

Objective One case study local produce and added value



Cornwall NHS Food Programme
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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.

Cornwall NHS Food Programme

In January 2005, the Cornwall NHS Food Programme became the first tenant to move into a business incubation unit at the Knowledge Spa, on the site of the Royal Cornwall Hospital, Truro. The three-person team was originally based in shared offices at the Royal Cornwall Hospital itself.

The Cornwall NHS Food Programme began in 2001 after receiving investment from the NHS locally, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Objective One European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF), the Organic South West Soil Association and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

The team works to find ways of using Cornish produce for hospital patients, staff and visitors. This means that local suppliers and producers are supported with year-round contracts, "food miles" (the distance produce is taken by transport before being sold or served) are cut and patients are guaranteed healthy, tasty food to aid their recovery.

So far some of the region's hospitals are supplied with Cornish-produced cheese, sandwiches, ice cream, yoghurt, fish, fruit, vegetables, milk and meat.

The team, comprising Nathan Harrow, project manager; Mike Pearson, project director; Roy Heath, sustainable food procurement manager; and Katie Pearson, administration assistant, is backed by all five health trusts. Cornwall Partnership Trust is the leader of the project with its chief executive Tony Gardner chairing the project board. Mr Harrow said: "We have noticed the difference since we moved into the Knowledge Spa. For a start we are all together so communication is better and the facilities are superb.



Roy Heath of the Cornwall NHS Food Programme

"In this day and age food you can trust is so important. We have such fantastic quality produce in Cornwall and the more we can get onto the patients' plates the better. It is also good for the producers because we are here 365 days a year, so contracts are not just seasonal."

The team is now working hard on getting a central food production unit up and running. Based at Barncoose Industrial Estate near Redruth, the Central Food Production Unit would have the capacity to cater for 3,000 meals a day for Cornwall's hospitals. There would also be scope for other food businesses to use the cutting edge equipment, such as blast freezing, so their food could be processed locally, cutting food miles.

Local producers working with the programme so far include Matthew Stevens and Sons, Callestick Farm, Cornish Country Larder, Trewithan Dairy, Newquay Fruit & Veg, Gwavas Farm, Doble Quality Foods, Chaffins, WC Rowe and Scorse Foods.

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