

# FLAMINGO HORTICULTURE LTD SMELLING OF ROSES





Today Flamingo Horticulture is a vertically integrated agribusiness that provides customers with the highest quality and leading best practices in the supply chain. They have built themselves a reputation based on sustainable and responsible sourcing through an extensive network of strategic partnerships with growers and customers alike.

“Flamingo Horticulture was started in 1994. The first of December was the date of our first invoice to a customer. The business was born out of Homegrown Kenya, the brainchild of Richard Evans (Dicky) in 1982, who supplied speciality vegetables to UK retailers through an intermediary,” explains Flamingo’s CEO, Martin Hudson. “Then we formed Flamingo UK Ltd in 1994 to manage the direct customer relationships and form the vertically integrated supply chain.”

“Flamingo Horticulture has stood the test of time,” Hudson says simply. “We have integrity, professionalism, investment strategies with clear acquisition targets and broadly a global supply footprint.”

Indeed, the company has grown to become the largest added-value exporter and producer of flowers, with Flamingo delivering over 780 million stems a year as well as supplying the European Union with 26 million kilograms of vegetables a year from around the world. They are one of the world’s largest producers and packers of Fairtrade roses.

“WE HAVE INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM, INVESTMENT STRATEGIES WITH CLEAR ACQUISITION TARGETS AND BROADLY A GLOBAL SUPPLY FOOTPRINT.”

Flamingo is now active in every stage of the supply chain for sustainably produced roses, cut flowers, premium and prepared vegetables. From growing the crops through to processing, marketing and distributing them, Flamingo intimately understands every process that brings their products into the hands of their customers. Indeed, they are now a core supplier to most of the UK’s leading retailers, as well as international customers in Europe, South Africa, the Middle East, Japan and Australia.

#### BRITISH IMPORTS

While their reach is global, the core of Flamingo’s business has always been supplying to the UK.

“Supplying British retail is one category,” Hudson says. “We’re supplying to Europe as well but the biggest market is in the UK. It’s a competitive landscape but we provide the service levels, quality, innovations and insight to build a competitive position.”

They’re able to do this through a supply chain model that is based on a balance between Flamingo’s own large-scale professional farms which operate out of Kenya and South Africa, and a number of long-term sourcing partnerships with a global network of vertically integrated third-party suppliers and small scale growers, allowing Flamingo to offer a high quality product range and year-round supply.

FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS FLAMINGO HORTICULTURE HAS GROWN BOTH ORGANICALLY AND THROUGH STRATEGIC ACQUISITION. WE TAKE A LOOK AT THEIR JOURNEY.

# SMELLING OF ROSES



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## We would like to congratulate Flamingo on this fantastic milestone!



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A major part of the business is within the horticultural sector and we are privileged to have been working with Flamingo Flowers for over a decade, not only on everyday items but also special projects for some of the UK's leading supermarkets and stores.

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We congratulate Flamingo Flowers on their 25 year anniversary and we look forward to a continued partnership for many years to come!

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## FLAMINGO HORTICULTURE LTD

**“WE’VE GOT GREAT PLANNING BETWEEN OUR FARMS AND OUR CUSTOMERS AND THAT’S WHAT WE’RE GOOD AT”**

altitude near the equator, the perfect conditions for growing flowers and vegetables thanks to consistent temperatures and regular rainfall. Once the produce has grown, it’s a race against time to get it into the hands of customers as quickly and smoothly as possible.

“We’ve perfected our supply chain and planning,” Hudson says. “Without a plan, that makes any supply chain, short or long very difficult. But we’ve got great

planning between our farms and our customers and that’s what we’re good at.”

Flamingo Horticulture adopts a consistent, yet flexible strategy to keep up with the needs of the market.

“We keep a close eye on our customer base and managing and continuously improving our strategies to become more efficient,” Hudson says. “In a labour dependent sector it’s about just keeping pace with your footprint and efficiencies.”

Of course, ensuring you have access to that labour is a big challenge for any business. When it comes to recruitment, Flamingo is a self-reliant business, drawing from its own talent pools to fill senior positions.

“It’s a combination of things. We have many colleagues who >>

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**“WE’RE VERTICALLY INTEGRATED WITH OUR OWN FARMING FOOTPRINT, BUT WE ALSO WORK CLOSELY WITH GROWERS ACROSS THE WORLD AND CLOSER TO HOME IN UK”**

“We’ve got two aspects to our relationships with the farms,” Hudson says. “We’re vertically integrated with our own farming footprint, but we also work closely with growers across the world and closer to home in UK, which we’d describe as virtually vertically integrated. We have a completely open book with these growers in terms of the relationships. We invest together.”

Flamingo’s in-house farms are based in Kenya, near the scenic Mouth Kenya and Lake Naivasha, and in South Africa near Johannesburg. While their Kenyan farms cover a combined area of 1,856 hectares at a high







“WE’RE PROUD OF THE LONGEVITY OF THE COMPANY, THE FACT WE’VE BEEN GOING 25 YEARS”

have been with the company for most of our 25 years, and 54 who have been on the full journey. We have clear succession plans in place for as many key positions as we can,” Hudson says. “We’ve got strong loyalty from our colleagues and we see them prosper and get promoted to senior positions. Sometimes you do need to go to market and we look for energetic, enthusiastic, passionate people who want to work in this market.”

GROWING ASPIRATIONS

Flamingo has seen positive growth organically, but the business is always on the look-out for potential

acquisitions that will allow them to expand their offering. “Where possible we’ve made acquisitions in parallel with our customer base, trying to find the right fit by scaling up from smaller and smaller operators, but that’s only been one aspect for our strategy,” Hudson says. “We’ve been busy expanding our farming footprint. One of the points of difference is we have the ability to pack finished goods at source. We pack the consumer shelf ready product in factories with leading standards and audit accreditations, we pack those products in Kenya, or Guatemala for example.”

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It’s a time for reflection for Flamingo, as the company is approaching a landmark anniversary. “We’re proud of the longevity of the company, the fact we’ve been going 25 years. That’s a reason to recognise this year,” Hudson says. “We’ve a lot of experience within the team that is built on history with Homegrown Kenya that was formed in 1982, so that’s the heartbeat of the business.” Of course, with the company entering an extremely busy

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period Hudson concedes it might be a while before they can plan the birthday party. “Between busy diaries I’m trying to work something out,” Hudson says. “We can celebrate from the first of December. We’ve got quite a bit of scope into the first quarter of next year. The peaks, Mothers’

Day, Valentine’s, Christmas are important for us as a business, but in January you always need a pick me up, so we’ll probably be celebrating then.” Looking forward, Flamingo is planning to build on those advantages and continue their strategy. “We’re planning to do more of the same, looking for the synergies you can get from acquisitions,” Hudson points out. “We recently bought a plant business. We’re already in cut flowers, we’ve moved into plants and gardening sector and that’s synergistic with the growing customer base we supply.” ☺







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