

SUCCESS STORY

MACRIDGE, SOUTH AFRICA

Flip Potgieter and his son Phillip started building Macridge in 2003. Since 2011, Phillip has been in the driving seat at Macridge, a well-established macadamia factory, nestled in the lavish Soutpansberg Mountains in the Limpopo Province, South Africa.

The company specializes in processing and marketing macadamia nuts and recently decided to partner with TOMRA Sorting Solutions to increase throughput as well as to achieve higher product quality.

Flip Potgieter of Macridge had a vision for his own macadamia processing factory that would include value-added lines such as pressing macadamia oil, roasting the nuts, as well as manufacturing his own bio-diesel. His dream has now become a reality: its vehicles and tractors run on bio-fuel and its oil is available at leading stores.

Phillip Potgieter, now owner of Macridge, says: “Macridge is a privately owned company with a real passion for our product and the people that are connected to it. Our company was started and built on the vision of a single person, with the aim of ultimately becoming a business that would not only thrive and expand, but also give something back to the community, in this case by providing work opportunities and self-improvement to disadvantaged groups in the surrounding area.”

MAXIMUM RETURNS TO THE PRODUCERS

Initially Macridge focused on processing only low quality products, with the aim of ensuring any lost income would be returned to the farmers/producers pocket through recovering lost products and adding value elsewhere.

“We were convinced that the success of this would automatically gain the respect and attention of current and other potential producers and inevitably become a stone on which we could further build,” explains Phillip.



Phillip Potgieter, owner of Macridge

This was indeed the case as many more producers began to trust them with their products, especially in the N.I.S. export. Nowadays, Phillip and his team work six days a week, allowing the company to target the local market as well as the Chinese, European and American markets.

“We have over 80 producers supplying products to us, including our own production which makes up about ten percent of the total produce. We process the product by drying, cracking and then separating the shell from the kernel and completing a quality sort of the kernel. After that, we wash and dry the kernel before final packing and distribution.”

Flexibility, customer service, communication and efficiency are values that Macridge holds dear because it believes that providing a transparent and ethical service to its customers establishes a long-term, trusting relationship to ensure the brand is preferred by choice.



QUALITY OF MACADAMIAS

Phillip says that its main processing problem was the quality of the macadamias. “The industry as a whole faces big challenges in this regard. The quality of the macadamias has a significant effect on our actual throughput, but also incurs great loss on revenue for the producers as well.

“That’s why we started to be more selective regarding the products we receive, how we choose to process and market it, all based on quality. It was through another nut processor that we found out about TOMRA and its capabilities.

“We were impressed with the initial visit from the TOMRA representatives, their presentation and focus on our specific requirements. Being able to actually view a laser sorter in operation at one of the other processing plants in our area was very impressive. The most valuable was the fact that this machine could achieve greater accuracy and accommodate a variety of different sorting requirements on our specific product. The fact that the sorting machine was able to do this easily and effectively, whilst maintaining throughput, was a real asset.

MOST EFFECTIVE & EFFICIENT SORTING TECHNOLOGY ON THE MARKET

“The TOMRA Helius sorting machine embraces technology that makes it more effective and efficient than any of the technology offered by competitors. The machine is capable of sorting across a diverse cross section of the product, in our case it is ideal to the task at hand. The fact that it provides a dynamic range of programming preferences and online setting options to fine tune its sorting capabilities as well as the fact that it is extremely user-friendly ultimately made the decision to purchase straightaway.

“TOMRA’s Helius sorting machine is without question impressive.”

Phillip Potgieter, owner of Macridge



“We feel it’s the most versatile and effective sorting machine currently available to sort our product. On top of that, it has a high sorting efficiency and impressive throughput capacity - approximately two tonnes per hour.”

INCREASED THROUGHPUT BY 140%

“By installing TOMRA’s Helius sorter, we increased our throughput and production by 140 per cent and reduced our labor count by approximately 32 people (2011: 716 tonnes NIS processed; 2014: 1400 tonnes NIS processed).

“We have been able to sort products, which have previously been sorted by hand. This in turn has had a direct effect on the volumes recovered and the financial value of the product.”

“Maintenance, cleaning etc. is accessible, quick and poses no risks to the working, functioning parts of the machine.”

Phillip Potgieter, owner of Macridge

“From a strictly business point of view, we place a high regard on sound business ethics, honesty and transparency. Something which we firmly believe will stand us well in every aspect and challenge we face. We still have the privilege to give individual time and attention to our customers and believe that trusting relationships are the foundation to any business.”

<http://macridge.co.za>

