

The Winning Ingredient



Maggie McGinlay, director of food & drink at Scottish Enterprise, presents Robert Graham snr and Robert Graham jnr with one of their awards.

There was a double celebration when we picked up two prestigious awards at this year's Scottish Food & Drink Excellence Awards.

The Scottish Food & Drink Excellence Awards recognise companies that are leading the way in innovation, enterprise and quality. Now in its sixth year, the competition is organised by the Royal Highland & Agricultural Society of Scotland in association with Scottish Enterprise.

We were presented with the Brand Development award in recognition of the highly successful rebranding exercise which we undertook last year and continue to develop and support. Our brand enables us to differentiate ourselves, by illustrating the strong family element in our business and how this ties into our brand values, and key qualities, provenance, traceability and trust. The judging in this category also recognised our clear brand development aspirations, which are supported by our strong brand strategy.

Best Retail Product was awarded to our organic range of milk, butter and cream. This award recognised that we had researched and assessed the current market, and had portrayed this through a clean design, with a quirky welly boots image, and again linking into our core family and farming heritage. Our organic range also illustrates the health and environmental benefits associated with organic produce.

Presenting the award for Brand Development, Maggie McGinlay, director food and drink, Scottish Enterprise, said: "Graham's is operating in a very difficult commodity market where it is often hard to differentiate between products, but its strong focus on 'family' has helped it do this and significantly raised the bar for others to match. Further evidence of this success is the fact that it has just completed its first ever export order."

We are all delighted with our success, as everyone at Graham's has worked extremely hard to develop the business and expand our product range. We hope our retail customers will also enjoy the benefits of the award win in terms of increased trade.

In order to continue to develop and support our brand for retailers and consumers, we will be displaying the Scottish Food & Drink Award winner logo on-pack and are undertaking an advertising campaign, starting in the middle of June, for three months, so watch out for it in your weekend magazines.



Foreword

We do, indeed, live in a global village. If ever those of us in the Scottish dairy business doubted it then proof has come with the news over the summer that a unique set of circumstances has conspired to produce a worldwide milk shortage accompanied by the resultant rise in prices.

Drought in Australia, bio-fuel production in the US allied to a massive increase in demand in China has led to increased milk shortages and, more particularly, skimmed milk powder. Milk prices across the globe are rising at the fastest rate ever and the supply and demand implications in the global marketplace will undoubtedly have a knock-on effect in our own backyard here in Scotland, particularly on cream and butter.

Analysts are predicting ongoing potential shortages and increased prices for milk producers but, also, rising store prices for all products associated with dairy products. These range from cheese and ice-cream to baby food. Such is the unprecedented scale of the global increase in skimmed milk prices - quite incredible 60% - that there is no way that consumers can be shielded from the general upward trend in prices.

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Our Reputation Spreads to France

The French appreciation for the finest foods has led a baker all the way to our family dairy in Bridge of Allan and our delicious, creamy butter.

We have started exporting Graham's Jersey butter to Martine Specialites, located in the north east of Bordeaux, where it is being used as an ingredient in the making of its bakery products.

"Receiving this on-going export order is a significant milestone in business terms and provides further proof of how our reputation for producing the finest Scottish dairy products has grown," explained managing director Robert Graham.

"Given the reputation France enjoys as the culinary capital of the world, securing this deal adds a real stamp of quality to our butter and again demonstrates Scotland's ability to produce some of the finest and most sought after ingredients."

We make Jersey, salted and un-salted Scottish churned butter, as well as organic butter, at our dedicated butter plant in Bridge of Allan which churns out between 23-30 tonnes of butter per week.



Robert Graham snr displays Graham's highly prized Scottish butter.



★ Michelin-Star ★ Grilling for Young Chefs

Supplying the foodservice sector continues to be a significant part of our business and we were delighted to support the cream of Scotland's budding culinary talent by once again sponsoring the Scottish Food Scholarship.

Open to young chefs, aged 18-28 years, this year's Scholarship culminated in an exciting cook-off at ScotHot, held in Glasgow's SECC. The finalists were put through their paces by a selection of Scotland's Michelin star chefs, including Martin Wishart, Keith Braidwood, Tom Kitchin and Jeff Bland.

The overall winner was announced as Liam Mckenna from Circus Bar and Grill, in Edinburgh. Second place went to Tristin Farmer from Enverdale House Hotel, in Coupar Angus, with third place being secured by Brian Grigor from Greywalls Hotel, in Gullane.

As well as picking up a free year's supply of Graham's milk, the winner secured the opportunity to carry out a series of internships, working with some of the best in the food and catering world.

This will include a stint with Martin Wishart at his eponymous Edinburgh restaurant, who commented after the event: "This year saw a marked increase in the number and calibre of chefs entering and competing in the Scottish Food Scholarship. We want the competition to encourage and showcase young talented chefs in Scotland and in doing so push them to use the best of Scottish produce."

