due to transforming the Gourmet Garden operation into a 'Centre of excellence for lean manufacturing for a sustainable future'. ■

Queensland floods highlight the importance of freight safety

The recent flooding in Queensland and Victoria has reinforced to people just how important road transport really is to their daily lives, Gary Bone, General Manager of Volvo Trucks, said.

"Big modern cities are almost completely reliant upon heavy road transport," he said.

"For many people in Brisbane, this is the first time they've ever seen their supermarket shelves empty. Most of the time we take it for granted that fruit and vegetables will magically appear, we don't stop to consider what the trucks drivers have to do to get it there.

"Getting the trucks to the right place at the right time requires a lot of planning, and lot of attention on the part of the driver. But what's a driver's main concern? Arriving on time? No. A driver's most important consideration is safety.

"In these days of rising fuel prices and tight deadlines you could be forgiven for thinking that trip times and kilometres-per-litre were more important. So how do safety considerations affect the way a driver manages his truck? It's not enough to deliver on time using the minimum fuel, you have to do it without endangering anyone, including yourself. This affects every decision the driver makes along the way."

"This is why Volvo puts such a big emphasis on safety, because it's fundamental to every moment behind the wheel. We know that our trucks might have

"Is the main concern arriving on time? No. The most important consideration is safety."

to thread a city's streets one day and do a 1000-kilometre line haul the next. There are different safety considerations for every operating environment, and Volvo trucks are designed to handle all of them."

The Volvo Accident Research Team has been investigating collisions, interviewing drivers, and gathering accident information since 1969. It has investigated more than 1500 accidents and crash-tested more trucks than anyone. Some manufacturers like to think that trucks are all about horsepower, but there's a lot more to it than that.

From the research, Volvo knows that 80 per cent of truck accidents are from leaving the road or colliding with another truck, usually from the rear. Volvo deliberately designs its cabs to minimise the effect of these types of accidents on the driver and anyone outside.

"Volvo has two categories of safety features, active and passive, and both are designed to prevent accidents happening," Mr Bone said.

"Active safety features assist the driver in avoiding an accident, such as stability programs, lane-change support, adaptive cruise control and lane-keeping support. Passive safety refers to the features that minimise the risk of injury to all people involved, such as FUPS, cab strength, seatbelts, etc.

"A driver in control of a vehicle that has the right safety features can take assertive action to prevent an accident happening. Over the years the public has got used to the term 'road toll'. At Volvo we believe it's inconceivable that society is prepared to accept a toll in human lives in return for the convenience of freight transportation. That's why we believe that nobody builds safer trucks than Volvo." ■