

THE MONTH END

EPISODE FIVE

White Leaf Provisions

MEGHAN ROWE



SHOW NOTES



SPEAKER BIO

Meghan Rowe is the CEO and co-founder of White Leaf Provisions, a family run Biodynamic baby food business that she co-founded with her husband Keith. After having their son, they searched the aisles of grocery stores for Biodynamic baby food and could not find it in the US. That started them on their journey to create White Leaf, the first Biodynamic baby food line in the United States.

TAKEAWAYS

What Is Biodynamic?

Biodynamic is a holistic farming approach. It's a regenerative method of farming that's clean, helps heal the soil, and does not use pesticides, herbicides, or fungicides. Demeter is the international Biodynamic certifier, and their mission is to heal the planet through agriculture.

On Procuring the Supply Chain:

Keith is a professional chef by trade so he really spearheaded the sourcing mission. They worked backwards and went through Demeter's directory to find Biodynamic-certified farms. They spoke with the farmers, shared what they wanted to create, and found manufacturers who were willing to take the Demeter certification on and work with a small brand. It took them three and a half years to produce the first pouch of baby food, which launched in October of 2018.

TAKEAWAYS (Cont'd)

Procuring the Supply Chain, Continued:

Because they knew that they wanted to scale into a national brand, they knew that supply and demand could be an issue because of the lack of Biodynamic farms and manufacturers in the US. They set their sights on Europe. Biodynamic farming is on an industrial scale over there.

They give themselves six weeks for an inventory run due to all of the factors of working with European manufacturers.

On Biodynamic Cost and Pricing:

They partnered with advisors early on who had worked with Annie's Organic Mac & Cheese in the 1990s, so they had experience going into a market with a newly created product. These advisors recommended they look at their COGs and aim for a 40% margin for distributors. White Leaf worked hard to get their prices down from the beginning.

Sales Channel Advice:

White Leaf is really focusing on the direct to consumer sales channel right now.

Trying to fundraise for a Biodynamic product in the US is extremely difficult, so they realized early on that they would have to keep a tight ship and allocate correctly. When they launched, they spent a lot of money going to the industry trade shows. A lot of people advised against it, but it really benefited them. It put them on the radar of a lot of industry leaders and store buyers.

When they first launched, they hedged their bets; do they invest in direct to consumer or brick and mortar? Most store accounts that they have now are inbound - the store buyers come to them. Over the past year and a half, they have focused on developing the relationship with the brick and mortar stores, and now they are shifting and focusing on the direct to consumer channel. That channel really allows them to educate the consumer, the margins are higher, and they can reinvest that money back into marketing or supporting new product launches.

CPG BUSINESS DO'S AND DON'TS

CPG Business Do:

Definitely get your books aligned! Find what your weaknesses are and get assistance early on for those.

CPG Business Don't:

Don't discredit your instinct. Meghan notes, "We've really listened to our guts going forward every step of the way with this business and the few times that we've gone against what we've instinctively thought, it's bit us. So definitely don't discredit your instincts."

NOTABLE SHOW QUOTES

From Meghan on working with European manufacturers:

"It's a nice cadence of doing business. It's not really high powered or high stress, and they really take a love of what we're doing in trying to boost the North American Biodynamic market."

From Meghan on educating consumers:

"It's always been an educational piece with Biodynamic and regenerative which we're fortunate that we have an online platform for that. And that's really our billboard where we can educate the consumer."

From Meghan on distribution:

"We've been really strategic with our distribution rollout. We only focus on the natural organic set because that's where our consumer already shops and they already understand the importance of high-level organic."

From Meghan on Biodynamic vs. regenerative:

"Biodynamic is a farming method - it's the gold standard of regenerative agriculture. Regenerative has really taken hold with the consumer and the investor; they know that that's a much needed way to help the planet. And now our conversation leans heavily toward regenerative farming."

NOTABLE SHOW QUOTES (Cont'd)

From Meghan:

"We're a very lean ship. Whatever we can outsource for freelancers or consultants, we do."

"I look at Quickbooks almost daily."

From Brad:

"It's not just a selling game for you, it's an educational aspect really."



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