

Heard the one about the Chinese president at the G20 summit? No? Well; when asked what he would like to drink he replied "Apple Juice – Moor's Organic of course". Now that surely has got to be an endorsement of the power and potential of farmers and growers in South East England.

Following the summit some chap with a mismatched eyebrow and hair combo said "you can grow your way out of recession but you can't cut your way out". If one follows this sound bite logic the first question ought to be "how do we fund this growth?" Nick Moor from D J Moor, the aforementioned purveyors of fruit juice to world leaders, clearly understood how to do this. Together with his accountant, Nick Holmes from Chaverneys, he has started to realise the potential of the juice business and the need for it to 'grow' but they also thought long and hard about how to fund it.

Nick Moor has developed a thriving fruit juice business which was helped by a capital grant under the old ERDP scheme. However it quickly became apparent that to take the business on to the next level further investment was required. The key limiting factor of the business has been the lack of on site cold storage. Given the disarray of cold storage

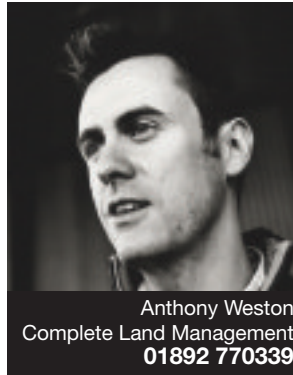
Juicy grant

provision in the South East and the tightening of organic standards relating to storage it quickly became apparent to the two Nicks that on farm storage was the way forward. The next question was how to fund the project?

When we first started talking about a possible SEEDA grant application it wasn't immediately apparent whether a grant scheme that calls for collaboration and innovation would fund a simple cold store. Build costs were projected at over £1million and a grant of 40% would not just be desirable, it would be essential to the success of the project.

The core issue

The result of our deliberations was a robust business plan and rationale that satisfied



SEEDA's stringent criteria. Based on this plan and with some guidance from the SEEDA officer the development agency have come up with the cash to support a sound business looking for growth. Putting the successful application together meant some serious attention to the detail of the finances, careful thought about what we were trying to achieve and how the project con-

tributes towards SEEDA's targets. We had to make sure all the relevant information was in place and presented properly and we also relied on some very patient contractors. To get to the stage where suppliers and contractors knew that the work was coming in has meant marrying the identified needs of the business with the SEEDA requirements. It has meant that we have not ended up with a mere cold store but in fact a "Fruit and Juice Hub."

Branching out

Nick Moor is fortunate for being a well known juice producer and not just for his own organic fruit but for a number of other growers as well. The impact the investment will have on third party businesses is clear. Local growers are crying out for modern storage and organic growers doubly so. For smaller growers access to the D J Moors juicing facility is vital. Thanks to the new Fruit and Juice Hub D J Moor can juice more fruit for other growers as well as storing their fruit and juice.

There is no doubt that there are other potential projects across the South East which will help the rural economy grow again. It is equally clear that the path to successfully funding these projects is not always straightforward. However don't rule out the opportunities before you have explored the possibilities. You never know which world leader will have a craving for English produce next.




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