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MANUKA BOOSTA WRAPS UP GLOBAL TRADE WITH HAWAII

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Hamilton, NZ, June 29, 2010 – A humble honey manufacturer from Hamilton has global trade all wrapped up thanks to support from the Tekau Plus Export program. The company has just signed off on an international order to Hawaiian distributors and marketing company, Hica Ventures, which should double production overnight.

The 'Manuka Boosta' energy bar was developed in 2007 by Hayden Pohio of Nature's Country Gold to provide a natural alternative to protein bars that are full of artificial ingredients. Popular among athletes, it is endorsed by ultra distance runner, Lisa Tamati. Tamati is currently running across the Gobi Desert as part of a six-stage, 250km endurance race, in Western China and has chosen to use Manuka Boosta during the event.

Hayden Pohio, who is a food technologist, said the HiCa deal represents a significant milestone for the company.

"We are sending a pallet with 8,000 bars to Hawaii which is just under 1 months volume of bars which I normally sell in New Zealand. So while it's really scary, it's also exciting."

Manuka Boosta originally found its feet trading with small health shops like Common Sense Organics and Hardy's Healthy Living. They now supply over 200 different stores around the country. The company rents a factory in Hamilton that can produce 30,000 bars a week.

"We now have the capacity to make more bars and are gearing up to increase our overseas exports. I also plan to approach distributors in Australia," said Pohio.

It was John Panoho, a fellow member of the export initiative called 'Tekau Plus,' that provided the opportunity to be introduced to HiCa ventures who also currently distribute seafood products made by Aotearoa Seafoods Limited (ASL).

ASL shipped a container worth of product to Hawaii in February and is negotiating a deal with HiCa that could see a significant number of containers reach Hawaiian shores.

Pohio said that being part of Tekau Plus has helped him to take the shortest path to success, saving him both time and money.

"Tekau Plus is incredible in terms of networking and the opportunity to go to different events offshore like China. I've met a lot of other young Maori business people in the same position as me as well as experienced veterans like Paul Morgan."

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Mr Morgan said that Tekau Plus will assist to evaluate Manuka Boosta's current business strategy to make internal changes within the company to ensure they can develop new markets and manage their growth in a strategic way.

"The key now is to fine tune their approach to their current international activity and ensure that procedures are in place at the Manuka Boosta factory so that the export opportunity with HiCa can be maintained over the long-term," said Mr Morgan.

Pohio said he is looking forward to becoming a player in New Zealand's growing export sector and hopes his story will help encourage more Maori entrepreneurs to take up the challenge of entering new international markets.

"The most difficult challenge with any new venture is it takes a lot of money to grow your business. Don't expect immediate results and don't be afraid to ask questions all along the way – you never do know everything!"

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