

Eclipse under new management

from the The Huddersfield Daily Examiner

Entrepreneur leads food test firm buyout: A YORKSHIRE woman has led a management buy-out of a company which makes our food safe to eat.

Julie Dedman has bought the Eclipse Scientific Group from Swan Group for an undisclosed sum.

Eclipse's laboratory staff test foods for humans and animals to see if there are any hidden health dangers.

Based in Chatteris, Cambridgeshire, it employs more than 200 people in eight UK laboratories, and has a turnover of more than £10m.

Eclipse's northern headquarters, along with its new laboratory, are in Mirfield, West Yorkshire .

Mrs Dedman, who also comes from Mirfield, started her entrepreneurial career in 1984, when she was made redundant from her first job at an animal feed firm.

In 1985, she started her own business, West Riding Laboratory Services, analysing milk products for quality control with a grant of £1,000 from The Prince's Trust Youth Business Initiative, a forerunner of The Prince's Youth Business Trust.

She joined Eclipse as managing director in 2002, after completing an earn-out contract from the company, which had bought West Riding Laboratory Services three years earlier.

Mrs Dedman said: "This company has enormous potential to expand, not just in the UK but across Europe and further afield.

"Independent laboratory testing is a growth business and Eclipse has an excellent reputation for the quality of its services."

She said the massive expansion in the convenience foods market was one of the main factors behind the business's growth.

"It's food safety awareness that's driving it," she said. "It's always growing because people are always looking at how they are going to save time.

"Time is the most important thing in people's lives."

Eclipse's laboratories provide analysis and consultancy services to the food, pharmaceutical, environmental, water, agrochemical and animal feed industries. They check food for airlines, sports drinks and pet food.

Mrs Dedman was advised by Michele Phillips of Leeds commercial law firm Lupton Fawcett and Ian Wrightson of accountants Mazars.

Ms Phillips said: "Julie is a proven entrepreneur. Her acquisition of Eclipse means she can now accelerate her exciting plans for the company."

Visit www.eclipsescientific.co.uk for more information.

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