

Directors's Comment



"Plans are now advancing rapidly for the third Northern Ireland Food and Drink Festival. This is our simple platform, celebrating our biggest

Industry. This year we hope to have more partners than ever, so if you would like to get involved contact us!

Garden Gourmet III is confirmed for 18th and 19th September and we are confident of over 10,000 visitors. Other events are in planning.

Welcome to our new 'Taste of Ulster' members. We hope you will like the new look guide due to be published shortly. We look forward to an exciting and productive year ahead. We believe there are many opportunities for co-operation between local food manufacturers and hospitality establishments.

Finally we look forward to Minister Ian Pearson's thoughts on the Food Strategy report that should be out early autumn."

Michael Bell, Director, NIFDA

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NIFDA'S ANNUAL CHARITY BBQ

On Thursday 10th June NIFDA held their 8th Annual charity Barbecue raising £400 for the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children. Our thanks to Ulster Bank and J C Brow Packaging for sponsoring the event.

Some 100 members and guests including John Barrett, Chairman of Northern Ireland Food and Drink Association, Tom McGrath, Chairman of Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Graham Furey, Vice President of Ulster Farmer's Union attended the event at the Manor House, Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, Cultra.

It was an enjoyable evening with many members relaxing and enjoying the wonderful food and drink donated by NIFDA members. It was also a chance for the NIFDA members to network with other members in the food and drink industry.

The charity ballot was in aid of the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children. Barbara Money Penny, Acting Nurse Manager, showed her appreciation by saying a few words on the chosen charity. NIFDA members and NIFDA Associate members kindly donated prizes for this year's event. These ranged from a fabulous slim line DVD player, which was generously donated by Moy Park to a superb NIFDA raincoat!

Members were certainly kept entertained throughout the evening by the talented APEX Jazz band as well as comedienne Nuala McKeever. Everyone enjoyed the craic and a great night was had by all!

Once again NIFDA would like to take this opportunity to thank members for the fantastic food and drink they provided.



Staff and guests from Allied Bakeries enjoying the NIFDA BBQ

Good for
Northern
Ireland

...Good
for you.

NIFDA'S ANNUAL CHARITY BBQ (continued)



David Finley and Carley McWilliams,
Evron Group



(L-R) Graham Furey, Vice President, UFU, John Barrett, NIFDA Chairman and Tom McGrath, Chairman of the NI Tourist Board.



(L-R) Nuala, Jason Hempton, Michael Bell and Nuala McKeever

IFEX18 Hailed As A Great Success

With the curtain now down on another successful IFEX Exhibition, both exhibitors and the organisers have declared it an outstanding event.

Ireland's 18th International Food, Drink & Hospitality Exhibition, was held at the King's Hall, Belfast, from 27th to 29th April where thousands of trade visitors, kept the 350 exhibiting companies (including many NIFDA members), busy throughout the three days of IFEX as new products were launched, orders placed and follow-up contacts for future development made.

Conor Kelly, Managing Director of IFEX said: "IFEX18 had one of the best attendances for several years and this was reflected in the number of

compliments we have received from both exhibitors and trade visitors. The quality of our trade visitors was especially high and this resulted in significant business being achieved by the exhibitors together with a high level of contacts made.

Many exhibitors said they didn't get a break during the entire three days as trade visitors poured into the King's Hall, eager to search out the latest products, innovations and ideas."

Northern Ireland Sales Manager, Alan Stewart commented; "The quality of visitors was exceptional. I have been coming to IFEX for about 12 years in various capacities and this has been the best show that I can remember. It exceeded all our expectations."

IFEX18 brought together successfully the food, drink and hospitality sectors in one dynamic three-day showcase, which had the King's Hall buzzing from morning to evening.



Award winning cheeses at the Fivemiletown Creamery stand.



Cooking up a feast at the Castlewood Farm Products stand at Ifex18.



Special guest Jenny Bristow samples the fresh produce on the Willowbrook Foods stand at Ifex18.

