



## case study

# environmental sustainability



Objective One is  
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The Objective One Partnership  
for Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly

## PENGREEP FARM DAIRY

Ponsanooth

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www.lynherdairies.co.uk

### *the project*

The project has established a new on-farm cheese production unit to allow an increase in handmade cheese production to meet demand which had been outstripping production capacity.

The cheeses produced at the unit have also won an array of British Cheese Awards; a gold medal for Cornish Yarg, silver for Cornish Red Nettle Cheese and bronze for the Cornish Herb and Garlic cheese.

The Programme has invested £155,660 from the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) in the project which has a total cost of £778,299.

The new building has won two prestigious awards; the Royal Institute of British Architects medal for the best agricultural building in the South West in 2002 and the Civic Trust Agricultural Building Award in 2003. The unit has also attracted the attention of The Independent which featured the building in its list of 50 best modern buildings to visit in 2003.

### *measures of environmental sustainability adopted*

#### **To promote the prudent use of natural resources**

Monitoring of the dairy's energy use is carried out by an external company to ensure maximum efficiencies. Heat generated by the refrigeration system (which uses glycol antifreeze instead of harmful CFC refrigerants) is recirculated to heat the water used in processing. The unit has rock wool insulation in floor and ceiling panels to minimise heat loss, and the wall panels can be easily moved to alter the space available for various aspects of production as the need arises. The whey by-product is used to feed the dairy cows, the product packaging is recyclable and the business recycles office waste through a local recycling company. Waste water is cleansed through a reedbed system and rainwater is directed to a storm water pond. Water is supplied from a borehole.

#### **To protect and improve the environment**

90% of the goods bought are milk which is supplied directly by Pengreep Farm and through Milk Link, a consortium of local milk producers. Employees are



largely from the local area and tend to walk in to work or share lifts. Biodiversity is enhanced by the reedbeds. 12 acres of woodland were planted under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme to replace the 5 acres lost due to storms and the redevelopment of the site.

#### **To take advantage of the business opportunities afforded by growing demands for environmental goods, processes and services**

The use of natural materials (e.g. nettle leaves, garlic leaves) in the product packaging is employed to develop a strong branding image which relies on the natural environment to provide a niche market.

#### **To increase awareness of residents, businesses and visitors of the value and importance of the environment**

Natural products such as the nettles on the Cornish Yarg are used as branding devices for the cheeses. The supermarkets are made aware of the dairy's environmental sustainability credentials.

### *benefits of environmental sustainability*

The insulation and energy keep the building at a more equitable temperature resulting in a food safe environment, comfortable working conditions for staff and reduced costs associated with having to heat up and cool down the building. Rock wool insulation is also fire retardant which helps secure buildings insurance



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far easier than the typical polystyrene based panels do. The good use of natural lighting also helps reduce the energy use and costs associated with this.

The sensitive design of the building improves the company's image locally and, vitally, that of the cheeses whose profile and branding would have been undermined by an industrial style production building.

Developing a system to supply, cleanse and discharge water removed the considerable one-off cost and disruption of connecting to the mains water and sewerage system. There will also be ongoing savings in discharge costs.

The use of local milk increases the traceability of the product, reduces transport costs, supports the local community and farmers, strengthens relationships with local producers and reinforces the ever-important Cornish branding which is crucial to the cheeses' success.

Planting the woodland helped to secure planning for the redevelopment (which had displaced a smaller area of existing woodland) and has provided community benefit and a haven for wildlife.

Public perception about the dairy and its cheese is greatly enhanced by the emphasis on the natural and Cornish environment. This has created a niche market allowing the dairy to charge a 50% premium on its products and cushioning the dairy from price decreases within the cheese market due to falls in the price of milk.

The supermarkets are increasingly asking questions about, and placing importance on, the sustainability of the products they buy, so integrating environmental sustainability into the dairy's practices makes the cheeses more attractive to this major set of customers.

In summary the economic benefits for Pengreep Farm Dairy created through the adoption of environmental sustainability measures have been one-off and ongoing costs savings, increased attractiveness to major customers, niche market development and protection from price fluctuations.

### lessons learnt

Catherine Mead, Director of Lynher Dairies, said: *"Environmental sustainability was born out of the very project itself as the dairy needed to develop a building linked and sensitive to the natural and Cornish environment in order to maintain its successful Cornish branding."*



*"It is best to consider your environmental sustainability and other options at the new build stage. Research the subject thoroughly by talking to and visiting other initiatives that are doing similar work."*

*"The dairy managers and staff are now used to the environmental sustainability measures which are integrated in every aspect of what we do; design, purchasing, processing and marketing. In fact they don't even stop to consider them but rather see them as the norm."*

Speaking at the opening, Lord Haskins said: *"This is a classic example where enterprising farmers with skills can do things in the market place that they would not have thought about doing years ago. This is the future of farming and it's very exciting. The Cornish brand, as a food brand, is the best in England without a doubt and this is a great way of exploiting it. I have always talked about the need for a culture of enterprise and not a culture of dependency and what we have seen today is in the true spirit of enterprise."*

Carleen Kelemen, Director of the Objective One Partnership, says: *"As well as producing some of the finest cheese in the world, Cornwall can also compete with anyone else when we invest in innovative thinking and modern design."*

**For more information about how you can incorporate environmental sustainability into your project please contact the Objective One Partnership Office on 01872 241379 or email [objectiveone@cornwall.gov.uk](mailto:objectiveone@cornwall.gov.uk).**