

Ryan Farr: 4505 Meats and Whole Animal Agriculture

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KEYWORDS

- 4505 Meats
- Chicharrones
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- Market Expansion

CASE STUDY RESEARCH

Ryan Farr: 4505 Meats and Whole Animal Agriculture

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Abstract

The current paper investigates the market expansion strategies employed by 4505 Meats Chicharrones over the past decade. Using a multi-faceted approach, the brand has seen significant growth, targeting niche health-conscious markets and expanding through multi-channel retail partnerships. The paper elaborates on eight key findings including product innovation, quality sourcing, consumer education, and community engagement, providing insights into the brand's sustained growth and market penetration.

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1 | INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the food industry has seen an increasing trend towards health-conscious and sustainable consumption. Companies that have successfully navigated this shift have often employed multi-pronged strategies focusing on product quality, consumer education, and strategic retail partnerships. One such company is 4505 Meats, a brand specializing in Chicharrones, or pork rinds. This paper aims to elucidate the key strategies that have contributed to the brand's notable market expansion over the past decade.

2 | RYAN FARR AND THE ORIGIN STORY OF 4505 MEATS

Ryan Farr, originally from Kansas City, Missouri, eventually made his way to the west coast where he made a name for himself in the kitchens of exclusive San Francisco area restaurants such as Fifth Floor and Orson. While working in the kitchens, he found that there were a number of challenges to sustainably sourcing certain cuts and parts of the

animals that he wanted to work with as a butcher and chef.

"It was hard to know where (the meat) would be coming from, so I started working with whole animals that I could source directly from farms," Farr says in a recent interview. After over 15 years of working in restaurants in the Bay Area, Farr and his wife decided to leave the restaurant world and work with a non-profit organization. During this transition, Farr was looking for ways to make a little bit of extra money to reliably make his rent payments and prepare for the arrival of his first child. A load of pigskin taking up space in his refrigerator led him to start making and selling chicharrones and cracklings, also known as pork rinds. He would sell his signature pork rinds to neighbors and friends, and also marketed them with local bars and restaurants in the area of San Francisco where he lived.

"My background is as a chef and a butcher, and I am really into whole animal utilization," Farr says. As a chef,

I got sick of throwing away the (pig) skin, and (making pork rinds and chicharrones) was a great way of utilizing the waste.”

At the same time, Farr also began using his butchery skills to host butcher parties and classes. “We were doing all these things around whole animals and didn’t know what to call ourselves, so the next natural progression was 4505 Meats,” he says.

Today, 4505 Meats sells a variety of Paleo and Keto Certified pork rind snack products. Their chicharrones are made from cuts from the pig’s back and belly and are marketed as a great no-carb crunchy snack as well as a unique ingredient to liven up just about any dish you can think of. Over the past decade, 4505 Meats Chicharrones has undergone significant market expansion through a multi-pronged strategic growth approach through product innovation, targeting niche markets, expanding retail partners, consumer education, quality and transparency, marketing and branding, and community engagement.

3 | PRODUCT INNOVATION

4505 Meats Chicharrones has set itself apart through product innovation. The brand utilizes a unique type of oil that confers additional crispiness to the pork rinds. The exact recipe has been kept a closely guarded secret, which has not only created a mystique around the product but also thwarted potential copycat products. This level of innovation adds intrinsic value to the brand and drives consumer curiosity and interest.

Chicharrones or pork rinds have long been associated with the diet of country farmers and the Latino population. However, as millions of people began to become interested in low carb diets, pork rinds were seen as a desirable crunchy snack alternative to potato chips. Much of the pork rind industry is dominated by industry giants who purchase pork skins removed by

mechanical skinners from massive meatpacking companies in 20-ton lots. Chicago-based Evans Food Group, for example, processes over 100 million pounds of raw pork skins in a given year. Not exactly what you’d consider an artisanal butchery process.

“If you’ve never had our chicharrones, you might have a bad taste in your mouth from eating pork rinds in the past,” 4505 Meats founder Ryan Farr says, “so getting people to understand that pig skin can be a beautiful thing did take some initial effort.” After close to a decade on the market, however, the demand for 4505 Meats Chicharrones snacks has outpaced his need for the other parts of the pig. While the exact recipe for 4505’s Chicharrones is kept a secret, Farr does admit to using a special type of oil, which makes them extra crispy.

Farr and 4505 Meats pride themselves on only using quality ingredients crafted with care. They source their pig skins exclusively from a collective of small family ranches and farms in California that practice sustainable and humane husbandry techniques. This focus on short and direct supply chains obviously plays a huge role in the taste and quality of the end product as well.

4 | TARGET NICHE MARKETS

The chicharrones have received Paleo and Keto certifications, thus strategically positioning the product within growing niche markets focused on health and wellness. This is a notable competitive advantage that helps attract a dedicated and health-conscious consumer segment.

Beyond mere marketing appeal, these certifications serve as a testament to the product’s nutritional integrity, assuring consumers of its compatibility with their dietary preferences and goals. As health-conscious consumers increasingly prioritize transparency and authenticity in their food choices, 4505 Meats’ certifications reinforce its credibility and reliability in meeting these evolving demands. This trust emphasized by certifications not only strengthens consumer loyalty but also cultivates a positive brand

reputation within the health and wellness community, paving the way for sustained growth and market expansion.