YOUR COMMUNITY



You'll find the
tastiest products
closer to home



Co-op Launches Campaign to Promote NI Food & Drink

This summer the Co-op will be launching a new campaign to promote Northern Ireland food and drink by using an on-pack logo.

The Co-op has teamed up with Northern Ireland Food and Drink Association (NIFDA) and will be using the organisation's logo.

Both organisations believe that the NIFDA logo has now achieved a high degree of recognition by consumers since it has been used to promote Northern Ireland food and drink in high profile events such as the popular Belfast Food Festival.

The Co-op has always sold many locally produced food and drink products in its 34 stores in the province. Now the retailer wants to reinforce this message by featuring the NIFDA logo on in-store point-of-sale material, as well as on some of the Co-op's own label products, such as eggs and milk. It is the first time that the logo will be used to endorse the Northern Ireland origin of products. The Co-op currently emphasises its locally-sourced produce in Scotland and Wales with the St Andrew's flag and the Welsh dragon, respectively.

The Co-op hopes that its suppliers of branded Northern Ireland products will follow its move and incorporate the NIFDA logo on their packaging design.



Members News • Members News • Members News

Bakery Earns its 'Krust' for Rural Charity

The smell of freshly toasted bread has proved to be a fundraising success for NIFDA members, Irwin's Bakery.

The Portadown-based bakery raised almost £2000 for local charity, Rural Support after selling thousands of its highly popular 'Nutty Krust' loaves over the three day duration of the 2004 Balmoral Show.

In return for making a minimum donation of 40p to Rural Support, each visitor to the Irwin's stand received a loaf of Nutty Krust. Such was the demand that visitors even bartered for the last loaf, which was eventually sold for a much appreciated donation of £5, just as the Show closed on Friday evening.

"We decided to mark the 40th anniversary of Nutty Krust by exhibiting at Balmoral and by announcing our fundraising partnership with Rural Support," said Elly Hunter, Irwin's marketing manager. "However we were



Jack Quigley from Banbridge helped support the Nutty Krust fundraising initiative at this year's Balmoral Show. The initiative raised almost £2,000 for local charity rural support.

Pictured (R-L) Elly Hunter, Marketing Manager of Irwin's and Malcolm Emery, Development Director with Rural support.

totally over-whelmed by the response to our stand as we were inundated with requests from people of all ages, eager to sample the 'taste of home' and, in return, support the work of this

important charity. Once again Nutty Krust has proved that locally baked bread is the first choice for NI consumers!"

The North Down Group Celebrate Double Triumph

NIFDA members, the North Down Group celebrated a double triumph at the inaugural Re:refresh awards. Chairman Perry Donaldson scooped the Florette Lifetime Achievement Award, while the company took the Capespan Wholesaler of the Year title. Mr Donaldson was commended for more than 40 years serving the industry. He began life in the fruit and veg trade in 1963 with James McVeigh and Son and eight years later he formed Perry Donaldson & Co, which proved to be a fortuitous piece of timing. The market's administrators were planning to move from its traditional city centre home to a green-field site. When the move took place he was the first to take his business outside the market complex. It was the first of many occasions when Donaldson made his own decisions and created his own marketplace.

In 1981 Perry Donaldson founded Perry Pac Ltd, the first vegetable processing

and packaging facility in Northern Ireland and during this decade he became something of a frontman for the industry in the province. Donaldson was fresh produce spokesman for BBC Radio (NI) and contributed to a regular consumer spot on BBC TV. In 1989 he sold his two existing businesses and joined a new company, North Down Fruit & Vegetable Co, as chairman and managing director, and today North Down is a £22 million turnover company that continues to innovate and lead trade in Northern Ireland. It was the unanimous view of the judges that, having spent his working life raising the standard and awareness of the fresh produce industry that he should be presented with the Florette Lifetime Achievement Award. Donaldson, pictured after receiving the award from Florette's Mark Newton, said: "I was completely surprised – my colleagues were collecting information and I



Perry Donaldson, The North Down Group receiving Florette Lifetime Achievement Award from Florette's Mark Newton.

thought it was for the other categories we were nominated in. But they had been working hard behind my back! I am delighted to receive the Florette Lifetime Achievement Award especially since it the first one. I am absolutely thrilled. I have seen the industry change, but for the better."

