



# Tadmarton Products buck the trend



**From its original roots in farming, Tadmarton Products based in Banbury has changed the face of its business over the last 4 decades and is looking forward to a busy time this coming year.**

**T**he Tadmarton Products story started in 1970 in rural Oxfordshire. Based on a farm near Banbury, the company was a well-respected specialist chicken processor. Like many farm businesses, the company recognised the need for diversification, and over the past 40 years has become one of the country's leading independent meat wholesalers. Today Tadmarton remains in the same family ownership and is justly proud of its farming roots and history.

Managing director Mike Mourant's challenge is to increase the company's turnover by 35 per cent over the next 3 years. He explains: "Trying to grow a business in the middle of a recession is challenging, but we're determined to buck the trend and achieve our goals. Sales this year are ahead of target and when other companies are cutting back, we've appointed new sales staff. And to ensure we support our next day delivery service, we're increasing the size of our fleet and taking on new drivers."

In 2001 Tadmarton Products moved into its purpose-built premises in Banbury, complete with its own cutting room, where all the chicken portions are hand-cut. Investment in the new facility, with a capacity of 350 pallets of chilled and

250 pallets of frozen, was key to the planned expansion. The additional space allowed beef, lamb, pork and bacon to be added to the product range. 10 years down the line, with a team of 32 staff and a fleet of 10 vehicles, Tadmarton Products supplies high street and catering butchers in 19 counties across the midlands and the south of England.





With a background in distribution and finance, Mike Mourant joined Tadmarton in 2008, and is working alongside sales director Steve Harper to implement the company's expansion plans. "Steve Harper really is the face of Tadmarton" said Mike. "As a former butcher, he's been with the company for 20 years and has built up a wealth of experience and knowledge of the trade. Steve's one of the industry's most popular, well-known and well-connected professionals. Every one of our sales team has years of butchery experience, and that counts when they're out there talking to our customers. They understand what the butchers need, and we're working hard to make sure we deliver it right first time. It's about building relationships with the customers and we've been supplying some of ours for 25 years or more."

To help achieve the proposed growth, marketing is high on the Tadmarton Products agenda. 2009 saw the launch of its new website [www.tadmartonproducts.co.uk](http://www.tadmartonproducts.co.uk) and the production of promotional leaflets and brochures for the sales team. Plans to extend the TP brand beyond poultry are already well underway. Tadmarton is working in partnership with its suppliers to develop a range of own brand products covering fresh, frozen and cooked meat.

Sales director Steve Harper takes up the story: "In 2008 we introduced our own tray-wrapped whole Shropshire chicken to give our butchers something different from the supermarkets. The consumer wants wrapped birds with a good provenance. Last year we invested in a gas flushing machine to improve the presentation of our own fillets and allow us to create new products such as tray-wrapped BBQ packs. We also collaborated with our supplier to produce individually bagged and labelled Shropshire cockerels for the Christmas market. We can even supply speciality meat such as kangaroo and bison, as well as the more traditional beef, pork and lamb. If our customers want something special, they only have to ask and we'll try our hardest to source it."



One of Tadmarton's biggest successes has been the introduction of text messaging special offers to its customers. Steve Harper added: "We introduced the service last summer and it's become a big hit. Although the offers appear on our website, the majority of butchers don't have computers in the shops, but nearly everyone has a mobile phone. Our customers opt-in to receive the texts and once a week we send a message outlining the special offers. This means they know exactly what's on offer and can take advantage of it while the stock's available. We can also phone customers with the offers, but that means they have to stop what they're doing to take the call. The text messaging is fast and efficient, and our butchers love it!"

2010 is going to be a busy year for the Tadmarton team with new appointments planned to increase the size of the sales team. "We're also going to be talking to our customers to find out what sort of point of sale materials they need," says Steve. "We want to be seen as a caring, ethical supplier which provides consistent quality meat, reliable deliveries and a top notch service. We measure our customer service levels daily and weekly, and take this very seriously."

As an independent supplier we offer a personal service, with real people who know what they're talking about at the end of the phone."

The Welford family who own Tadmarton have always recognised the importance of 'putting something back' into the community by supporting disadvantaged people. Mike Mourant explains: "For many years now Tadmarton Products has been supporting the work of Toybox, where our company chairman Alastair Welford is also chair of trustees. It's a Christian charity committed to helping street living and street working children, and those at risk of becoming so, principally in Latin America. We also contribute to the work of Oxfordshire's Leadenporch Trust, which provides funding to needy causes in both the UK and overseas. We're busy growing our business, but it's important we remember those who are less well off. Before Christmas we were approached by the Crisis Christmas charity which was in desperate need of turkey joints. They had been let down at the last minute and had to find enough meat for 2,000 Christmas dinners for London's homeless. Luckily we had the stock and were pleased to help."

Despite the economic climate, Tadmarton is looking forward to a busy time over the coming year. Plans are underway for a range of its own brand beef and continued growth of the product range. As well as the company's expansion, Mike Mourant has a personal goal ... he never again wants to hear anyone say ... "I didn't know Tadmarton did that!"

