

Quality baby food

Two Christchurch sisters have joined forces to create an innovative and nutritious baby food.

As the Green Monkey Company, Lizzie Dyer and Charlotte Rebbeck have started producing packets of organic baby food (using certified organic fruit and vegetables) frozen in convenient 10gm and 20gm portions.

The idea for the company came about when Lizzie, a mother of three, was disappointed by the variety of ready-made baby food on the market.

"My middle child Olivia would eat just a teaspoon of something and that was it. It was very disheartening so I was keen to find a way to give her the nutrition she needed without the additives."

A busy working mother with a fast-moving lifestyle, she wanted to find a way of combining convenience and quality.

Charlotte had spent seven years travelling and with an environmental degree under her belt, became increasingly concerned with the amount of GE products or goods that contained sprays and chemicals.

"I loved the European idea of using only the freshest seasonal produce, hand-made with care."

The pair spent many hours discussing the topic before deciding they should do something about it. After a year of research and months of experimentation they came up with a way of producing frozen-fresh seasonal fruit and vegetables for babies and toddlers, four months and above.

Sourcing their produce from local, fully certified organic



Monkey business: Green Monkey Company creators Lizzie Dyer, left, with Amelia, and Charlotte Rebbeck.

farmers, the sisters are proud of what they have come up with.

"As adults we can choose what we want to eat, but babies and children can't so you should only feed them the very best," says Lizzie.

"Women's lives are so much busier now, but with Green Monkey products they no longer have to feel guilty about not having the time to prepare home-cooked food."

Freezing retains more nutrients and results in a naturally better aroma, colour and flavour, she says. "Nutritionally, the first few years of your child's life are the most important and child obesity and health is a major concern for parents these days. Research shows that training your toddler's palate to enjoy 'real' food early in life also trains their tastes for later — reducing the cravings for fast, low nutritional foods."

Lizzie says one of the huge advantages of Green Monkey's

products is its flexibility.

"We understand the needs and tastes of your toddlers, so we package them in convenient bite-sized portions. This means you can serve a few of them as a full meal or stir them through baby cereals or rice. For older, fussy eaters it can be put with something they do like, like pizza, yoghurt or a milkshake. Then you know they are getting the nutrition they need. It also means there's no waste — just thaw or cook what you need."

Charlotte says the response so far has been phenomenal.

Stocked in supermarkets in the four main centres, Green Monkey products are also available from a variety of specialty food outlets.

"We have been blown away by how helpful and supportive people in the food industry have been. I had an awesome 40 minute chat, comparing notes with a woman from a major frozen food manufacturer the other week," says Lizzie.

The company has also been given a \$20,000 Trade and Enterprise grant, which it plans to use to increase market awareness and branding in New Zealand before the jump to international markets, says Charlotte.

■ For more information, phone (03) 328-9515, or visit: www.greenmonkey.co.nz

FAMILY FOCUS

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