BORD BIA OUTLINES DATA-DRIVEN RESPONSE TO BREXIT
IRISH BEEF ENGAGES UK CONSUMERS
IRELAND AT SFFF AND LUNCH!

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FOOD & DRINK EXPORTER OF THE YEAR 2016
There is no denying the importance of Brexit for Ireland’s agri-food industry. For an industry that has enjoyed an important period of growth, leading the way during the economic downturn, the news that trade with its biggest customer could be significantly impacted was a blow. The uncertainty around the issue is a further hurdle to navigate but, the clear message from the industry is that it intends to overcome these hurdles, using every resource in its arsenal.

Bord Bia (the Irish Food Board) is committed to supporting businesses in this task and launched the Brexit Barometer to help them measure their exposure to a changed market environment.

Businesses are talking about being creative and innovative in their approach to the market, looking to add value and recover savings where they can. The message from industry is that while the UK may be leaving Europe, Irish businesses are going nowhere and will remain steadfast partners in business.

Despite the lingering question marks, Irish businesses are continuing to enjoy success in the UK market. In our UK Focus, read about new kids on the block – Eastcoast Bakehouse and Pure Irish – which are enjoying success in their first year in the market.

We also feature insights on beef consumption in the UK, which shows that it is an important draw for consumers when choosing a retailer, and we have details of the Irish exhibitors at this year’s Speciality Fine Food Fair and lunch! 2017.

As always, we have the latest news from Ireland’s food and drinks exporters.

Enjoy!

Editor
Facilitating a smooth route to the UK market
In the wake of Brexit, Bord Bia is the bridge that will facilitate a smooth route to market for Irish producers and satisfy the continued demand for premium Irish produce across the pond, according to Henry Horkan, UK market manager, Bord Bia

Confidence in UK export opportunities
Data from the Bord Bia Brexit Barometer shows that 80 per cent of Irish exporters believe the UK still offers significant potential

Endorsing our sustainability message
If Bord Bia ever wanted an endorsement of the strongest kind for its Origin Green programme, it came from Larry Murrin, the CEO of Dawn Farms, at a recent MSD conference, writes Matt O’Keeffe

Capturing consumers with beef
Research commissioned by the Consumer Insight Team at Bord Bia found that beef was an influencing factor on consumers’ choice of retailer, writes Helen King, director of Consumer Insight & Innovation, Bord Bia
Rising tide for Irish seafood
According to the annual 'Business of Seafood' report from BIM, Ireland’s seafood sector grew by 7.4 per cent in 2016.

Lessons in leadership
Practical, tangible and accessible are just some of the words used to describe Enterprise Ireland’s L4G Programme. Irishfood speaks with two managing directors who completed the Programme in 2016 and are beginning to see its impact in their businesses.

A plucky plan for sustainability
Under the Bord Bia Origin Green umbrella, award-winning duck producer, Silver Hill Foods, is exploring innovative ways to generate value through its sustainability initiatives.

Educating and engaging UK consumers
Online activity is key to the Bord Bia strategy for marketing Irish beef in the UK market.

Organic growth online
Less than one year on from its launch with online retail site, Ocado, Hilton Food Solutions is forecasting online sales of its Pure Irish organic beef will hit £1.3 million at the end of its first 12 months.

Glenilen grows UK footprint
Natural yoghurt brand, Glenilen Farm is continuing to grow its presence in the UK market, securing new listings with Sainsbury’s.

Disrupting the meat market
Since its inception, Dawn Meats has been innovating in the red-meat market. Today, it continues to be a leader in new product development.

Smart cookies
In its first year of business, East Coast Bakehouse has hit the ground running. Daragh Monahan, commercial director, East Coast Bakehouse, talks to Irishfood about the company’s ambitions for future growth.

Ireland’s American dream
Bord Bia says the USDA’s positive endorsement of Irish beef exports will accelerate its activities with beef buyers and retailers and bring its message closer to the US consumer.

Food science gets sense
Dr Eimear Gallagher, head of the Food Quality and Sensory Science Department, Teagasc, explains that the focus on flavour and sensory science has significantly intensified within the food industry.

Spotlight on...
Durrus Cheese

Ireland at SFFF 2017
Eleven Irish companies will exhibit at this year’s Speciality & Fine Food Fair.

lunch! 2017
Four Origin Green member companies will participate on the Origin Green Ireland stand with Bord Bia, at lunch! 2017.
With an annual turnover of €26 billion (£23 billion), agri-food is Ireland’s most important indigenous industry. It is outward-looking with exports worth over €11 billion (£9.8 billion) to over 175 markets worldwide – to the UK, other European countries and global markets. Our current 10-year strategy – Food Wise 2025 – is based on a vision of sustainable growth. The theme of the strategy is ‘Local Roots, Global Reach’, reflecting a high level of ambition and a clear view of where we want to be.

The UK is one of our most important trading partners and is the number-one destination for Irish food exports, accounting for 41 per cent of total exports. Our food exports to the UK range across the spectrum from prime beef and dairy, to consumer foods, poultry, snack products to specialty cheeses, with a variety of drinks making up a full offering.

Perhaps less well known is that Ireland is the number-one destination for UK food and non-alcoholic beverages and accounts for €3.4 billion (£3 billion) or 24 per cent of exports. Tastes are similar, the business and trading relationships are long-standing and the foodservice and retail supply chains are linked in many ways.

**Brexit**

Trade will continue whether there is a hard or soft outcome to current negotiations, but the quality of that trade, the benefits and choice to consumers, journey and paperwork times for those seeking to ship goods across boundaries, will be hugely affected by the nature of the final outcome.

Our Government has set up a well-coordinated process, to ensure a joined-up approach to the challenges and uncertainties following the decision of the UK to trigger Article 50. My Department has been considering all the potential impacts of Brexit with its agencies and food and drink companies, looking at where the areas of greatest risk arise.

I have met my UK counterparts and major UK companies who do business with Ireland to discuss how best to ensure continued trade. Throughout the past year, I have been involved in a wide ranging engagement process abroad to ensure that EU Member States and the UK government are fully aware of the potential impact a hard Brexit will have on our agri-food sector. From an agri-food perspective, and given the importance of the UK market for the sector, Ireland wants to ensure that we have continued free access to the UK market, without tariffs and with minimal customs and administrative procedures.

In parallel, I have led trade missions to China and other Asian countries, the Middle East, the US and Mexico to develop business opportunities for Irish food and drink companies, large and small. My own Department is working closely with stakeholders and our financial institutions are engaged in collective discussions on potential risks and managing volatility. On the marketing side, Bord Bia (the Irish Food Board) is at the fore in assisting food and drink business navigate market challenges, innovate and maintain attractive product offerings. Its market insight, understanding of routes to market and commitment to bringing the best of our food and drink to UK buyers and consumers is greatly valued by Irish companies.

In the meantime, we need continued discussion between suppliers and buyers to identify points of shared and medium-term interest. Conserving a sustainable food supply chain, grounded in top-class standards of safety and traceability, is in the interest of all.

The Irish proverb ‘ní neart go cur le chéile’ (there is no strength without unity) is particularly relevant to the Irish agri-food sector today.

Michael Creed
Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine
EIGHT NEW BISCUITS
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Wellnice Foods Ltd is an exciting new food development company based in Limerick, Ireland. The first innovative brand the company has brought to market is Wellnice Pops. For the health conscious consumer, Wellnice Pops is a range of deliciously healthy ice pops made exclusively from cold-pressed vegetable & fruit juice. All of the pops are low in calories, have vitamins & minerals, but unlike traditional ice pops, do not have any added sugar.

The portfolio includes: Frost Beet, Two Carat Diamond, All Hail Kale and Lemon Sucker.

BJ & Trín, the creative duo behind Wellnice Foods Ltd, combined their skills as a Nutritionist and an Engineer, to set up the company in 2015. They are on a mission to help people eat more veg, by making it fun and easy.

Three Irish cheesemakers were awarded top prizes at the prestigious international cheese and dairy fair, Mondial du Fromage. For the second time, Cashel Farmhouse Cheesemakers was successful in the Sheep Milk Blue Cheese category, winning a Super Gold Medal for its Crozier Blue Cheese. Cahill’s Farm Cheese won a Silver Medal in the Uncooked Pressed Cheeses category for its Vintage Cheddar, and Carrigbyrne Farmhouse Cheeses won a Bronze medal in the Soft Cheese with Washed Rind category, for its Humming Bark Cheese.

In total, six Irish cheese companies travelled with Bord Bia (the Irish Food Board) to France for the world’s leading cheese and dairy trade show to showcase the very best of Irish cheese production. Exhibiting on Bord Bia’s Origin Green stand, were: Cooleeney Cheese, Cahill’s Farm Cheese, The Little Milk Company, Cashel Farmhouse Cheesemakers, Durrus Cheese, and Carrigbyrne Farmhouse Cheeses.

Mondial du Fromage showcased over 170 exhibitors from 10 different countries at the Vinci International Congress Centre in Tours, France. Over 3,500 visitors attended the unique event including top chefs, retail buyers and distributors, from 28 countries around the world. A hub for meeting and sharing knowledge of innovation and development in the cheese market, the international event also provided an ideal opportunity to highlight the value of Bord Bia’s Origin Green sustainability programme, as well as to develop new export opportunities.
Teagasc will host the International Congress of Meat Science and Technology (ICoMST), in collaboration with University College Cork this August. This Congress reconvenes in Ireland after an 11-year absence and the theme is ‘Nurturing locally, growing globally’.

Keynote speakers include Professor Temple Grandin of Colorado State University.

**Hot topics include:**
- Carcass grading technologies
- Meat tenderisation
- Innovative clean label ingredients
- Novel meat smoking technologies

"Over 5 days, there will be sessions on themes such as genomics, animal welfare, meat processing, meat safety, consumer aspects and the health aspects of meat."

Declan Troy, Chair of the organising committee.

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- Kepak
- Enterprise Ireland
- PIC
- Stable Micro Systems
- Niacet
- University College Dublin
- Bord Bia

For more information visit [www.icomst2017.com](http://www.icomst2017.com)
International media report on Origin Green

Bord Bia (the Irish Food Board) recently welcomed Middle East journalists to Ireland where they were introduced to Origin Green for the first time to learn about sustainable food production. The journalists from the Khaleej Times and the Dubai Eye radio station received an in-depth briefing on Origin Green and a tour of Bord Bia’s Thinking House in addition to a dairy sector briefing from Ormu. Their targeted itinerary provided a full experience of Origin Green at farm and food producer levels.

This is one of 13 inward visits organised by Bord Bia for 2017 aimed at informing food buyers in global markets about the point of differentiation that Origin Green can give them as they face the challenge of meeting consumer demands for sustainably produced food. As well as target markets in the EU and the Middle East, a media visit from the US is also planned for later this year.

ABP Ireland strike gold at International Quality Awards

ABP Ireland were quadruple winners at the prestigious annual International Taste and Quality Institute (iTQi) Awards. The Brussels-based institute is a leading global authority in testing and promoting superior food and drink products. The 135 judges are selected from leading European culinary and sommelier associations.

ABP Ireland received three golden star awards for its Tipperary Dry Aged Black Angus Rib Eye Steak and Hereford Dry Aged Rib Eye Steak products. The company’s Hereford Dry Aged Striploin Steak and Tipperary Dry Aged Black Angus Striploin Steak received two golden star awards.

Commenting on the result, Eoin Ryan, European sales manager, ABP Food Group said: “We are absolutely delighted to have won these awards. This is further endorsement of our Ultra Tender process, which has seen ABP beef is served in over 100 Michelin-starred restaurants across the world. Today’s news is particularly satisfying given the European nature of the judging process and the fact that we supply product into a number of Europe’s leading retailers and foodservice providers.”

The winning products were produced at ABP Cahir the newly upgraded processing facility, which was officially opened in 2015 following an investment of €50 million. More than 600 people are employed by ABP Cahir, which makes a €200 million contribution annually to the local economy.

Fane Valley and ABP joint venture to extend to Linden Foods

Fane Valley Co-op and ABP Food Group have announced plans to extend their joint venture relationship to include Linden Foods, the UK-based meat processing business of Fane Valley. The partnership will see ABP Food Group take a 50 per cent stake in the Linden Foods company. An agreement in principle has been reached by both parties, which is subject to approval by the relevant regulatory and competition authorities. Linden Foods is an award-winning, fresh-meat processor with facilities in Dungannon (Northern Ireland), Burradon (England) and Kettyle Irish Foods (Fermanagh). The announcement follows last year’s joint venture between Slaney Foods and Irish Country Meats.

