



Canadian Trade Successes 11-06
Northern Quinoa Corporation

SASKATCHEWAN COMPANY PLANTS SEEDS OF SUCCESS

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Key Quotation:

Michael Dutcheshen is quick to credit Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada's Trade Commissioner Service for helping Northern Quinoa Corporation plant the seeds of success in Mexico. "With their support, we participated in a trade mission to Monterrey and were given the opportunity to exhibit in the Canadian Pavilion at the Alimentaria International Food and Beverage Exhibition in Mexico City. As a result of that exposure, and the contacts we were able to make, we decided the time was right to open an importation and distribution office in Monterrey."

Story details:

Saskatchewan-based Northern Quinoa Corporation has built much of its success in Canada on a product most often associated with South America, the exceptionally nutritious quinoa seed. Perhaps it's only fitting, then, that the company should also achieve success in Latin America, specifically Mexico, with flaxseed, a product most closely associated with Canada.

Yet that's just what happened in 2003.

Michael Dutcheshen, who with his father Joe, owns and operates Northern Quinoa, runs the company's division, NorQuin Brand Mexicana, in Monterrey, Mexico. "We attended Alimentaria

(one of the world's largest food and beverage tradeshow) in Mexico in 2003 to explore opportunities to sell quinoa and some of our other products in Mexico," he explains. "As it turns out, we discovered that our flaxseed was the best fit for the Mexican Market."

The company has distributed its vacuum-packaged NorQuin Brand® Milled Flaxseed to major retail stores in Mexico since then. Today, its NorQuin Brand® flaxseed is found throughout Northern Mexico in major retail stores such as GNC, H.E.B., Sanborns and Soriana. The company has been so successful, it recently introduced an exclusive variety of golden roasted flaxseed to the Mexican market.

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Dutcheshen says the trade mission, and particularly Alimentaria, "gave us extraordinary exposure to the best food distributors in Mexico." He says Alimentaria was the perfect event for producers like Northern Quinoa to meet customers and to learn more about the products about to come out on the market.

"The bottom line is, we benefited enormously from the opportunity to put our products before important decision-makers at the show."

Clearly, other Canadian companies agree. In the two years since Northern Quinoa participated, the Canadian Pavilion has more than doubled in size. In 2005, 23 Canadian companies and organizations participated, giving them direct access to more than 10,000 buyers whose purchasing budget exceeds \$300 million.

"Alimentaria gave us the opportunity to crack a market we might not have considered accessible," says Dutcheshen. "We were confident that the flaxseed varieties we grow in Canada are more nutritionally beneficial than the types grown in the rest of North America; we just needed the opportunity to make that point to the people in Mexico."

With Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada's help, Northern Quinoa Corporation is definitely making its point.