



### **Glenilen Farm – Championing the local on the world stage**

Resting on the banks of the Ilen River in Drimoleague, County Cork, Glenilen Farm is as picturesque a setting as you could find. As a dairy farm, it has been in Alan Kingston's family for generations, but a new and unexpected chapter in its history opened when his wife, Valerie, decided to use some of the milk to make yoghurt for a local farmers' market.

Fast forward some 15 years and what began as a sideline is now a business with an annual turnover of €4 million. Still owned and run by Alan and Valerie, the company now employs 33 people.

Glenilen has its own production facility on site, where it makes its range of yoghurts, butter, cream and desserts. Glenilen products can be found in major supermarket chains like Tesco and Dunnes Stores, smaller independents like Donnybrook Fair and Avoca, and in prestigious hotels like Dublin's Merrion Hotel.

### **Developing sustainability**

#### **Animal welfare**

At Glenilen, the raw material of the business, milk, 30% of the milk is produced by a herd of 55 cows that roam the farm while the remainder is produced on neighbouring farms – testament to the centrality of sustainability to Glenilen's enterprise. For Alan Kingston, the on-site herd is vital: "It allows us to have control of our primary raw material, ensuring it's produced in the most sustainable manner possible, while adhering to the highest standards in animal welfare".

#### **Carbon footprint**

Sustainability achievements at Glenilen include using solar panels to heat water and reducing the use of heating oil by 3,600 litres a year. The company also uses heat-recovery systems and harvests rainwater – of which there is rarely a shortage in west Cork. In addition, new cleaning processes mean that less water and chemicals are used.

#### **Waste**

All waste glass, cardboard and plastic is recycled, and all Glenilen packaging is made from 50% recycled plastic and 40% recycled glass. All food waste on the farm is given to a local pig farmer. Glenilen adheres to British Retail Consortium (BRC) food safety standards (recognised as the foremost accreditation for quality control and safety in the food industry).

### **Social sustainability**

In 2009, with the support of Bord Failte and West Cork Development, Glenilen developed a new walkway in Drimoleague, as a link to Sheep's Head Way. This project will bring an expected 8,000 visitors to the area each year.

Since 2011, Glenilen has been piloting a "return your bottle" scheme at Mahon Point's Farmers market in Cork. The company also gives annual funding for Adara Savana, a school for mentally and physically disabled children in Sri Lanka.

### **What does Origin Green Membership mean for Glenilen Farm?**

The ethos of Glenilen Farm makes it an ideal fit for Origin Green. Glenilen's sustainability plan focuses on the areas of energy and water usage, alternative energy supply, waste management and emissions monitoring.

Under its Origin Green plan, Glenilen's sustainability targets include:

- Reducing, by 2017:
  - Electricity usage by 10%
  - Use of heating oil by 10%
  - Consumption of vehicle fuel by 20%
  - Water usage by 10%
- Advancing its work with University College Cork on an EU-sponsored project exploring more energy-efficient pasteurisation
- Building on initial plans for on-site hydroelectric generation, wind turbine and a wetland system
- Continuing employee development, with programmes in mental health awareness, anti-smoking and healthy eating
- Increasing involvement in the local community
- Building a tour centre and education centre on the farm, for children

"Glenilen Farm believes in the benefits of sustainable business, both for brand strengthening and long-term savings through stronger energy independence. This means we can enhance our local environment as well as strive towards continuous improvement," says Valerie Kingston.

Website: [www.glenilenfarm.com](http://www.glenilenfarm.com)

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