

Basacar Produce



AT A GLANCE

2.1 A BUNDABERG SUCCESS STORY

Basacar Produce is one of Australia's premium tomato growers and a prominent employer in Bundaberg.

2.2 ASSURING QUALITY

Basacar Produce has adopted a very stringent quality process.

They undertake regular staff training on all aspects of hygiene and monitoring standards.

Basacar understands that along with quality, traceability is becoming more and more important to consumers and has very strict procedures in this regard.

2.3 Q&A AND SOME STATS

Basacar Produce's Business Manager Tina Broadhurst on the relationship with Coles and some stats that demonstrate the company's success.

Growing strongly in Bundaberg

Basacar Produce is a Bundaberg success story.

One of Australia's premium tomato growers, the company was established in 2003 by Ayhan Basacar and relocated from Thornlands Brisbane to Bundaberg.

Here it operates two pack house facilities and four farms.

"Ayhan started this company from the ground up," says Basacar Produce's Business Manager Tina Broadhurst.

"His knowledge of the produce and farming industry will ensure we continue to lead the industry into the future."

A growing local business Approaching 1 million plants

All of Basacar's produce is grown on its local farms and is maintained and picked by its qualified staff.

"At the moment, we're growing in excess of 950,000 plants," says Tina.

"All the produce we grow for Coles is grown to specification, all trellis grown and quality assured."

Tina believes it is Basacar's commitment to such quality that sets them apart.

"Our produce must pass strict guidelines so to ensure we maintain our respected name," says Tina.

"Packaging at our own pack houses enables us to provide Coles with a personal service and an excellent quality brought about by attention to detail."

Customer relationship A strong and fruitful connection

"Our objective is to display how we are evolving and changing to ensure our relationship with Coles, and their customers, remains strong and fruitful," says Tina.

"We continue to grow and make strategic capital investments, in the form of plant and equipment, as well as in the development of farmland.

Tina says Basacar also invests heavily in its people.

"We focus on training at all levels of Human Resources within Basacar."

The result is a higher standard of quality that Tina describes as a win-win-win for Basacar, Coles and its customers.

Maintaining the highest standards Constantly reviewing and improving

Over the last year, considerable effort and investment has gone into bringing Basacar Produce's facilities up to the highest standard.

"We continually review our procedures and policies to ensure even better quality assurance," says Tina.

"We've made a very firm commitment with Coles to not only maintain, but continue to improve our high standards."

Consistency of supply Quality tomatoes, 52 weeks of the year

"We have adopted the latest innovations, from the design of the packing sheds to the machinery required for washing, grading and packing," says Tina.

"This allows us to provide a consistent supply and a consistent quality 52 weeks of the year."

At maximum capacity, Basacar is able to produce approximately 4,500 trays of tomatoes each day. Tina notes that this will increase as new plant and equipment are put into place.

"This capacity allows us to offer a weekly program and (*continued page 2*)



ASSURING QUALITY

Basacar Produce adopts a very stringent quality management and food safety system.

“We have an SQF consultant under contract,” says Tina. “We also have three full-time HACCP-trained quality assurance managers on staff as well as Freshcare-trained management, quality assurance trained production staff and supervisors.”

Basacar Produce also undertakes regular staff training on all aspects of hygiene and monitoring standards.

“We also understand traceability is becoming more and more important,” says Tina.

“We have a very strict traceability process and regular internal audits.”

Consistency of supply

Quality tomatoes, 52 weeks of the year

(from page 1) opportunity buys,” says Tina – both which benefit Coles’ customers.

“Planning ahead will always be a high priority at Basacar,” says Tina.

“In order to keep satisfying the customer, we know that we have to constantly upgrade as technology moves ahead.”

As well as keeping apace with technology, Basacar Produce also recognises the fundamentals of a quality product and service is critical to future success.

A local employer

Good staff at the core of success

“The core of good staff we have in our key areas provides expertise and training to other employees in their area of responsibility,” says Tina on how Basacar is managing growth in terms of its people.

“These practices (among others) ensure we’re always delivering the best we can across every aspect of the business.

“We aim to have a healthy, successful company that is a leader in quality as well as customer service.”

Basacar Produce has grown considerably over the past few years, to the point where today they are employing more than 120 highly trained staff.

