

Objective One case study local produce and added value



Plough To Plate
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The projects in the Local Produce and Added Value investment cluster are about adding value to local agricultural and fishing produce and promoting the local sourcing of food.

Agriculture, fishing, food production and manufacture are key parts of the traditional economy of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Projects in this investment cluster develop and expand existing food production and manufacture facilities, support the development of new markets such as the organic sector and promote quality Cornish food to the rest of the UK and the international markets. Fish projects are helping both to ensure the long term viability of the region's fishing industry and to increase the value added to fish in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Plough to Plate

An expanding Cornish business is reducing food miles while increasing its annual turnover to £1 million and doubling the size of its premises.

Plough to Plate, originally based in 2,000 sq ft of rented units at Doublebois, near Liskeard, sources and supplies quality Cornish food and drink to Cornish food outlets. It is now operating from its own new 4,000 sq ft unit at Pensilva.

The company, which provides a one-stop delivery shop for local fresh quality produce, is building on its environmental aims and is poised to offer remote home working to staff and to promote the use of car-sharing.

Now in its fourth year, Plough to Plate lists 1,500 Cornish food and drink product lines from 100 local producers and has a base of 675 regular customers ranging from restaurants and pubs to corner shops.

Set up in 2003 with support from Objective One EAGGF (European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund) via Business Link's Cornwall Food and Drink Programme and Cornwall Taste of the West, the business, which has six vans and ten employees, is currently in talks with national potential clients including a major cash and carry firm and a heritage organisation.

Founder directors Nigel and Sherry Boocock had food retailing experience and knew exactly the difficulties faced by both ends of the food supply chain.

"Plough to Plate fills the gap between the two," said Sherry. "As a small specialist food producer it is



Personal Business Adviser Alex Nicholas samples the goods with founder director Sherry Boocock.

not always easy to build up markets and new business while for owners of eating and retail establishments, accessing Cornish food and drink from individual businesses can be a logistical nightmare. We provided a badly needed wholesaling and distribution service at a time when the interest in selling, eating and sourcing local foods was starting to take off.

"One major new initiative has been the cutting and labelling of whole cheeses ready for resale. This has given some of our smaller customers, for example Post Offices, an opportunity to sell more Cornish produce to which they otherwise would not have had access."

The company benefited from Business Link support for strategic workshops, communications and branding, business systems and processes, and a new website which will be launched shortly.

"The support really helped and the mentoring from Alex Nicholas is invaluable," said Sherry. "We see him every couple of months and he has assisted us to become a better business by sitting down with us and analysing what has been done, and how, and the way to move forward including changing roles in the company. With Business Link's help we have evolved from our early beginnings into the proper business that we are now, although there is still a long way to go."

Winner of a silver award in the Cornwall Business Awards 2006 and a finalist in the Devon and Cornwall Business Awards 2006, the company recently expanded its phone lines from two to six, improved its IT and introduced new racking and systems.

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Looking to the future, Plough to Plate is planning to trial its business model outside Cornwall to prove that it can be successfully applied in other areas.

For more information about Business Link visit www.blhc.co.uk or ring 0845 600 9966.

For more information about Taste of The West visit www.cornwalltasteofthewest.co.uk or ring 01579 349363.



Sherry Boocock and Bill Sixton of Plough to Plate, back in 2005 when the company had five vans and six full and part-time employees. The business continues to expand and now has six vans and ten employees.