BROW PACKAGING CELEBRATES PRESTIGIOUS UK HYGIENE AWARD AND CONFIRMS MAJOR NEW R&D PROJECT

Associate members, Brow Packaging has secured a rare hygiene / quality accreditation double.

Brow Packaging is one of the country's top producers of polythene and related products and operates round the clock from 100,000 square feet premises on the outskirts of Belfast. It also acts as a major distributor of bakery and other plastic, paper, board and foil packaging products and keeps more than 2,500 products in stock at any one time.

They recently announced they had been successful in achieving the coveted BRC/IOP Technical Standard – just weeks after securing the upgraded ISO 9001 2000 quality marquee. Brow packaging also confirmed it has been working for some time in partnership with specialist food packaging consultants to the major supermarkets with the aim of producing a new packaging film which will significantly extend the shelf-life of certain fruits and vegetables. Each additional day of shelf-life means literally millions of pounds saved by the retailer.

Managing Director Angus Brow, whose father, John founded the company in the 1940s, is convinced there are exciting days ahead for the Belfast company.



Angus Brow (left), Managing Director of Brow Packaging and David Needham (Brow Packaging Operations Director) with the hygiene and quality certificates achieved by the company

"The quality and hygiene accreditations are hugely important to us. Almost 90% of our sales are in the food sector, so in order to be able to sustain this and grow

our business it was imperative for us to achieve the BRC/IOP Technical Standard – which is endorsed by both The Institute of Packaging and the British Retail Consortium. Many of our packaging products are used by major suppliers to the multiples who are rightly demanding ever-increasing protection against contamination. The structures and systems we have put in place now enable us to ensure our customers are able to meet the demands of the retailer and the growing burden of legislation."

The process of achieving the prestigious BRC/IOP Technical Standard – which is rapidly establishing itself as a European-wide hygiene standard for the manufacture of food packaging – took almost a year and required an investment of over £30,000 plus management time.

According to Angus Brow the fact that Brow Packaging now operates to even more exacting hygiene standards and quality systems differentiates his company's offering from that of most in the marketplace.

'Boxing Clever' at Loughry Campus

The Packaging Centre staff in the College of Agriculture Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) Loughry Campus have been delighted with a successful year of academic and industrial achievements.

The Centre has a well-equipped laboratory that is unique in Ireland and comparable with many of the leading packaging testing facilities throughout Europe. Many companies are finding that today's marketplace is fraught with packaging legislation as well as economic and environmental constraints to use less packaging whilst maintaining performance standards. Hence it is no surprise to learn that the unique service provided by the Packaging Centre's resource coupled with the professional reputation of the staff has driven an ongoing annual growth of its customer base.

The team-members are currently involved in teaching full and part time students as well as working on packaging projects with local businesses. September 2003 saw 16 new students enrol in the Diploma and Certificate courses that aim to improve the key core packaging competencies of the Northern Ireland Food Industry. The Diploma is targeted at Supply Chain Managers and the Certificate is targeted at Supervisors/ Key Operators.

One of the academic highlights of the year for the team was the achievement

of student Claire O'Hagan. Claire, a part time packaging student at Loughry Campus, was recently presented the award for achieving the highest marks in the 2003 Institute of Packaging Exams.

Claire was delighted to receive her award of five hundred pounds and a cut glass engraved decanter at the star studded gala Starpak awards ceremony in Birmingham.

" I am absolutely delighted and would like to thank all the staff in the Packaging Centre at Loughry for their help and guidance throughout my years study". Claire is employed by Diageo Global Supply, IBC Limited (Guinness) as a Quality Systems Administrator and

her line manager Joanne Doak made the following comments on Claire's Success;

" The Company is delighted with Claire's achievement and commend the CAFRE for the professional competencies that their programme deliverers. This course has been and will continue to be a cornerstone for the skills enhancement and Personal Development Plan of the staff in my department."