Photograph shows scholarship winner Liam Mckenna from Circus Bar and Grill, in Edinburgh, receiving his award from the judging panel of Michelin star chefs.

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Closer to home, we are now a year into our branding makeover. We caused a splash at last year's Royal Highland Show (RHS) with the unveiling of our fresh new look. For us, this represented probably the most significant financial investment outwith infrastructure and machinery. It has, though, provided a real boost for our family business and made it even easier for customers to find our range of Scottish dairy products.

Our new brand image has helped us to secure space for Graham's milk, butter and cream on the shelves of even more of Scotland's supermarkets and independent retailers, as well as in the kitchens of many leading hotels and restaurants.

We were also delighted that this success was recognised at the Scottish Food & Drink Excellence Awards 2007, where we received the prestigious Brand Development award. There was also praise for our organic range which won the award for best Retail Product in the dairy, confectionery & snacking category.

This year, we're back in the RHS food hall having further expanded our Organic offering with the launch of Graham's Organic Slightly Salted Butter. Fans of organic products tell us they are delighted with the addition to our popular range which also includes organic milk and cream.

Listening and responding to customer feedback is crucial to the success of our business and we look forward to meeting many more of you and hearing your views on our products when you visit our exhibition stand this year.

Enjoy the show.

Robert Graham, MANAGING DIRECTOR

Cool school trip

Nursery pupils from Beaconsburn School found out how milk gets from the farm to the fridge during a recent tour of our Bridge of Allan dairy. Chairman Robert Graham snr welcomed 24 children, aged between four and five years old, for a guided tour of the dairy where we produce over 330,000 pints of milk every day.

Following the tour, the children sampled the produce for themselves in the farmhouse kitchen. The young visitors also had the opportunity to ask members of our family questions about milk.

Tracy Maclean, early year's practitioner at Beaconsburn School, said: "The children were very excited about visiting the dairy and enjoyed seeing how the milk is put into bottles and extremely pleased that Graham's allowed us to see behind the scenes."

Robert Graham snr added: "It's always enjoyable having children visit the dairy and teaching them about where milk comes from. It's important that they develop an understanding about how their food is produced and we were delighted to show them around the dairy."



Honorary Role

Chairman Robert Graham's year-long role as Honorary Vice President of the Royal Highland Show will draw to a close with the end of this year's event.

However, before Robert passes on the mantle he will be kept busy throughout the Show performing a range of official duties, including escorting any visiting dignitaries.

"It has been a real honour to hold the position of Vice President and an extremely enjoyable year which will culminate in another excellent Show," said Robert.

"Throughout the year I've had the pleasure of meeting and working alongside many interesting and knowledgeable people."

Robert was nominated for the role in recognition of the contribution he has made to the farming industry over many years.

Not only has he overseen the growth of Graham's from a small farm and dairy to become the largest independent dairy company in Scotland, but Robert has also always had an active interest in livestock breeding and improving beef breeds.

The Graham family has lived and farmed in the central belt of Scotland for almost 100 years and owns three farms in the area – Airthrey Kerse, Boquhan and Birkenwood – which total 700 acres of land.

Having won his first championship at the age of 10, Robert has achieved considerable success both in the sale and show ring over many years with both cattle and sheep.



Robert Graham snr proudly displays the many trophies won by his pedigree livestock.

More recently, Robert has won a clutch of awards with his impressive French-bred Limousin bull Samy. In 2005, Samy was awarded the Limousin Champion title at both the Royal Highland Show, Ingleston, and the Royal Show, held in Warwick. In 2006, Samy won Limousin Male Championship at the Royal Show and went on to win the Burke Trophy, seen as the Olympic Gold of the Royal Show, for the second year running. Samy is the only animal in Britain, to have won this prestigious prize twice.

Robert will again be showing his pedigree Limousin cattle and Berrichon du Cher sheep at this year's Royal Highland Show and Royal show.



Graham's butters-up organic fans

Our popular organic range continues to grow with the launch of Graham's Organic Slightly Salted Butter – the only Scottish organic butter currently on the market.

The growth of our organic range coincides with the growing popularity of organic food generally, and we have experienced over 50% increase in our organic sales in the last twelve months.

Made from fresh, organic Scottish cream, our organic butter is lightly churned to produce a butter that tastes deliciously rich and creamy. Just a touch of salt is added to enhance the flavour, allowing you to enjoy its purity.

Only pure organic milk from certified farms is used in our organic range. Cows graze on lush green pastures in a habitat that is natural and organic, which means it is not only good for the health of your family but also beneficial for the animals and countryside.

As organic cows enjoy a diet that is rich in red clover, organic milk contains high levels of Omega 3 which is essential for maintaining a healthy heart, supple and flexible joints, healthy growth and strong bones and teeth.

