

Case Study

Garbutt + Elliott secures growth for Hesper Farm with 1,000-year-old recipe for success

One of our members Hesper Farm Dairies Ltd, one of the UK's only farms to make a nutritious yoghurt from a ninth century Icelandic recipe using British milk, secured major entrepreneurial investment in a deal facilitated through one of with our Patron Sponsors, Garbutt + Elliott.

Background

Hesper Farm has been producing Skyr yoghurt for four years after the family farm's third generation, Sam Moorhouse visited Iceland in 2015 to learn the ancient Viking recipe. After identifying a gap in UK market for the thick, creamy natural yoghurt, Sam utilised these traditional methods of production to launch the Hesper brand.

Skyr, is made in a 24-hour labour-intensive process, with minimal mechanisation, by incubating skimmed milk with live active cultures and straining away the whey. Each pot uses four times as much milk as traditional plain yogurt, creating its thick and creamy texture.

Hesper Farm's Skyr yoghurt is made in its purpose-built dairy, using milk from the family's award-winning pedigree Holstein Friesian herd. While produced by only three members of the Hesper team it is already supplied to 110 northern stores, including all Booths, and several Morrisons supermarkets as well as farm shops and Harrods, London.

Plans for growth

Managing Director of Hesper Farm, Sam Moorhouse was introduced to Garbutt + Elliott Partner Tony Farmer due to Garbutt + Elliott's specialist food and beverage sector expertise, and a shortlisting for Best Yorkshire Brand in their annual Food and Drink Awards.

Tony and his team helped position Hesper Farm for its next stage in development by introducing it to two Yorkshire entrepreneurs who became investors. Lead investor, founder and chairman of Elland-based BCA Group, Wim Batist, says: "While Sam had financial help from his parents to set up, he needed a lot more to reach where he wants to be. His business has potential to become a multi-million-pound operation, especially with his strict quality control."

As well as the introduction to the investors, Garbutt + Elliott also introduced Hesper to specialist food sector marketing and brand advisers Subrosa, a team of food and drink industry professionals with experience across a large number of FMCG categories who have also helped a lot in the progress of the business to date.

Outcome

Since working with Garbutt + Elliott and following the investment, Hesper Farm has tripled its workforce to boost production and have set up accounting systems to enable them to pursue national supermarket accounts.

The long-term aim is to make Hesper Farm the top British Skyr brand and to introduce other innovative dairy products. Having created six new jobs and increased production capacity, the business will produce approximately 55,000kg of Skyr this year compared with around 9,000kg in their first 12 months.