



McCain France – 'It's all good'

Hardly any other deep frozen food product is as popular as french fries. Whether for the deep fryer, the baking oven or the microwave, the long potato sticks, which originally come from Belgium, are popular worldwide as a snack, a side dish or – among children – even as a main dish. McCain Alimentaire S.A.S. based in Harnes, France, is the French subsidiary of the Canadian french fries concern McCain. The company is the undisputed market leader in France and aims to enhance its market position on the basis of a sustainable future strategy. Product innovations and diversification will be key words in the coming years for McCain Alimentaire.



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“ Our core business is frozen French fries in different variations for the deep fryer,” explains Anne Sophie Fontaine, general director and responsible for France, the Netherlands and Belgium.

“Yet not the least due to the increasing health awareness of the consumers, we have been recognizing a growing demand

for french fries for the oven.” In addition to the traditional french fries, the product program of McCain Alimentaire boasts french fries specialties such as Western Style, Golden Longs, Organic, Steakhouse, Hot & Spicy, and others.

Further-more, the fries specialist also offers a wide range of different frozen potato



► products for adults and kids, such as potato wedges in different styles, croquettes, Smiles, fried grated potatoes or fried mashed potatoes.

McCain Alimentaire focuses on three major distribution channels. Firstly, the company sells

via retailers such as the big supermarkets and the big chains. Key accounts are the second distributions channel, for example, McDonald's, Quick or other restaurant chains. Last but not least, the food service market with snack bars, individual restaurants and public

institutions is an important marketing channel. France also supplies the markets in Belgium, the Netherlands, Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain.

The origins of the concern date back to 1957 when two brothers who brought the processing of frozen potatoes

“ We focus exclusively on the market for processed potatoes ”

to perfection founded a small firm in Florenceville, Canada. Around 30 years ago, production facilities in Harnes, France, were taken on, and over the course of the years, two more companies in France followed.

Today, France is the group's center for the French and Benelux market with Harnes being the head office. Alto-

gether, around 1,100 people work for McCain Alimentaire. McCain Foods has a staff of over 18,000 worldwide and operates 55 production facilities in twelve countries on six continents.

The group produces around one million pounds of potato products per hour and sells approximately one third of

all deep-frozen french fries worldwide to customers in over 110 countries. “We focus exclusively on the market for processed potatoes,” says Ms. Fontaine. “We are not active in the raw material market.

At present we only hold around 4% of the global consumption of processed potato products. So, there is much ...



► more market potential to exploit. Of course, our market is highly competitive, and there are big players. But we clearly excel in quality. All our products are premium products from A to Z. Our quality strategy starts with the raw material, the potato itself, and

covers the complete growing and production chain.

In France, we collaborate with 900 farmers. There are several partnerships that are older than 25 years now. The close cooperation has a strong positive effect on the quality of

the finished product. Another important sales argument is that children like our products. This effect must not be underestimated.

French fries are a pleasure you can afford. Therefore, we also offer special kids' products and try to adapt them to their needs and likes."

“ In France, we eat 220,000 t of potatoes per annum ”

Expansion is one of the key issues on the company's future agenda. The company aims to launch new products and to further diversify the product program. "According to a new survey, every Belgian consumes around 85 kg of potatoes every year, every Dutch per-

son around 80 kg and every Frenchman approximately 65 kg," says Ms. Fontaine. "In France, we eat 220,000 t of potatoes per annum. Belgium comes up to around 190,000 t, although the population is only one sixth of ours. I believe we have every reason to be opti-

mistic about the future. There is so much more market potential we have not even touched. But, despite all our growth plans, we will continue to stay true to our guiding principles and to our slogan: 'McCain – it's all good!'"

