

The UK Modern Slavery Act 2015

Transparency in Supply Chains Clause Statement 2023/24

The statement covers the activities of Branston Ltd and Branston Holdings Ltd in the UK up to 28 July 2024.

Introduction

Branston Ltd and Branston Holdings Ltd are aware of Modern Slavery risks and remain committed to achieving an ethical fresh food supply chain free from worker exploitation. We recognise that current pressures on labour markets have increased the scale of the challenge and the associated risks. We will work collaboratively with our supply chain partners to improve awareness, training and communication to mitigate the risks of Modern Slavery in our business.

We continue to take a risk based approach which will focus on continuous improvement.

Structure and supply chains

Branston is a farmer controlled business established in 1968. The company supplies major UK retail, wholesale and food manufacturing businesses with fresh potatoes, sweet potatoes and a range of prepared produce, including mash and jacket potatoes.

Branston's packing activities are all based in the UK and a majority of the products come from UK farms. We do source from other countries to ensure year round supply. The countries sourced from during 2023/24 were: USA, Italy, Israel, Spain, Germany, Denmark, South Africa, Egypt, France and Holland.

This statement includes the progress the company has made in the last financial year (23/24) and plans for the next year.

It remains the responsibility of the HR Director to put in place effective measures to ensure compliance with The UK Modern Slavery Act 2015.

We identify the protection of human rights as a core principle of how we operate and do not accept any forms of Modern Slavery or knowingly work with any businesses that do not sign up to these principles.

Relevant Policies

To support our activities to minimise the risk of modern slavery and human trafficking within the business the following policies have been developed and are adhered to:

- Ethical Trade & Worker Welfare Policy
- Equal Opportunities & Worker Welfare Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy (reviewed and updated in 2023)
- Recruitment Policy
- Code of Practice for Labour Providers.

Training and awareness

We are committed to reducing the risk of modern slavery and human trafficking within our own business and our supply chains. We recognise that characteristics of modern slavery crimes are hidden and we understand that staff need to be trained to identify potential abuse. Key personnel in the Human Resources, Procurement and Technical teams have attended Stronger Together Workshops. Internal ethical training has been delivered across the wider business and site Technical teams have attended customer-specific training against ethical standards.

We are pleased to report that the plans for the last financial year were actioned resulting in the following steps being taken:

- Stronger Together refresher training rolled out to Operations and Technical Management teams at all sites.
- A week-long 3rd Party 3 pillar SMETA mock audit was undertaken on all systems and processes at the Lincoln site audit, a full report and action plan will help shape forthcoming activities.
- Potato growers contracted to Branston were screened through our risk assessment tool.
- Supply chains monitored using the SEDEX Radar tool.
- Improvements made on the action plan created by the Stronger Together Progress Reporting Tool.
- Labour Provider Tender Process at Lincoln site resulting into consolidation to one provider across the site.
- The Whistleblowing Policy was reviewed and updated.
- All site SAQ's have been updated against the new assessment standard including the addition of our new Mash facility.
- On site review meetings with overseas Sweet Potato suppliers to cover off ethical policies and close out any SMETA non-conformances.

Measuring effectiveness

All labour providers were audited twice in the financial year 2023/24. All of these audits in the second half of the year were conducted by telephone. These audits included worker interviews.

We encourage our employees, customers and suppliers to report any concerns related to ethical issues within our business. A monthly report is published on the status of any complaints received through the whistleblowing line. All complaints were responded to although it was noted that the no complaints were received in the previous 12 months.

All sites host regular employee representative 'How we do business' forums, throughout the year, giving workers a voice.

All raw material suppliers were subject to a desktop ethical risk assessment audit conducted by a member of the Agronomy team.

Plans for the next year:

- We will further develop our Responsible Sourcing Programme throughout the year.
- Build a partnership with one dedicated labour provider at Lincoln site.
- We will review and update our risk assessment audit tool for labour supply agencies in the UK.
- Further collaboration with tier 1 ingredient suppliers to engage and support regarding ethical compliance.
- Training to be undertaken by HR Business Partners on the SEDEX Radar tool.
- Engagement activities internally and within the supply base on Anti-Slavery initiatives during the awareness week in October.

We will work alongside the relevant agencies to actively investigate any suspected instances of modern slavery or human trafficking.

Our Modern Slavery statement will be uploaded to the government Modern Slavery registry.

We have made progress in the last financial year but understand that there is more work to be done in this area and we will continue to play our full part to help ensure that the practice is eradicated completely.

This statement is made pursuant to Section 54 (1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and constitutes our transparency in supply chains clause statement for the financial year ending 28 July 2024. It has been approved by the Main Board who will review and update it annually.

Jim Windle
CEO

29th October 2024