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Discover the versatility and beauty of turkey says Marco Pierre White as he joins forces with Bernard Matthews Farms

Bernard Matthews Farms, the British turkey company, is joining forces with celebrity chef, Marco Pierre White, to move turkey further up the UK's culinary agenda. The famous chef will act as its ambassador and work with the Norfolk based company to champion turkey as a great tasting and versatile meat.

Through a wide range of activities, Marco will encourage people to move away from the 'turkey is just for Christmas' psyche and inspire us to cook with turkey all year round. In addition, Marco will be developing a new range of turkey products for Bernard Matthews Farms later in the year.



Commenting on this new venture, Marco Pierre White said: "Ever since I was a young boy I've been an admirer of turkey and particularly Bernard Matthews, because he is without question one of the great farmers of the last 5 decades.

"Turkey is the nation's favourite roast on the most important family day of the year, so why not all year round? Turkey has more flavour, more texture than chicken, but for many the only association with turkey is Christmas or Easter, which is down to tradition and nostalgia.

"Consumers traditionally roast turkey but there are many other ways to prepare this majestically delicious bird. Through our joint collaboration, we wish to show the great British public how perfect the great bird is for today's modern lifestyles – as it is versatile, healthy and affordable.

"Bernard Matthews Farms is unique in that it is a fully integrated food business. I never realised until I visited their Norfolk farms, that they do everything from breeding their own turkeys, hatching the eggs and rearing the birds, through to delivering the end product. They even mill their own feed from locally sourced wheat. It really is an iconic British brand, based on one great man's vision more than 5 decades ago."



"I am honoured and privileged to be working with Bernard Matthews Farms to promote the great bird and put turkey back on menus across the UK."

Jeff Halliwell, Bernard Matthews Farms' Managing Director, added:

"We are delighted to be collaborating and working with a chef of Marco Pierre White's calibre to help promote and support Bernard Matthews Farms and British turkey. Marco has an enthusiastic passion for food and he will be a great advocate for this great meat. For Bernard Matthews Farms this collaboration is part of our plan to grow the business for the future. We are investing in many new initiatives and innovative products that will help drive turkey consumption in the UK, which is only half that of countries like France or Italy where turkey is a staple protein and integral part of everyday diets."

"Marco will be working with us to help promote turkey and develop a new range of Bernard Matthews Farms turkey products. We are thrilled about the opportunities ahead and look forward to working with Marco at this exciting time for our business".

Notes to Editors

Marco Pierre White

After leaving Allerton High School in Leeds without any qualifications, White decided to train as a chef.

He began his training in the kitchen at the Hotel St George in Harrogate, North Yorkshire and later at the Box Tree in Ilkley, West Yorkshire. Arriving in London as a 16-year-old with "£7.36, a box of books and a bag of clothes" he began his classical training as a commis under Albert Roux and Michel Roux at Le Gavroche, a period that would lead Albert to describe him as "my little bunny".

At 24, Marco became Head Chef and joint owner of Harveys with a kitchen staff that included the young Gordon Ramsay and Heston Blumenthal.

He was awarded his third Michelin star at the age of 33 - the first British and youngest chef ever to achieve this.



Bernard Matthews Farms

In 1950, at the age of 20, Bernard Matthews purchased twenty turkey eggs and a second hand incubator at a local auction. Four weeks later twelve turkeys hatched and unknowingly became the origin of the most successful turkey farmer in Europe.

Bernard Matthews Farms, which now employs more than 2000 people across East Anglia, is majority owned by the Matthews family and is headquartered near Norwich in Norfolk. For the year ended 28 December 2008, the Company generated a turnover of £335.5 million (2007: £348.9 million) and an operating profit from continuing operations before exceptionals of £857,000 (2007: loss of £9.6 million).

Bernard Matthews Farms is a totally and uniquely integrated food business, allowing for full traceability of all its products from farm to fork. The Company farms approximately 7 million turkeys each year. The turkeys are hatched in Norfolk and reared on its 56 farms across Norfolk, Suffolk and Lincolnshire. The turkeys are fed on a cereal-based diet, which contains locally sourced wheat from East Anglia prepared at the Company's own mill near Kings Lynn, ensuring the highest level of quality and control.

In July 2008, after some difficult years, the management team started to implement some major steps to re-establish the Bernard Matthews Farms brand and put British Turkey farming back at the heart of the business. Today, all Bernard Matthews Farms branded turkey products are made from 100% British turkey meat.

At the heart of these products is turkey, a meat that is both high in protein, and has the lowest saturated fat content of any mainstream meat. As the Company looks to the future the focus will be on championing turkey as a great tasting, versatile and healthy meat and encouraging the British public to consume more turkey generally, whether that is through the Bernard Matthews Farms brand, retail customers own brand products, or through foodservice.

Bernard Matthews Farms turkey is Quality British Turkey (QBT) and Assured Food Standards (Red Tractor) certified and the Company's farming practices are also in line with the Farm Animal Welfare Councils' Five Freedoms.

The farms and factories are open to regular unannounced inspections from independent bodies such as DEFRA, the RSPCA and representatives of all major UK supermarket retailers at any time during the year. Through long-standing and constructive association with these organisations, Bernard Matthews Farms is at the forefront of driving the standards of best practice in turkey farming.