

# Boulder's Evol, famous for burritos, turning attention toward other frozen foods

By Alicia Wallace Camera Business Writer

Posted: 12/26/2010

If officials behind a Boulder-based frozen burrito company get their way, the Evol empire will spread in 2011 and do so in a very cold -- yet, brightly lit -- place.

A year after the Boulder-bred Phil's Fresh Foods gained some investors and rebranded itself as Evol Burritos (not sinister, it's 'love' spelled backwards), the company changed its name once again. Now operating as Evol Foods, the local manufacturer is launching a line of frozen gluten-free bowl entrees and has grander plans to tackle other sides of the frozen food market, founder Phil Anson said.

"It evolved really quickly into a big overall convenience brand," Anson said. "Over time, we'll be in entrees and you'll see us go into other categories that are as big or bigger than entrees."

What those could be, Anson's not saying right now, just that Evol Foods will broaden its offerings more in the spring and summer.

Although he's staying mum, Anson expressed confidence in Evol Foods' ability to gain a foothold in the sector. Consumers are looking for something fresh, new and different, he claimed.

"That's why we launched Evol," he said. "We really wanted to create a lifestyle brand that people can connect with."

Anson said he also sees a big gap on the meat front, especially in the natural, organic, active and health-focused arena.

"Just because people want natural and organic products doesn't mean they don't want meat," he said.



Noe Torres places the freshly made burritos for the packaging machine at Evol Foods in Boulder on Dec. 9. Next year, the company will move beyond burritos and add offerings in the frozen food market. ( MARK LEFFINGWELL )

Evol Foods is expanding in a sector that had "strong" growth during the past five years, but also experienced a slowdown this year.



Jason Espinoza checks the seal on the burrito packaging and racks the burritos for the refrigerator at Evol Foods in Boulder on Dec. 9. ( MARK LEFFINGWELL )

During 2006 to 2010, sales in the frozen foods and beverages channel increased \$10 billion, or 21.7 percent, for a compound annual growth rate of 5 percent, according to an industry report released this month by Packaged Facts. The projected sales gain of 1.7 percent, or \$900 million, for 2010 would be the weakest during the period; although, sales gains in the preceding years could have been driven by higher prices, officials for the market research firm said in the report.

While some consumer spending has contracted during the economic downturn, frozen foods have been affected to a lesser extent, according to the report.

"The new economic reality feeds two opposing trends in consumer goods markets, including frozen foods: premiumization (upscaling) and cutting back (downsizing)," Packaged Facts officials wrote in the report. "Rather than canceling each other out, these two trends interact in the face of slow economic recovery as consumers juggle how to get the most out of less money or less spending."

Evol Foods' sales multiplied in 2010, Anson said, noting the company should finish the year up 200 percent from 2009.

The brand's distribution also exploded. As Phil's Fresh Foods, the burritos were sold in 700 stores. Now, as Evol, they are sold in 5,000 to 6,000 locations, he said.

Anson said the key to future expansions -- in sales, products and areas such as food service -- will include his "foodie" mindset and keeping on top of the variety of food-related trends.

"Monitoring what's happening from white tablecloth restaurants to mobile eating, my ears are attuned to all of those things," he said.

Contact Camera Business Writer Alicia Wallace at 303-473-1332 or wallacea@dailycamera.com

**Link to the online article:**

[http://www.dailycamera.com/ci\\_16942482?IADID=Search-www.dailycamera.com-www.dailycamera.com#idc-container](http://www.dailycamera.com/ci_16942482?IADID=Search-www.dailycamera.com-www.dailycamera.com#idc-container)