



Famous for fish since 1937

Smales Group Restructures Its Business

The family-owned Smales Group – the largest individual supplier of fish for Britain’s fish and chip shops – has restructured and demerged its Hull-based national food service division to provide a greater focus on the different areas of the Group’s operations.

Following the restructuring and a Management Buy Out, 3G Food Service Ltd, which incorporates Seafood Solutions, is now operating as an independent company. Smales and 3G will continue to enjoy a good trading relationship.

The shareholders of Smales Fish Merchants are Lee Smales, Chief Executive; Simon Smales, Sales Director of the Trading Division; and Colin Smales, who will continue as Non Executive Chairman.

Lee Smales said: “Despite the recession, all areas of our operations have already seen a significant increase in business and we are forecasting more growth. However, whilst 3G trades with pubs, restaurants and national accounts, Smales Fish Merchants supplies the retail sector, fish and chip shops and distributors. Rather than try to adapt the same disciplines to these different areas of operations we believe that the best way to maximise the opportunities ahead is to restructure the business, and give each operation its own specific focus, enabling them to implement their own key strategies.”

Established in 1937, Smales Fish Merchants now supplies approximately 3,000 fish and chip establishments, which is about 25% of Britain's total outlets. The company also supplies selected independent wholesale distributors.

"Our volume sales to the fish and chip shops have increased by 15 per cent in the last year and with more fish and chip shops opening we are confident that sales will continue to increase. This shows that people are not prepared to give up on their fish and chips – in times of recession people want comfort food with value and quality," said Mr Smales.

Smales is the UK's largest importer and distributor of high quality 'frozen at sea' fillets, and has developed long standing relationships direct with quota-holding fishing vessel operators so that it can ensure continued supplies of fish from well managed and sustainable stocks, mainly from the Barents Sea. The quotas in these waters have been steadily increasing due to conservation measures.

The company also has a chilled seafood division, headed by Jeff Crowther, Managing Director, which supplies major retailers with fish, other seafood and prepared meals produced in their Hull factory which has the BRC (British Retail Consortium) Grade A accreditation.

Smales has just increased its storage capacity by nearly one-third after transferring its cold store and distribution operations to Gillett Street, Hull, which has a 4,000 pallet capacity and a refurbished site.

The company has increased its total workforce by 40 to 200 in the past year at its 35,000 sq ft processing factory and operational facilities in Hull. It has also doubled the number of vehicles in its national, temperature-controlled delivery fleet from 14 to 28, and has a strategy for further expansion.

Colin F Smales

Lee Smales

Simon Smales

Non Executive Chairman

Chief Executive

Sales Director (Trading Division)