Confirming the plans, Trevor Lockhart, chief executive of Fane Valley Co-op said: “Linden Foods is a growing company within the UK red-meat sector, delivering the highest levels of innovation, quality, service and value to its long-established customer base. Our experience of working closely with ABP Food Group in the Republic of Ireland has been extremely positive and we now wish to build on this success.”

The joint venture will continue to trade as Linden Foods under the current management team, and is expected to ensure the business can capitalise on new commercial growth opportunities within both the domestic and international marketplace.
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BLOOM FESTIVAL OPPORTUNITIES

€10 BILLION OPPORTUNITY FOR IRISH FOOD AND DRINK PRODUCERS AT BLOOM

More than 100 of Ireland’s top food and drink companies had the opportunity to market their produce to 250 national and international buyers at the recent Bloom festival, which is organised by Bord Bia (the Irish Food Board). The buyers, from Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland and UK retail, foodservice and independent stores, have a combined buying power of more than €10 billion. They were introduced to the Irish producers at an early-morning, meet-and-greet trade event organised by Bord Bia.

Bloom celebrated its 11th year, with the trade event marking its fourth consecutive year. The Bord Bia trade event has already helped secure multiple new routes to market for exhibiting food and drink companies. Attending buyers included UK retailers such as Dean and Deluca, Selfridges, Buckley and Beale, Costwold Fayre and Ocado, alongside Irish-based companies like Aldi, Lidl, Tesco Ireland, Dunnes Stores, SuperValu, Insomnia, Pallas Foods, Compass Group Ireland, Topaz and Applegreen.

Tara McCarthy, CEO, Bord Bia said: “Bloom not only offers an opportunity to showcase the best of Ireland’s horticultural and food industry to the Irish public, but it has also become an established hub for trade. While visitors to Bloom spend in excess of €7 million at the event and our records show that up to €30 million is spent directly with exhibitors after the show, our annual trade breakfast has become an important commercial date in the Irish food and drink calendar. Irish producers, large and small, get the potential to secure significant new contracts with some of the UK and Ireland’s leading companies. For visiting retailers and foodservice buyers, it provides a unique platform to engage directly with suppliers and identify new trends, new products and opportunities to bring to market.”

WORLD STEAK CHALLENGE

Six awards for Kepak

The Kepak Group scooped six awards at this year’s prestigious World Steak Challenge.

Flying the flag for Ireland, Kepak beat off stiff competition from large beef-producing countries such as Japan and Brazil to take home gold, silver and bronze accolades across several categories.

Kepak was the only Irish company to achieve three gold medals, one silver and two bronze at the competition; additionally, Kepak picked up awards in both grass and grain-fed categories.

Commenting on the achievement, John Horgan, managing director of Kepak, said: “Kepak is extremely proud of its significant award haul at this year’s World Steak Challenge. Kepak’s heritage is grounded in crafting meat for our retail and foodservice customers based on our butchering and maturation expertise, fine-tuned over many years. As an Irish company and one of Europe’s leading food innovators, engaged in processing and marketing a full range of meat proteins in varied formats and presentations, it is an honour to be recognised at such a prestigious global industry event.”

WORLD STEAK CHALLENGE

Kepak team members pictured celebrating their recent win in the prestigious World Steak Challenge are: Mark Connolly; Finbarr Barrett; Tom Finn; Paul Hogan; Victoria Antoniades; Eoin Higgins; Joanne Farrelly; and, Roy Mulrooney
**Steps to Success 2017**

**Food Wise 2025 progress report launched**

The second progress report on *Food Wise 2025: Steps to Success 2017*, was recently launched by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed.

*Food Wise 2025* is a high-level strategy document for the agri-food industry, the design of which was led by the industry itself.

*Steps to Success 2017* highlights the progress achieved in year two in the implementation of the detailed *Food Wise 2025* strategy. Of the 368 actions due to commence by 2017 or the ongoing actions, 46 per cent have been achieved or substantial action has been undertaken; and a further 49 per cent have commenced and are progressing well.

*“While the industry is currently facing significant uncertainty, caused largely by Brexit, the sector’s capacity for resilience and diversification in times of challenge should not be underestimated. The challenges posed by Brexit makes the actions proposed in Food Wise 2025 all the more relevant.”*  

Minister Creed chairs the Food Wise High Level Implementation Committee (HLIC), with senior representatives from all relevant Government Departments and State agencies, ensuring a joined-up approach.

“*We will double-down on progressing relevant Food Wise recommendations, particularly those related to market development, competitiveness and innovation, as part of our Brexit response. Food Wise commits us to the highest standards of environmental protection, food safety and quality assurance, all of which are crucial to the sustainable development of the sector.***

Some successes highlighted in the progress report include the opening, in 2016, of The Thinking House by Bord Bia (the Irish Food Board); the establishment of Meat Technology Ireland; and the ‘2017: Year of Sustainable Grassland’ initiative.

Key priorities for the next year of *Food Wise 2025* implementation, according to the Minister, include:

- the creation of a ‘one-stop-shop’ to attract and inform individuals of the benefits of a career in the sector; and
- the establishment of a ‘high-level innovation team’ to review current agri-food sector innovation capacity and better market that innovation capability.

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Kepak is a global food company serving international retailers and foodservice household names with prime cuts of meat, on-trend food concepts and ready-for-market convenience foods.

With over 50 years expertise in meat craft we are still leading the way with bespoke innovations and highly successful international food brands.

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How is the Irish/UK relationship being understood at a European level?

The historical and geographical relationship between Ireland and the UK is well understood. There is also widespread recognition that Ireland is most exposed among EU countries to Brexit, and that Ireland will not want to follow the UK out of the EU. There is a deep concern about the situation on the island of Ireland and a commitment to avoid returning to a border.

You travelled to Ireland with your MEP colleagues earlier this year. Can you comment on the feedback from this visit?

Seeing is believing. The MEPs saw with their own eyes how impossible and undesirable it would be to see a hard border re-established between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

While already acutely aware of Irish priorities to maintain peace and stability in Northern Ireland and to avoid a hard border, as well as our concerns for the impact on bilateral trade in goods and services between Ireland and the UK, which amounts to €1.2 billion every week, my MEP colleagues developed a deeper understanding from first-hand experience. They met local business and political and farming representatives who provided the visitors with tremendous insight into the current status of the border counties and the potential damage Brexit could cause.

How significant was the decision to include the border issue as one of the top priorities for the EU?

The recognition of the importance of the Irish border issue is thanks to a sustained campaign led by former Taoiseach Enda Kenny, much respected among EU leaders, and the Irish Government and Irish representatives, including MEPs. The EU commitment to addressing the Irish issue is thanks to that work. The EU also has a deep investment – not only financial but also political – in the peace process in Northern Ireland, and a long awareness of the situation on the island of Ireland.

Indeed, chief negotiator Michel Barnier is particularly sensitive to the importance of protecting the peace process. And as a former agriculture minister in France, he is also acutely aware of the potential negative impact of Brexit on the Irish agriculture and food sector.

What impact could Brexit have on EU food-safety regulations, which is particularly important given the land border in Ireland and the levels of trade between the North and South?

The question of food standards is a crucial one in the negotiations on a possible future relationship between the EU and the UK. The EU will maintain and develop its food safety and traceability standards and will expect the UK, should it want to trade with the EU, to meet those standards and commit to meeting new standards as they emerge. There are mixed messages coming from the UK government on this issue, with comments about taking back control of ‘law making’, including on food standards. Yet there are also comments from the UK about maintaining standards that are common and agreed EU standards.

Issues like hormone beef, chlorinated chicken and GM in food production are contentious. Should the UK do a trade deal with the US, for example, and agree to import these products as part of a deal then the EU would be particularly conscious of making sure that they would not end up in the EU market. So, the issue of how to control the ‘invisible border’ between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland might arise.

Then there is the issue of agriculture commodities produced in Northern Ireland and processed in the Republic of Ireland. If this is to continue then, at the very least, the standards met by farmers in NI must be EU standards or equivalent.
How will currency fluctuation impact Member States?
At the moment, the greatest economic impact is coming from the uncertainty around Brexit and the future UK-EU relationship. That makes it hard for businesses to plan for the future. It is very likely that a transition period, post-March 2019, when the UK leaves the EU, will be required. How long that period will be is not clear, but it may mean that there is little change in the trading relationship until after 2020.

Ireland isn’t the only country impacted on the agri-food exports front, what soundings are coming from other affected countries and do you see opportunities for greater collaboration?
Other EU27 countries that will be impacted include Belgium, the Netherlands and France. It is not a question of a few countries collaborating but rather all EU27 Member States identifying their collective and specific concerns and making sure these are addressed. What has been important is the engagement by sectoral interests - horse racing, food, education, etc. - in informing the negotiating team of the specificities of their sectors. Clearly, any disruption to the EU single market for food would be a concern. The UK itself also has problems as the House of Lords EU Select Committee’s report on Brexit and agriculture highlights that about 80 per cent of the UK’s agricultural exports go to the EU. UK farmers are now very worried about what will happen (even though many British farmers voted for Brexit), I’ve had contact from the presidents of the UK’s four farming unions urging a continued close relationship with the EU on agri-food and no introduction of trade barriers.

If the situation arises in which Irish processors are forced out of the UK market by cheaper products from other parts of the world, finding alternative markets for Irish beef, cheddar cheese and other food products would be difficult. The EU20 would be the obvious marketplace with undesirable consequences on market prices. That is why the problem is a European one and not just an Irish concern. A new European Fisheries Alliance representing the interests of EU27 fisheries has been formed to represent the sector in the Brexit negotiations. This is a particularly difficult issue where the UK appears determined to ‘take back control’ of their waters, yet expect the EU to continue to buy their fish.

What is being said about the shape of the EU after Brexit and how might farm payments etc., be affected?
The European Commission has launched a series of documents intended to provoke a debate on the future of Europe. What’s good about these documents is that they don’t prescribe a way forward but, instead, set out a range of possible scenarios. We’re moving into a period of consideration and debate about what the future of the EU should look like. Since Brexit, there is a very strong determination among the EU27 to remain united and to plan for a stronger future. In terms of the future CAP, unsurprisingly the debate is compounded by Brexit and how the UK’s departure might impact on the EU’s budget and subsequently the CAP budget. Like a lot of issues, it is unclear how specific areas of the CAP, such as direct payments and rural development, would be impacted. While some see the CAP budget as an easy target for cuts, others understand the importance of protecting the budget as direct payments don’t just support farmers but also underpin Europe’s rural areas. They also keep our countryside a living landscape and as farmers are likely to be asked to deliver more ‘public goods’, keeping people in the countryside becomes more important and defending the budget equally so.

I very much oppose those who have given in to a lower budget for the CAP. There may be a battle but it is important to battle hard for our rural communities, who rely on these payments. Discussions are taking place on how direct payments might be reoriented. Greening payments may be more focused on outcomes, but this could lead to greater controls and bureaucracy — which is something we want to avoid. The last reform of the CAP is only being bedded down and the timing of a new round of reforms must be carefully considered.

The Parliament’s Agriculture Committee is focused on shaping a policy that meets the new challenges of today. There will be greater emphasis on protecting the environment and on climate actions to meet the targets set in the Paris Agreement. Ensuring that farmers receive a fair price for their produce is also on the agenda with the Commission expected to come forward with a proposal next year to tackle unfair trading practices. Addressing generational renewal is also important. We need to evaluate existing actions and see what modifications are needed.

Has Brexit brought the EU27 closer and do you foresee stronger trade among them?
Certainly on Brexit there is a political unity of purpose among the EU27, and we seem to be in a much stronger position than we were a year ago. There is already strong trade in food in the Single Market. Whether this will increase between the EU27 will depend on increased demand and/or displacement of non-EU imports.

French farmers probably won’t want to see Irish meat diverted from the UK into their market, but our French colleagues, therefore, understand the importance of having a good trading relationship with the UK post-Brexit. What is of more importance is that the EU is stepping up its trade negotiations with the rest of the world. The EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement, where agreement has just been reached on the main principles, would be a welcome new market for Irish beef exporters. On the other hand, the EU is moving closer to an agreement with Mercosur. Here, we will be insisting on the sensitive nature of the EU beef sector and demanding that this is reflected in the final agreement, if one is reached.
**Facilitating a smooth route to the UK market**

The Irish food and drink sector recorded its seventh consecutive year of export growth in 2016, as increased output in major sectors and an improvement in market demand for key categories boosted the value of trade.

However, the UK chapter of this success story saw exports fall by 8 per cent to €4.1 billion, due to weaker sterling and better returns elsewhere – the ripple effects of Brexit. And, while that post-Brexit climate may have an air of uncertainty, Ireland and the UK’s future food journey is destined to be a strong one, says Henry.

