# Draves gets his deal from the Dragons

By Eamonn Maher emaher@theifp.ca

A Georgetown man had the cast members of the popular CBC-TV show The Dragons' Den breathing fire on a recently run episode over the opportunity to invest in his "super food" venture.

Jamie Draves, president & CEO of Katan Kitchens, is in the development stage of producing a high quality variety of the edible seed from South America called quinoa and would like to build a glutenfree processing facility in northern Ontario.

The 44-year-old approached the Dragons about possibly getting some financial support— "because anywhere (else) I'd go to get (the financing) would be a loan"— and soon had his prospective investors in a bidding war over getting on board with his Quinta quinoa, which he called "the most complete protein in the plant king-

Quinoa is already produced in countries such as Peru and Bolivia, but there are concerns about its quality, Draves said, so he has developed his own variety, Quinta, which is superior in protein, nutrients and taste, while fitting nicely into the growing season in Canada.

With approximately 100 contracted farmers in the Guelph area and northern Ontario committed to growing the product and a demand of \$2 million in purchase or-



Georgetown's Jamie Draves makes his pitch on the CBC television show The Dragons' Den, which appeared in early March and can be viewed online under Season 9,

ders waiting to distribute Quinta, Draves entered The Den during the program's ninth season with an initial pitch to the five Dragons to sell off 20 per cent of his business in exchange for \$150,000.

After hearing Draves's confident projections of \$50 million in revenue in five years, the offers began to flow, except from outgoing Dragon marketing whiz Arlene Dickinson, who preferred to sit back and enjoy the financing

Dragons David Chilton and Vi-

kram Vij were so impressed with Draves's presentation that they *Dragons' Den* is a story in itself. each wanted 20 per cent stake of \$400,000 for 50 per cent control, Dragon Jim Treliving.

interrupted each other.

In the end, Vij, who has an ex- dio time. tensive background in the food with Draves for a 20 per cent piece cookbooks.

they shook hands on the deal, then the newest Dragon had a parting

my deal, so don't wreck it."

Drayes, who also runs the parent marketing company of Katan Kitchens and Quinta, called Junto, has big plans for his quinoa and has also applied for a government grant to build the processing facility in Cochrane District, which could employ up to 50 people for five years.

"We see beyond just the (quinoa) seed," he added, "We see the other elements such as protein and starches and other things that are special to this crop."

in the company. Then Michael ting process of interviews and dry quiet," he laughed. Wekerle countered with an offer runs as part of their audition, but just over a year ago, one of the Dragon's Den — my family getting which was reduced to 49.9 per cent show's producers had seen the Ka- to watch it with me and how excited in a combined bid with veteran tan Kitchens' booth at the Royal theywere, and the second thing was Winter Fair and wanted a quinoa the overwhelming response we've At one point, Draves acted like venture to appear. With no sales at had from many different communian auctioneer with an exasperated the time, Draves wasn't prepared to ties, especially Georgetown. That's "Sorry guys," as the Dragon bidders face the Dragons, but the producer what's going to stick out as the insisted and booked a tentative stu-things I'll remember most about it."

Then in April of last year, things industry, came to an agreement came together quickly for Quinta and literally on the morning of the of Quinta for \$200,000, vowing to scheduled taping, Draves rushed incorporate it into his recipes and down to the CBC's studios in Toronto to sign the confidentiality papers, "I promise you, you won't be leaving his van parked outside the disappointed," Vij told Draves as national broadcaster's head office.

The toughest part about appearing on the program, Draves noted, shot directed at his Den colleagues. was that he had to remain silent "I'm feeling really good about about the outcome, even to family and friends, for almost a year.

"There were several people ask-



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rving the community of Halton Hills and surrounding areas since 1992

How Draves made it onto *The* ing multiple times to know how it went and at times they tried to trick Most companies endure a vet- me, but it was well worth keeping it

"Two of the best things about



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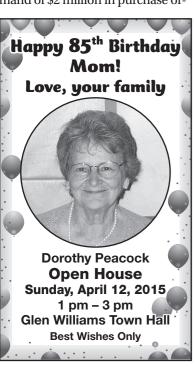
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