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HEREFORD CIDER MAKER DOUBLES PRODUCTIVITY WITH LLOYDS BANK SUPPORT



An award-winning cider maker in Hereford has invested in new bottling technology that will double its production capacity, after securing a £1.5million hire purchase facility from Lloyds Bank Commercial Banking.

Westons Cider, established in 1880, is a fifth-generation family-owned business that produces some of the UK's most popular cider brands including Stowford Press, Henry Westons Vintage and Mortimer's Orchard.

The company supplies its products to national supermarkets, wholesalers and pub groups, as well as regional breweries and convenience stores across the UK. Tapping into international markets is a core value of its long-term growth plans and the business currently exports its products to more than 40 countries worldwide.

Following an increased demand over the past five years, the business secured a hire purchase facility from Lloyds Bank to invest in new equipment without affecting its day-to-day cashflow. The state-of-the-art bottling machinery was imported from Italy and has the capacity to bottle 20,000 products an hour, doubling its previous production volume.

Westons Cider is based near Ledbury in Herefordshire, has an annual turnover in excess of £60m and employs 250 people.

Paddy Smith, Company Accountant at Westons Cider, said: "As well as enjoying consistent and strong growth in the UK market, we've seen an increase in international demand for our ciders and we now export to more than 40 countries worldwide. International expansion is one of our key growth pillars and with the new equipment in place, it will provide us with the capacity needed to explore these exciting new markets.

"We've enjoyed a longstanding relationship with Lloyds Bank and the team fully understood what we're trying to achieve. The recent funding has helped us make a giant leap in our production process, and we look forward to working with them again in the future as we continue to grow."

Richard Stevenson, Senior Regional Manager at Lloyds Bank Commercial Banking, said: "Prospects are looking bright for the UK food and drink industry. Our latest food and drink report found that many businesses are expecting a growth in turnover in the next five years, with exporting playing a major role in that expansion.

"It's encouraging to see an established local business like Westons Cider harnessing that demand and capitalising on new opportunities. We're committed to helping Britain prosper by supporting ambitious mid-sized businesses like Westons Cider, and by providing tailored funding packages,

we've been able to support sustained growth.”

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