

The Inside Track

Spring 2015, edition 1

Healthy & Creative
Food Regions – Ireland
www.nourisheu.com



What is nourish eu ?

nourish eu is an Erasmus+ funded project to support Healthy & Creative Food Regions in Northern Ireland/UK, Ireland, Bulgaria and Hungary. We are working to encourage food SMEs to innovate /orchestrate change in the entrepreneurship, development, production & marketing of “healthier food”, and we have set three big aims. By 2016, with your help, we will:

Partnership

Contribute to the establishment and participation in a Healthy Food Partnership. We will develop a toolkit to assist and train regional stakeholders to create this Healthy Food Regional Partnership. This toolkit will comprise a programme of learning actions and guidance on how to create a healthy food region.

Education

Our **FREE** course 'Creative Ways to Produce, Market & Distribute Healthy Foods' course will be invaluable to SMEs. It will train food businesses on how to implement greater innovation and creativity for production and distribution of healthy food.

Employability

Through short industry work placements, young unemployed may consider starting a new food businesses or get new employment in Food SMEs.

Who is involved?

nourish eu combines agri food industry champions and education specialists drawn from profit, non-profit and public sectors in Northern Ireland/UK, Ireland, Bulgaria and Hungary.



The Irish partners are The Food Hub www.thefoodhub.com and Momentum www.momentumconsulting.ie from Co. Leitrim.

What motivates nourish eu?

The project is motivated by two closely-related challenges - obesity and food poverty. Firstly, chronic EU obesity figures (OECD) show that more than half (52%) of the adult population in the EU is overweight or obese. Secondly, food poverty is on the rise in Europe. These 2 clear challenges represent enterprise opportunities for Food SMEs across the EU to innovate to develop healthier, affordable food and new food distribution channels. However, SMEs have been slow to respond as they do not have the professional capacity or skills base to innovate/orchestrate change in the entrepreneurship, development, production & marketing of “healthier food”. That is where **nourish eu** will assist !

Case Study:- Business OPPORTUNITY with health focus



Conor Murphy is the founder of [Gym Chef](#), a ready meal brand based in Co. Meath, Ireland.

The business was born out of the intense frustration experienced by Conor when he tried to improve his own health and fitness. He found a 'scary' amount of misinformation about 'healthy-food' and the ready meal sector had little to offer in terms of healthy and convenient food.

Gym Chef was set up with a simple aim, to make healthy eating easy. The business places great emphasis on providing information about nutrition to consumers.

The key messages are – Clean Food and All Natural Clean Ingredients.

About Conor ...

Conor has a keen interest in health and fitness. He holds a first class honours degree in Sports Management from UCD. After graduating, he spent two years working in corporate sales for Dell Computers before taking a year out to travel. The challenges he experienced in healthy led him to see an opportunity for a business that can make healthy eating easier. He began researching food and the links between food and health in January 2011, as part of a personal endeavor to improve his own health. During this process he founded Gym Chef, a ready meal brand with the nutrition and fitness industries in mind.

Conor launched the Gym Chef range in 2014 as a pilot and built up a strong sales base through Supervalu outlets and independent retailers. He subcontracted the manufacture to his recipes and strict protocol. In early 2015, Conor reassessed the business and is assessing a new business model of taking over production himself or looking for a new manufacturing partner.

We asked Conor for his top 3 tips from his experiences to date ..

1. *Focus on the product from the start. When you get your product right, everything else will follow. Don't be surprised or offended if there isn't the demand for your product that you expected. Listen to the feedback you get, and re-design your product into something people want, and will pay for.*
2. *Start small and keep it simple. Start with as little investment and risk as you can manage An out-sourced business model with producers, distributors, retailers etc. sounds great, but is very difficult to manage for a new food business. Sometimes you're better off doing everything yourself, and only out-source when you absolutely have to. Keep your packaging simple also. There is a trend in food towards where producers are using really basic packaging, a label with some text, and they let the food do the selling.*



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Don't waste money with expensive packaging designers!

3. Consider alternative routes to market. Selling through a stall at a farmer's market/food market might not have the scalability you desire, but it's a good place to start, and to test your product. Treat it as your test bed, get it right dealing directly with the customer, and then look to move on to retail or other channels.

Follow Conor's progress on www.facebook.com/gymchefhq and <http://www.gymchef.ie/>

Coming soon **FREE** nourish eu training course

The **Creative Ways to Produce, Market & Distribute Healthy Foods Course** will bring together for the first time and in one source, a FREE online course to develop foods for two specific areas of absolute and proven need at consumer level – obesity and food poverty. 6 modules will be available ..

- 1) Innovating New Healthy Foods for the Obesity Crisis
- 2) Innovating for more affordable and healthy foods
- 3) Creativity in Food New Product Development - ethical sourcing and eco nutrition
- 4) How to 'lean and green' food services
- 5) Marketing - getting the healthy message out
- 6) Distribution channels for healthy food

Please register your interest in being part of our training pilot by emailing info@nourisheu.com

Armagh cider maker emphasises natural approach

Paddy Mc Keever of Long Meadow Cider, Armagh, Northern Ireland met the **nourish eu** partners to present his company start up based on agri diversification and the development of a wholly natural product.

Partners were very impressed by the quality ethos of this regional producer, proud of his roots and his dedication to producing a product without preservatives or additives which are very common in the sector.

www.longmeadowcider.com/



Benefit from and Contribute to nourish eu..

The Food Hub and Momentum invite you to be part of forming a **Healthy Food Partnership** in the North West of Ireland. Food entrepreneurs, agri food producers, educators, enterprise agencies and policy makers are all invited ! We can make exciting things happen by becoming Ireland's first healthy and creative food region where innovation and creativity are the basis for new healthy affordable food products. Please email Fergal Mc Partland, The Food Hub on info@thefoodhub.com or Orla Casey on orla@momentumconsulting.ie to get involved.

Keep in touch

Join our mailing list on www.nourisheu.com, follow us on Facebook on www.facebook.com/nourisheu or join our nourish eu LinkedIn Group on www.linkedin.com.

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