



eNcompass: Errigal Seafood's sustainability plan for Origin Green

About the Company

Errigal Seafood's business strategy focuses on exporting premium quality seafood to a global market of leading retailers, wholesalers and food services. A commitment to providing the highest quality products using innovative processes, combined with a focus on customer satisfaction has resulted in Errigal Seafood becoming Ireland's largest seafood processor and exporter of shellfish products, with an export turnover of over " 26m per annum.

Despite the recession, rising costs of production, bad weather and increased competition, Errigal Seafood has managed to grow sales by 55% over the past three years. The company employs up to 200 people at peak times in its 15,000 sq ft state-of-the-art facility in the southwest Donegal Gaeltacht.

Sustainability has always been a key consideration for Errigal Seafood. Since its inception, it has been an important source of sustainable employment in the Glencomille area. However, in the last three years the company has expanded its initial view of sustainability beyond job creation and social responsibility, to include an environmental dimension. The environmental impact of sourcing, processing, packaging and delivering products globally has prompted the company to examine its operations in detail and to move towards more sustainable practices.

Origin Green Membership

In May 2012, Errigal Seafood signed up to Bord Bia's sustainability development programme - Origin Green, which provides support for Irish food and drink producers to develop an individual sustainability plan.

Once signed up, Errigal Seafood attended a workshop facilitated by Bord Bia during which the company was guided through the Origin Green sustainability plan template, giving practical advice and examples on how to create a unique sustainability plan.

Errigal's plan, *eNcompass*, was submitted in late 2012 and the company was accepted as a full member of Origin Green in January 2013. *eNcompass* details the company's measurable sustainability goals in the areas of energy, water, waste and emissions over a five-year period using a 2010 baseline.

Key Strategic Objectives

eNcompass declares its commitment to balancing the economic feasibility of its activities with social and environmental responsibility, to serving the needs of its customers, as well as the broader needs of society. The company is dedicated to growing sales whilst continuing to employ measurable programmes of sustainable, responsible resource utilisation. It is anticipated that this increased focus on sustainability will bring about gains in eco efficiencies and innovation, as well as market positioning and new market opportunities.

Sustainability is an interdisciplinary endeavor that is dependent on collaboration and commitment of management at all levels. The company has recently integrated sustainability into its mission statement, strategic planning, communications, training and operations.

This thinking permeates all planning and decision making processes. By reviewing and measuring these practices, the company is able to determine if it is on track. The vision and buy-in filters through the entire company network by promoting environmental awareness and responsibility among staff, consultants and contractors.

Sustainability Targets

The *eNcompass* plan sets out realistic and measurable goals in detail over a five-year period under the headings of energy, water, waste and emissions.

Energy

As shellfish processing is extremely energy intensive, Errigal Seafood set the ambitious target of achieving the ISO 50001 standard in energy management. This goal is being achieved by the introduction of an energy management system (EnMS) in the plant, by capital investment in more efficient machinery, and by recruitment of highly trained personnel. This will significantly reduce the company's carbon footprint.

Water

Due to the high standard of quality assurance required of the company's BRC accreditation (BRC Global Standards is a market leading brand that helps build confidence in food safety internationally) there is a significant emphasis on water intensive cleaning processes. The company is currently improving site and wastewater treatment facilities and optimising procedures to save water where possible whilst maintaining a high standard of hygiene and quality assurance.

Waste

High production levels translate into large amounts of waste, which are treated at rendering and licensed landfill facilities. The company is focusing on initiatives aimed at reducing overall waste in a number of ways (e.g. further meat recovery). It is also currently

funding research into the use of all by-products from manufacturing, such as shellfish shells, to explore their use as organic fertiliser and road grit.

Emissions

Emissions are derived from the burning of LPG from the steam generation plant. Recently the central steam plant was upgraded to a new, more efficient LPG system. The company is currently awaiting a feasibility report on the introduction of alternative energy sources to the plant to reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

Benefits of Origin Green Membership

Participation in Origin Green has unquestionably increased our customers' confidence in Errigal Seafood's commitment to sustainability, says Margaret Daly, Director of Innovation. It allows our customers to meet the growing information demand from end consumers on the ultimate impact their daily diet is having on their world.

Within the company, the increased focus on sustainability has led to significantly reduced operating costs, lower carbon emissions, strengthening of community bonds and the development of some exciting new products as a result of increased innovation. All by-products of production are now considered valuable resources and there is a palpable sense of excitement looking at their potential uses as new product ranges.

On a global scale, Ireland, an island nation, is uniquely positioned to protect its lakes, rivers, aquifers, soil, biodiversity and by embracing the Origin Green Ethos, is set to become a world leader in sustainable food and drink production.

The Future

Over the coming years Errigal Seafood will continue to implement measures to achieve sustainability targets as set out in *eNcompass*. The assessment of satisfactory progress will be determined by a Bord Bia retained independent third party (SGS). This will verify the authenticity of the progress reported. In the future, the majority of international retailers and wholesalers will select suppliers based on their carbon performance and sustainability credentials. Errigal Seafood is on its way to achieving these criteria and becoming a sustainability leader in its field.