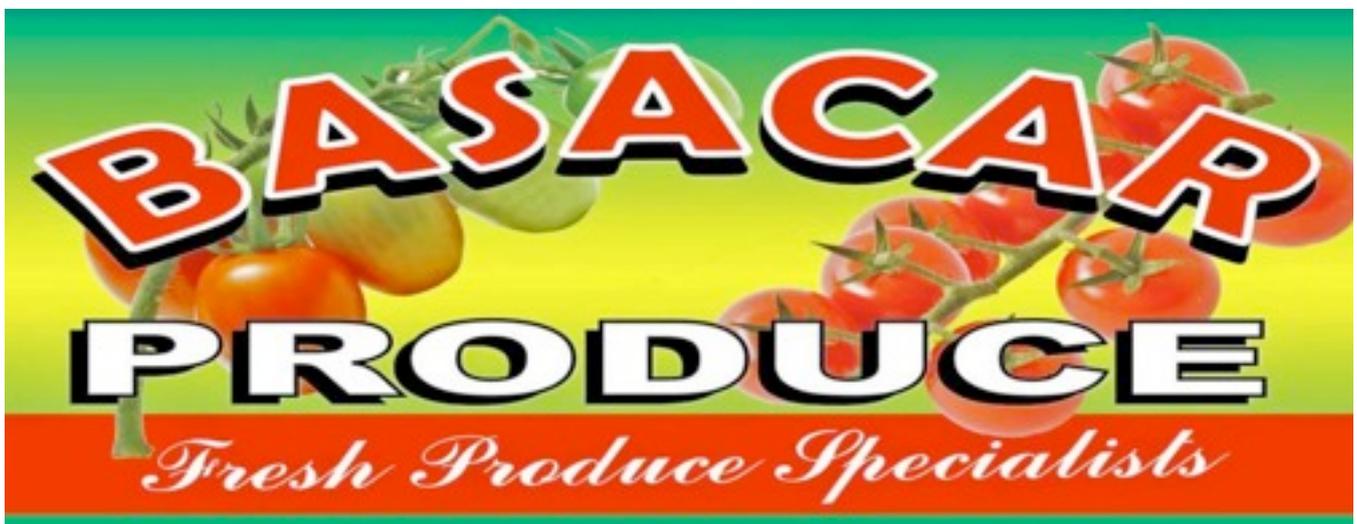
Embracing change

Ripe for the picking

“Change creates both fear and opportunities,” says Tina.

“But with sound strategic planning and the support of key partners such as Coles, we can be assured that the opportunities significantly outweigh the fears.

“We have already surpassed many of our high expectations for the future.”





Q&A

with Tina Broadhurst, Business Manager, Basacar Produce

Does your relationship with Coles help provide further insights into the needs of consumers?

Yes.

Through regular conversations between our key staff members and the Coles Business Managers, we have acquired a better understanding of what the consumers require.

Coles has also given us the opportunity to do in-store product testing in order to get a better understanding of what the consumer's needs are.

This has been very helpful in creating a thorough knowledge of those people who put our produce in their trolley.

How is Coles helping Basacar Produce meet its business objectives?

Our main business objective is to be the largest cherry tomato grower in Australia.

Coles is extremely important in helping us achieve this.

Through our dealings with, and the commitments from, Coles this has enabled us to expand our production and growing capacity.

As a result, our objectives is becoming closer every day.

On product types and innovation, how are you trying to provide Coles with a point of difference?

Not only have we met any and all requirements that have been asked of us, we have continued to suggest and trial new varieties in order to provide Coles with a point of difference.

We have also tried some new methods, one of which was treating leaking fruit that had been mutually suggested by us and Coles.

BASACAR BY THE NUMBERS

950,000+

The number of plants Basacar Produce is currently growing.

7

The number of years it has taken Basacar to grow from its founding by Ayhan Basacar, to becoming one of Australia's premium tomato producers and a leading employer in Bundaberg.

350

The number of people Vizzarri Farms employs during peak season.

120+

The number of highly trained staff employed by Basacar Produce.

4,500

The number of trays of tomatoes Basacar is able to produce each day.

52

The number weeks each year Basacar is able to produce a consistent supply and quality.

Batlow Co-Op



AT A GLANCE

2.1 A GOLDEN INNOVATION

Batlow Co-Op is developing a variety of apple that will be a favourite in lunch-boxes all over Australia.

2.2 LOCAL PRODUCE

You can be guaranteed that every Batlow Co-Op apple has come from the famous apple-producing region.

