

Taking steps to ensure supply

By EMMA FIELD

LIKE most agriculture businesses, oat processor Blue Lake Milling has had to plan for poor seasons.

However the families which run the West Australian-owned business are hoping that good rain will deliver a better oat crop this year.

Farmer cooperative CBH Group bought Blue Lake Milling last year from the Cook and Collins families, but family members have stayed operating the business which was established in 1973.

The company runs two facilities in Dimboola and Bordertown, South Australia which employ 145 people and have the capacity to process 100,000 tonnes of oats a year.

Oat processing makes up about 90 per cent BLM's business — they produce rolled, quick and instant oats for their own lines but also for other retail companies.

The company has experienced year-on-year sales growth thanks to strong domestic demand and also from export markets such as New Zealand and countries in the

Pacific Rim, Asia and the Middle East.

"The growing demand is being driven by nutritional benefits in developing markets, such as Asia," BLM business development manager Lindy Cook said.

The operation has taken measures to secure supply when farmers experience poor seasons. In 2012 BLM built a new hulling facility which processes lower quality oats into a high grade product, allowing growers to sell oats which don't meet milling grade yet still meet customer demand.



Family firm: Jenny Tilbrook and Lindy Cook of Blue Lake Milling at the company's oat processing facility at Bordertown, South Australia.