

Cranswick gears up to play vital role in cost of living crisis

Cranswick is gearing up to play a key role in feeding the nation as consumers tighten their belts amid a cost of living crisis.

Chief executive Adam Couch told how the £2 billion turnover business is well placed to serve demand for chicken and pork – seen as real value family protein providers – as inflation cuts deep.

Pressure on purses has been ramped up as the year ended for the Hull food giant, with a huge new investment coming online in the city to accelerate its poultry production alongside its strong pig-based meal solutions.

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And while prices are having to rise to cope with inflationary pressures on the supply chain, Mr Couch is confident Cranswick will continue delivering the goods.

He said: “Against a backdrop of a difficult environment we are in a place where we have good value products which should be very well received in a tightening economy.

“We are acutely aware of the pressure pig production is under. Wheat prices have spiked because of Ukraine and costs have gone up, and we have to manage this with our customers as well as our farming business.

“We are fortunate we are in a space where we are dealing with very versatile products in pig and poultry. You can still buy a whole chicken for £4 which is great value.”



Cranswick Plc's new facilities on Helsinki Road.
(Image: Katie Pugh)

As reported, £32 million has been invested in a new breaded poultry facility on Helsinki Road, part of Cranswick's continually growing cluster of operations. A total of 200 people are employed, swelling the city workforce to 5,500.

It is immediately focused on retail, but it is geared up for food service too, following the £26 million addition of a cooked bacon plant, serving McDonald's.

Last year saw margins maintained by Cranswick, though recent months have brought challenges, with prices on the up.

"We have a really good, experienced team, really good talented people in our commercial arena, efficient operations that can help mitigate some of the cost increases against a backdrop of inflationary pressures," Mr Couch said.

"We've had to go back to customers, quite regularly, and

explain the situation. It is mainly major retailers, they are very aware of what is happening – whether it is bread, eggs or milk. “As long as we can articulate the message, while showing we’re being as efficient as we can, they see it. We just have to have the dialogue with them.

“The whole Ukraine situation was a surprise to everyone coming out of a post-Brexit and post-pandemic period, so to be faced with that, and to have unprecedented service levels and growth is a real testament to our team, a fabulous team.”

The results brought with them 32 years of unbroken dividend growth for a firm founded by East Yorkshire farmers. An outlook to the city suggests a run unlikely to end.

On the breaded poultry expansion in Hull – with another £100 million to be spent across the production facilities Cranswick owns this year – Mr Couch said: “We’re in week four, and we’re pleased with progress, and we are ramping up volume. It is retail, but geared up for food service. We’ve started off in retail, we are onboarding customers over the next four or five months, and by the end of the financial year we hope to have a good food service client to announce.”