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Hot potato chips become truly Aussie as Coles freezes out imports

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Coles will mark Australia Day by replacing all its Smart **Buy** frozen vegetables **sold** across the nation with 100% Aussie-grown vegetables.

In a move which will benefit more than 240 growers in Tasmania and New South Wales, Coles has signed a five-year contract with Simplot to source only Australian-grown vegetables for its Smart **Buy** frozen range - in addition to its existing Coles **Brand** frozen vegetables commitment with Simplot.

The deal means growers will need to plant more crops so Simplot can supply an extra 1.3 **million** kilograms of Australian-grown produce for its Smart **Buy** Mixed Vegetables and 1.4 **million** kilograms for its Smart **Buy** potato chips.

The extra demand for Simplot, which has been a valued supplier for Coles for more than 15 years, represents a 12 per cent increase in the volume of private label frozen vegetables they supply to Coles.

Coles now stocks more than 32 Coles **Brand** and Smart **Buy** frozen vegetable and potato products supplied by Simplot. In addition, Simplot supplies Coles with over 200 of its own brands, including Birds Eye.

Coles converted all Coles **Brand** frozen vegetables to Australian grown in 2012 and announced its intention last September to source only Australian frozen vegetables for all private label brands by early 2014.

Coles Chief Operating Officer John Durkan said the latest move to source 100 per cent Australian Smart **Buy** frozen vegetables brings at least 2.7 **million** kilograms of additional volume each year to Australian growers that was previously sourced overseas from **China**, Thailand, New Zealand and Europe.

"We know our customers want to **buy** Australian-grown produce and we also want to support Australian farmers so we have made a concerted effort over recent years to **buy** Australian produce whenever and wherever we can," he said.

The Simplot deal follows Coles announcement late last year to source 100 per cent of its private label canned peaches, pears and apricots from SPC Ardmona using fruit grown in Victoria's Goulburn Valley.

And in March last year, Coles would switch supply of Coles **Brand** tinned pineapples back to Australia by sourcing 4 **million** kilograms of additional pineapple from growers in Queensland.

Thanks to the three separate initiatives to replace imports - the Simplot, SPC and tinned pineapple contracts - Coles now sources an extra 7 **million** kilograms or 500 truckloads of tinned fruit and frozen vegetables from Australia each year.

As part of Coles' Australia-first sourcing policy, around 96% of Coles fresh fruit and vegetables is Australian grown, 100% of fresh **milk** and meat from the meat department is Aussie grown and 90% of Coles **Brand** food and drink products are made in Australia.

Simplot Australia Managing Director Terry O'Brien said: "Simplot Australia is a proud supporter of locally grown produce and is committed to helping deliver quality Australian grown products to Australian families."

Fourth generation Tasmanian farmer James Addison and his father, David, welcomed the announcement by Coles to source 100% Australian-grown produce for its private label frozen vegetable range.

"The five-year contract gives us added confidence to plant our crops and greater certainty in knowing their future," James said.

Addison Farm Produce began in 1860 at Moriarty in northern Tasmania when James' great great grandfather, Edwin Addison, bought land. The **business**, which is now run by James, his brother Mark and father David, supply Simplot with peas, beans, potatoes and onions.

Stowport potato grower Justin Shephard, whose family has been growing potatoes in Tasmania since the 70s, also welcomed the announcement.

"Tasmanian spuds are among the best in the world so it makes sense for frozen chips to be made from Australian grown potatoes," he said.

For media inquiries, please contact Coles Media Relations on 0438 796 745 or email Julia Balderstone at julia.balderstone@coles.com.au or 0409 570 107

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