

SUNSHINE COAST INTERNATIONAL BROADBAND SUBMARINE CABLE CASE STUDY



AGRIBUSINESS INDUSTRY

The Sunshine Coast's agribusiness industry is valued at A\$700 million, with more than 900 businesses representing a diverse range of sectors including horticulture, dairy and specialty dairy production, seafood, nurseries and value-add producers.

With strong growth in the economic value of agriculture in the past five years and demand expected to continue to grow significantly from Asian markets, the Sunshine Coast is rapidly being recognised as one of the most dynamic locations for new agribusiness investment in Australia.

Processors who have invested in new facilities, product development and achieved supply into major retailers have shown strong growth, particularly in agricultural commodities such as strawberries, turf, dairy milk, cattle, macadamias and tomatoes.

Faster download speeds and lower latency (lag) from the international broadband submarine cable will make cloud computing more effective and allow agribusinesses to better collect and analyse big data, which can lead to more real-time decision making, according to the working paper, Impacts of 5G on productivity and economic growth economic growth, by the Bureau of Bureau of Communications and Arts Research, April 2018.

COYO

COYO started producing the world's first coconut yoghurt in 2010 from its facility on the Sunshine Coast and has expanded to include certified organic coconut ice creams and a new range of dairy free, sugar free, organic kids' coconut yoghurts.

"Specialist teams with dedicated resources can monitor and report on machinery performance from waste water, refrigeration, filling machine diagnostics and remote site security.

"From a business perspective, the submarine cable means we can also start using more cloud-based applications, and not have to invest in as much IT infrastructure onsite or have the expertise in IT architecture required to optimise site-based servers. We currently struggle with just a cloud-based accounting package so moving to a full ERP or CRM system is not currently realistic.

"With our expansion into the United States, United Kingdom, Europe and Asia, having greater speed and capacity will help COYO share data, marketing collateral and assist with real-time problem solving."

Andrew Eves-Brown, CEO, COYO

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COUNCIL

Leading Australian food manufacturers and exporters such as McCormick (owners of Palmwoods-based Gourmet Garden), COYO, Nutworks and Buderim Ginger are located in the region, showcasing the Sunshine Coast as an ideal investment location for similar high calibre companies.

Sunshine Coast based agribusinesses are well placed to be national leaders in their industry by capitalising on the advantages arising from the Sunshine Coast International Broadband Submarine Cable, data centre and associated infrastructure.

Examples of benefits and use of big data include:

Sophisticated computer algorithms can analyse decades and sometime centuries of weather and crop data, allowing farmers to accurately predict crop yields before planting seeds. The insights provided by data analytics means farmers can harvest their crops at the optimum time, which maximises crop yields and minimises stress.

Farmers are using drones with advanced sensors to survey their crops, update their data, and notify them which areas need improvement. As the technology develops, drones will move from surveying to planting and harvesting crops.

Driverless tractors can already plant seeds within a few centimetres of their target locations, while GPS-guided harvesters can reap the crops with equal accuracy which increases quality and efficiency. Extensive wireless networks send soil hydration and environmental data to servers for analysis, providing farmers with hourly or daily data to quickly identify and manage irrigation and pest problems.

In food processing, collecting and analysing sensor data such as vibration and temperature to monitor asset health can significantly reduce machine downtime. This allows companies to identify and fix potential component faults in real-time before the machine fails while maximising the efficiency of maintenance teams.

Sources: *Big data harvests better*, A Simran Mary, Dr Sr Sujatha Yeruva, St Francis College for Women, Hyderabad (2018); *How to utilize big data to enhance manufacturing processes*, Association for Packaging and Processing Technologies (2018).

McCormick and Company – Gourmet Garden

“Historically, it’s not been practical for many Sunshine Coast businesses to look at cloud-based solutions for software because the data transfer speeds have been too slow. The submarine broadband cable will enable improved speeds and faster communication between other countries and open up new digital opportunities in the future. As McCormick is part of a global network we will now be at the forefront of technology with our colleagues in other countries.”

Jacqui Wilson-Smith, Global Innovation Manager,
McCormick and Company

Food and Agribusiness Network

The Food and Agribusiness Network (FAN) is Australia’s fastest growing cluster which encompasses more than 900 food and agribusinesses across the Sunshine Coast, Gympie, Noosa and Moreton Bay.

FAN provides opportunities to connect the local food and agribusiness industry by spearheading local innovation and collaboration as Australia’s fastest growing food industry organisation.

FAN says opportunities for food innovators, agriculture and food manufacturers to leverage the increase in data transfer power through the international broadband submarine cable include:

- Digitised traceability from farms to the consumer’s kitchen, tracking food packaging in waste-streams and circular economies
- Artificial intelligence (AI) decision making and IoT connectivity in manufacturing
- Aggregated and intelligent database mining to predict consumer behaviours
- Smart innovation screening using algorithms based on past tracked consumer behaviour
- Sensor technology on farms and in processing
- Digitised syncing across the supply chain.

“The submarine cable will mean the food and agribusiness innovators on the Sunshine Coast will have the capacity and tools to build food manufacturing systems that could be scaled and exported globally, beyond just selling products and food commodities. As a result of digitisation, these food systems would be more efficient, more sustainable and provide consumers with greater transparency.”

Emma Greenhatch, General Manager,
Food and Agribusiness Network



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