So if YOU want to be 'BOX CLEVER' then phone Mary Scullion, at Loughry Campus on 028 8676 8100 for details of packaging improvement programmes.



Dates for the Diary

- Garden Gourmet - 18th - 19th Sept. 2004
- NIFDA Food & Drink Awards Ceremony - 21st Oct. 2004
- NIFDA Annual Dinner - 25th Oct. 2004
- Food Innovations for an Expanding Europe conference - Oct. 26-29, 2004, Warsaw, Poland.
- Winter International Fancy Food and Conference Show – Jan. 23-25, 2005, San Francisco, USA

FOOD SAFETY WEEK – DON'T LET GERMS SPOIL THE PARTY

If you're planning to host or attend a party, food poisoning is probably the last thing on your mind.

But with a rise in food borne illness during the summer months from bacteria such as salmonella, campylobacter and e-coli*, the risk is very real. At events where food is served, proper precautions are essential to prevent outbreaks of potentially lethal food poisoning.

This year's Food Safety Week is co-funded by safefood, The Food Safety Promotion Board and the Food Standards Agency Northern Ireland (FSANI); will focus primarily on community organisations, church groups and other associations that cater for members or visitors at meetings, parties or fairs. In partnership with the 26 local councils, and with support from NIFDA and the General Consumer Council NI, safefood and FSANI will distribute specially produced materials to highlight potential dangers and good hygiene habits to 2000 groups across NI.

A booklet outlining the hazards of catering for such occasions will be issued along with a set of kitchen stickers highlighting the main ways to prevent food poisoning. In addition, a series of Food Safety Week events throughout Northern Ireland will aim to remind people of the four main safety messages – Clean, Separate, Cook and Chill.

Barney Whelan, Communications Director for safefood said: "Whether its sandwiches for a meeting, cakes for a summer fair or sausage rolls for a party, a lot of food is served in community and church or parish halls. If the right precautions are not taken, serious outbreaks of food poisoning can occur. The good news is that most cases of food poisoning are easily preventable by following the advice that we're giving during Food Safety Week.

Michael Bell, Executive Director of NIFDA said: "The aim of Food Safety Week is to make people change their habits when it comes to handling or preparing food. Food poisoning can be serious, with symptoms ranging from mild discomfort to hospitalisation. Anyone who does prepare food for numbers of people must realise the



Pictured at the launch are (from left) Michael Bell, Northern Ireland Food and Drink Association; Lesley Johnston, General Consumer Council for Northern Ireland; Barney Whelan, safefood, The Food Safety Promotion Board; Judith Jordan, Environmental Health Officer; and Trevor Williamson, of Food Standards Agency NI.

consequences of not taking the correct precautions."

The launch reception for the 12th National Food Safety Week was held on Monday 14 June 2004 at the Palace of Westminster. It was well attended by MPs, food chain partners and members of the media interested in the foodlink

campaign and the work our industry does on promoting food safety.

Our host, Paddy Tipping MP, and Deputy President Gavin Neath presented the prizes to the winners of the foodlink schools poster competition. Reef and Aoife, 6 year old pupils at Harlow Green Community Infant School in Gateshead won the under 7s year group; 11 year-old Eleanor from Westholme School in Blackburn took first prize in the 8-12 year group; and Nusrat from The Heathland School in Middlesex won the over 12s section. All won tickets for the London Aquarium and a flight on the London Eye as well as £100 in vouchers. Each school also receives £500 to spend on food technology equipment.

More Information

Visit the foodlink website (www.foodlink.org.uk) to find out more about National Food Safety Week and the foodlink programme of activities or contact Carol Elsasser at: foodlink@fdf.org.uk or on 020 7420 7129.



