

Indian win-win



Hemant Gupte
India office manager

It is full steam ahead for Unicorn Ingredients’ satellite office in central Gujarat, India, which is planning to start importing seeds to India as well as exporting from the sub-continent.

From the time that Unicorn Ingredients was founded in 2008, it traded with India, sourcing key lines such as hulled sesame seed there.

As volumes grew to above 2,000 tons a year, a decision was taken to open a local office in India to ensure the quality and quantity of supplies, and to make sure that these were available in a timely manner.

So, Unicorn engaged a representative in India in 2014 and then opened office premises in February 2016. It established Unicorn Ingredients Pvt. Ltd, a year later in February 2017. This is a registered company in India set up to look after business operations there.

Unicorn has satellite offices in China as well as India, these are both countries where many of its key products are sourced from, and having local offices helps it to manage sourcing challenges and monitor quality direct with local suppliers

Hemant Gupte, who runs the office in India explains that Unicorn’s Indian premises are located in Vadodara in central Gujarat in the western part of India.

Most of India’s well-known sesame seed processing units are in surrounding areas, such as Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan.

Vadodara is a well-planned and historical city, and is well connected with by air, rail and road to India’s growing regions, Gupte says.

The Indian office manages the shipments and oversees the quality of the products exported from India, he explains.

Unicorn has been certified against the global BRC for Agents & Brokers standard since February 2015, which means that all its suppliers must meet exacting standards.

The company also adheres to Soil Association certification for organic products.

Maintaining the consistent quality of supplies to BRC standards, and where appropriate to the organic standards, and ensuring that shipments go out in a timely manner are the key challenges for the team, Gupte says.

A strict supplier approval procedure also ensures that any new supplier meets requirements.

Alongside Gupte, the country manager for India, there is a logistics officer to look after shipments and a technical officer to look after quality and resolve any customer queries.

The key products currently sourced from India by Unicorn are organic and conventional natural sesame seed, black sesame seed, hulled sesame seed, Nigella seed, amaranth seed and brown flaxseed or linseed.

For the future, the company plans to start to export some additional seeds such as basil seed, psyllium seed, coriander seed and cumin seed from India.

Gupte says that Unicorn plans to export these lines to customers in the EU, USA, Canada and Vietnam. He comments:

“India has lot of potential to export other seeds which are not listed by Unicorn at present, and we hope to include these in the near future.”

The company also has exciting plans to start to import other seeds to India, such as chia seed immediately and poppy seed by the end of 2018.