

15 food start-ups complete SuperValu Food Academy

Products from 15 new Irish food producers are to go on sale nationwide in SuperValu stores after their founders successfully completed the retailer's Food Academy programme.

Now in its seventh year, [SuperValu Food Academy](#) is a unique food business development programme between SuperValu, Bord Bia and the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs). Participants in the programme receive training in market research and branding, food safety, marketing, finance and business development.

The programme helps early-stage Irish food and drink businesses to get their start in the food retail sector with their first, all-important supermarket listing in SuperValu. For the 15 food start-ups, today (19 May) marks the culmination of a journey that began back in October 2019 when they started the SuperValu Food Academy training programme and completed a series of training and mentoring courses.

One of the food start-ups to list in SuperValu is Thanks Plants, a 100pc plant-based, handmade vegan sausages brand.

Aisling Cullen, who set up Thanks Plants, said: "Over the last six months, with the help of SuperValu's Food Academy, I've been working steadily to develop a unique product. Without the help of Food Academy, I would not be where I am now. It has given huge support to all the producers involved, and I recommend it for any new producer starting out."

Some of the other suppliers include Larkins Farm, Muckross Creamery and Loch Measc. These new suppliers reflect a shift in thinking towards sustainable, local food production and comprise healthy, plant-based and gluten-free offerings, underpinned by values of provenance, transparency, and authenticity.

Food Academy producers have sold a combined €140m of produce in SuperValu since 2014, supporting 1,500 jobs in the economy. To date, 620 producers have come through the programme, with 272 producers currently enrolled in the programme.

"We have been supporters of local for 40 years and it's part of our DNA," said Martin Kelleher,

managing director, SuperValu. “We started SuperValu Food Academy to support local food start-ups and the programme is more important than ever as we see consumers swing back to support our local food producers.

“SuperValu’s network of independently owned and operated stores across Ireland means that we are best placed to support local food start-ups through SuperValu Food Academy. Our independent retailers can provide local producers with their all-important first supermarket listing, helping them to create employment in local communities, We believe in local business and Food Academy is great way for us to help new businesses to grow and get the support they need.”

The SuperValu Food Academy programme is now open for applications until Friday 26 June 2020. To apply, contact your Local Enterprise Office for an application form on www.localenterprise.ie

15 new Irish food producers

Builin Blasta

[Builin Blasta](#) is a coffee shop in the heart of Connemara that makes its own range of coffee, dressings, mayonnaises, jams, chutneys, honeys and breads.

Camo’s

Cahersiveen, Co Kerry-based [Camo’s Restaurant](#) bottles its dressings and oils, blending quality extra virgin olive oil with fresh herbs and other ingredients in small batches.

Katie's Kombucha

[Katie’s Kombucha](#) is a healthy pro-biotic drink, vegan and made with love in Dalkey by Katie McCann, who did her studies in Ballymaloe

Kaffa Coffee

[Kaffa Coffee](#) is a Ballina, Mayo-based coffee roasting business whose Well Bean product is designed to taste delicious while reducing fatigue, chronic pain and easing stress.

Larkin’s Hill Farm

[Larkin’s Hill Farm](#) is a family run traditional mixed farm located in the picturesque village of Puckane, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary. Larkin’s Hill Farm grows their produce on some of the best soil Ireland has to offer with lands situated beside the beautiful Lough Derg. This fertile land allows them to grow their food naturally creating highly nutritious produce.

Lets Chaat

Bringing the taste of Rander, India, to Ireland, SAMA's Foods Ltd was set up in 2019 in Dublin and its [Let's Chaat](#) range features a range of Indian desserts and snacks.

Lough Measc

Eoin Holmes, the Founder and Head Distiller of [Lough Mask Distillery](#), has been devoted to the wild Mayo landscape since fishing there as a child. Today, his distillery is as much an award-winning spirits producer as it is an ode to the rugged, lakeside mountains wherein it lies. His award-winning Loch Measc Gin takes the surrounding countryside as its muse, and is made with Lough Mask water and wild flower botanicals.

Maisha Coffee

[Maisha Coffee](#) takes the best knowledge of growing Arabica coffee from Kenya to producing a range of ground coffee, beans and cold brew products.

Portmagee Whiskey

[Portmagee Whiskey](#) crafts small batches of Barbados rum cask finished Irish whiskey. The business was founded in early 2017 by two brothers John and James Murphy from Portmagee, Co. Kerry. The Portmagee spirit, logo and branding honour the traditional Seine Boat and maritime heritage of South Kerry and also Portmagee's colourful history as a 1700's smuggling port under Captain Theobald Magee and his strong-willed wife Brigid Morgell.

Muckross Ice Cream

Fifth generation dairy farmer John Fleming diversified the family farm in Killarney to making a delicious range of ice cream using its own fresh milk, fresh cream and free-range eggs under the [Muckross Ice Cream](#) brand.

Subh Frao? Bán

[Subh Frao? Bán](#) is a small food business in Monaghan that makes hand-crafted artisan sauces and relishes. The business is the brainchild of former chef Val O'Kelly who has worked all over the world and started his own food manufacturing business after becoming tired of using bulk-produced, synthetic sauces that lacked provenance and goodness. O'Kelly drew on his skills to develop a range of tomato-based sauces and relishes, brimming with natural goodness and fresh flavours, that he would be proud to use in his restaurants.

Plantraption

Creators of the Irish Sea Burger, [Plantraption](#) is creating products for consumers who are looking

for a more natural and sustainable source of nutrients. The seaweed burger grew popular at festivals and markets over the summer months and a business was born.

Rivesci

[Rivesci](#) was founded in 2019 by Shannon Forrest and Declan Malone. Their street food focuses heavily on vegetarian and some vegan dishes where local suppliers reign supreme and are name checked on their menu and included in their condiments. Popular products include their Cashew Chilli Crush and Red Onion Marmalade.

Tex-Mex Addict

[Tex-Mex Addict](#) was started by Brendan Hedley who first began with a Tex-Mex food stall offering burritos to local farmers markets and festivals. May 2020 marks the launch of Tex-Mex Addict fajita kits that are bursting with Mexican flavours, using traditional recipes mixed with real spices.

Thanks Plants

[Thanks Plants](#) is a 100pc plant-based, handmade vegan sausages brand. Produced locally in Ireland, Thanks Plants is a delicious and wholesome option for vegans and anyone trying to reduce their meat intake and is available in a number of varieties, including apple and sage; sun dried tomato and herb and a frankfurter option.

Main image at top: Aisling Cullen of Thanks Plants, with her children Aida (5) and Sebastian (3)

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