Paddy Tipping MP, and Deputy President Gavin Neath presented the prizes to the winners of the foodlink schools poster competition.

Scholarship Student Returns Home



Last year the NIFDA Educational Trust and St. Joseph's University, Philadelphia supported Lynsey Hollywood

with a scholarship to study in the States. She has recently returned and here is how she got on....

"America, the land of dreams, hope and opportunities- that's what America has meant to me. This time last year I never thought that I would be in America studying at a top class university, working at one of the states most famous companies, or being part of a typical American family. This opportunity has been an incredible blessing to me in a thousand different ways.

From August to September I studied food marketing at Saint Josephs University in Philadelphia. This experience in itself was unique as not only did I study classes, which were completely new to me, but I also got involved in university life and lived on campus.

At Saint Josephs I also had the opportunity to meet various other international students, which was awesome. Through this I got to know a lot of Indian students and somehow ended up modelling in an Indian Diwali fashion show. It was there I realised that my hopes of becoming the next big supermodel were diminished as I realised that walking in a sari proved more difficult than it actually looked!! I also had the honour of attending the USA Food industry ball in Washington DC. It

was at this event that the 12 students selected got to wine, dine and network with executives within the food industry. It was all very upscale and classy but lots of fun- but not what a wee country girl is used to!

So after a very eventful term, with the stress of exams over Christmas beckoned and my best friend joined me for a week in the Big Apple where we shopped till we dropped! Then after a whirlwind Christmas it was back to Philadelphia to start the second part of my scholarship.

When it came to the second part of my scholarship it too was an eventful and enriching experience. This time I was living with an American family and working at the local Wawa convenience store just outside Philadelphia. After working on the shop floor I moved on to the corporate part of the company and it was there I realised how important that experience was, I had learnt who the core consumer was, what kind of lifestyles they lead therefore understanding why they ate certain foods and bought certain products.

It was in the corporate part of my Wawa experience in which I truly learnt a lot and realised how much I have a passion to work within the food industry. This company could not have treated me any better and in the end blew me away. At the corporate office I spent 4 weeks working at the Wawa bakery. It was there that I had the opportunity to do quality control testing of product specifications, to be part of a quality assurance survey on the bakery's hygiene standards, to understand the manufacturing process including learning about the company's supply chain and distribution, but finally to be involved in

the product development of both new and line extensions of bakery products.

The following month was then spent working in the foodservice marketing department of the company. My time here was incredible due to the fact that I had a mentor who took me under her wing and taught me a lot about the food product development process. I also was involved in supply chain management by visiting companies who supplied products to Wawa and finally in the research of both consumer trends and new recipes for hot food service and breakfast. Wawa is an amazing company in which its core values are evident in all that they do. I am grateful to have had such a wonderful time with such a forward thinking company.

Within this scholarship I also used any free time I had to travel as much as I could. This experience, made it possible for me to go places I could have only once dreamed of. Within this short space of time I managed to see Boston, Washington DC, Baltimore, NYC, San Francisco, LA, and Hawaii. All were so different but very special in their own way.

Truthfully this scholarship was life changing. I feel that this opportunity not only made me do things I never thought I would but it has also taught me a lot about the person I am and the person I want to strive to be. I feel like I am more passionate about having a successful career and trying to play a role in making the Northern Ireland food industry a booming success. I would just like to say Thank-you to NIFDA for providing me with this wonderful experience - I hope many other students get to experience this kind of wonderful opportunity."

Lynsey Hollywood.

MARKS & SPENCER LISBURN HITS THE JACKPOT WITH CHECKOUT 'GOLD AWARD'

Congratulations to Lisburn's Marks & Spencer Food Hall which has just been awarded 'Northern Ireland Supermarket of the Year' at the recent Checkout Gold Awards in Dublin.

At the event, which took place at the Four Seasons Hotel, Ireland's top retailers and retail outlets were recognised for excellence across the entire Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) spectrum, from advertising and new product development, to management and product support.

