

PepsiCo adds new R300m production line at Western Cape Weet-Bix plant

Food and beverage giant PepsiCo sub-Saharan Africa is boosting production capacity at its Weet-Bix plant in Atlantis, Western Cape with the launch of a new production line. The new line was funded by a R300m cash injection as part of the public interest commitments made at the time of the [acquisition of Pioneer Foods](#).



Source: Supplied

The new production line will create 14 additional jobs across four shifts as the site will be operational 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and includes expanded silo capacity to store 500 tons of wheat. This further strengthens PepsiCo's role and contribution within local communities.

Product demand set to grow

"PepsiCo's decision to invest in this new production line is as a result of a specific focus to increase production as consumer trends indicate a demand for healthy, convenient, minimally processed, and varied food products. Technology is enhancing the efficiency and safety of production processes," says Hopewell Hlophe, manufacturing plant manager at the Weet-Bix facility.

The company notes that Weet-Bix is a low-sugar product with few ingredients and utilises only minimally processed whole-grain wheat. PepsiCo says that Weet-Bix volumes are expected to accelerate "given product health credentials and the value it offers within the ready-to-eat cereal category".

The new production line is required to fuel the capacity for future growth enabling more focus on and capacity for Weet-Bix innovation into new formats.



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An additional R60m has been spent on an upgrade of the company's Malmesbury Mill which is the only source of the specific cleaned wheat needed to produce Weet-Bix. The mill's expansion will enable wheat supply for a number of years and ensure easier process control in the Weet-Bix cooking process.

PepsiCo's acquisition of Pioneer Foods in 2020 was approved by the Competition Tribunal subject to a number of public interest commitments. The investments into the upgrades of the Weet-Bix value chain form a part of the committed R6.5bn capital expenditure investment.

Top-selling breakfast cereal

Weet-Bix was first introduced in South Africa in 1930 and is still made using the same recipe today.

"Weet-Bix remains South Africa's number one selling breakfast cereal and has held pride of place at the South African breakfast table for generations. This investment is timely as we move towards a safer, more efficient, and sustainable food system. It's also part of our commitment to investing in our operations," says Tumi Matsheka, VP supply chain at PepsiCo SSA.

This investment is strongly linked to PepsiCo Positive - a strategic end-to-end transformation with sustainability at the centre of how the company will create growth and value by operating within planetary boundaries and inspiring positive change for the planet and people.

Beyond addressing global threats to the food system and achieving more sustainable production through technology, strategies to redress global food inequalities and increase access to quality nutrition for all must be built into the system.



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Renewable energy upgrades

In addition to the new production line, the Weet-Bix facility has been fitted with solar panels, "We now have the capacity to generate 1.8 million kWh of electricity every year from this facility alone. By 2030 we plan to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions (Scope1 and 2) by 75% against a 2015 baseline, and this milestone brings us one step closer," explains Matsheka.

"We are confident that PepsiCo positive directly links the future of our business with the future of our planet, for the benefit of both. We're making sure to offer nutritious options that consumers are seeking, while still providing the same great taste. Our journey is filled with possibility as we are offering consumers positive choices helping build the sustainable future, we

all must have,” concludes Matsheka.

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