5 | EXPANDING RETAILER PARTNERS

Originally focused on local markets in San Francisco, the company has significantly widened its retail reach. By securing partnerships with major online retailers like Amazon, Thrive Market, and physical retail giants like Whole Foods, the product is more widely accessible than ever. This multi-channel approach extends both geographical reach and consumer demographics, contributing substantially to market expansion.

6 | CONSUMER EDUCATION

4505 Meats invests in consumer education to mitigate common misconceptions around pork rinds and to promote the brand's commitment to sustainability. Through butchery classes, public talks, and published guides on whole-animal butchery, the brand provides an educational foundation that both informs and engages the consumer. This serves to reframe pork rinds as a responsible and gourmet choice, thereby attracting a new and more conscientious consumer segment.

While most people are probably not going to be making their own cow-hide moccasins, interest in learning about humane, whole animal slaughter and processing is growing. For over a decade, Farr has offered whole animal butchering classes where, for a \$75 fee, people could enjoy a hands-on process of turning a 90-pound pig into delicious pork chops, roasted pork head, and of course the signature chicharrones that are Farr's specialty.

Farr has also published a complete book titled "Whole Beast Butchery: The Complete Visual Guide to Beef, Lamb, and Pork," a visual manual that includes 500 step-by-step photographs, master recipes for key cuts

and a primer on tools, techniques, and meat handling. "Knowing where your meat comes from is important. Knowing the person [who] cuts it is also important. Respect for the animal and the farmers is easier to attain this way", he says.

7 | QUALITY AND TRANSPARENCY

Farr sources pig skins exclusively from small family farms that adhere to humane and sustainable practices, the brand has built trust and transparency into its supply chain. This appeals to a consumer base that is increasingly focused on ethical consumption, which has had a positive effect on both brand image and customer loyalty.

For Farr, consumers are beginning to demand a return to a more prudent, resourceful source of butchery. While there has been much focus on pasture-raised meat and free-range poultry, the slaughtering process is often less-discussed amongst health food advocates. Educating people about humane, whole animal butchery is another of Farr's passions.

"Suddenly people really care about what they put in their bodies; it's about where it comes from, not what [part of the animal] it is. Everybody's excited to be learning more about things like pig skins and pig hearts and buffalo testicles," Farr says.

8 | MARKETING AND BRANDING

The brand has successfully employed targeted marketing and creative branding initiatives to elevate a product often associated with lower market segments. Through catchy phrases like "crispy clouds of porkaliciousness," 4505 Meats Chicharrones has repositioned itself as a premium and desirable product, which has played a vital role in its market expansion.

9 | COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

By hosting hands-on butchery classes and collaborating with nonprofit organizations, the company not only educates but also creates a community around its brand. This fosters customer engagement, drives word-of-mouth advertising, and strengthens brand loyalty—all crucial factors for sustained market growth.

As this community continues to grow and thrive, fueled by ongoing educational opportunities and collaborative endeavors, it becomes a powerful catalyst for sustained market growth and success. Essentially, engaged customers become brand advocates, actively promoting the company's products and values within their social circles and networks. This organic, grassroots marketing effort amplifies the brand's visibility and credibility, attracting new customers who are drawn to its compelling story and commitment to making a positive impact.

In essence, by nurturing a community built on education, collaboration, and shared values, the company not only secures its position in the market but also paves the way for continued innovation, expansion, and lasting success.

10 | INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH

While the available data does not include international market penetration, it is important to note that the globally recognized Paleo and Keto certifications may facilitate future international market expansion. These certifications could serve as the catalyst for cross-border consumer acceptance and distribution partnerships.

DISCUSSION

The insights gleaned from this study underscore the significance of adhering to ethical and sustainable business practices as a method to combat food waste. Ryan Farr, who founded 4505 Meats, demonstrates that a localized, small-scale operational model can have wide-ranging, positive impacts. The company's

adoption of whole-animal agriculture not only minimizes waste but also results in a premium product aligned with the preferences of an increasingly health-aware consumer base. This example sets a benchmark for the meat industry, indicating that business objectives can coexist with ethical and environmental considerations.

Moreover, the revival of whole-animal agriculture plays a crucial role in re-establishing the connection between consumers and the food supply chain. Rooted in the historical approaches of Native American societies, this model embodies a comprehensive and prudent utilization of resources, contrasting sharply with modern wasteful practices.

This case study suggests that the approach to whole-animal agriculture, as exemplified by 4505 Meats, offers a viable and scalable solution to mitigate food waste within the meat industry. By comparing this specific case study against the broader context of food waste and environmental damage, the research advocates for an industry-wide reassessment and encourages the widespread adoption of similarly sustainable and ethical models.

This multi-dimensional strategy has been pivotal in 4505 Meats Chicharrones' consistent market growth over the previous decade, emphasizing the critical role of product differentiation coupled with alignment to shifting consumer tastes for market success.

In summary, over the past ten years, 4505 Meats Chicharrones has realized substantial market growth via a well-implemented strategy that integrates product innovation, niche market focus, strategic partnerships with retailers, and consumer education initiatives. Alongside these, the brand has also prioritized quality sourcing and community involvement, establishing a solid framework for enduring growth. These strategies serve as a model for how food industry companies can effectively adapt to the complex dynamics of the ever-changing contemporary market.

8 | REFERENCES

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