

New Zealand produced grain tells a good story.

Champion Flour Milling takes another step toward ensuring the supply of domestic product is stable by signing a multi-year supply contract with Countdown involving New Zealand wheat.

Until this year the in-house bakeries of more than 180 Countdown supermarkets across the country had been using a combination of pre-mixes produced here and imported from Australia. In a deal that Champion Flour Milling orchestrated, Countdown bakeries have switched entirely to pre-mixes made using locally-grown product for all in-store manufactured loaves, rolls, buns and scones.

Champion Flourmill has a strong working relationship with PGW Grain and understands the value we bring to the industry particularly the ongoing work and investment in R&D, on farm agronomy advise and procurement.

Some would say this is a return to the good old days of pre-deregulation in 1987 when New Zealand was self-sufficient in flour and grain. Now as much as 70 per cent is imported.

The rising demand for domestically produced grain doesn't stop with wheat as New Zealand's first homegrown oat milk producer Otis Oat Milk has announced ambitious expansion plans in response to surging demand for its homegrown oat milk. Otis is currently sold in 150 cafes throughout New Zealand. This year it plans to treble the number of New Zealand cafes, initiate sales in Australia and recently the product has become available in supermarkets.

Dubbed the 'wonder oat', New Zealand-grown oats have the highest concentration of beta glucan, a natural fibre, that helps lower cholesterol, improves blood sugar control, and boosts the immune system. The global non-dairy milk market is expected to reach revenues of more than US\$38 billion by 2024, as consumers continue to make the conscious shift. Oat milk is the fastest growing plant-based milk globally.

A recent Cambridge University study found oat milk production requires significantly lower environmental inputs than dairying. According to the research, producing one litre of oat milk requires 11x less land, 13x less water, 6.5x less fertiliser, and emits 3.5x less greenhouse gas emissions than one litre of dairy milk.

In a recent letter drafted to Southland grain growers by Harraways CEO Henry Hawkins he touched on the importance of growing the overall production area particularly in areas like South Canterbury and North Otago. Harraways are in a strong position for supply throughout 2021 but Henry did point out the industry has forecasted significant ongoing growth that can be seen in the graph below. It is expected by year end 2021 a factory for oat milk production will be established in New Zealand.

