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Dacon completes 30,000 s/f new facility for 88 Acres in Canton, MA

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Canton, MA Foods matter. They influence health, performance, celebratory moments and cultural exchanges. Today's shift from commodity-driven pricing to personalized products reflects a growing consumer preference for transparency and value-added benefits. Today, consumer choice is an exercise in sustainable sourcing, non-GMO, vegan, allergen-free, nutrient-dense and gluten-free shopping. Snacks have transitioned from impulse buys to pre-planned purchases, becoming a staple in the American diet. The U.S. retains the largest global revenue for snacks at \$105.9 billion, outpacing Japan, India and China.(1)

The Beginning

Great products start with determination and an intuitive sense for innovation. As with many high

growth brands, 88 Acres was created to fulfill a niche need. Founders Nicole Ledoux and Rob Dalton met on Match.com, and during their 4th dinner date, Dalton consumed food contaminated with nuts. A dangerous allergic reaction ensued, landing him in the emergency room where Ledoux met her future in-laws. Not having food allergies, she adjusted her cooking and looked towards alternative ingredients that produced flavorful snacks without forsaking nutrition. “From the start, our promise has been to craft flavorful food without compromising on quality or safety for those with or without food allergies. Food is more than fuel – it’s comfort, celebration, and connection. Our R&D drives us to create products that enrich our community’s lifestyle and are versatile enough to be enjoyed by kids in the pickup line or athletes at the finish line,” said Ledoux. Started in 2015, the brand is named after the 88-acre farm where Ledoux was raised in North Brookfield, Mass.

A Budding Brand

88 Acres’ products offer flexible nutrition for modern lifestyles based on seeds. As a sustainable food resource, seeds are nutrient-dense due to their ability to grow a plant. They are also high in protein, healthy fats, fiber, taste and texture properties, and are not a common food allergen. The portfolio consists of seed-based protein bars, seed and oat granola bars, seed butters and crunchy granola clusters called Seed’nola. Fan favorites include dark chocolate sea salt and oatmeal chocolate chip seed + oat bars, banana bread protein bars, and dark chocolate sunflower seed butter. 88 Acres snacks are distributed nationally in grocery stores, mass retailers, K12 and higher education partners, on airlines, Amazon and 88acres.com. Originally created in their apartment kitchen, 88 Acres’ first production facility was located in Dorchester, Mass. Exponential growth of the brand has resulted in a new headquarters leased from Camber Development at 85 John Rd. in Canton. Currently this site gives 88 Acres 6X the production capacity of their previous bakery. While many snack companies turn to co-packers to produce their snacks, 88 Acres crafts their artisan snacks in-house to uphold the highest allergy standards. For this facility design, function was prioritized over form, with the facility being reconfigured to easily meet growing demand. Areas include a quality control lab, R&D lab, production area, cooling room, warehouse, executive offices and conference rooms totaling 30,000 s/f. The resulting effect is overall organizational continuity between sales/marketing, warehousing, R&D, and production functions.

Civic Engagement

With each facility completion, Dacon funds an unmet need with a small, local nonprofit through their philanthropy called Designed with Dignity. To honor 88 Acres, Dacon funded a water conservation program in Canton. Currently the Neponset Watershed Association (NepWA) monitors water quality via testing for the presence of chemicals, water depth, temperature, clarity and dissolved oxygen in a 120-mile area around the Neponset River. Working with NepWA, a green team of local high school students will be tagging 200 drains with markers to educate citizens on stormwater contamination. Street runoff from fertilizers and debris is the largest source of water pollution. The use of chemicals and illegal dumping in drains affects the drinking water for 120,000 citizens along the Neponset River.

To date, Dacon’s Designed with Dignity programs have enhanced 16,620 lives in Massachusetts.

(1) Statista, Revenue of the Snack Food Market by Country 2022, Global: revenue of the snack market by country 2022 | Statista.

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