

Pulses are more than run-of-the-mill at EDME



EDME's Mike Carr and Hodmedod's William Hudson.

Pulses in Demand

It's three years since natural ingredient producers EDME opened their gluten-free mill. A disused, run-down building on their site in picturesque Mistley, Essex, was transformed into a state-of-the-art mill. It's now running full time and pulse flours are an important part of its output.

"Demand for our gluten-free flours has increased sixfold in the past two years," says Mike Carr, sales director at EDME.

"Look along the supermarket aisles, and you'll see where the demand has come from. The 'free-from' sector is enormous: the market is now worth over £700 million a year.

"Bakers and food manufacturers – the people we supply - are really upping their game when it comes to 'free-from' products. They are increasingly looking to use ingredients that deliver added nutritional value and health benefits. Pulses fit the bill perfectly."

British Grown Raw Material Supply

Since its formation in 1884, most of the raw materials used by EDME have been produced by East Anglian farmers. The region is famed for its cereal-growing, but farmers are now also building their reputation for producing a wide range of gluten free crops. Award-winning Hodmedod has played a huge role in these developments.

A partnership with Hodmedod has enabled EDME to develop a range of flours from British-grown pulses. The ingredient manufacturers turn split green peas, broad beans, chickpeas, and brown lentils into finely-milled, quality flours. These naturally gluten-free flours are bought by bakers, food manufacturers and caterers for use in breads, poppadoms, biscuits, cakes, pies, pastries, batters, coatings and sauces.

"We used to import all our pulses, but the more we can source from British growers, the better," says Mike. He points out that supply from local farmers means minimum food miles as well as support to the regional economy. "Anything that benefits the environment and economy - and contributes positively towards food resilience has got to be a good thing."



Savoury pastries made from EDME green lentil flour



EDME's natural ingredients include fava bean flour

Pulse Flours

- Are a good source of protein, and are often used by food manufacturers aiming to make 'high protein' claims
- Are an excellent source of vitamins, minerals and fibre, contributing significantly towards daily intake of folate, iron, magnesium, calcium, zinc and potassium
- Can support food manufacturers in increasing fibre intake. Given that British adults consume on average 40% too little fibre, this is an important benefit in terms of the wellbeing of the population
- Are low-fat and support food manufacturers aiming to create foods with health claims around fat content of their products

Uses and Applications

"The flavours of pulse flours are distinctive and can change the texture, as well as the taste of foods," says Mike. "Restaurateur Ottolenghi is a big fan of the mildly nutty flavours they create in a range of baked foods and he uses them widely.

"The savoury flavours created by gram and fava flours for example, are great for many foods – especially vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free products; coatings and batters; and Asian cuisine. But there are times when they might need to be used in conjunction with other flours (seed or grain-based), to help mask any slightly 'beany' flavour notes."

Adding Value

"Our aim is to work across the supply chain to create ever more nutritious, better-tasting products using quality ingredients. We pay tribute to pulse growers and Hodmedod who have been so innovative and done so much to raise awareness of the potential of this sector.

"Together we can do our bit in adding nutritional and economic value to the food chain - and by doing so in making a contribution to the well-being of the nation," concludes Mike.