

WHY MOOTRAL?

An interview

with Joe Towers

Manager, Brades Farm Barista Milk

bradesfarm.co.uk



1. How did Brades come across Mootral?

Since joining the family business back in 2013, innovation has been a key focus. We looked for a way to move milk away from being a faceless commodity product and our goal since has been to produce the most consistent and quality milk possible, bespoke for coffee, while maximising the welfare of our beautiful cows. I had spent a year working for a coffee exporter in Tanzania and Kenya as part of my degree, and so a 'barista' product innovation had great appeal to me. We sell our 'single origin' coffee milk primarily to London coffee shops under the brand Brades Farm Barista Milk. Once the barista milk demand started to grow we began looking for further exciting areas to innovate and I was inspired to find a way to drive our environmental performance.

I had read about a type of seaweed called *Asparagopsis Taxiformis* and how scientists had discovered a reduction in methane emissions when they fed it to cows. I was awarded a Nuffield Scholarship initially looking at how this could be developed and scaled to be used in a commercial market; it was during that research that I came across Mootral. I could see that with Mootral the science was far more advanced; trials had already been carried out where they were seeing significant results; however, there had been no trials on a commercial working farm. I saw a huge opportunity for us and Mootral to work together to help each other achieve the next steps in our ambitions.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Joe Towers

Manager, Brades Farm Barista Milk



Following a degree in Agri-food Marketing at Harper Adams University, Joe joined the family milk processing business, which was being operated on the family farm and supplying small local businesses with fresh milk.

Shortly after joining the business, he took the decision to outsource the processing and focus on looking for an added value opportunity. The possibility came along to work with a Copenhagen-based scientist and coffee expert to develop a bespoke milk for coffee. Joe had spent a year working for a coffee exporter in Tanzania and Kenya as part of his degree, and so this product innovation had great appeal. Brades Farm Dairy Ltd sell their 'single origin' coffee milk primarily to London coffee shops under the brand Brades Farm Barista Milk.

Joe and his brother, Edward, scooped the British Farming Awards Dairy Innovator of the Year award (2017) for this initiative.

He's been fortunate enough to have many opportunities since leaving university, including a spell working for Tesco in their dairy and commodities teams on a dairy price risk management project. He sits on the BBC Rural Affairs Committee and is an Honorary Teaching Fellow (Entrepreneur in Residence) at Lancaster University Management School.

Joe was delighted to be awarded a Nuffield scholarship in 2018 to investigate reducing methane emissions in cattle and will be sponsored by McDonalds Restaurants and has recently joined the Agriculture and Horticulture Development board as a Dairy board member.



2. Why did Brades decide to do a pilot project with Mootral?

As a farm, our milk is fully traceable back to one farm which is rare in the dairy industry. We segregate our milk and are in complete control of its journey from cow to consumer. By doing this, we can ensure that we are producing a product that our customers want, in the way that they want it. Combined with our interest in reducing our methane emissions, this made us an ideal partner to work with Mootral on testing the supplement in a working environment.

At Brades we're a small team with big ideas and are passionate about what we do, which again mirrors that of Mootral. When we started to explore working together on the pilot project, it was apparent that their scientific and commercial knowledge, combined with our farming and dairy industry knowledge was going to be an exciting partnership.

3. What was / is your motivation?

From a farming perspective, being a farmer isn't just a job, it's your life, 24/7. It's part of who we are and has been passed on through generations. For us, it's important that the land and animals we care about can continue to thrive and grow for future generations to enjoy. Climate change is something we can't and shouldn't ignore. If we all looked at our industries and identified areas where we could improve and acted upon them, collectively we would make a huge difference.

From a global perspective, the population is growing and we need to find healthy, sustainable ways to feed a growing population. As ruminant production is responsible for approximately 14.5% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, promising breakthroughs in this area have tremendous potential to be a major step in the fight against climate change.

We produce a specialist barista milk for some of the country's top coffee shops. The ethos and values of the coffee scene consumer base tend to be environmentally focussed. They are quite discerning about their environmental impact. Dairy-free alternatives are becoming increasingly popular. The companies who are promoting these products are well funded and are marketing themselves heavily as being environmentally friendlier than cow's milk.

We want to push back and show our industry has a responsible attitude when it comes to the environment. By showing that we can reduce emissions not only allows us to proactively engage with the debate about the status quo, but it also shows that we have a progressive mentality and want to constantly improve our footprint, irrespective of how well it competes with the alternatives.

One of the main reasons we believe in Mootral as a significant opportunity for the livestock sector is its scalability. It doesn't have to be unique to us, other farms can use it as well and that is the long-term aim; it needs to be adopted industry-wide to maximise its impact.

Mootral is developing the concept of CowCredits – so that the reduction in methane achieved by feeding Mootral can be converted into a carbon credit that can be traded in the voluntary market, enabling governments, businesses and individuals to offset their carbon emissions. This enables the supplement to become affordable and attractive throughout the supply chain, which is so important because although some farmers would like to adopt methods to reduce methane, if it's not commercially viable then a mass impact wouldn't be a realistic goal.

We'd like to think farmers could be incentivised to adopt this opportunity to reduce methane emissions. Perhaps major players in the agri-food/retail sector could benefit from encouraging their suppliers to feed it to their cows in return for CowCredits. At Brades, we're excited to set the standard for the industry. Our product is traceable, affordable, highly nutritious and now, climate-smarter.

