

Progressive Brand Profile

HODMEDOD STUDY

Introducing the face of
Stakeholder Centricity

*the blueprint for
sustainable living*

 Hodmedod's

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“We are here to change the food system and show people that there’s a different way of interacting with each other in terms of where their food has come from.”

The Great Leap Forward

- In 2012, Hodmedod was founded by three food activists with the aim of supplying beans and other products from British farms across the UK. Hodmedod is an East Anglian dialect word. It mostly means snail in Suffolk but can also refer to the curls in a girl’s hair or an ammonite.

FACT FILE:

Mission: set up in 2012, Hodmedod’s focus is been on changing the whole food system by moving away from a reductive monocultural based production system and pulling in more diversity onto farms.

Vision: “You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.” Buckminster Fuller *1. For Hodmedod, this means introducing process flexibility in the farming process and to think differently about how farms operate their purchasing, procurement and product development so that there is still a planet to trade in 100 years from now.

Location: Beccles, Suffolk, UK

Number of employees: 25

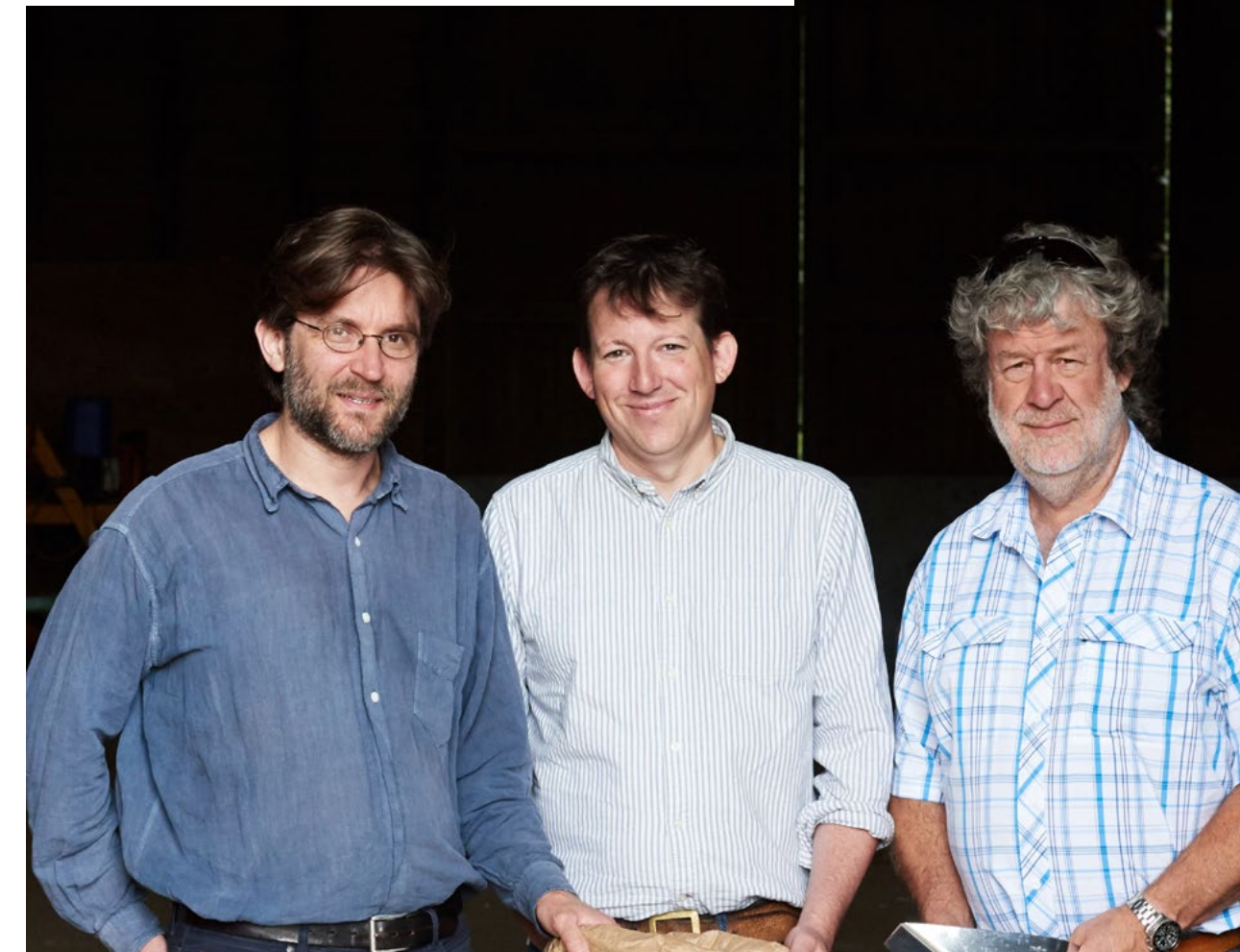
Founders: Nick Saltmarsh, Josiah Meldrum and William Hudson

The business launched the Great British Beans trial project to stimulate and assess demand for indigenous pulses. This project saw half a tonne of British-grown split fava beans being packed up on a kitchen table and distributed through community groups and local shops. The response was overwhelmingly positive.

