



BANANA FEEDS AUSTRALIA: AN 'A-PEELING' SOLUTION TO TRANSFORM BANANA SURPLUSES

Banana Feeds Australia, an innovative small business based in North Queensland, is dedicated to reducing banana waste and providing an additional revenue stream for growers. Their flagship product, B-COMLETE™, is a 100% natural green banana supplement designed to enhance the gut health and performance of horses, dogs, and bees. Since its commercial launch in 2020, Banana Feeds Australia has expanded its market to six countries, including the USA, Ireland, and the UK.

DRIVERS OF INNOVATION

Founded by Robert Borsato and John McArthur in 2019, Banana Feeds Australia combines Borsato's extensive experience in growing produce with McArthur's expertise in food processing and management to uncover innovative waste reduction solutions. The founders were driven to find a productive use for underutilised bananas – having seen the sheer scale of bananas being wasted every year because of cosmetic imperfections or size – while providing growers with an additional revenue stream. Recognising the nutritional benefits of bananas for humans, the founders came up with the idea to develop a banana-based product for animals.

PARTNERING WITH RESEARCHERS

Having had the idea to develop a supplement from bananas for animals, Borsato and McArthur initially worked with researchers in their networks to conduct a preliminary desktop study to understand the potential nutritional benefits of banana supplements for horses.

Later, through matched funding from the End Food Waste Cooperative Research Centre (CRC), they were able to conduct more detailed desktop research, laboratory, and in-field testing with The University of Adelaide. This research played an important role in proving the commercial viability of their idea.

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That got us thinking. What else could we do with the product at various times of the year, depending on the growing conditions? The industry can see up to 20, 30 per cent of production not making it through to the markets because of things like skin markings, size, profiles, and shape. It's obviously a considerable amount of product that growers weren't getting enough economic return for. We started thinking about, knowing full well that bananas have got huge nutritional benefits for humans. Why couldn't we make that available to other species? In particular canine and equine.

John McArthur
Director, Banana Feeders Australia

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SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

Banana Feeds Australia turns what would be waste into a valuable resource – both nutritionally and economically. They provide bins to growers for collecting bananas that don't make it to market and pay a bin rate for these products. They then pick up and process these bananas at their facility, converting whole bananas into the supplements, before packaging and selling these under their branding. Despite some trial and error at the start, the processing involves simple, low-tech equipment, an intentional strategy to ensure scalability and cost-efficiency.



When you look at the nutritional profile, you look at all the elements that are so important for human beings being sustained, it's exactly the same for animals. It was just a matter of trying to marry up which animals and what benefits, and that's where we've spent a fair bit of our time with that laboratory work.

John McArthur
Director, Banana Feeders Australia



PROMOTING HEALTH BENEFITS RATHER THAN WASTE

Despite the impact Banana Feeds Australia has on reducing banana waste and supporting Australian farmers, the organisation made the deliberate strategy to focus on promoting the health benefits of their products, rather than positioning them as an upcycled product. This strategy has proven effective in reaching their target markets.

CHALLENGES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Banana Feeds Australia has encountered several challenges including navigating the export market and competition from cheaper international products. One of their biggest challenges, however, has been the cost of marketing and getting the word out about their product. Recognising the nutritional benefits of their product, the company's next challenge is to navigate the complex regulatory process to enter the human supplement market. Despite these challenges, the founders remain committed to their vision of sustainability and are exploring opportunities to scale up their operations and develop new products.

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It's trying to get that story right because if you start talking about waste, then straight away that is setting a tone for what people perceive to be a degraded or inferior product rather than what it really is. The commercial reality is people aren't going to buy just to help use up food waste. It has to do what it's got to do.

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John McArthur
Director, Banana Feeders Australia

CONCLUSION

Banana Feeds Australia exemplifies how upcycled food businesses can thrive by finding an innovative solution that not only address food waste, but supports Australian farmers and improves the nutritional health of animals.

ACCESS OUR FREE RESOURCES TODAY

As part of this project a series of free resources have been developed to support your upcycled food journey. Scan the QR code or visit: www.endfoodwaste.com.au/upcycling-food today.



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