“Both the UK and Ireland have a long trading relationship that has been built up over many years with similar tastes and views on food production. That has been the bedrock of the trading relationship that Ireland has had with the UK and we don’t anticipate that changing dramatically, notwithstanding the many challenges that have been posed by Brexit.”

Such challenges, shrouded in uncertainty regarding potential trade tariffs, hard borders and the strength of sterling – or lack thereof – may mean UK customers are operating in a vacuum to some extent but in practice it is business as usual, Henry says.

“The full implications of what Brexit will mean for business and trade are still relatively unknown. But most of our customers in the UK market are operating in a business-as-usual mode, there has not been a knee-jerk reaction.”

Regardless, Bord Bia is increasing its top-level engagement with senior executives. “The one thing that has changed over the last 12 months or so since Brexit happened is that Bord Bia has redoubled efforts to ensure that we are best placed in our relationships with key customers. We have had an intensive round of meetings with senior retail and foodservice customers since Brexit and that has been very much to reassure those customers that Ireland still is a valuable trading partner for them.”

“The message that these customers have been giving us is that this is recognised. There is an appreciation in the UK that they are not self-sufficient. Between 30-35 per cent of total food consumption there needs to be imported. They understand that Ireland, in terms of its geographical proximity, but also in terms of its standards, its similar and shared farming and food heritage, is the best-placed supplier of that food.”

**Engagement**

Ireland’s total food and drink exports for 2016 amounted to €11.5 billion – an increase of 2 per cent on 2015, representing a 41 per cent growth rate on 2010 figures. While this is a very good news story, in terms of the UK market, which attracted 37 per cent of Irish exports in the same year, there is no room for complacency, says Henry. Bord Bia realised that certain actions could be taken to empower UK customers against a backdrop of Brexit-related uncertainty.

“Over the last 12 months or so, there has been an increased level of engagement at a more senior and strategic level. “We are coming from a position where Ireland is the leading supplier of food and drinks to the UK market. So, they are looking to understand, from our
perspective, what impact Brexit might have on individual sectors. They are looking to understand the Irish industry’s thoughts on the Brexit challenge.” That is where Bord Bia’s Brexit Barometer, developed in conjunction with PwC, comes into play. This has provided the industry with a consistent structure to assess the likely impact of Brexit and provide baseline information to companies. It has helped companies find ways to ease the impact of market volatility, to greater understand depreciation, and help them work in a more informed way on how to manage both.

**Distinctive feature**

With so much ground work, is the short-term outlook positive for Irish exports to the UK? “We hope, through the services we have provided and through the work that these companies have done, in terms of managing currency volatility, that it has improved their position from what it was immediately after the shock of Brexit.”

One thing that will certainly contribute to increased Irish exports is Bord Bia’s national sustainability programme, Origin Green, and its associated Ambassador programme. According to Henry, customers are choosing Ireland as a food supplier based on the sustainability criteria Origin Green provides. “Origin Green is the single most distinctive feature that Ireland has. The way it works at farmer and supplier level has gained huge traction in the UK in the last number of years. We have a great story in terms of sustainable food production, and our grass-based production system and low water stress index. Origin Green allows us to prove that. To be able to tell UK customers that we are undertaking 700 sustainability audits on Irish farms every week is extremely powerful. Not only are we measuring it, but we are going back to those farms again and reassessing them and their progress for continuous improvement. That is hugely beneficial and cannot be underestimated,” says Henry. The Ambassador programme has also been gaining popularity and, now Origin Green ambassadors are in demand from UK companies that are buying into the importance of this sustainability initiative. “In the last six months, we have had ambassadors on placements in Marks & Spencer and in Sainsbury’s, working within their sustainability and commercial buying teams, understanding what those companies are thinking in terms of sustainability, helping us to inform their thinking and sharing insights with Irish suppliers.” Ambassadors have also been placed with Tesco, Asda, Unilever and Mars in the past.

**Trends**

The health and wellness sector is continuing to develop within the UK market, according to Henry, and many Irish companies are benefiting from this. “There has been a lot of traction in that space and it is growing all the time. What we are seeing now is that the ‘free-from’ and the gluten-free categories are certainly no longer niche, but are becoming more mainstream. It is now a lifestyle choice. So, the number of people buying into these categories is greater.”

But, says Henry, the online platform is the one to watch, particularly with the recent acquisition of Whole Foods by Amazon. “The full impact of that has yet to play out but it is going to be a real game changer in terms of the potential for Amazon’s business. “Amazon is a behemoth in the online space and, until recently, food has been a relatively small part of what they do but it is growing significantly. Online shopping currently accounts for 7.6 per cent of the total but that is growing every year by 10 per cent so it is incredibly important. We have seen a lot of Irish companies getting involved in that space. “It can be difficult to get onto the retail shelf but the online channel gives a slightly easier route to market. There are certain ways to do retail business online. It is much more visual and based on online promotion, so you must understand how that works. If you go onto Ocado or any retailers’ online sites, you will see that how you promote a product on their website is very different to how you would promote it in a bricks-and-mortar store.”

See page 20 for more on the Brexit Barometer.
At a recent Brexit conference, where Bord Bia announced the results of its Brexit Barometer, there was an overriding sense of ‘all hands on deck’. Irish exporters are united in seeking the best solutions to manage the potential impact of Brexit on trading relationships.

The UK is by far Ireland’s largest food and drink export market, worth over €4 billion in 2016 and, while the trading relationship predates the EU and the European Single Market, it has flourished to an exceptional degree within the framework of both. This relationship is very much a two-way street. Ireland is also the UK’s most important food and drink export market, with imports from the UK valued in the region of €3.8 billion last year. The UK’s decision to exit the EU has raised significant questions about the future of trade between the two markets, however, Bord Bia is working with the Irish food industry to prepare for the new trading conditions.

Data-driven response
“Brexit will demand a nuanced and concerted response from every level of the food industry. It will require new skills, new approaches and new thinking. We will need to be innovative, agile, informed and prepared as never before,” said Bord Bia CEO, Tara McCarthy. “These are demands that will be made on Bord Bia as much as the industry we represent. Following what we believe to be the most comprehensive industry analysis to date, we are currently engaged in a comprehensive review of our structures and programmes to ensure that we perform to the level required of us in this changing and challenging environment.” Bord Bia’s Brexit Barometer was completed by 139 food, drink and horticulture exporters over a 28-day period. The risk-analysis tool is designed to help individual companies assess their exposure to six specific risk areas associated with Brexit: routes to market; customs and tax; supply chain; trade; currency; and human resources. A team of Bord Bia managers conducted 65 per cent of the reviews face to face, with over 350 hours’ worth of data collection completed in total.

Irish commitment
The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed, described the Brexit Barometer as a useful tool, not only for businesses, but also for Government, informing it in its negotiations. The Minister said Ireland had an early win with border issues being put “front and centre” in Brexit negotiations. “This is critically important because of the critical nature of the supply chain on the island of Ireland but also because of the acute sensitivity of any kind of hard border on the island. Our agri-food exports to Northern Ireland in 2016 were valued at €665 million with imports from Northern Ireland at €535 million. This level of interconnection is manifested daily in cross-border travel and trade in live animal for slaughter or fattening, and in ordinary people going about their daily business to work and shop for leisure. Avoiding any disruption to this normal flow of life and business on this island is critically important for the future.” The Minister added that Ireland had made it clear from the outset that it wants trade between Ireland and the UK to continue unimpeded, “without tariff or non-tariff barriers”. He said shelf space in UK supermarkets has been hard won over many years and Ireland intends to protect that. “We have been active in this space, meeting with...
Dean Attwell, CEO and co-founder of Oakland International, a supply-chain specialist, said his company is looking at the opportunities and how a well-managed supply chain can help to address the potential challenges of Brexit if it results in hard borders. He said there was a lot of talk about business partnerships being challenged; however, he has not seen evidence of this. “The majority of businesses in the UK did vote to stay in and you are talking to open doors.” He commended the work of Bord Bia and the Irish food and drink industry for their efforts in planning for the future, even if the shape of that future remains uncertain. “You have to hope for the best and prepare for the worst.”

He said there was no change in buying behaviour from retailers. “Even though the exchange rate has moved so unfavourably, we are seeing no less deals coming from abroad. About 45 per cent of what we do currently is from continental Europe and Ireland and we are seeing no dip in that.” However, Dean did discuss opportunities for reducing costs in the supply chain, supplying practical tips that would challenge Irish exporters but appeal to their customers.

The Bord Bia Brexit Barometer report highlights include:

- The need for competitive insights, focused marketing strategies and customer acquisition plans are critical to future growth.
- Strong trading relationships exist in the UK market and there is optimism for future growth - 80 per cent of exporters believe the UK still offers significant potential.
- Outside of the UK, while respondents believe there are viable markets for their products, localised marketing strategies along with structured customer acquisition programmes will be critical to success.
- 89 per cent of respondents believe there are new market opportunities for newly-developed products.
- Increased lead times, especially when related to short shelf-life products, and a complex and intense supply chain, is a key issue facing the industry.
- Respondents believe they have reasonably well-developed practices for managing currency risk; however, this belief will be tested in the event of any further devaluation of sterling. Companies need to invest in currency risk-management strategies for the longer term to manage and limit this exposure.

Catalyst for change
An industry panel put forward the Irish exporters’ view with contributions from Alison Cowzer, director of East Coast Bakehouse; Jim Woulfe, CEO, Dairygold; Dean Attwell, CEO and co-founder of Oakland; Michael Colgan, head of revenue’s Brexit Unit; and Padraig McEnaney, CEO with Celtic Pure. From an industry perspective, there was much talk of innovation and strategic approaches to seeking opportunities in the market, investing in on-the-ground resources and strengthening relationships. Jim Woulfe advised every Irish company to complete the Brexit Barometer. He described it as a business health check and said that if Brexit doesn’t end in a hard border, the Brexit Barometer has the potential to be a catalyst for change.
**Endorsing our sustainability message**

If Bord Bia (the Irish Food Board) ever wanted an endorsement of the strongest kind for its Origin Green programme, it came from Larry Murrin, the CEO of Dawn Farms, at a recent MSD conference, writes Matt O’Keeffe.

“I firmly believe in my heart and soul that history will look back on the creation of Origin Green as one of the most strategically important initiatives that the Irish Government and the Irish food industry ever brought about,” said Larry. “There will be challenges that we have to face around reconciling Origin Green with environmental issues. But the ultimate goal of having a watermark of quality to differentiate Ireland globally in terms of its food production and food products and the ethics with which we go about our job is hugely important.”

**Success story**

Dawn Farms itself is a remarkable success story. It operates under the public radar because it does not have any recognisable trademarks. Neither is it associated with own-label products because there are no items in the supermarket made by Dawn Farms and carrying a supermarket or other brand name. Larry outlined the position of his company in the food chain: “We are the largest multi-species business to business (B2B) cooked meat ingredient producer in Europe, in fact the largest in the world outside of North America.” Dawn Farms produces all forms of cooked meat, including beef, lamb, turkey, chicken and pork. The latter includes bacon and ham. Occasionally, the company has even been asked to produce duck and venison meat.

“Pizza production is an enormous international business and one in which Dawn Farms is heavily involved: the three largest pizza chains in the world use meat toppings that are made at the Dawn Farms production facility in Co. Kildare. That places its meats in 40 geographic markets across the globe: ‘We produce enough pepperoni and salami annually to circle the Earth five times. In addition, we supply the largest sandwich makers, including Greencore and Subway, putting our products into 30 different international markets. If you go into any branch of Subway from Athens to Athenry and consume any sandwich on the menu you will be eating meat proteins that are manufactured by Dawn Farms.”

**A sustainable business**

It’s no wonder, then, that Larry places such emphasis on sustainability in all its manifestations, given the likelihood that any consumer could walk out of any European supermarket with at least two dozen products that contain Dawn Farms ingredients.

“That’s the context in terms of sustainable business relationships. Sustainability is one of those words that has a very broad meaning, depending on who is doing the talking. We have a simple ethos that has been at the core of our business since its foundation. Everyone involved in our business supports the customer. Ultimately, everything is paid for by the customer. Making sure that we imbue that customer-facing culture throughout our business, is what makes us successful.”

**Science and innovation**

With a total company workforce of 1,200 people, the nerve centre of the Dawn Farms operation is based in Naas, comprising its corporate headquarters, processing facilities, and science and innovation centre. That campus accounts for 800 of the total staff, while there are two other large processing units, including one in Southampton. Thirty-five people are involved in the Dawn Farms science and innovation centre, continuously focusing on customer and sectoral needs. To put the Irish prepared consumer foods sector, of which Dawn Farms is a part, in context, it directly employs 22,000 people with a turnover of €4.2 billion.