2.3 Q&A

Coles is supporting innovation at Batlow Co-Op through its ongoing commitment.

2.4 AT THE CORE

More than 100 registered growers, all from the Batlow region, produce a staggering 1,500,000 cartons of apples each year.

MRI scan detects a better ‘crunch’

New technology ensures Batlow apples are as crunchy as you’ll find anywhere in Australia.

Batlow Co-Op’s business development manager Bruno Muscatello attributes this to not only the altitude and climate, but also to the careful attention paid by growers looking after their orchards, and a world-class grading and packaging process.

“We’ve invested heavily in the latest technology to ensure a constant premium quality,” says Bruno.

“Our advanced handling methods are worlds apart from the old hand-packing regimes of previous decades and our technology is world-leading. In fact I would say we are pioneers in this area.”

Batlow Co-Op’s technology includes new infra-red technology that allows the Batlow Co-Op to not only scan the quality of the apple’s exterior, but also look inside the apple.

“It’s sort of like an apple MRI,” says Bruno.

“Not only can we instantly discard any apple that may not be quite right on the inside, we can also grade the quality of the apple’s density.

“In a way, it allows us to grade our apples on a ‘crunchiness scale’.”

The technology complements the natural advantages of Batlow’s apples. Located at the base of the Snowy Mountains, the region’s high altitude and crisp air provide the ideal conditions for the sweet flavour and crisp bite found in every Batlow apple.

A ‘golden’ new variety

Among the orchards in Batlow, situated 70 kilometres west of Canberra, grows a variety of apple that is sure to find its way into fruit bowls and lunch-boxes throughout Australia.

The Greenstar is an innovative cross between the widely known Granny Smith and Golden Delicious varieties.

This sweet-eating green apple has one quality that is sure to delight Australian mums looking to give their kids a healthy snack – it is anti-oxidising. That is to say, it doesn’t go brown, after you cut it.

Bruno is excited by the prospects of the new variety.

“The Greenstar will be the perfect apple for kids’ lunch-boxes,” says Bruno.

“Not only does the anti-oxidising quality of the appeal maintain a fresh appearance, but it is also has a delicious sweet flavour.”

Another new variety in development that excites Bruno is the Kanzi.

“Kanzi is a fresh red apple that is a cross between a Gala and a Braeburn.

“It has a unique sweet-sour flavour that is a hit in Europe and no doubt the home-grown variety will be hugely popular in Australia.”

The Big Apple Batting above its average

For a town with little more than 1,000 people, Batlow plays a big role in Australia’s apple industry.

About 50 growers in the region supply 1.5 million cases of apples each year, representing approximately 10 per cent of Australia’s apple crop.

Batlow’s proportion of the Australian apple market will soon be reflected by Coles, which has plans to increase the proportion of apples it takes from Batlow from less than three per cent to nearly 10 per cent.



Batlow Co-Op grower Greg Mouat at his apple orchard

BATLOW CO-OP: BY THE GROWERS, FOR THE GROWERS

Greg Mouat, his wife and three sons and are a second-generation apple growing family.

Greg's parents purchased the current orchard site, 'WYOLA', in 1926 and Greg has been growing Batlow apples for 30 years – Red Delicious, Braeburn, Pink Lady, Sundowner, Granny Smith and Greg's favourite, Fuji.

"The Co-Op places value on professionalism and duty of care to principles of co-operation, with aspirations of co-operative growers to produce premium quality apples," says Greg.

THIRD GENERATION APPLE GROWER

Michael Smart and his wife Sharon (a third generation orchardist) have been growing apples at 'Tingara' for 30 years.

The property was originally a soldier settlement block and was purchased from Sharon's family in 1980.

During this time, the orchard has grown from four hectares of apple trees to now more than 25, growing Red Delicious, Fuji, Royal Gala and Pink Lady varieties.

"We enjoy the fresh air, great water, lots of space and quiet nights," says Michael on life in Batlow.



Batlow Co-Op grower Michael Smart at his apple orchard

A little bit about Batlow...

Batlow is famous for apples. So much so, the town's main landmark is 'The Big Apple'.

Located 70 kilometres west of Canberra at the foot of the Snowy Mountains, Batlow boasts the perfect climate for growing premium quality apples.

"The soil and climate provide ideal conditions for growing apples," says Batlow Co-Op's business development manager Bruno Muscatello.

