

'Equine health and nutrition is what we do best'

Margie McLoone pays a visit to Sarah Foran and the busy team at Foran Equine as they expand and build for the future

THERE is a lot happening at Foran Equine Products these days but it's business as usual as the firm builds on past achievements and seeks to expand sales at home and in an ever-increasing number of foreign markets.

Towards the end of last year, Connolly's Red Mills purchased a majority shareholding in the firm which is shortly to move its sales and distribution unit from its present building to a larger premises in Cherry Orchard Industrial Estate where its parent company, Foran Chemicals Ltd, was founded in 1974 by Sean Foran.

"At that time, my grandfather decided there was an opening for quality Irish-made horse supplements at affordable prices," explained Sarah Foran who took over the role of sales and marketing director, international markets, following the sudden death of her father David in 2010.

"Sean, who recently retired as managing director, sought the advice of Dr Kenneth Strickland, MRCVS, veterinary consultant to the Irish Thoroughbred Breeders Association, to develop the company's copper products, amongst others, and our oral paste was the first of its kind for horses in Ireland. It all kicked off from there through Sean's hard work and determination and he always turned to the top people for guidance."

Specialist veterinary, scientific and nutritional advice is sought by Foran on all its products, the formulation of which falls under the watch of technical director Dr Vijay Sharma who has recently been appointed general manager. Dr Sharma is backed up by an experienced team of professionals who work closely with key people in the industry, designing and testing products to exacting standards.

Product integrity is the cornerstone of Foran's manufacturing process. Good Manufacturing Practice principles are adhered to throughout the facility, complemented by strict quality control in place at the in-house laboratory. "We use only the best ingredients, the bulk of which are sourced in Ireland, which ensures complete product safety and quality. We only sell products which we know will produce results."

"There has never been, and never will be, any compromise on quality for our products," says Sarah. "We are very proud of our excellent worldwide reputation as a highly-trusted brand in the equine industry and have very loyal customers who have found that our products give the desired results."

The link-up with Red Mills is seen as complementary and very positive for both companies by Sarah who will be working closely with Michael Connolly, international business director of the Co Kilkenny animal feeds firm. "My father introduced Foran products to Japan, the United Arab Emirates and France and we are now selling to 30 countries worldwide.

"We supply the racing and sport horse industries in these countries while in Sweden, which is one of our key export markets, our main target is the trotting sector. We have recently started selling to new markets in Asia and the Middle East and the future looks bright in emerging markets.

"Connolly's Red Mills is another



Members of the Foran Sales Team, from left to right: Sallyann Freyne, Sean Lynch, Sarah Foran, Sarah Condell, Gemma Wyer, Fiona McCourt

worldwide recognised name in the industry and we can now broaden the range of products and services we offer our clients. With a combined 140 years' experience between the two family businesses, we are uniquely positioned to prepare and build for the future."

Forans have a compact, high quality range of nutritional and healthcare products for small animals, selling under the Foran Pet Care brand, but mainly concentrate on the horse side of the business.

"We see ourselves as specialist in equine nutrition and care, providing superior products for breeding stock, competition and performance horses. We want to remain focused on equine health and nutrition, as we feel this is what we do best, and that is the reason we never ventured into selling other items."

Amongst the comprehensive offering, one of the best-known Foran products is its digestive aid Kentucky Karron Oil (an Omega 3 and 6-rich flaxseed emulsion), which, when tested against other products on the market last year by *The Horse Journal* in America, was recommended as the editor's choice for value and results. Other popular products in-

clude the vitamin and mineral supplement Chevalin, Equi-Lyte G and Osteo-Glycan for strong bones.

Like her grandfather and father before her, Sarah, who used to ride as a child, supports the industry as a racehorse owner and Foran products are tested on the family's own stock before being approved for the general market.

Although they have had horses with other trainers in the past, Sarah now has the winning hurdler Novarow with John O'Shea while she and Sean both have a horse with Tom McCourt whose daughter Fiona is the latest recruit to the 32-strong Foran team as sales administrator. Fiona, who is well-known for her high standard of turn-out, plans to take part in the charity races at Fairyhouse and Punchestown this year.

Having retired from the saddle, former jockey Sean Lynch slipped easily into his role as sales representative when he started working for Forans in January 1986 and is now the firm's key equine account manager. Well-known throughout the length and breadth of the country, Sean is father of successful jockey Andrew Lynch who added to his Grade 1 haul on Flemenstar at Leopardstown last Sunday.

Lynch senior flies the Foran flag wherever he travels, particularly on his regular trips to Australia as captain of the Irish jump jockeys' team when he meets up with the firm's local representative.

Sallyann Freyne, sales and marketing manager, Ireland, has been working with Forans for over 16 years. She has a wealth of experience in the veterinary and pharmaceutical industries and her father Garrett and brother John are well-known veterinary surgeons based in Clondalkin, Dublin. In the new amalgamation, Sallyann will be working closely with Red Mills's sales and marketing director for Britain and Ireland, Gareth Connolly.

Sales representative looking after veterinary and pharmacy accounts, Sarah Condell is based in Co Tipperary where she competes regularly in show jumping and riding club activities on her Irish Sport Horse mare Rosemount Alacca. Foran's accountant, Gemma Wyer, is a dressage enthusiast who has two competitive horses on the go including a mare bred by her sister Alison who is now working with thoroughbreds in Perth, Western Australia.

Sean Foran was always keen on spreading any sponsorship around racing and the various sports that make up the equestrian world - in the past Forans sponsored the leading National Hunt jockey and conditional rider - and his granddaughter is following in his footsteps.

The company is currently preparing for the Irish Thoroughbred Breeders Association Expo 2012 in Leopardstown in three weeks' time and Sarah has been delighted with the response to the Foran-sponsored veterinary advice pages 'Hands On' which appear in this paper each week. "It's proving very effective and is producing great feedback.

"I'm looking forward to the Expo where, although Connolly's Red Mills is associate sponsor of the event, we will have our own stand as usual. We are happy to give advice to anyone who calls to the stand and are always ready to visit yards and veterinary surgeons' practices if people have specific problems they would like to discuss."

The health and wellbeing of the horse is paramount at Foran Equine Products and Sarah is proud to stand over everything that leaves their premises. "Customers worldwide trust our products as they know they are manufactured from the best quality materials and that they are 100% safe.

"Our products are designed to keep horses fit and healthy and to allow them to compete to the best of their ability."



Sarah Foran with general manager Dr Vijay Sharma

Jack Caffrey

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