One particular aspect of sustainability that Larry regularly emphasises is food safety: “It has become a definitive USP [unique selling proposition] for our business. Every aspect of safety, of quality and quantity, is measured and monitored all of the time.”

**Maintaining UK trade links**

Larry was forthright in his ambition to see the British market being as important to Dawn Farms and the Irish food sector in general in 10 years’ time as it is now: “That has to be our aim, however unlikely some people think that ambition is in the context of Brexit. We spent 50 years developing that market. In the absence of positive policies being brought forward that all of the interested parties can engage in, our existing trade with the UK could shrink rapidly even before the EU-UK trade talks begin. So defending, protecting and maintaining our trade links with the UK is of the utmost importance, starting right now.”

**Sustainability a key issue**

The Irish business veteran concluded his remarks to the MSD conference attendees by firmly describing the importance of sustainable production and processing systems to his customers: “Sustainability wasn’t in the first five customer questions 10 years ago. Today, it is either the first or second question. For the Irish food industry, sustainability, in its widest sense, is crucial if we are to protect and maintain the market shares we now have and capitalise on the opportunities that are available elsewhere.”
Capturing consumers with beef

Research commissioned by the Consumer Insight Team at Bord Bia (the Irish Food Board) found that beef is an influencing factor on consumers’ choice of retailer. The research shows that attracting consumers with an appealing beef offering can lead to sales across other categories, writes Helen King, director of Consumer Insight & Innovation, Bord Bia.

In 2016, the Bord Bia Consumer Insight Team, along with research partner Red C, conducted a comprehensive study of the motivations and preferences of the typical UK beef shopper. Building on previous research and analysis, the Consumer Insight Team worked with a diverse, nationwide sample of UK consumers to gain insights into the missions and motivations of beef shoppers before, during, and after shopping.

The first phase of the study involved a national meat survey, conducted online, which looked at the motivations of UK consumers from every region, background and walk of life. This survey formed the bulk of the study’s quantitative analysis and served as a foundation for its next, more qualitative phases: digital ethnographies and meat safaris.

Through digital ethnographies, researchers remotely accompanied consumers throughout the shopping experience. Ethnography participants shared video and text posts detailing their expectations, in-store influences, and beef consumption experience. In the final phase of the study, researchers conducted meat safaris, in-depth interviews that occur during the shopping experience, with select consumers. These phases allowed for a deeper understanding of what motivates UK beef shoppers and complemented the quantitative results of the national survey.

Destination category
Among the major findings of this study, is the emergence of beef as a destination category for UK shoppers. More than half of consumers studied agreed that beef selection influenced their choice of retailer, and nearly one quarter of shoppers stated that beef was the main factor behind their store selection. Once consumers arrived, nearly 60 per cent did all of their shopping at the same store in which they purchased their beef, which demonstrates beef’s importance to the shopping experience for both consumers and retailers.

Altered approach
Despite this importance, the results of this study also show a decrease in beef purchases among shoppers. Of the consumers studied, 17 per cent stated they had bought beef less often in the last 12 months. The underlying reasons for this decline, however, show that consumers are still open to eating beef. Of those choosing to buy less beef, 62 per cent said that they would like to buy more beef but think the price of beef is too high. Nearly half of those reducing beef are doing so for health reasons, instead choosing meats considered healthier – and cheaper – like chicken. This presents opportunities for beef producers to alter their approach and better appeal to UK consumers.

Beyond price
Researchers identified six key lifestyle trends that influenced consumer behaviour when shopping for beef. The trends include a focus on clean eating; increased scrutiny about how much protein and fat are in food; engagement in remote personal training; a desire to cook food at home; and a growing preference for local products. All of these trends point to increasing feelings of responsibility surrounding food choices among UK consumers.

Given these trends in beef consumption and its importance to the shopping experience, the Bord Bia Consumer Insight Team worked to understand how beef can recapture broader consumer appeal. They asked participants to identify which messages were most appealing. Topping the list were health-related messages like ‘low fat’ and ‘high protein’. Quality assurance certifications and animal welfare claims, like grass fed, followed closely behind. The results of this study indicate consumer receptiveness to factors beyond the price of beef, particularly as it relates to their health and the wellbeing of the animal. If beef producers can produce a healthy, high-quality product for a reasonable price, consumers will be responsive.
Educating and engaging UK consumers

Online activity is key to the Bord Bia (the Irish Food Board) strategy for marketing Irish beef in the UK market. According to Bord Bia, utilising digital platforms enables the agency to communicate directly with UK consumers, demonstrating the benefits and unique selling points of Quality Assured Irish beef in a quick, responsive, cost-effective manner.

Bord Bia launched its Irish Beef website in 2000. It works as an education and information hub for UK consumers, while its associated social channels engage with consumers to further drive traffic to the website.

This year saw the launch of Irish Beef Encounters (IBE), an Irish beef UK marketing campaign, which ties in a range of activities that showcase the premium credentials of Quality Assured Irish beef, while educating consumers on Ireland’s grass-based, sustainably-focused agricultural system. The goal is to continue to grow the awareness and reputation of Ireland as a source of premium, naturally-produced beef and encourage propensity to purchase. IBE activities included online articles; influencer and chef engagement; partnering with the Great British Chefs website; Street Food series video content; consumer and trade events; brand partnerships; and seasonal campaigns. For the year to date, the campaign has had a reach of 17.5 million people, with website traffic increasing 80 per cent compared to the same period in 2016.

“Irish Beef Encounters has been a great success for Irish beef thus far,” says Emmet Doyle, trade marketing specialist, Bord Bia. “Aligning Irish beef’s marketing to what is on trend and introducing new initiatives, such as working with key influencers or the Street Food series, has increased the awareness and reputation of Irish beef.”

Data driven

According to Emmet, IBE ties in nicely with current UK consumer trends where individuals are interacting more with their food, either looking for more information on what they’re eating, ie. where it’s from; identifying how it’s produced and the health benefits; and exploring different cooking techniques; cuisines; and consumption occasions.

“All our online activity is data driven, which is imperative to ensure we are producing content that is appropriate for our target audience, who tend to be affluent foodies looking for inspiration. From understanding and studying our audience, we can tailor the content we produce.”

An example of this is a monthly interview with a different Irish beef producer or chef. “This came from an ad hoc piece we did with award-winning butcher Pat Whelan.
The readership for this article was phenomenal showing there is an appetite for such stories. These articles perform well while also highlighting the benefits and quality of Irish beef from the people who interact with it every day.

Other activities that are on trend include the ongoing work of some of the top UK bloggers and Bord Bia’s latest Street Food video series, which demonstrates the versatility of grass-fed Irish beef. Filmed in Camden Market, London, three of the most prominent London-based street food purveyors of beef showed how to prepare different dishes, demonstrating the benefits of using grass-fed Irish beef. These dishes were then taste-tested with a number of market visitors. “The third of these videos was launched at the start of July and, to date, the Street Food series has increased Irish Beef’s reach by 290,000.”

Emmet cites a Nielsen report that shows 92 per cent of the UK population take a recommendation from an individual even if they don’t know them personally while ‘street food’ is one of the top googled terms when individuals are looking for where to eat.

**Digitalised events**

In 2017, Bord Bia aimed to increase the return on investment from all its activities. This included digitalising consumer and trade events. “For example, in May, we had an Irish beef lunch featuring several Michelin Star or equivalent chefs. Irish beef was celebrated and served in various ways in an environment where prospective chefs could mingle and discuss the benefits of Irish beef with chefs already using the product.”

“Through a media partnership, the videos had over 90,000 views with a trade audience of 380,000.”

In 2017, for the first time, Bord Bia utilised online banner and display adverts to increase the reach of Irish beef to a tailored audience, encouraging UK consumers to visit the Irish Beef website. “This was first trialled to great success for the IBE spring campaign with St. Patrick’s Day being the focal point. IBE banner adverts ran on numerous consumer food websites including BBC Good Food; Olive; Delicious Magazine; Jamie Oliver; Delia Online; and The Guardian.”

**Targeted social media**

To coincide with the consumer food website adverts, Bord Bia initiated a targeted social media advert campaign, targeting individuals who are interested in food, cooking, and animal welfare, based on their likes and social media traffic. Another targeted segment were individuals who visited the Irish beef UK Facebook page, while the remainder were individuals who liked brands with a similar target audience. The three-week spring campaign had a reach of over 4.5 million people.

**Great British Chefs**

Bord Bia also renewed its partnership with Great British Chefs (GBC), the fastest-growing UK recipe-led website. “Through this initiative we have the opportunity to work with some of the leading, high-profile Michelin Star chefs producing seasonal content.”

According to Emmet, analytics show a high percentage of referrals from the GBC website to the Irish Beef website. Emmet says Bord Bia’s online promotion of beef in the UK has been far-reaching and good value for investment. “With a reach of over 17 million people this year, this equates to a cost of just over 1 cent per customer. When you compare this cost to other marketing channels such as print advertising or television it is extremely cost effective. On top of this you also have the added benefit of adopting a more tailored approach in reaching your target customers and encouraging them to engage with Irish beef.”
Organic growth online

Less than one year on from its launch with online retail site, Ocado, Hilton Food Solutions is forecasting online sales of its Pure Irish organic beef will hit £1.3 million at the end of its first 12 months. With a positive reaction to its initial lines, Pure Irish is planning to launch new additions to its range this autumn.

Broadening the range
Pure Irish currently lists eight products with Ocado: steaks – fillet, sirloin, rump and rib eye; roasting joint; mince; burgers; and meat balls. "Sales on all lines are continually growing, month-on-month. The bestselling lines are steak mince, accounting for 17 per cent, closely followed by sirloin steaks at 16 per cent," says Peter Hounsumble, managing director, Hilton Food Solutions. "We are currently looking at a possible range extension and listing two ingredients lines, including diced beef and stir fry." Peter says meal-ingredient products sell well online. Furthermore, he believes the fact that Pure Irish is grass-fed, organic, resonates strongly with shoppers on the Ocado site. "Ocado continues to over trade in organics generally, which makes it the ideal partner for our brand." Pure Irish organic beef is certified by the Organic Trust and is only available and exclusive to Ocado customers.

Positive feedback
Peter says discerning customers do their research and the response to the Pure Irish brand since it launched has been hugely positive. "We advertise organic grass-fed beef from Ireland, which resonates well with the customer." Peter says Hilton Food Solutions will continue to promote the brand online with Ocado through strategic use of banners, featured products, shallow price-promotional activity and additional marketing support from Bord Bia (the Irish Food Board). "We have just finished some promotional activity with Bord Bia, offering a chance to be entered into a draw to win a foodie weekend for two in Ireland."

Irish reputation
Pure Irish organic beef is sourced from the Irish organic, grass-fed beef producer Good Herdsman, based in Tipperary, Ireland. Good Herdsman is a verified Origin Green member and one of the largest dedicated organic meat producers in Ireland and the UK. It accounts for 70 per cent of the national organic kill in Ireland. It has an organic supply base of 580 beef farmers. It also farms 1,000 acres to organic principles, grazing 900 organic cattle, which John Purcell, managing director, Good Herdsman, says offers security of supply to the company’s customers, which include Hilton Food Solutions.

Peter explains that Ireland is strongly associated with being a clean, green environment. "Ireland’s natural environment, with its lush patchwork of green fields, soft rolling hills, pure fresh air, clear lakes, rivers and streams, is renowned worldwide. These physical elements, combined with a temperate climate, produce conditions ideally suited to the production of quality, grass-fed Irish organic beef."
Natural yoghurt brand, Glenilen Farm is continuing to grow its presence in the UK market, securing new listings with Sainsbury’s for five of its yoghurt lines. The lines are available nationwide through 150 Sainsbury stores.

Glenilen Farm, a family-run dairy farm, produces a range of high-quality products, including yoghurt, cheesecake and desserts. It launched its range in the UK in 2010 and began trading with Waitrose in 2012, as well as supplying online retailer Ocado. Its cheesecake range can also be found at Ocado, Budgens and Booths.

UK success
Today, the UK market accounts for 20 per cent of the total turnover of the west-Cork business. The latest deal will see Sainsbury list three flavours of Glenilen’s 500g big pot range in approximately 150 supermarkets and two flavours of its the 160g glass jar yoghurts in approximately 340 Sainsbury Local stores.

Alan Kingston, Glenilen founder commented: “We are really proud to partner with one of the UK’s premium supermarket chains and we hope Sainsbury’s customers will enjoy our simple farmhouse yoghurt. We have seen great success already in the UK with Waitrose so we hope to build on that and increase our market share in the highly competitive UK yoghurt category.”

