



COMPANY PROFILE

Family-run company **Hollings** describes its booming business

Hollings is a business that has seen huge expansion over the last 35 years. Today, it keeps £1.25 million in ingredients in stock to meet industry demand for its natural pet treats. Sales and marketing manager Emma Hollings said: "We've seen growth year-on-year. The treats range began with a bulk box of 50 pig ears and we now have over 100 lines.

"Hollings was started in 1979 by my parents, Jeff and Celia. They began by making dry dog foods and in 1981 bought our current premises in Skipton." The couple created an 8,000sq ft factory and business continued to grow. In 1995 ex-butcher, Jeff, responded to wholesalers' demand for dried pig ears by sourcing high quality meat and installing a drying room at the Skipton facility. 2004 saw more expansion when the company bought and modernised a purpose-built factory for the production of pet treats. Today Hollings has over 90 employees.

But, despite its size, Hollings is still very much a family firm. "Myself, my father and my mother are all involved. We're proud to be a family company

and find family-run businesses are still common in the pet trade," said Emma. "I have a brother, Charlie, who hasn't joined the business yet. He's a racing driver and does a lot of work for McLaren and Ferrari and races GT cars around the world (though we don't think he's The Stig!). He occasionally helps us with packing."

THE HOLLINGS RANGE

Hollings offers a wide selection of products and uses wholesalers to supply independent retailers around the UK. Natural treats make up over 90 percent of its business. Many are manufactured in the 30,000sq ft factory in Worksop and then moved to Skipton for packaging.

The company also produces Tyke Gold dry dog food, Bobtail & Pipkin small animal food and white label products for retailers who want to create own-brand products. Hollings' major sellers include:

- A display box range
- A prepack range
- A carrier bag range
- A boxed range
- A slimline display range
- Supergiants
- A rawhide range
- A foods range

The 'Bulk in a Box' selection was the company's first ever range of natural treats. It's still going strong and features products from pig trotters to filled bones.

"There is still a market for the bulk boxes," said Emma. "There are a lot of market traders who like to have loose products and some traditional pet shops that want to weigh out their own sausages, their own tripe sticks and so on."

Hollings also offers a carrier bag range, which places popular products in a bag. "Ten years ago when this range started, it was really a larger pack size

for our seven or eight most popular lines," explained Emma. "Now, the carrier bag range has expanded and is still one of our strongest. Sales are very good, for example the pig ear ten pack is one of our top five best selling products."

Hollings doesn't manufacture stands for its products, preferring to offer shelf-ready display boxes. The packaging is in Hollings Blue with the company logo and the range features over 35 popular treats, including real meat treat beef, filled hoof and many others. "We manufacture a lot of the display box products in our own factory in Worksop,

EU AND UK INGREDIENTS

"We have hundreds of enquiries asking where our products are sourced," said Emma. "We have the British flag on the packaging of any treat that we manufacture ourselves and is produced in the UK. Red packaging, for example on our beef ribs, means that we manufacture the product ourselves. When you're looking at the range you can easily spot which treats are British ones.

Hollings sources most of its products within the UK or EU, though rawhide is purchased from South America. "We work with a factory in Poland, and have done for 15 of the 20 years we've made natural treats," continued Emma. "We have a really good relationship with the factory, we're the only people they deal with from the UK because they're very loyal to us. We don't go for the cheapest raw materials, we choose quality and good service."

using fully traceable British beef," said Emma. "We've added various pack sizes to the display box range; four inch bones, eight inch bones, and different flavours of filled bones and sausages. We also offer chicken, beef and duck real meat treats which are 100 percent pure meat all sourced from the EU. We can provide a lot of variety and the sales are fantastic. For example, the mini roast bones have a two pack and a one pack option as a lot of the time a pet store will have a preference on which product they want to sell."

Hollings' tub products are another top seller. The company added to the existing two flavours to create five options overall and found that a festive treats tub sold very well in 2015. "The tubs are great for promotions as they can stand on the end of aisles and don't need to take up shelf space" said Emma. "When retailers buy from our network of wholesalers, they can choose to have two boxes or a few tubs, they don't have to buy a whole pallet." The rawhide range is also attracting interest. Hollings offers eleven different products and avoided the availability issues experienced in some areas of the industry by making sure the company was well stocked in advance.

STOCKING HOLLINGS' PRODUCTS

Retailers interested in Hollings' ranges can contact their local wholesaler. "We deal with national and regional wholesalers and believe we have the correct companies to look after the distribution of our products so we really do recommend that that's the route the independents take," said Emma. "Our wholesalers have a wide range of our products and good websites, availability, promotions and delivery slots. We do have some direct customers but a lot of Hollings' products go through the wholesalers

and we're really happy with the ones that we work with. If an independent asks for a product they'll call it in."

THE FUTURE

The last 18 months have been a busy period for Hollings, as the company switched to an innovative new packaging design. "It looks great," said

Emma. "We pride ourselves on leading the way with packaging and think carefully about merchandising, the colours we use and how they look on the shelf. We're very happy with our strong, blue display boxes. When they leave here they have a fair way to travel to their destination so we invest a lot in them.

"In the future, we want to

grow, expand and look at new products. We've invested year on year in people, packaging, equipment, we have eight packing lines for all the different types of products, from bulk to pre-pack. Our Worksop factory is running 24 hours a day now, using many British ingredients."

For more information go to hollings.uk.com 



Jeff and Celia Hollings

