

HODGSON MILL: *Commitment to Quality*



Hodgson Mill began offering gluten-free products in 2005, although the company has been around since 1882. The company recognized the need for quality gluten-free products and used its 125 years of experience in creating wheat-based, stone ground, whole grain products to craft a line of gluten-free mixes, flours, pasta, and flax that have amassed quite a following.

I learned from Ray Martin, Vice President of Sales and Marketing for Hodgson Mill, that the transition to producing gluten-free cereal, coating mixes, and other products has been a labor of love for the company. Hodgson Mill believes in producing a safe product that not only tastes good, but is good for you. Being a wheat-based miller by design, the company realized it could not grind gluten-free grains in a shared area, so they built a dedicated gluten-free production facility and sourced all gluten-free grains.

This gluten-free facility is set aside from the rest of the plant by what they call a “clean room.” A clean room serves as a buffer, so there are two walls separating it from the rest of the plant. The creation of a gluten-free facility was a huge undertaking and lengthy process that incurred construction expenses and required the creation of safe-handling procedures. But Hodgson Mill took the plunge with both feet into the gluten-free arena.

Hodgson Mill’s gluten-free production facility has separate ventilation (heating and air) and also a dedicated group of employees that follow specific procedures to ensure it remains uncontaminated. Dedicated aprons (kept in the gluten-free facility), air and brush cleaning for shoes, and dedicated uniforms ensure the facility remains free of wheat/gluten. Hodgson Mill is hypersensitive to cross contact, so the company instituted these procedures to add another layer of safety to their gluten-free product line.

Their line of more than 20 gluten-free products boasts a healthy profile that is matched by few gluten-free manufacturers. Their gluten-free line began with their apple cinnamon muffin mix, which is still one of their best sellers, and later transitioned to include more baking mixes, flax products, cereal, baking aids, and brown rice pasta with flax. The most recent additions to their gluten-free line are a cornbread mix, reformulated chocolate chip cookie mix, and a seasoned coating mix.

Even Dr. Oz is a fan of their gluten-free pasta and recommended it to his audience as a weight-loss tool for those who don’t want to give up pasta. The company’s brown rice pasta contains flax, which was added to achieve the mouth feel of wheat-based pasta and makes it healthier with the added Omega 3s and fiber. The addition of flax creates a structure that is more forgiving when cooked, so no more overcooked, gummy pasta.

Hodgson Mill also offers a particularly clever product: one-tablespoon packets of xanthan gum. Usually when baking, very little xanthan gum is needed for recipes, but it is commonly sold in large bags. Purchasing xanthan gum in individually sealed packets means less of an investment and better shelf life.

All products in their gluten-free line test at less than 20 parts per million (ppm) of gluten and every batch is internally tested. Hodgson Mill has achieved a consistent “A” rating when audited by the British Retail Consortium which audits their gluten-free facility for the Global Food Safety Initiative. Not only does Hodgson Mill test the finished product, but they also test the raw ingredients. They don’t use a third party certification service because they are comfortable with the safety of their products, which is a claim a number of gluten-free companies cannot make.

“We believe life is better if you take care of yourself and eat healthier, and eating gluten-free shouldn’t be a punishment,” Martin says. Their gluten-free product line is a testament to Hodgson Mill’s dedication to meet this goal and one that should be celebrated. 



ABOUT THE AUTHOR: **Jennifer D. Harris** was diagnosed with celiac disease over 15 years ago and has turned her diagnosis into a thriving career and an opportunity to help the newly diagnosed. She is a Gluten-Free Product Specialist and an Industry Consultant for her own consulting company. She also is the marketing coordinator for Pure Knead, a dedicated gluten-free and allergen-friendly bakery in Georgia. Email Jennifer at: jenniferharris326@gmail.com