

Leading the way in water harvesting

DOES it really rain pennies from heaven? Well, city company Freerain is a master of turning the wet stuff into pounds – and lots of them.

For what started out as a Newark-based housebuilder's side-line is becoming a market-leader in the rainwater harvesting business.

And, having imported its original technology, it is now on the verge of reversing the process – selling its sophisticated developments of the concept across Europe.

Now Freerain Ltd – part of the Gusto Group – is a nominee for the Lincolnshire Media Business Awards (presented in association with the Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce) in the Lincolnshire County Council-sponsored Business Innovation Award.

“Ten years ago Gusto decided its new homes would perform at least 50 per cent better than the then building regulation requirements regarding water and energy consumption,” said Freerain MD Terry Nash.

Unable to find suitable rainwater systems on the British market at the

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time, it invented its own and developed them in co-operation with a German firm.

Among key requirements, the systems needed to be cost-effective and so low maintenance that they were virtually “fit-and-forget” items.

“Having met all those criteria we started selling our systems to other housebuilders,” said Mr Nash.

That was when Freerain was launched and, now employing 10 people and looking to significantly expand, it has been continuously developing its technology – latterly working with Nottingham Trent University as well as its German associate.

Its latest products are the G Tank and GEMMS, the former an underground tank using the minimum of material and minimising the depth of holes dug to accommodate it.

“There has been considerable European interest and shipping it out there doesn't increase our carbon footprint as there are always empty

INNOVATIVE: From left, Freerain's commercial director Marcus Fox, sales manager Mark Williams and managing director Terry Nash. *Picture: Anna Draper*

trucks returning across the Channel,” said Mr Nash.

GEMMS stands for Gusto environmental monitoring and management systems, which are hi-tech networks capable of monitoring and displaying utility consumption “right down to individual appliances and machines if necessary”.

That information is, unusually, sent via the Internet to Freerain's server where it is stored and processed into whatever form customers want.

“It can then be accessed by authorised users from anywhere in the world,” said Mr Nash. “That ability enables real time improvements in, and management of, performance and cost reductions.”



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