Organic whole milk is also naturally high in calcium, vitamins A & E and antioxidants. In fact, according to OMSCO (Organic Milk Suppliers Cooperative), drinking a pint of organic milk a day provides 17.5% of the required intake of vitamin E for women and 14% of that for men, and as much beta carotene as a portion of some vegetables such as Brussels sprouts. To find out more about Graham's Organic Butter, and all Graham's Organic products please contact Louise Mclay on Tel: 01786 835225.



GRAHAM'S SETS THE STANDARD

We were top of the class in our recent EFSIS accreditation, receiving an A grade – the highest level awarded by the leading technical inspection company and achieved by very few companies.

The EFSIS Standard provides assurances to retailers and purchasers about the production standards of suppliers and includes all the requirements of the British Retail Consortium technical standard for retail branded food.

Technical manager Mary Morgan, who joined us in January, bringing with her over 20 years experience in quality assurance

and technical roles within the dairy industry, said: "To be awarded an A grade is an excellent achievement and further confirms the importance we place on quality of all our products, and the standards that we constantly strive to achieve."

Culinary talent gathers for conference

Over 220 chefs attended the inaugural Scottish Chefs Conference, sponsored by Graham's.

Held at Lochgreen House Hotel, in Troon, Ayrshire, the conference was an overwhelming success with excellent culinary demonstrations from four of Scotland's finest chefs, Andrew Fairlie, Martin Wishart, Tom Kitchin and William Curley. Robert Graham said "Restaurants and foodservice are an important part of our business, and we are therefore delighted to be able to sponsor the first chefs conference to be held in Scotland."

The countdown is now on to this year's event on 19 November 2007 which is expected to attract even more of Scotland's chefs.

Organised by Willie Pike, executive chef and head of craft training for Costley and Costley Hoteliers, the conference provides a unique opportunity for chefs to experience the talents of the demonstrators, speak with Scotland's finest suppliers and network with other chefs.

Martin Wishart demonstrates his skills at the Scottish Chefs Conference.



Club nets tennis funding

We have again teamed up with our local Bridge of Allan Sports Club to support its growing Junior Development Programme.

The programme encourages youngsters to play tennis or squash at grassroots level and aims to keep them interested in playing throughout their teenage years and beyond.

Our funding will be used by the club to further expand the initiative, with particular emphasis on providing additional tennis coaching sessions, purchasing new equipment and organising and attending tournaments.

Jamie Durkin commented: "It's often difficult for children to believe they could become champions at their chosen sport but with the example of one of our most famous members, Andrew Murray, the profile of tennis has been given a boost. More and more young people can now see that tennis is a great sport to become involved in."



Keep on running

Good luck to managing director Robert Graham who will pound the pavements of the Big Apple later this year when he takes part in the famous New York City Marathon to raise money for Orchid, a charity fighting male cancer.

More than 90,000 people entered the lottery for a place in the New York City Marathon which takes place on 4 November. Robert will join 37,000 runners from around the world lucky enough to win a place in the 26.2 mile race through the city's famous districts of Staten Island, Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx, and Manhattan, before crossing the finishing line in Central Park.

Robert is currently in training for the event, which will be his first full marathon. He said: "Running the New York Marathon will be a fantastic experience and a great challenge, while enabling me to raise money for an extremely worthwhile cause."

The milk moustache effect

Four years on from the launch of 'The White Stuff Milk Moustache' campaign and more and more Scottish kids are getting the message about the benefits of drinking milk.

Graham's is one of five leading dairy companies behind the campaign which has helped to reverse years of decreasing milk sales. The initiative also supports Scottish retailers with the provision of merchandise and helps to drive trade within the dairy sections of their stores.

Robert Graham said "We at Graham's believe that it is important to invest money into this campaign, for the future of the Scottish dairy industry, as well as helping to grow sales for our customers."

Sales figures show milk consumption in Scotland has risen by 2.76% in the past year, while sales of low fat milk (semi-skimmed and skimmed) have increased by 5% over the same period.

Research undertaken by the campaign found that 98% of kids in Scotland agreed that milk is healthy. A total of 60% also now think that drinking milk can be cool, a trend linked to the big names who continue to sign up to wear the famous moustache.

The latest celebrities to sport the famous milk moustache are jungle beauty Myleene Klass and Irish pop stars Westlife. With expectant mum, Myleene and new dad, Westlife singer Nicky Byrne, fronting the campaign, it's a family affair.

Myleene said: "I always try to eat healthily and to drink plenty of milk to give my body many of the nutrients and vitamins it needs. I hope by joining Westlife as the new faces of the campaign we can encourage more people to drink more of the 'white stuff'."

Since its pilot launch in 2003, the campaign has seen a whole host of stars from the world of TV, music and sport wear a milk moustache, including bands like McFly through to tennis player Andy Murray and TV presenter Steve Jones.

Myleene Klass sports the famous milk moustache.

