



News

Our great sea salt shake-up

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THE nation's appetite for Tasmanian salt is proving insatiable.

Soaring demand for Tasman Sea Salt, harvested on the state's East Coast, will see the company triple production next month.

The producers are also setting their sights on the Asian market and are part of a delegation of Tasmanian food and beverage businesses heading to a trade show in Singapore today.

Founders Chris Manson and Alice Laing started the company in 2013 and had their first sales in 2014 — and already production is at 500kg of salt a week.

Mr Manson said the sea salt had enjoyed strong growth in demand in the past 12 months, prompting the purchase of new equipment to speed up production.

By next month they aim to be producing up to 1.5 tonnes of salt a week. "It seems as though there is an appetite for our salt," Mr Manson said. "We can't keep up with demand, so we are scaling up production".

To date the demand has come from within Tasmania and interstate, but the husband and wife team are also planning to expand into the South-East Asian market.

The company has had some small export deals to the UK, Germany and Singapore, but is ready to expand.

Mr Manson grew up in Tasmania before leaving to study Science Law in Sydney and then moving to live and work in London — where he met Alice, who was born in Scotland.

On a trip to Tasmania, the pair wondered why they couldn't buy locally harvested salt — especially given the expanse of pristine seawater.

"Tasmania has such incredibly clean nutrient-rich waters, we wondered why no one was making salt here," Mr Manson said.

So they moved to Little Swanport in 2013 to start Tasman Sea Salt, harvesting off Mayfield Beach.

"The quality of the waters here absolutely relates to the quality of the salt," Mr Manson said.

The pair head to Singapore today with eight other food and beverage businesses taking their products to 80,000 trade delegates from more than 70 countries at the Food and Hotel Asia 2018 trade show.

"We feel as though there will be a market there for us," Mr Manson said. Another producer heading to Singapore as part of the delegation is Woodbridge Smokehouse, which is also enjoying growth.

Operations manager BJ Plummer said sales of smoked fish were more than doubling every year.

"We started three years ago and we've easily grown tenfold," he said. He said their smoked ocean trout and Atlantic salmon was already being sold in Singapore and Hong Kong, but the company could see further growth in their Asian markets.

“We are heading over to see our clients and spread the good word about Tasmania,” he said.

It is the first time in six years a Tasmanian delegation has exhibited at Asia's biggest international food and hospitality trade event.

Acclaimed chef and Brand Tasmania ambassador Tetsuya Wakuda will also be on site talking to producers and potential buyers.

Tasmania sells \$127 million worth of food and beverages into Asia a year — which is 41 per cent more than the last time the state attended the fair.anne.mather@news.com.au

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