

# Farmers co-operative buys Northumberland grain store out of administration

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A farming co-operative based in the North East has bought a grain store in the region after its former owners went into administration.

North East Grains, which is based at Longhirst, near Morpeth, has completed the purchase of Swarland Grain Store from the administrators, FRP Advisory Trading Limited, following the demise of the grain merchanting business Alexander Inglis and Son.

North East Grains was established in 1987 and since then has grown to have more than 90 farmers members. The co-operative has grain capacity in excess of 60,000 tonnes, and the new acquisition will take its total grain capacity on two sites to more than 100,000 tonnes.

As well as grain drying and storage, North East Grains offer a number of services to its members, including grain marketing, crop input and energy purchasing and agronomy services. It also operates a livestock feed production plant.

But due to the timings of the administration process, North East Grains says it will not be able to take wet grain into

Swarland this year, and instead will start its operations there in 2022.

It said it was aiming to meet farmers who have previously used the Swarland facility soon to discuss its plans for the site.

North East Grains managing director Matthew Curry said: “We are delighted to take ownership of this additional store at Swarland, this is a fantastic opportunity for our membership, and we hope to work with local farming businesses who have previously relied on the store.

“The cooperative has been exploring plans to expand their business for some time, and the opportunities that the site at Swarland bring meet the overall objectives of North East Grains extremely well.”

Alexander Inglis & Son, which dated back to 1950 and had four grain sites in Scotland and one in Northumberland, went into administration earlier this year. The business’ failure was blamed on weaker trading following a poor harvest in 2020, a contraction in demand stemming from the Covid pandemic and legacy losses from the acquisition of another grain trading company.

The company had been led by former Scotland rugby international Jim Aitken.