Growing momentum
Over the past six months, Glenilen has gained momentum with its chilled dessert range across the UK, particularly its family-sized cheesecakes. “Based on this success, we plan to launch a couple of more dessert lines in the UK before Christmas. Additionally, in the UK, we have recently secured listings with several specialty regional wholesalers who have now made it possible for our products to be more widely available to a host of specialty independents, farm shops and delis – ideal Glenilen Farm customers – which we were never able to reach in the past.”

Challenging times
Despite the uncertainty of Brexit, Tom is confident that the UK will remain the company’s most important export market. “The feedback I have been getting from the trade in the UK is that as long as your products have a unique offering, a point of difference and, more importantly, a role to play for their customers, then there is no reason why any other external factors should inhibit your stance on supplying them.

“Of course, we are all still quite in the dark as to how it will all play out long-term with regards to import/export and I am sure we will need to be a little more conscious of these factors when planning our marketing activity programmes etc., while keeping a close eye on exchange rates. But, for the most part, for now, it is very much business as usual here at Glenilen Farm.”

Future focused
Business as usual also means that the company is exploring opportunities for growth. “We are currently expanding our production plant to make way for several new pipe-filling lines in addition to expanding office space, as well as building a visitor centre to better cater for the thousands of community and local school tours that take place on Glenilen Farm every year.”
Disrupting the meat market

Since its inception in the 1980s, Dawn Meats has been innovating in the red meat market. Today, it continues to be a leader in innovation and is delivering new solutions to customers, increasing the sales opportunities for meat products.
Headquartered in Waterford, Dawn Meats is one of Europe’s largest family-owned meat processors. It has been exporting product to the UK since the early 1980s and soon saw an opportunity to offer greater value to its customers. “In 1992, we opened a state-of-the-art facility, it was the first stand-alone retail pack site in Europe, pioneering the centrally packed concept, and now the majority of red meat is sold in this way in UK supermarkets,” says Marcus Sherreard, sales director, Dawn Meats.

**Evolutionary practice**
Marcus explains that red-meat sales in the UK have been very stable for the last decade, with limited growth in UK consumption of beef, pork and lamb. “The modern consumer wants those products delivered to them in a more convenient format. There have been several iterations of that over time. The first move towards convenience was for fresh burgers and meatballs, followed by summer-seasonal marinated meats and all year round, oven-ready convenience meats. We have seen these innovative areas become part of the core offering over time.

**Slow cooked opportunities**
More recently, the evolution of the category has seen the growth of the slow-cooked category. “This is appealing to red-meat consumers who are choosing slow-cooked products in place of their regular red-meat purchase.” Marcus says Dawn Meats have been advocating the benefits of this category to their customers for many years. Disruptive innovation such as this is often difficult to place in traditional supermarket category areas, but we have now seen significant growth in both the red meat and ready-meal sectors. The slow-cooked market is now worth £170 million per annum.

**Moving mainstream**
The popularity of the format is proven by the sheer number of products seen across multiple categories in supermarkets. “UK consumers can serve a restaurant style centre of plate dish that has already been slow-cooked for many hours in 30 to 40 minutes. Delivering the ultimate in convenience, the very best taste and the highest quality, leading to repeat purchase by the consumer.” Dawn Meats creates products that fall into three categories: centre of plate traditional UK slow-cooked products, such as beef casserole, authentic American BBQ; and, more recently, the range has expanded to include “more culinary and sophisticated” full-meal solutions offerings, including recipes, such as beef bourguignon and coq au vin.

**Extending shelf life**
The pack format has the additional benefit of reducing waste in the food chain. “Most food waste happens in the home by consumers because of having limited time to use the product. Traditionally chilled meat products have a seven to 10-day shelf-life, but our process means that we can offer significantly more life whilst retaining freshness without any detriment to product quality.

**Meat snacking**
Dawn Meats is also taking its meat innovation beyond the traditional meat aisles with the introduction of its Fori brand. Fori is a paleo-inspired protein snack that is designed to appeal to people on the go, sports enthusiasts and endurance athletes. “With more consumers moving away from carbohydrates and traditional lunch-time fare becoming less popular, we wanted to offer a highly nutritious, protein-rich, healthy alternative.” There are four products in the range: Chilli beef, Piri-Piri chicken, Moroccan lamb, and Thai turkey. The bars are gluten free, high in protein, low salt, low sugar, nut-free and paleo friendly.

Dawn Meats launched the products at the end of 2016 through several outlets in London. “We created a European first, which is now rolling out distribution through more channels.” Marcus is incredibly excited about this new category and the company is already seeing some major breakthroughs working with leading premium retailers in London. These early adopters, along with their customers, are recognising the benefits of the product as a healthier alternative to their regular impulse-snack purchase.

**A market disruptor**
Dawn Meats’ innovation is led by consumer insights. “We have been working in conjunction with Bord Bia [the Irish Food Board] at the Thinking House facility in Dublin. Absolutely everything we do starts with the consumer – all of our innovations are based on sound consumer insight and trial.” Marcus describes Dawn Meats as a market disruptor, which is renowned for creating new categories and growing red meat sales through new channels. “Innovation is something that we are famous for in the UK marketplace. We have the best invested site with the best team and we disrupt the market to create new opportunities for red-meat sales.”
While East Coast Bakehouse is very much a fledgling company, having begun production just over 12 months ago, Daragh explains that it is built on a strong foundation of expertise. “The combined management team has over 100 years’ experience in biscuit manufacturing. We are, essentially, the team that acquired Jacobs from Danone and we brought that experience with us to East Coast Bakehouse. We are not a small, start-up company, we are large-scale manufacturers, capable of creating 25,000 tonnes of biscuits per annum and we have real global ambition for that business.”

**Global ambition**

East Coast Bakehouse is already in the process of realising that global ambition, with listings secured in the UK and negotiations in the US entering final stages. In the UK, the company has successfully secured listings in Co-op, B&M, and Nisa. “We have appointed a UK sales director to establish our brand in the mid-tier section and get the brand visible. Then we will look to some of the top four or five retailers, like Morrisons, and get our brand into those outlets.”

From a UK perspective, Daragh says Brexit raises some questions but, he believes, the company is well placed to respond to these. “Our flour and chocolate and packaging comes from a sterling base, so we are reasonably hedged in that perspective. The challenge for us in the future will be around any impact on tariffs, which is still an unknown. If there are tariffs it will create massive brand and private-label opportunity for us in Ireland because we are the only Irish biscuit manufacturer.” Meanwhile, the company is also exploring opportunities further afield, with talks ongoing in other eurozone countries, as well as the US where East Coast Bakehouse is on the cusp of securing listings with two large retailers. “It’s quite fortunate that the brand seems to resonate with the US retailers because of the east-coast connotations. We have essentially agreed terms and we are now in the process of regulation and registration with the Food and Drug Administration. We expect to be shipping to the US this year.”

In its first year of business, East Coast Bakehouse has hit the ground running, successfully securing listings with leading Irish retailers, as well as establishing its footprint internationally. Daragh Monahan, commercial director, East Coast Bakehouse, talks to *Irishfood* about the company’s ambitions for future growth.
Brand ambassador

Using the East Coast Bakehouse brand as an ambassador, Daragh says the company has also begun developing the private-label strand of its business. “We have commenced two private-label contracts, for Ireland and the UK, and we have several other private-label contracts that are being negotiated. Private label is very different to the brand, it is about being competitive, having no legacy costs in the business and being able to compete at the highest level against all our international competitors.”

An important factor in its privat-label business, according to Daragh, is that there is no competition between the brand and private label. “If our competitors create an innovation, they tend to keep that innovation for their brand and don’t offer it out under private label for maybe two or three years. If our competitors create an innovation, they tend to keep that innovation for their brand and don’t offer it out under private label for maybe two or three years. Our key point is that if we introduce new products to market, which are innovative from either an ingredients or packaging perspective, that product is immediately available for private label. That is something that is quite appealing in the conversations that we are having.”

Innovative thinking

East Coast Bakehouse is also keen to explore contract manufacturing opportunities. Daragh believes the company’s commitment to innovation will yield results in this space. “We have a fantastic new product development team based in Drogheda, led by Alison Cowzer from Dragons’ Den Ireland. We are paranoid about the ‘sameness’ of the category and we want to be the innovators. We are doing a lot of work and already have caramel and pecan flavour, which is interesting. We are working on a chocolate dough, stem ginger product, which tastes fantastic, and we are also playing around with Sicilian-lemon zest.”

Daragh believes the company’s use of Irish butter resonates strongly with consumers at home and abroad. “The brand’s mantra is to bake better biscuits. In the East Coast Bakehouse brand, we don’t use palm oil, we use Irish butter. It’s a more expensive commodity to use but it dramatically improves the taste, profile and mouthfeel of the product.”

Quality driven

Daragh says the company’s commitment to quality is demonstrated through successful certification. From the very beginning of the business, East Coast Bakehouse has incorporated the standards of Origin Green, the national sustainability initiative for Ireland’s food and drinks industry.

“We are the first company to establish itself with Origin Green from the outset. We didn’t retrofit Origin Green into the business. As we established our business, we adhered to all the principles of Origin Green and sustainability. Then, when we were up and running, we became a fully-fledged member of Origin Green.”

Daragh says the company’s commitment to sustainable practices resonates with retailers internationally. At a recent podium day in Albert Heijn in Amsterdam, Daragh met the head of global sourcing at the Dutch retailer. “He was extremely familiar with Origin Green in that meeting and understood all the principles. It is a great testament to the marketing that Bord Bia (the Irish Food Board) is doing internationally.”

Located in Drogheda, Co. Louth, East Coast Bakehouse invested heavily from the outset in its equipment and capabilities. “We have the most modern biscuit-manufacturing equipment in Europe, with the longest – 80m – and widest – 1.5m – oven. Our production is completely in-line. We can enrobe biscuits with chocolate, we can pack automatically, in quantities of up to 24 packs per minute. Everything about the facility is state of the art.

“We are fully accredited, with a British Retail Consortium (BRC) AA rating, UTZ chocolate certification and Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil certification. We were delighted to achieve a BRC AA accreditation so early. It is a great testament to the entire team in Drogheda to achieve that.”

Daragh says the company is very pleased with its progress to date and is confident of continued success for the business. “People have really welcomed the new player on the block. When we look at the overall business, in three or four years’ time, I think 70 per cent of our business will be private label. I think brand and contract manufacturing will share the balance.”
Blackwater Distillery

Blackwater Distillery is a microdistillery based on the banks of the Blackwater River in Co. Waterford. There are currently three Blackwater products on the Irish market, its flagship Blackwater No.5 Gin, Blackwater Wexford Strawberry Gin and Blackwater Juniper Cask Gin. In addition, it makes Blackwater Pot Still Vodka for export to Finland. The company owns and produces the Boyle’s Gin brand, which Aldi has exclusive rights to in the Republic of Ireland. This gin will also go into Aldi UK for Christmas 2017. This year, the company is launching an Irish whiskey brand called Retronaut and an Irish poitin brand called Puca. At the same time, it is beginning limited whiskey production at its current facility, while works start on a new distillery building in Ballyduff, Co. Waterford, with the company due to move in by March 2018. The company describes itself as unique in the Irish distilling industry, as it distils and bottles all under one roof and only lends its name to products it produces. According to the company this means it has product provenance and traceability. Additionally, it continues to innovate with Ireland’s first aged gin and first hedgerow gin. Future innovations are in research and development stages.

Brogan’s Bakery

Brogan’s Bakery is a family business steeped in baking history. Originally established in 1967 in Co. Galway, the business relocated to Dublin several years ago. Its bakery has a wealth of experience in creating acclaimed confectionery within the food industry under its brand, licensed trademarks, such as Kerrygold, and private label. It produces biscuits and cakes using only the best ingredients, manufactured to the highest standard in its own bakery. Its master bakers have developed recipes through years of experience and products are still produced to traditional methods to ensure much-loved recipes are preserved as the family favourite treat that Brogans are renowned for. All ingredients are sourced with care from Irish producers and Brogan’s works closely with its suppliers to achieve high-quality products using the best raw materials. It considers provenance, health and safety, and ethical issues when sourcing raw materials. The company says the care taken in its production is demonstrated by the quality and superior taste of its finished goods. Brogan’s says it aims to develop and nurture quality products for strong brands that are renowned for excellence in standards and taste.
**Carlingford Oyster Company**

Carlingford Oyster Company was established in 1974 by Peter Louet Feisser and is currently managed by his son Kian and daughter-in-law Mary. It employs 18 full-time and part-time staff and produces 200 tonnes of oysters annually. Its oysters are exported to the UK, Singapore, Hong Kong and China. The Carlingford Oyster Company purifies its oysters in a new, state-of-the-art purification facility. This allows the oysters to be packed directly to restaurants and customers from the shores of Carlingford Lough, preserving all the unique flavour and freshness. Carlingford Oyster Company is Ecopact and Origin-Green certified. It has been awarded the Gold Medal at the 2015 Cloudy Bay UK Oyster tasting Championships and, in 2016, it won two Gold Stars at the Guild of Fine Food’s Great Taste Awards.