Marks & Spencer has also recently opened a new store in Omagh, which is located at the Showgrounds Retail Park. The new 10,000 sq. ft. store, Marks & Spencer's ninth in Northern Ireland, represents an investment of £2.6 million and has created 50 new jobs in the local economy.

Pictured celebrating their award in the Marks & Spencer Lisburn store is (L-R) Jonathan Glenister, Marks & Spencer Divisional Head of Food, Movita McKenzie, Store Manager and Kenneth Daly, Food Manager.



New Staff At NIFDA

NIFDA are pleased to introduce the two newest members of the NIFDA team, Caroline Mackin and Emma Collins, who have joined us on a year's placement from the University of Ulster.

Caroline Mackin, Marketing Assistant

Having obtained her A' Levels in Business studies and Computers, Caroline is now a student at the University of Ulster, Jordanstown, currently studying for a BSc (Hons) Marketing DIS Degree.

Caroline has already gained a great insight into the ever-changing dynamic world of Marketing, through work experiences and has gained the knowledge of working abroad in America during the summer of 2003. This experience enabled her to widen her communication skills and broaden her working relationship with different cultures while adapting to a different lifestyle.

At the beginning of June, she joined

NIFDA for her placement year as the Marketing Assistant for the company and is looking forward to the challenge of working within the marketing department of the food and drink sector for Northern Ireland.

Caroline has a keen interest in travelling and enjoys socialising and walking.

Emma Collins, Assistant Researcher

Having previously studied Business and Retail at The Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education, Emma is now at The University of Ulster working towards a BSc Hons degree in Marketing.

Emma has a passion for marketing and has developed a good insight into the practical elements through work experience.

In 2002, Emma participated on the Leonardo Da Vinci programme, which involved a three week work placement in Hungary. Emma benefited greatly from the programme as it has given her



L-R Caroline Mackin, Emma Collins

a more in depth view of the industry. Emma also spent time in Budapest and Vienna through the programme. This enabled Emma to experience a different culture, lifestyle and most importantly, a different working environment. The overall experience was positive and has prepared her well for the future. Emma has also spent time working in England and Northern Ireland. From her experiences Emma realised she wanted to pursue a marketing career.

Having a keen interest in the food and drink sector, Emma is particularly looking forward to her placement at NIFDA as their Assistant Researcher.

Emma has a keen interest in travel, playing tennis and the music industry.

Taste of Ulster 2004 guide launched

Taste of Ulster, the initiative that promotes excellence in food preparation and service and encourages the use of local produce, has just launched its 2004/05 guide. Featuring over 100 hospitality establishments from coffee shops to hotels, the guide is a publication of the Northern Ireland Food and Drink Association and is supported by Invest Northern Ireland.

Speaking at the launch, at Mc Hughs in Belfast, Lord Rathcavan, Chairman of taste of Ulster Said; "Taste of Ulster is the benchmark for quality food and service across all sectors of the Northern Ireland hospitality market. In the run-up to the busiest holiday period of the year, I congratulate our 9 new members, and all our existing members what are the front-line ambassadors for the best that the Northern Ireland food and drink industry has to offer."

John Barrett, Chairman of Northern Ireland Food and Drink commented; "This is the first year that NIFDA has been involved with the production of the Taste of Ulster guide, but the synergies and links between producers

and the hospitality sector are absolutely apparent. We hope that both visitors and local people will use this guide and that it will contribute to the growing food reputation of this provision."

Nine new membership plaques are to be awarded this year to Mc Hughs Bar, The Kings Head, Ryans, James Street

South & The Holiday Inn in Belfast. La Mon House Hotel in Co. Down, The Old Green Nursery in Kells, Squires Bar in Enniskillen & The famous Bushmills Distillery in Co. Antrim. Copies of the Guide will be available, free of charge, from the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Tourism Information Centres across the province.



From left to right in the photo is Lord Rathcavan, John Barrett NIFDA chairman, Maynard Mawhinney of Invest Northern Ireland and Joe Webb of Mc Hughs Bar

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