- Since launching the first retail packs of dried Fava Beans in 2012, Hodmedod has been working to find and develop production of other less well-known foods, such as “Black Badger” Carlin Peas and Quinoa from the plains of Essex.
- Transition City Norwich, part of the global Transition Network was looking at a lower carbon, more resilient food system; in fact a whole way of living that might reflect the changes that as a population, we will probably have to make over the next 25 years.
- Hodmedod decided to explore the possibility of Norwich, a city of about 170,000 people, feeding itself. The team created three scenarios (1) a ‘business-as-usual’ model (2) a flexitarian diet model i.e. small amounts of high-quality meat and more pulses and (3) a vegan model which demanded more land because of the extended fertility building phases in the crop rotation process.
- This resulted in a community-supported agriculture scheme growing fruit and vegetables for 100 families on the edge of the city, a mill producing flour and the

final part of the equation was legumes; dried beans and peas (pulses) that could be an important part of a future diet because of their protein content. Also, pulses have a significant role in more sustainable agriculture rotations because they build soil organic matter.

- One outcome of the Transition City Norwich project was having a demonstrable market for a range of new crops. Hodmedod approached farmers and suggested a range of higher value crops they might grow and then offered to buy them. This was positively received.
- Social media has been instrumental in helping Hodmedod to engage with cooks and chefs to change the narrative around particular ingredients
- Technology has also helped to identify farmers who can grow these ‘niche’ crops as well as communicate with other farmers about issues they may be facing with their crop rotations or other ideas they’ve had. Also, something as simple as farmers being able to talk to each other very readily has facilitated a blossoming of innovative farm practice.
- Running the business on an e-commerce platform makes it incredibly straightforward to promote its pulses, grains and seeds in front of a huge audience.



What does a Progressive brand look like to you?

“It’s really difficult. You know them when you see them. I think probably the honesty and transparency is really critical.”

Josiah Meldrum, Co-Founder

“We have a one word mission statement which is Diversity. This is how we start every conversation or presentation we give. Everything that we talk about is thinking about diversity at every level, from the field to the edge of the field, to the people involved in processing the crops, to the businesses that are involved in marketing those products to the people that cook and eat them. Diversity really is the key to our work.”

Josiah Meldrum, Co-Founder

Hodmedod Progressive Scorecard



Winner Best Food Producer in the 2017 BBC Food & Farming Awards!



Winner of several Great Taste awards - seven in 2020, five in 2019, one in 2018, seven in 2017, three in 2016.



Hodmedod won two awards at the 2017 Good Choice! Quality Food Awards. Our Yellow Pea Flour and Roasted Green Peas with Horseradish were both category winners, while our Lightly Salted Roasted Fava Beans were highly commended.



Hodmedod's Organic Naked Barley Flakes were shortlisted for the Great British Food Awards 2017.



Hodmedod's Organic Quinoa won the delicious. magazine 2016 Produce Award for From the Field (Primary)



Winner of the 2016 BOOM Award for the pantry product category: Hodmedod's Organic Carlin Peas



Hodmedod was the winner of the local food category in Suffolk's 2016 Creating the Greenest County Awards

"I think the supermarkets are going to die. At least, I want them to! I think it's creeping up on them and they haven't fully realized that there's a whole new generation of consumers who don't like the supermarkets, don't want to use them, and will avoid using them if they can. You don't need a big shop on the edge of the town to make your sales anymore. It was really interesting through the financial crisis and the first phase of the austerity period a decade ago, that a lot of the alternative retailers and the wholefood wholesalers saw no change to their sales and many grew significantly. I think we'll see more of the same in the coming recession. There's a huge tide of change coming over the next five or six years."

Josiah Meldrum, Co-Founder, Hodmedod

- Understanding the future crops that we will need to grow in 10 or 15 year's time. Working out how to grow and produce these crops now in what are sub optimal conditions, is of equal importance. As the climate changes, it's vital to have the skills, knowledge and markets to sell these foods in.
- Having a network of like-minded businesses co-funding this work going forward is also a must. Hodmedod has managed to kick start these conversations on a shoestring supported by a lot of good will from farmers and research organisations who are part of UK GrainLab (<https://www.ukgrainlab.com/>)

"It's easy to think there's no problem with the food system because there's plenty of food in the shops. But yet that food often comes at an extraordinary environmental cost and many people still don't have access to affordable, nutritious food. I think part of the answer lies in greater mutualism, not necessarily Co-operatives in the traditional sense but more in those general ideas about mutual support, respect and reciprocity; a collaborative economy."

Josiah Meldrum, Co-Founder, Hodmedod



Greatest challenges ahead

- *"Growth because we have this network of supply rather than a linear supply chain where we have lots of relationships of trust with producers and processors and our customers. As we grow, those relationships are much harder to manage. We have 25 farmers working with this at the moment. We know them all personally; we go and see them. When we reach 50 farmers, that'll be very difficult. "*
- Growing to a point where the business has sufficiency i.e. a turnover that allows it to do what the founders need it to do in terms of its set of values. For Hodmedod, this anchors around its staff and enabling food system changes.
- Hodmedod is currently nurturing and mentoring some smaller businesses that are replicating its model (or close to it) with the aim of exchanging materials, sharing ideas and achieving growth through replication. This may take the form of crops or products these businesses have grown or made that others couldn't and vice versa.

Fast Facts on a Sustainable Food Future

- The WRI (World Resources Institute) report on Creating a Sustainable Food Future estimates that we need about 70% more food in 2050 than we have today in order to provide every one of the 9.6 billion world population with a daily intake of 3,000 calories. It's a huge challenge, but unlike other sustainability challenges, everyone can play a part in the solution.

**1 - Richard Buckminster Fuller was an American architect, systems theorist, author, designer, inventor, and futurist. Born 12th July, 1895 and died, 1st July 1983.*

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