"And the altitude at which they're grown makes them nice and firm."

The town's orchards have been vital to the region's economy for more than 120 years. For a small town of 1,000 people it produces nearly 10 per cent of Australia's apple crop.

Since 1922, the Batlow Co-Op has played a crucial role in ensuring the success of the local apple industry.

In the years preceding World War I, there was a push towards the primary industries and farming, with governments

encouraging growers to market produce in a more effective and united method.

Batlow growers had already achieved the benefits of unifying as a group and as the number of orchards grew, the Batlow Co-operative Cool Stores Company was established.

The Batlow Co-Op is still proudly owned by the growers of Batlow. The Co-Op employs many local residents and actively supports the community.

The Batlow apples brand represents growers, community and premium quality apples.

"Batlow Co-Op represents everything we look for from our growers," says Greg Davis, Coles General Manager of Fresh Produce.

"They are passionate about the quality of their product and they continue to make significant investments in ensuring both a consistency of quality and supply, along with research into new varieties and sustainable methods of production."



The importance of the source **Batlow's home-grown advantage**

"Locally grown is BIG," says Batlow Co-Op's business development manager, Bruno Muscatello.

"If you look at what's happening in markets overseas, there is little doubt that customers are paying more and more attention to where their food comes from."

With the issue of apple imports looming large with Australian apple growers, it is something Bruno believes local growers should be talking about.

There are so many reasons why a Batlow apple tastes so good – our climate, our soil, our location and the care and investment we put in post-harvest," says Bruno.

"We're proud of the quality we produce and we've no doubt that pride translates to consumers when they buy top quality fruit that is locally grown.

"Every apple that bears the Batlow Co-Op sticker is 100 per cent from the Batlow region."

Always staying one step ahead

Maintaining the high quality associated with the Batlow brand gets more complex by the day.

The Batlow growers and the Co-Op's horticulturalists continue to find new and improved ways of not only growing their apples, but also controlling pests and minimising damage to crops.

Advances in technology over recent years have led to non-chemical means of controlling moths. This technology involves the use of small dispensers placed in the trees which emit synthetically-produced female pheromones to confuse the male. This disrupts the mating cycle and controls the pest.

Widely used in Batlow, this breakthrough has completely changed the ecology of the orchards, allowing naturally-occurring beneficial insects to survive and control other pests.

"It is achievements such as this that contributes to the pride the Batlow Co-Op has in its effort to provide consumers with a safe product grown under an environmentally-sustainable system," says Bruno.

Advances have also occurred once the apples are grown and picked.

"We employ a specialised washing, grading, packing and storage system that sets the Australian standard," says Bruno.

The methods of the Batlow Co-Op and its growers have developed over its nearly-90-year history and continue to grow.

"Like any trade secret, we have a few things we keep to ourselves," says Bruno.

"But we've no doubt that when you try one of Batlow's delicious varieties, you'll taste it for yourself."

Coles is the only supermarket chain in Australia to stock Batlow's world famous apples.



AT THE CORE

1,500,000

The approximate number of cases of fruit the Batlow Co-Op produces each year.

12

The number of commercial apple varieties grown by the Batlow Co-Op.

50+

The number of growers with the Batlow Co-Op.

88

The number of years the Batlow Co-Op has been in operation.

100

The percentage of Batlow Co-Op apples grown in the Batlow region.

1
The number of apples a day required to keep the doctor away, according to an old proverb, given new life in a new apple industry ad campaign.

Cummaudo Farms



AT A GLANCE

2.1 THE BEST POTATOES

The unique features of the region surrounding Mirboo North in West Gippsland contribute to the production of some of Australia's best potatoes.

2.2 A FAMILY CONCERN

A desire to be his own boss sent a 16-year-old Tom Cummaudo on the path to creating Cummaudo Farms.

2.3 Q&A WITH TONY CUMMAUDO

Tony Cummaudo on how the farm's relationship with Coles is helping to grow its business and provide Coles' customers with the very best potatoes.



The tallest tree, the best potatoes

Just outside of Mirboo North (155 kilometres east of Melbourne) lies a monument recognising the site where the world's tallest tree once stood*.

Sam Cummaudo of the farm that bears the family name points out that when the tree stood it was a sign to pioneering farmers that the area was home to incredibly fertile soil.