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**Collar of Gold**

According to the producers, Collar of Gold is the only mild and light Irish rapeseed oil, creating a new product category in the busy oils’ sector. Made from virgin oil, from seed grown by Irish farmers, it is a 100 per cent natural product, high in both omega 3 and omega 6. This unique Irish kitchen and table oil has a mild taste and pale, golden colour. It is suitable for both cold- and high-temperature uses, enhancing the flavor of the food, without leaving a flavour of the cooking oil. Thanks to careful seed selection and patented manufacturing, Collar of Gold’s slow mechanical cold pressing extracts the liquid golden oil while still leaving the bitter tasting outer shells. Thereafter, a gentle damping with mild steam creates its mild tasting oil.

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**Genovese**

Genovese was established in 1999, making it the oldest fresh pesto producer in Ireland. Its range of savouries are hand made in small batches, blending the taste of the freshest ingredients and using techniques that allow those flavours to develop naturally and unhurried. Genovese is strongly focused on the provenance and seasonality of the ingredients it uses. Sustainability is a key element of the business and Genovese is a verified member of Origin Green and carbon neutral certified. Its award-winning products are available for retail and foodservice in a variety of packaging options. These savouries are all gluten free and either vegetarian or vegan.

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**Hassetts Bakers & Confectioners Ltd**

Michael Hassett, entrepreneur and artisan master baker established his first bakery in 1984 in Douglas, Co. Cork. Today, he owns and manages a Hassetts Bakers & Confectioners Ltd, Carrigaline manufacturing facility, as well as several retail and foodservice businesses. The Hassetts Bakers & Confectioners company currently employs over 40 people across all units. Michael has gained invaluable experience within this industry over the last 33 years and, over the past 18 months, he has advanced into biscuits and cracker manufacturing, servicing his own retail outlets. These products have proven to be very successful and have created a demand of its own. The company has begun exporting its products to the US, with more orders in the pipeline to follow. The company says it is an exciting time for the business with continuous growth and many export opportunities across many countries.
The Jelly Bean Factory

Established in 1998 by father/son team, Peter and Richard Cullen, The Jelly Bean Factory is Europe’s leading producer of gourmet jelly beans. Over 12 million gourmet jelly beans are produced daily in 36 flavours made using only 100 per cent natural flavours and no artificial colours, and packed in innovative pack formats. Each gourmet jelly bean from The Jelly Bean Factory takes 14 days to come off the production line and the flavour runs right through the bean, from centre to shell to deliver a full-on taste explosion. The jelly beans are gluten free, nut free, gelatine free, GMO free, kosher certified and halal compliant, as well as being suitable for vegetarians and coeliacs. The Jelly Bean Factory is also a fully verified member of Origin Green.

Natasha’s Living Food

In 2017, Natasha Czopor set up her own raw and living food company from her kitchen, making healthy snack alternatives based on naturally-grown, wild or organic, sustainably raised fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds and sprouted grains. Natasha’s Living Food is now an award-winning business based in Dublin. The product range is free from wheat, dairy, egg, soya, and refined sugar. The company uses cold-pressed, hand-pressed, low-temperature extraction and gentle-fermentation techniques that keep fresh flavours and vital vitamins, minerals and anti-oxidants intact. All products are low GI, suitable for coeliacs and diabetics. Natasha’s Living Foods has two Great Taste Awards to its name, as well as a 2011 Food & Drink Industry Award from Bord Bia, a Bridgestone Award for Best Health Food Products, Bridgestone Guide listings in 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2013; and Highly Recommended by Georgina Campbell.

Quinlan’s-Kerryfish

Multi-award-winning Quinlan’s operates from Caherciveen, Co. Kerry, on the southwest coast of Ireland and was started in 1960 and continues to be owned and managed by Michael Quinlan and his three sons, Liam, Ronan and Fintan. It supplies sustainable seafood from Ireland’s west coast to customers all over the world via its factory, including wild, organic and conventional smoked salmon, as well as a range of fresh fish and shellfish products. In March 2017, it acquired the well-respected Kenmare-Select brand, broadening its customer base both at home and in mainland Europe. The dedication and commitment of the family, together with a staff of 100, has assisted hugely in allowing the Quinlan’s brand to grow in both the wholesale and retail sectors, which includes its fish shops and seafood bar restaurants.

The Marshmallow Factory

The Marshmallow Factory is a family-run business located in Co. Cork. The company is currently expanding due to growing demand for its luxury brand of marshmallow products. There are three main flavours of marshmallows distributed to stores around Ireland: Sassy Strawberry, Marvellously Mint and Smashin’ Passionfruit. Orders can be placed by email or through the sales team for delivery across Ireland, the UK and Europe. The Marshmallow Factory frequently lends its services to cater for large events such as weddings. The Marshmallow Factory also supplies a range of marshmallow cream in 5L buckets for restaurants and bakeries, which it describes as a delicious alternative to dairy-based cream as a cake filling and decorative icing. There are seven delicious flavours available in this range. The Marshmallow Factory strictly ensures that only the finest quality ingredients are used in the crafting of its products. This means that only natural flavours are used, which the company says delivers a natural burst of fruit in every bite or a delicate hint of vanilla from the vanilla-flavoured range. The impact of the natural flavours extends to the creamy melt-in-the-mouth texture delivered in every mouthful of marshmallow, according to The Marshmallow Factory.

Wellnice Pops

Wellnice Pops is the brainchild of Limerick friends Trín O’Brien and B) Broderick, producing 100 per cent vegetable and fruit juice ice pops. A healthy snack alternative, all the ice pops are free from additives, including artificial colours, flavourings and sugar. As an added bonus, the company says, they are low in calories and contain vitamins and minerals. The portfolio includes: Frost Beet, Two Carat Diamond, All Hail Kale and Lemon Sucker.
This is the second year that Bord Bia (the Irish Food Board) is taking a stand at lunch! in London. In 2017, six Irish companies will exhibit on the Origin Green Ireland stand with Bord Bia. “lunch! focuses on the ‘grab-and-go’ and convenience foods sector and is an important platform for Bord Bia and Irish companies to be on at this time. “This is significant because the convenience and grab-and-go channels are so important. It is certainly very useful to be part of that again this year and to continue our participation in lunch!” says Henry Horkan, UK market manager, Bord Bia. Find Bord Bia and exhibiting Irish food companies at: H40.

Benoit’s Chocolate Factory
Benoit’s Chocolate Factory has spent the last four years working with a team of French master chocolatiers to produce what it believes is not only the finest hot chocolate in the world, but a product that will revolutionise the $6 billion global hot-chocolate industry. Benoit’s Chocolate Factory ready-to-drink ‘real hot chocolate’ is made by blending the finest Belgium chocolate into fresh milk and is supplied as a fully-prepared liquid hot chocolate in a 1L carton. The company says its product has several unique selling points, including: it is ready to drink – the hot chocolate is fully prepared, so each customer receives a consistent and perfect hot chocolate, according to the company; quality and taste – “we only use the highest quality Belgium couverture chocolate blended into fresh Irish milk so every hot chocolate will taste rich, indulgent and delicious”; and easy and fast to prepare – no staff training is required, all that’s needed is to shake, pour, heat and serve.

Cully & Sully
Cully & Sully soup was launched eight years ago and is now Ireland’s number-one soup brand across both chilled and ambient categories. Cully and Sully are childhood friends who have made it their business to bring good, honest and tasty foods to those who like to eat good food. Cully & Sully’s acclaimed soup range includes: Positively Pea and Distinctly Minty; Velvet Creamy Tomato and Basil; Full-Bodied Vegetable and A Sweet-Tempered Honey; and Carrot and Coriander. All the soups are made from fresh and natural ingredients; ingredients that you could find in your grandmother’s kitchen. In fact, some of the recipes in the range were inspired by Cully’s grandmother, a respected Irish chef and proprietor of the famous Ballymaloe House Hotel. Cully & Sully soups are presented in an oval 400g tub, which is convenient for desk-top lunching but are also ideal as a dinner-party option. Cully & Sully soups are also gluten free. Cully & Sully soups have won numerous awards from Great Taste Awards to the Sial d’Or.

Green Isle Foods
Green Isle Foods, part of the 2 Sisters Food Group, is Ireland’s largest frozen-food manufacturing company specialising in a variety of categories, including pizza, fish, vegetables and pastries. It exports products to over 30 countries supplying branded, private label and foodservice solutions. The company’s mantra is to bring ‘fresh thinking to frozen foods’. It has established a reputation for developing innovative products across its portfolio. Its brands are popular household names including Goodfella’s (pizza), San Marco (pizza), Donegal Catch (fish) and Green Isle (vegetables and pastries) with many holding brand leadership positions. In Ireland, it boasts four manufacturing facilities that operate to world-class standards. From new product development through to technical support, ingredient sourcing and manufacturing, Green Isle Foods has achieved the highest accolades the food industry offers and complies with individual retail standards required by the world’s leading retailers. Green Isle was named Irish Multinational Exporter of the year 2016, by the Irish Exporters Association.
The Jelly Bean Factory

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Keeling Juices

Keeling Juices is driven by a passion to create great juice products that deliver the fresh taste of nature to its customers. Keeling Orange Juice has been particularly successful, winning four Irish Food Quality Awards, including the Irish Food Quality People’s Choice award, in 2017. Other popular citrus juices available through the company include: lemon, lime, ruby grapefruit and more, as well as long-life vegetable juices and smoothies. Owned by Fred Keeling, Keeling Juices says it is making huge advances in the quality and value of healthy beverages available today. Fred has over 50 years’ experience sourcing fruit and making juice products; now he is building on that experience to create fully natural products that are a blend of harvests from different countries to maintain consistent pleasing taste and colour all year round. As well as its own brand of juices, Keeling Juices also supplies household names in Ireland and the UK with products under their own label, including national airlines, countrywide supermarket chains and cafés. Keeling Juices is committed to continuous improvement and innovation. Its state-of-the-art production techniques give the company the flexibility to adapt quickly when required. It is committed to meeting client specifications on a consistent basis with varying raw material available throughout the year. Its manufacturing site is accredited to BRC v7 and TFMS.

Loughnane’s

Loughnane’s is an award-winning sausage and black pudding specialist, based in Galway city, in the west of Ireland. New product development is at the core of the company’s culture. Chilled and frozen products are supplied to retail and foodservice markets, both domestically and internationally. Traceability is a cornerstone for the company. At this year’s Lunch! the company will feature its award-winning Guinness sausages and other highly innovative, new product developments.
Rising tide for Irish seafood

According to the annual ‘Business of Seafood’ report from Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) – the Irish Sea Fisheries Board – Ireland’s seafood sector grew by 7.4 per cent in 2016. The Irish seafood industry produced 325,000 tonnes of quality, caught and farmed, seafood worth €543 million in 2016. Wild caught seafood accounts for the largest share of production at 281,000 tonnes or €376 million. Farmed fish and shellfish comes in second at 43,900 tonnes or €167 million. This represents an increase of 9 per cent in volume and 13 per cent in value.

The primary driver of the growth in farmed produce is the continued development of the gigas oyster and salmon industries. Production of gigas oysters increased to almost 10,000 tonnes to a value of €41 million. Salmon production also had an extremely successful year with production reaching 16,300 tonnes valued at €105 million.

Funding fishing

The report also shows that there has been an increase in private investment by seafood enterprises. Furthermore, Ireland is now receiving more financial support than ever before through the European Maritime Fisheries Fund. A global leader

The report states: ‘Ireland has the ambition to position itself as an international leader in the global seafood industry.’ Seafood consumption is on the rise, standing at approximately 20 kilos a year and projected to increase by 50 per cent by 2030. The BIM report says the Irish seafood industry can build on its natural advantages, including access to some of the most productive fishing grounds in the EU, a commitment to sustainable fishing and the development of a high-quality aquaculture sector, to serve that growing demand.

Jim O’Toole, BIM CEO says: “We have a valuable and sought after raw material that is in great demand in our key markets, contributing €376 million in fish landings alone, €167 million in farmed fish and shellfish, and employing 11,000 people in our coastal communities. The task facing the sector now is to build on this growth, add value and diversify to withstand current challenges, including Brexit. BIM will continue to provide supports to enable this valuable industry to achieve its full potential and future proof the sector in the years ahead.”

