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- April 24 2008 - 09:36AM

### Life & Style

Consume, snacks and beverage maker Freedom Foods is proving to be a new star growth story for Australia's food sector – an industry where the past 20 years' headlines have often been about factory closures and foreign takeovers.

Also, our biggest processor and exporter of ultra-high temperature (UHT) treated beverages, Friesland, hits domestic milk markets next month with its own A2 and reduced fat range under the Australia's Own label.

Freedom's dairy connections extend to its cornerstone shareholder, Leppington Pastoral Company's Parich family, which has supplied milk to the processor for almost 20 years and owns about 54 per cent of the business.

In the next decade Freedom

### Climate Research

Since 2013 Freedom Foods Group's share price has risen from below \$1 to this week breaking \$6.

*As global consumer habits shift towards healthier eating, a Citi research study noted Freedom's attention to healthy food and beverages put it "in a prime position to*

Much of its growth to date was built on contract packing UHT (long life) milk and plant-based beverages for other brands, including an extensive Chinese export pro-

### Challenging tradition

Even as he worked for Canada's R

UHT production is likely to be restricted until MG's milk receives insurance.

\*Priorities have changed for many in the dairy sector.

Freedom Foods' total sales will lift at least 40pc this financial year to about \$100 million and potentially toward

*Busy Mashed, Freedom Foods*

Boostered by a \$200m shareholder capital raising finalized last week, the company wants to accelerate its production and acquisition activities.

### The UHT future

*Students who had not previously enjoyed the previous market states of their day, the structure since it was the popular picking choice for it.*

Freddie Foods managing director, Rory Michael.

"The main focus of the past six or so years, and in general I think we've seen a lot more of C&F as a mainstream product of the future," he said.

The business's focus has been on the benefits of Freddie's C&F product innovation and marketing push in Australia and overseas.

It already has a footprint in China, South East Asia, while Freddie's health-focused cereals and snacks are also broken on a commercial scale and have sold well in North America since 2015.

In a wider context with consumers of better big name brands and better value for money in today's globalised economy, Freddie's business tactics have proven refreshingly successful.

There wasn't much pre-investment psychology in the Australian food industry.

**Rory Michael, Freddie Foods**

"Today's export market dynamics have certainly helped our case, but Australian food processors tended to suffer from insufficient investment for a long time," Mr Michael said.

"There wasn't much pre-investment psychology in the Australian food industry."

"The 1980s and '90s saw a lot of cost-cutting consolidation as big groups moved in, requiring more scale and market share."

"But plans were still expensive to run... and supermarkets gave more demanding in-price and product innovation."

Part of Freddie's ready-to-eat breakfast cereal portfolio.

"Now, however, there's a whole new global market demanding Australian food – we don't need to sell to China and Western."

#### New market focus

"And why need significant commercial success when we can add value to Australia's unique grain and dairy supply base here, and stay the cereal base."

Commerce had changed, too, thanks for the specialty products in Freddie's "free food" range.

"So many healthy eating preferences and population growth dynamics are at play – the opportunities are very exciting," he said.

"We're not just part of the growing world market, you need to invest and develop an efficient commercial base."

"We also need to support sustainable technology."

As a family, we've always believed in the food and dairy industry's strengths and our potential in what Freddie was doing.

**Michael Perich, Longpoint pastoral Company**

While Australia's food and agribusiness sector had started more modest attention of late, Freddie was "intensely fortunate" to have had support from long-term key investors who were also farmers.

"The Perich family's interest has been pivotal in establishing our business and guiding us in our partnerships with farmer suppliers," he said.

Freddie Foods Group's four-year-old Shogakukan dairy processing plant received milk from them in manufacturing in northern Victoria and southern NSW.

The worksite was built over several years, with dairy, dairy and dairy processing, Michael Perich.

"Our commitment began with supply, but a family we've always believed in the food and dairy industry's strengths and our potential in what Freddie was doing," he said.

"We've got to understand the business we grow more involved in building its progress."

"That includes offering a generous time to buy farmer stock and what they expect from a relationship with buyers."

Now equity distribution, the Perich family's portion of the processor's milk made from their 1000-cow dairy system also runs Freddie's 5700-hectare dairy and its 1000-hectare dairy at Tarn Point.

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