The Cummaudo family was one of the first to settle the area and as a consequence of the ideal location and lots of hard work, now produces some of Australia's best potatoes.

"This is an ideal location," says Sam's brother Tony.

"We're drought proof, flood proof and more or less free from heavy frosts," says Tony.

However, there is one natural element the farm is not impervious to – fire.

Battling the elements Flames deny a perfect record of delivery

"About a week before the Black Saturday fires in 2009, fire swept the hills surrounding our farms," says Sam.

"It got to the point where we were actually putting out spotfires with wetted old hessian potato bags."

Thankfully the farms were spared and in a matter of days the brothers returned to a normal routine and prepared to make their regular deliveries.

However, while Tony and Sam had managed to get everything back on track, the roads surrounding the farms remained closed as a result of the fires.

"We'd worked pretty hard to ensure we met the delivery," says Tony.

"But there wasn't much we could do about the roads – and despite all the hard work we'd put in, it was the first and only time we've missed a delivery."

Consistent quality A near perfect potato record

Cummaudo Farms near perfect delivery record is mirrored by the consistent quality it provides its largest buyer, Coles supermarkets.

"We've a near zero per cent rejection rate," says Tony.

"Coles is good in providing us a clear indication of the quality they expect, and we work very hard to ensure we provide them – and more importantly their customers – with the best potato we can grow."

Tony says that years of work is behind every bag of brushed potatoes that finds its way to a Coles supermarket.

"We do a lot of work with development," says Tony walking into the cool-room where tubes containing m potato prototypes.

The marble-sized potatoes Tony points out a second or third generation.

"It's usually not until the fifth generation that the potatoes can be grown in commercial quantities," says Tony, noting that's how long it takes for the potato to build up the various resistances.

"Most people realise it's a little more complicated than just planting some seeds and watching them grow," says Tony.

"But most people would be unaware of just how much time, research and work goes in to growing what is considered a simple vegetable.

* The tallest tree claim is a misnomer. While the tree stood at an impressive 115m, it ranks sixth overall, with the tallest tree measured at over 150m in Healesville, Victoria.

Tony Cummaudo with a box of brushed Sebago potatoes at the family farm in Mirboo North.



A FAMILY CONCERN

THREE GENERATIONS OF FARMING CUMMAUDOS

Tony and Sam's father Tom Cummaudo became his own boss about 50 years ago.

Tom was 16 and had left school two years prior after a fight with his teacher at his school at Ballara South.

Tom worked at a number of farms in the region and when the opportunity came up to run his own farm, it sowed the seed of what would eventually become one of Australia's premier potato growing farms.

SEBAGOS AND STATS

450

The number of acres managed by Cummaudo Farms.

8,000

The approximate number of tonnes of potatoes produced by Cummaudo Farms each year.

35

The number of locals employed by Cummaudo Farms.

9

The number of third-generation Cummaudos who will hopefully underpin the future success of the family farms.

Generational Farming

Like father, like sons

The prominence of the Cummaudo family around the rolling hills of Mirboo North and Thorpdale becomes apparent as Tony and Sam Cummaudo take you to their various properties, pointing out those neighbouring paddocks that were owned by various family members throughout the years.

Tony and Sam both have fond memories of an idyllic childhood lifestyle on the farm.

It is a lifestyle they are trying to pass down to their own children – Tony's five children and Sam's four.

However, times change and with them some of the brothers' memories are now just that – memories.

"When I was a kid, I remember sitting on dad's knee, driving the tractor," says Sam.

"Today my kids don't even see there dad driving the tractor, today it's controlled by satellite and GPS, ploughing fields with an accuracy I could not replicate, certainly not with a child on my knee."

A bright future

Continuing the tradition

Both Tony and Sam are hopeful that some of their children will one day see the farm run by a third generation of Cummaudos.

"The farm has come a long way since dad started it all those years ago," says Tony.

"It's a great lifestyle in Mirboo North and it's well serviced by good schools and a great community.

"The two families live close to each other and the kids ride their bikes to each others houses, so in some ways that idyllic farm lifestyle still exists," says Tony.

"And if we continue to grow a top quality potato and continue to receive the report from buyers such as Coles, then we'll also have a healthy business to pass on to the kids."

But before then there is much work to do.

In a year, Cummaudo is expected to produce in excess of 8,000 tonnes of potatoes – all at a consistent high quality that will ensure Coles' customers know they're getting a great potato and keep coming back for more.