Green seas

Ireland’s green credentials were identified as an important market differentiator. The report says the success of Bord Bia’s (the Irish Food Board) Origin Green programme is evidence of that. Seafood companies are one of the programme’s most engaged participants by sector and BIM is supporting that commitment with programmes for the entire industry, from fishermen to farmers to processors.

Improving competitiveness

Competitiveness is essential to increase profitability and market share. To achieve this, the report suggests, Ireland’s fragmented seafood industry can restructure into organised networks that share resources and information. It must attract new investment, expand the raw material base by attracting new landings to Irish ports, measure itself against international competitors and build scale, so it can compete in the global market.

Innovative future

Currently, Ireland exports 70 per cent of its seafood as a bulk commodity but, BIM says, the way of the future is value-added seafood – and to achieve this, developing new consumer-friendly products, as well as innovative techniques that can overcome the challenges of shelf life and transportation will be needed. BIM is working closely with the industry and other agencies, both in Ireland and internationally, to build innovation capabilities.

Ireland’s Main Export Markets:

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<td>Asia</td>
<td>46</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nigeria/North Africa</td>
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Our Biggest Fishing Ports:

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<td>Castletownbere</td>
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Irish Seafood Exports are worth €559m
A plucky plan for sustainability

Award-winning duck producer, Silver Hill Foods, has made a business of sustainability. For several years, it has found ways to derive value from its waste streams and now, under the Bord Bia (the Irish Food Board) Origin Green umbrella, Silver Hill is exploring innovative ways to generate value through its sustainability initiatives.

Located in Emvyle, Co. Monaghan, Irish duck producer, Silver Hill Foods, was one of the earliest proponents of the Origin Green sustainability programme and one of the first companies to embark on a second Origin Green sustainability plan.

Over the past 50 years, Silver Hill Foods has evolved to become a global success, processing over 85,000 ducks weekly. Following a recent expansion of its business facilities, the company is now embarking on a further expansion of its processing facilities to keep up with demand.

**Good business sense**
Barry Cullen, head of sales, Silver Hill Foods, says sustainability has always been an important part of the Silver Hill Foods business model. As the company evolved, it has incorporated sustainable practices, which have generated additional revenue streams. “We see it as a sales opportunity. We use every bit of the duck. The feet, the head and neck all go to China for added-value sales. The liver and fat go to Belgium for pâté. The waste from the carcasses and neck flaps etc., goes to a rendering plant here in Ireland and we also sell a range of offal products for use in the dog food industry.”

Beyond the meat, Silver Hill Foods also generates revenue from its duck feathers, which are used to produce pillows. “Like any sensible business people, we try to convert waste into money. The feather production aspect was set up in the late 1970s. Most other duck companies sell their raw feathers to producers but don’t sort them first. We built a sorting machine, which adds value. It is approximately 10 times the difference in price if you sort it and grade it. Now, we supply pillows to most topend hotels around Ireland including The K Club, Adare Manor, Castle Leslie and The Merrion Hotel, to name a few. And we also sell them online on our website.”

**Innovative sustainability**
As the company prepares for further expansion of its processing business, Silver Hill is exploring an innovative technology that has the potential to be an important revenue stream in the future. “We currently produce about 60 tonnes of neck flaps and carcasses per week. There is an exciting new technology that we are looking at which minces that waste and processes it through a centrifugal machine, which then separates the product into three different by-products: water, fat/oil, and dry protein matter,” says Barry.

He explains that the company is uniquely placed to take advantage of this technology because of the fat content of its primary product. “Because our duck is so fatty, the 60 tonnes of waste product equates to about 20 tonnes of oil a week. With that, we can become self-sufficient in energy and probably be a contributor to the national grid. We would be able to fuel the factory and probably generate an income by producing energy for the national grid.”

The project is still in the planning stages but Barry is confident of its potential. “We have done trials. Our fuel by-product is so clean that we don’t have to refine it any further and it can be used straight.”

Silver Hill Foods had been paying to have its waste removed. Now it foresees generating value from it. The initial investment will be significant for the company but, Barry says, the payback will be quick. “In chicken and other poultry, the fat content is very low and the payback is less appealing but because the fat levels in our product is 10 times, or more, than that, it is more rewarding for us. It’s a happy coincidence.”

**More detailed planning**
Under its first Origin Green sustainability plan, Silver Hill Foods has been focused on achieving reductions in energy and water use, as well as increasing its...
contributions to the local community. “The target was to reduce our water use and electricity use in the hatchery by 10 per cent compared to the base year. It was a three-year plan and we managed to achieve those targets. At the same time, we doubled production, which made it trickier to achieve but we managed to do both simultaneously.”

Barry explains that the company was divided into different teams across each department to look at ways in which to make these savings. “They came back with simple ideas and initiatives. We changed all our lighting to low-energy lights. We looked at water, turning the taps off, and being more aware of use. The team in the environmental department created an educational piece for colleagues on how much water is wasted if taps aren’t turned off properly and we are putting meters in to measure exactly what we are using.”

The biggest demand on energy came from the factory itself and, in 2014, Silver Hill Foods signed up with Vayu, a green energy provider and, during the first Origin Green plan, only used renewable energy.

Barry says the second Origin Green plan is more widespread and a lot more detailed. “We are continuing to target energy production and water reduction and, also, want to sign up our suppliers. We are looking at what their sustainability plans are.”

**Co-opetition**

As well as working with its suppliers, Silver Hill Foods also sees an opportunity to support the Irish food industry’s sustainability efforts more broadly through ‘co-opetition’. “We invite other companies to come and look around our facilities to see if they can learn things that they can implement in their own business. We had a visit recently from Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) – the Irish Sea Fisheries Board – through Origin Green. People from the fishing industry came to see how they can convert waste into value-added materials,” says Barry.

Co-opetition is also behind Silver Hill Foods’ willingness to help open doors for other companies. Barry explains: “We deal with high-wealth individuals throughout Asia who would have a lot of companies. One such customer has 130 restaurants. Our customers are always looking for high-quality products. They want our duck but they will ask if we can get them other products. So, we can open doors.”

**Customer requirements**

On the commercial end, Barry says, sustainability is in demand. “Customers are asking for green credentials or sustainability plans. It’s becoming more prevalent, particularly in China and Asia due to their pollution problems.” Barry says it’s still not as high a priority in these countries as it is in Germany, for example. However, he adds: “China and Asia are a few years behind but it is certainly coming because they want to feed their populations in a sustainable way.”

While sustainability has always been a feature of the Silver Hill Foods business, Barry says Origin Green has helped to formalise its work and emphasised the importance of tracking that work and sharing it with customers. “We are doing what we always did but now it is being recorded and we are sharing more than we did in the past.”
Irish beef exports received a positive endorsement when the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) approved a proposal to advertise eight distinctive qualities of Irish beef in the US market. Bord Bia (the Irish Food Board) says the decision will accelerate its activities with beef buyers and retailers and bring its message closer to the US consumer.

The announcement came during a recent trade mission to the US and Mexico, which was led by Ireland’s Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed. The visiting delegation included State agencies and Irish food industry representatives, who participated in several engagements with key influencers in the new US Administration, as well as important meat, dairy, beverage and agri-industry representatives.

The US was the second most valuable destination for Irish food exports in 2016 after the UK, almost doubling in value from around €520 million in 2012 to €1,022 million in 2016. The Minister described trade development in the Americas as “a vital part of Ireland’s Brexit response.”

Irish beef’s unique selling points
In 2015, Ireland became the first country in Europe to secure beef access to the US market in 15 years. USDA data shows that Ireland exported some 2,400 tonnes of Irish beef in 2016. According to Bord Bia, the US market presents an opportunity to market Irish beef as a premium product that consumers will pay more for.

The USDA has approved the use of eight claims in advertising, which state that Irish beef is:
• fed a diet that is more than 80 per cent grass;
• from farms participating in Bord Bia’s Origin Green sustainability scheme;
• fully traceable from farm to fork;
• from Quality Assured farms and processing systems;
• pasture-fed for more than six-to-eight months of the year;
• raised on family farms;
• raised without the use of growth hormones; and
• treated responsibly with use of antibiotics.
Commenting on the announcement, Minister Creed said: “I am extremely pleased that we have received the green light to proceed with a measure that has the potential to add significant value to our beef offering to the US. Irish beef processors will now have the opportunity to market their produce as ‘Irish, grass-fed beef’, subject to adherence to the verification process. Such a marketing tool will allow our beef exporters pursue the premium US beef market and will boost Irish beef exports to the US, which will be crucial in terms of Brexit mitigation.”

**Sheepmeat discussions**
There was also an advancement on sheepmeat access to the US, with dates in September agreed for an inspection visit by USDA Food Safety Inspection Services (FSIS).

**Building on beverage success**
During the trade mission, the Minister and Tánaiste, Mr. Creed, CEO, Bord Bia, marked the success of Irish beverage exports to the US, which grew to over €500 million last year, at a trade showcase in Chicago. The event involved 25 Irish drinks exporters engaging with Binny’s Beverage Depot, the largest drinks retailer in the Mid-West, and other on-trade customers from the region.

Brett Pontoni, purchasing director, Binny’s Beverage Depot, said: “I am delighted with the response of US consumers to the breadth and depth of Irish drinks we stock in Binny’s Beverage Depot. New brands from Ireland are building an enthusiastic following by offering a new taste and are seen as different and independent. Bord Bia’s assistance to companies in telling their individual stories and providing resources on the ground is building on Ireland’s already renowned reputation for alcohol production. Being able to tell a story about sustainable production through the Origin Green programme, appeals to millennials, who are key to the future growth of the sector.”

**Most important market**
The US is the most important market for Irish alcohol beverages, amounting to €514 million or over half of Ireland’s total food and beverage exports to the market. “It is the destination for almost 45 per cent of Irish whiskey, the fastest growing spirits category globally with exports of 3.7 million cases. The 2016 figure represents an increase of 8.5 per cent on the previous year and an increase of 47 per cent over the last five years. Ireland was a key player in the whiskey business of the US up to the early part of the last century and lost ground for a variety of reasons. I am determined that our new and impressive progress will endure,” the Minister said.

**Consumer insight**
Bord Bia used the opportunity to inform US trade and retail customers about Ireland’s investment in consumer insight, routes to market and the Origin Green sustainability programme’s capacity to deliver benefits for their business. “We have invested over 1,000 hours in research over the last three years to better appreciate evolving US consumer tastes. Bord Bia’s research identified three key areas of focus for Irish whiskey to ensure success, namely, native personality, maturity and flavour complexity. We have worked with over 20 Irish companies in the past three years to meet these demands through consumer insight and branding, as well as market research and trade shows. Bord Bia has also partnered with these companies to get ‘feet on the street’ in the US market through our talent development programmes. Bord Bia will continue to target key buyers with the aim of bringing 10 to our Marketplace trade event in 2018 to meet with Irish suppliers. We will provide the buyers with guided itineraries to ensure that they feel the full impact of our sustainable production system.”

**Down Mexico Way**
Irish pork and beef access were topics of discussion during the Minister’s visit to Mexico. Minister Creed is the first Irish Minister for Agriculture to visit Mexico as part of a trade mission, during which he met the Mexican Secretary for Agriculture, José Eduardo Calzada Rovirosa and the Mexican Under Secretary for Trade, Juan Carlos Baker Pineda.

“I was extremely encouraged with the positive engagement I had with Secretary Calzada Rovirosa and Under Secretary Baker Pineda. Both Secretaries expressed a keen willingness to progress trade with the EU and, indeed, Ireland specifically. I hope these meetings can be the catalyst to further progress the flow in agri-food trade with Mexico.”

Irish agri-food exports to Mexico stood at €57.4 million in 2016, an increase of approximately 20 per cent on 2015. It was the 13th largest destination for Irish dairy exports in 2016, valued at €52.6 million. The other main exports to Mexico are beverages, which in 2016 were worth €4 million. “Agri-food trade to Mexico to date has been relatively modest,” said Minister Creed. “We do not have market access for meat products to Mexico at present. Therefore, I took the opportunity to present Secretary Calzada Rovirosa with a technical questionnaire for pork access and a letter of intent for beef access. There have also been several technical meetings taking place between my officials and Mexican authorities parallel to the political engagement.”

**Growing exports**
The trade mission to the US and Mexico is one of several being led by the Minister in 2017. He led one to the Gulf region in spring and is examining other relevant destinations that should be visited over the rest of this year. These trade missions form part of the agri-food industry’s agenda to increase the value of exports by 2025 to €19 billion. “Building new opportunities for trade is already a central element in Ireland’s Food Wise 2025 Strategy and is all the more important against the background of Brexit,” said Minister Creed. “I am convinced that the collaboration between Government, its agencies and industry operators that is evident on such missions makes a real and positive difference to Irish companies exporting into these markets.”
Since 2006, Enterprise Ireland’s L4G programme has supported business leaders to enhance their leadership, strategic capabilities, ambition and confidence to lead scalable, innovative companies, capable of growing exports and jobs in Ireland.

