

# Processing the world's crops

Leading UK manufacturer of crop processing machinery Alvan Blanch has received the Queen's Award for International Trade 2005. Export sales have been a key part of the company's activities for most of its 53 years.

**A**N EXTRAORDINARY DIVERSITY of export activities is central to Alvan Blanch's success. The company supplies machines and complete factories to convert almost every crop grown anywhere in the world into human or animal food, or for use in industry. An order could vary from US\$1,000 for a small machine for use in an African village to a multi-million industrial process plant.

Managing Director Andrew Blanch says: "We are delighted to receive this award, which is the ultimate recognition of achievement for any British exporter" Previous recognition saw the company's founder, Alvan B. Blanch, receive the OBE insignia from H.M. the Queen in 1969.

Says a representative: "Our markets are truly global – covering over 100 countries, in every continent".

Major contracts over the past two years have included:

- The world's largest on-farm maize flaking factory, producing 20 tonnes/hour, 24 hours/day of feed to sustain 40,000 head of dairy cattle, in Saudi Arabia.
- A feed mill for the largest integrated cane sugar project in the world in Sudan. AB developed a totally new process to convert the main byproducts of bagasse and molasses into a nutritious pelletised animal feed, allowing the sugar company to improve margins with added value and to diversify into new product sectors.
- A sorghum malting plant – for a substitute to malted barley for a brewery in Nigeria.
- An organic fertilizer factory to convert poultry manure in Oman.
- Fruit juice plants for processing oranges, mango and pineapple into sachet- and carton-packaged juice in Nigeria.
- Salt iodizers purchased this year by UNICEF to help mother and infant health by reducing iodine deficiency disorders in Iraq.



A vegetable oil press of the type supplied to Sierra Leone in February.



Feed mill for sugar cane products under construction in Sudan.

- Rice mills for small farmers in Haiti.
- Grain drying systems – shipped far and wide, as far apart as Canada and New Zealand.
- A sand grading and compost mixing system – to produce landscaping materials for a racecourse and safari park being created out of the desert in Saudi Arabia.
- Groundnut oil presses and other machines as part of a major EU-funded project to rebuild agricultural development following the end of civil war in Sierra Leone.
- A cocoa and coffee drying/cleaning system) for UNICORP is under construction in Guinea.
- The supply of vegetable oil presses, rice huller polishers and rice threshers to Sierra Leone through new distributor Strand Investments. (The equipment was successfully commissioned in February. This was an EU-funded project).
- A plant for producing extruded fish feed in Lagos state Nigeria, for his Majesty Akin Sateru. This is one of the first of its kind in the region to produce floating fish feed.
- A sorghum malting plant of capacity 50 tonnes per day has also been installed in Nigeria for Allbon Industries.



Feeding maize into a containerised flour mill at a refugee camp in Congo.

## Grain dryers

Grain dryers remain the main product line. Thus in Greece Alvan Blanch dryers are found to be ideal for the local cotton seed crop. The unique benefits of the Double Flow Drying System coupled with more active sales promotion continues to bring success in the form of increased sales and new markets. Other recent European sales successes include; a factory for producing rabbit feed pellets and herb processing systems.

Whilst predominately involved with crop processing, the company has already expanded significantly into the environmental sector, now accounting for 30 of total sales in the home market. These technologies includes bio-diesel from rapeseed, converting wood and other energy crops into valuable and sustainable bio-fuels, waste water recovery from food processing factories, farm slurry separation, municipal and animal waste processing and composting.

This success in creating such a diverse range of products and markets can be attributed to the company's positive approach in seizing new challenges and opportunities, even if this means developing new process technology in new markets. There can often be much risk attached to such business and there is often a costly learning curve, too. Training can be supplied either on site or in the UK. "Through our sister company Alvan Blanch Overseas, a government-accredited training provider, we are now offering courses in a wide range of technical skills. This summer we shall be welcoming a delegation of six Libyan students for two months training in manufacturing and project engineering at our factory," a representative says. As well as production, key departments involved in the export activities of this leading UK company include the project engineering team who design and put together the complete process systems, shipping and administration, the export sales managers responsible for different regions and product sectors, and the service department who often install and commission equipment right here in many countries in Africa. **E**