



Valuing sustainability is important for New Zealand customers

Do customers value sustainability? That's a good question. Discovering the answer and responding to it is a key challenge and opportunity for the team at Pitango.

Pitango was the first company in the world to sell carbon-neutral soups and meals.

When we look at our product on the retail shelf and compare it to our competitors, we like to think that people will "trade up" to support the environment and the Pitango brand.

Since a large part of our business is now export-orientated, sustainability and specifically being certified carboNZero™ by Landcare Research is a crucial point of market differentiation for us.

Australia is our major export market. We are also expanding into Asia and the US, selling to supermarkets through distributors who have the expertise, networks and passion to build the Pitango brand.

Right now, sustainability doesn't appear to have the same reach in New Zealand at the consumer level as say the UK, where there is heightened consumer awareness.



Wade Gillooly

Campaigns in the UK often focus on where a product has been produced and the sustainability practices of the companies producing it.

All of this means that consumers are definitely tuned into the issues. Some New Zealand wine producers have responded successfully by reducing, measuring, managing and offsetting their carbon emissions.

At Pitango, we believe sustainability will become a bigger international issue and an important one for consumers in New Zealand too.

We have made a holistic commitment to sustainability that supports our brand proposition. We are firmly involved in the organics sector and produce a range of fresh organic soups and meal products.

Systems such as carbon foot printing through carboNZero™ also offer businesses an accurate measure of supply chain efficiency. For Pitango this is about business processes, improvements in supply chain efficiency and being innovative.

Operating in a sustainable way is an insurance policy for business and for New Zealand. It is valuable for "future proofing" our businesses to meet carbon compliance regulations in overseas markets (often imposed by retailers) or mandatory government schemes in our international markets.

Pitango is an exciting company with a strong ethic of sustainability. Founders Yasmin and Ofer Shenav earlier this year sold the company to Australia's Gourmet Food Holdings, which has a portfolio of food companies in New Zealand and Australia.

We are focused on maintaining Pitango's momentum and continuing the good work of its founders.

We pride ourselves on being a verified sustainable business. There will be no changes in our focus on sustainability – if anything it is going to be stronger and more embedded in the company.

Finally, I would like to point out that sustainability is a broad term used excessively, I think, across multiple industries.

Consumers are savvy and switched on. Increasingly they will make their purchasing decisions based on an environmental and social conscience.

This is what sustainability is really about.

Wade Gillooly is general manager at Pitango.

Pitango manufactures and sells fresh organic soups and organic dips, ready-to-eat organic or free-range risottos, curries and porridge domestically and internationally. www.pitango.co.nz

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