

On its 100th birthday, Jungle Oats opens R208m mill in Cape Town

 By [Lauren Hartzenberg](#)

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Iconic South African brand Jungle Oats celebrates its 100th birthday this year. Remaining a firm fixture on the household breakfast rotation, the brand has just revealed a new mill in Cape Town and a refreshed communication strategy and packaging design.



Jungle Oats is Tiger Brands' first and oldest product. Its history dates back to 1920 when an immigrant by the name of Jacob Frankel opened the original Tiger Oatery in Moorreesburg, Western Cape. The factory, which launched the Tiger Brands Group, produced Tiger Oats, the breakfast oatmeal we know today as Jungle Oats.

South Africans enjoyed the health benefits, affordability, convenience and versatility associated with breakfast oats, and a second mill was opened in Maitland, Cape Town when demand outgrew the Moorreesburg mill's capacity in 1930. The first mill was [abandoned](#) in the late 1980s.

Tiger Brands officially opened a new state-of-the-art Jungle Oats mill in Maitland last Friday, 21 February. The consumer packaged goods giant approved a capital investment of R208m in 2017 for the mill, when the original Maitland facility kept running out of milling capacity.

Speaking at the launch event, unit manager Rees De Villiers said, "Jungle Oats used to be a very seasonal winter porridge. It then evolved into a breakfast staple throughout the year. Despite the mill running 24 hours a day, it wasn't able to meet demand."



State-of-the-art design

The new Maitland mill is delivering significantly improved output and increased efficiencies, but it has also reduced manufacturing costs and food waste. This is thanks to its advanced technology – both proprietary and off the shelf – and smart design, said De Villiers. Despite the increased output, the overall carbon footprint has been reduced through the installation of higher-efficiency motors which reduce the kilowatts of energy used to produce a tonne of oats.

The new mill features no windows, with air quality controlled by a computerised air management system. In addition, a computerised control system provides information on live yields, allowing staff to drive efficiencies continuously. The facility can also be managed remotely using a mobile app.

De Villiers said that a major accomplishment for the company is the ability of the new mill to mimic the unique century-old process of manufacturing Jungle Oats, but now using new technology and modern equipment to do so.



Far-reaching socio-economic impact

Approximately 1,5 million 1kg boxes of the original Jungle Oats variant are processed at the Maitland mill every month, in addition to other Jungle products. The launch of the mill secures employment for roughly 180 Jungle Oats employees.

As oat milling is a scarce skill, the increased production capacity at the new facility also led the company to develop its own in-house skills programme. “We were able to upskill current millers to run the new technology, and the programme enlarged our talent pool of millers because we upskilled and promoted other staff to help run the mill,” said De Villiers.



According to Tiger Brands, a significant portion of its spend was allocated to local suppliers through civil engineering, building construction as well as engineering installations. A total of 120 people were employed in the construction of the new mill, which took 12 months to build.

Other socio-economic benefits of the new facility include investment in local oat farmers. As the company can now source larger quantities of oats, it has invested in 10 black South African farmers through its Smallholder Farmer Programme in the Western Cape. These farmers will plant 100 hectares of oats in 2020.



Doing Life with Heart repositioning

At the launch event, Mandy Du Plessis, managing director: Jungle – Tiger Brands, introduced the way forward for Jungle Oats from a communication perspective.



The brand will be shifting away from its message of being 'The Energy Champion' and will now focus on heart health and wellness, given the challenges South Africa is faced with.

"The stats say that 225 people die every day from heart problems, and 80% of these cases could have been prevented with better health and nutrition," said Du Plessis.

The new communication programme revolves around 'Doing Life with Heart', and will prioritise Jungle Oats as a source of beta-glucen, and communicate the significant health benefits around it. Jungle Oats packaging will also sport a new, refreshed look and will include more health and nutritional information on pack for consumers.

“Interestingly, the original campaign of Tiger Oats was ‘Health is Wealth’, a trajectory that we continue with the repositioning of the brand around heart wellness and health and embracing the natural goodness of our products,” added marketing director Lee-Anne Govender.

“This year, we celebrate 100 years of ‘Doing Life with Heart’. Heart wellness continues to be a distinct benefit of Jungle Oats, given its beta-glucan content, and Jungle remains committed to promoting this message across South Africa,” Govender concluded.

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