

Country Foods boasts of its mushrooming profitability

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Country Foods, which listed on the AltX board of the Johannesburg stock exchange a month ago, posted revenue growth of more than four-fold, to R171million, in the year to the end of September.

Mushroom sales contributed 63percent of the company's revenue and 84percent of its R11.5- million profit — more than half of which were exports.

Its domestic brands include Edulis, which specialises in exotic porcini mushrooms, and Country Mushrooms — which sells the standard cultivated variety.

“Wild and exotic” mushrooms contributed 67percent of revenue and 37percent of profit.

Country Foods is trying to diversify. Beverage company Fruitime was acquired during the reporting period and contributed 35percent of revenue and 17percent of profit.

Its deli distribution business made a R173000 loss with a decline in turnover to R3.4-million from the previous year's R4.1-million.

Chief executive Robi Casaletti said that more brands had been secured for the company's distribution business. It is now the sole local agent for food brands Greci, Ferrarelle, Antonio Amato and Colavita.

International expansion includes an operation in Tunisia and a Moroccan operation that began trading in October.

“Our US subsidiary, Forest Products International, is making progress in market penetration and will begin distribution of additional products on the East Coast of the US,” Casaletti said.

No dividend was declared.