Pauline Brennan, L4G programme manager, Enterprise Ireland, says participants need ambition, an open mind and a hunger for growth.

**Practical implementation**

The programme comprises three residential modules, which cover: dynamic business strategy; high-performance leadership; and sustainable growth and execution. L4G is delivered by IESE Business School, which has been ranked first in the world for customised executive education by the Financial Times for three years in a row. "It’s the number one business school in the world and you would think that it would have a serious academic and theoretical slant, but working with IESE and the Continuous Learning Group/the Learning Partnership (Business Advisor Coaching panel), Enterprise Ireland has created a bespoke programme for Irish CEOs that ensures all elements of the programme are practical, focused on execution and impact for both the CEO and the company,” says Pauline. Each participant is assigned a business adviser coach (BAC) who encourages, challenges and assists them in implementing strategic frameworks and applying core leadership concepts to their companies. The BAC also holds meetings with the company’s CEO and senior management team to support the implementation of learnings within the business.

Each programme is cross-sectoral, with approximately 30 participants. Pauline says the peer-to-peer relationships and learnings are very important to the programme. "The cohort relationship is up there with the academic learning and advisory aspect. A lot of the growth plans will develop over conversations during coffee or in the evening and in the classroom.”

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**Lessons in leadership**

Practical, tangible and accessible are just some of the words used to describe Enterprise Ireland’s Leadership 4 Growth (L4G) programme. *Irishfood* speaks with two managing directors who completed the programme in 2016 and are beginning to see its impact in their businesses.
and her team went on food safaris to Paris, inspired by her fellow L4G participants, Anne was asked to think outside the box. “It structured my thoughts and allowed me to work out what that new product should be — we ultimately, helped her and her team to unlock future opportunities. “We make pre-portioned, fully-cooked food ingredients and we cook by frying. When we worked that out, we went on food safaris to see what other pre-portioned, fully-cooked food ingredients were in mainland Europe and the UK. We targeted areas that we are familiar with, which are ready-to-eat and food-to-go categories.”

Peer-to-peer perspective
For Anne Smyth, managing director, Drover Foods, it was a peer-to-peer conversation that helped her reassess how she views and presents the business. Established in 1981 as a raw sausage manufacturer, Drover Foods extended its range in the 1990s to include cooked sausages and in the early 2000s it added stuffing’s to its portfolio. Its customers include sandwich and ready-meal manufacturers in Ireland and the UK. “We are a B2B supplier. Our four biggest customers are Greencore, Kerry Foods, Adelie Group, and Samworth Brothers.” Anne explains that a fellow participant asked her to describe what Drover Foods does and she found it difficult to articulate this simply. The encounter forced her to reflect and, ultimately, helped her and her team to unlock future opportunities. “We make pre-portioned, fully-cooked food ingredients and we cook by frying. When we worked that out, we went on food safaris to see what other pre-portioned, fully-cooked food ingredients were in mainland Europe and the UK. We targeted areas that we are familiar with, which are ready-to-eat and food-to-go categories.”

The UK accounts for the bulk of the company’s business and Drover Foods was already exploring opportunities for expansion, with the introduction of a new line of potato rostis. However, the Brexit referendum further emphasised the need for diversification. “We were growing nicely but we knew we would reach saturation point if we kept making the same products. We needed to find a new product to continue growing, L4G helped me work out what that new product should be because it structured my thoughts and allowed me to think outside the box.”

Expanding customer service
Inspired by her fellow L4G participants, Anne and her team went on food safaris to Paris, Amsterdam and London, following which

Drover Foods decided to introduce two new products – falafel and onion bhajis. Anne says that, since doing the course, the Drover Foods’ management team is much more conscious of what is happening in the market. “We have improved how we make product presentations, we have rebranded our business and have joined up with partners in Germany to sell our products into mainland Europe. Overall, the L4G experience was great for me personally and for the team at Drover Foods.”

Strategy driven
Michelle Walsh, managing director of Ribworld, a sous-vide manufacturer specialising in ready-to-heat and ready-to-eat meat products, previously participated on Enterprise Ireland’s Management 4 Growth programme. “That brought me to a certain level but I was still very much working ‘in’ the business, rather than ‘on’ the business. Our Group CEO had already done L4G and he felt that if I wanted to work on the business I needed to do it and further my education. It was very much about my own development and, in turn, that would help develop the business.”

Michelle says a key learning for her was the importance of documenting the business strategy, as well as gathering detailed financial information to help deliver business results. “The business results are first and foremost, you must decide where you want to go, what your targets are and then you build the strategy to get there.”

Michelle says the programme also highlighted the need to have the correct processes in place to support the delivery of the strategy. “We analysed processes across the business to determine if they are substantial enough to support the strategy we wanted to put in place. ‘Then we looked at the behaviour in the business, which we hadn’t looked at before. We asked if the behaviour in the factory supports the strategy. We want to be an innovative company, but do people operate that way day-to-day? Culture is important to this and we examined what our culture is and what we want it to be and how to get there.”

Permeating the business
Michelle and her team devised an overall business strategy, which was set out clearly on a one-page poster. This template permeated the business, being used to draw up strategies for each department and, subsequently, for each employee. “Individuals have their own strategic objectives, which link to the department strategy, which links to the overall business strategy which in turn links to the business results. They all have three strategic objectives and action plans to go with those objectives and key performance indicators to prove that they are meeting those objectives.”

Michelle says all this feeds into delivering the best service for Ribworld’s customers. “If you look at our values, the customer is number one. The customer is the reason we exist and innovation is at our core. We want to bring innovative ideas to them so they are at the forefront of their categories.”
Food science gets sense

In 2016, Teagasc, Ireland’s agriculture and food development authority, continued to restructure its food programme to align Teagasc’s food research priorities with the Food Wise 2025 strategy for the Irish food and beverage industries. Out of that restructuring, the Food Quality and Sensory Science department was introduced, which strengthens current areas of core research with the inclusion of a new sensory science area. Dr Eimear Gallagher, head of the Food Quality and Sensory Science Department, explains that the focus on flavour and sensory science has significantly intensified within the food industry.

“Sensory science is not a new scientific discipline. However, the role of sensory science in food innovation is now becoming much more valued and sought after by the food industry,” says Dr Gallagher.

Reputable research
She explains that her department’s goal is to deliver high science and excellence in research, coupled with impactful technology transfer activities to the food industry. “We are using methods and technologies to undertake the highest quality research; we are benchmarking ourselves against the best research labs in the world. We have high-class research facilities at Ashtown and Moorepark, which help us to execute reputable science. “The research that we undertake is relevant to the food industry and the information that we obtain from that research is novel, backed by the highest quality science and can be transferable to the food industry. It is also published in peer-reviewed papers, so the science is accepted by peers in our field.”

Driving forces
Health and healthy eating remain a key area of food research and innovation, according to Dr Gallagher. She says food reformulation, particularly the reduction of sugar, is still a significant focus. “Novel foods for active/sports people are also growing in popularity.
Dr Eimear Gallagher completed her BSc and MSc in Food Science and Technology from University College Cork (UCC). In 2005, she earned a PhD in Food Science and Technology from UCC and Teagasc. Dr Gallagher has worked at Teagasc since 2000, where she has been involved in 21 funded research projects at Ashtown, coordinating 14 of these. Dr Gallagher previously worked as a research scientist for Nestlé PTC in England where she established a focus group methodology to study children’s preferences for chocolate and sugar confectionery.

What area of research do you find most interesting?

“My particular research area focuses on ingredient functionality in cereal/bakery science, together with sensory science. I have particular interest and enthusiasm in researching the fundamentals of ingredient interactions in new food formulations, at both the basic scientific level and at a more applied level. I also undertake significant research in the gluten-free area, where I study the processing, textural, mechanical and sensory properties of alternative ingredients to gluten in reformulated products.”

Career highlights

“My research in the gluten-free area has led to significant industry interaction, and to ongoing industry-funded research projects. I have been involved with food companies that have commercialised gluten-free products, with many now at the forefront in the export market internationally. Expansion of this area continues, as does my interaction with the bakery industry, from SME start-up companies, to large multinationals.”

Diverse department

Research across the Food Quality and Sensory Science department focuses on meat science, cereal/bakery science, sensory science and flavour chemistry. Currently, there are seven permanent researchers in the department, working across 28 ongoing projects. Furthermore, researchers in the department are also hosting the current Meat Technology Ireland initiative, which is part of the commercially-focused National Technology Centres programme and funded by Enterprise Ireland and nine meat processing companies. “Meat Technology Ireland aims to be a ‘one-stop-shop’ for beef and sheepmeat processing research and technology in Ireland.”

Knowledge transfer

Most scientific research projects in the department are won through competitive applications to funding bodies, with funding currently obtained from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Enterprise Ireland, Science Foundation Ireland and the EU. Some projects are also internally funded by Teagasc. Members of the department are also involved in industry-led research projects for national and international food companies.
Jeffa describes Durrus Óg’s success at the British Cheese Awards as a ‘a big win for a little cheese’. This award is the latest accolade for the dairy company, which was named by Condé Nast Traveller magazine as the producer of one of the world’s nine best cheeses in 2016.

“We’re delighted to receive this award, and very proud to represent the many wonderful cheesemakers who have contributed to building a really strong artisan cheese culture in Ireland over the years,” says Jeffa.

Established in the 1970s, Durrus cheese began as a hobby for Jeffa who had bought a small farm on the hillside valley of Coomkeen just above Durrus village in west Cork. As the cheese business began to find success, Jeffa sold her small herd and, since then, has sourced her milk exclusively from one local farmer who has a year-round milk supply.

**Award-winning**

Durrus produces four cheeses. Its main product is its standard Durrus, which is a 1.4kg, rind-washed, semi-soft, heat-treated cheese. “For years, we made raw-milk Durrus but we changed to heat treatment in the last three or four years. We still make a small quantity of raw milk cheese but the raw milk cheese that we make now is called Dunmanus. It’s a semi-hard, tomme-type cheese.” The dairy also makes a mini Durrus of 360g and the Durrus Óg – which is 225g, and a semi-soft cheese, with a distinctive pink rind. It was launched in 2008. As well as its win at the British Cheese Awards, Durrus Óg also won silver in the world cheese awards and three stars in the 2016 Great Taste Awards. Lastly, the company also makes a small quantity of smoked Durrus.

Jeffa says Durrus cheeses draw their character from the whole milk produced on West Cork’s rugged terrain and from the peninsula’s clear salt air, which, she says, shapes the cheese’s flavour as it ages.

**Room for expansion**

All Durrus cheeses are handmade by Jeffa and her close-knit team on the same farm where the business began. “We still make the cheese in the same place we started. The buildings have grown around us and we have converted all the farm buildings into cheese houses. We can grow steadily and we are planning to grow a little bit all the time.”

**International opportunities**

Since its earliest days, Jeffa says the company has been successful in securing listings with high-end distributors and restaurants. “We started to export in the mid-1980s to Neal’s Yard Dairy in London, which is a very important customer. Neal’s Yard Dairy remains a loyal customer today and, through it, Durrus products are distributed throughout the UK, as well as being exported to the US and Australia. “They buy a selection of Irish cheeses and we are fortunate enough to be in their portfolio.” Jeffa explains that Neal’s Yard Dairy deal with specialist cheese shops, and its arrangement with the Cork cheesemaker, has seen Durrus products introduced to the deli counters in high-end stores and specialist deli counters.

Product is also available in Belgium and Holland and, this year, Durrus participated in Mondial du Fromage in France to explore further opportunities.
Ashbourne Meat Processors supply premium chilled and frozen beef products to leading retailers, manufacturers and distributors throughout Europe, Russia, Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

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Resilient food businesses only grow from sustainable sources

In today’s world, businesses and consumers alike are becoming increasingly aware of the source of the food they buy. Origin Green, Ireland’s national sustainability programme, enables Irish food and drink suppliers to incorporate sustainability into all areas of the supply chain, with independent verification of their commitments.

• Over 90% of Irish food and drink exporters have been verified under Origin Green, by international auditors SGS.

• 90% of our beef exports have been audited and carbon footprinted to an independently verified standard.

• 80% of our dairy production has been audited and carbon footprinted to an independently verified standard.

Ireland is working towards its vision of 100% verified sustainable exports.

The Origin Green sustainability programme is tried and tested at every point along the supply chain. It’s that very resilience that can help make your food business grow more resilient too.

See how we are delivering for business at Origingreen.ie/resilience

an initiative by Bord Bia
Irish Food Board