



cooking up success

location of choice  
for wise food producers...



## about us

Drumshanbo Co. Leitrim is home to a world class state of the art food production facility called **the food hub**. Operational since 2007, **the food hub** operates at many different levels:

- at **landlord level** it provides 26,000 sq ft of premium food production space across 14 independent work units.
- at **innovator level** the project operates Ireland's only timeshare production unit where emerging food businesses can produce their products in a fully equipped kitchen which is charged out by the hour with no commitment other than bring own ingredients.
- at **trainer provider level** **the food hub** facilitates and delivers sectoral training programmes for the food sector - from start your own food business programmes to culinary skills.

Today, in overall terms **the food hub** provides total employment of 35 people across 5 tenant companies with 26 jobs in the pipeline with major job creation announcements pending for two new high potential start up projects.



the food hub

## a little history

The premises was originally home to the well known Lairds jam factory in the 1980's (we all remember Bo Peep jams) and was taken over by the Kepak Group during the 1990's. At one point Lairds was producing over 30 tonnes of jam and marmalade per each eight hour shift and its products were gracing breakfast tables in countries throughout Europe and the Middle East as well as the USA and Canada. The premises closure in 1998 meant a loss of 100 jobs in the community; it then lay idle for decades underscoring a lack of employment growth and economic development in the area. In 2002, the not for profit community activist group Drumshanbo County Council insightfully took the opportunity to restore the premises as an state of the art food specific enterprise centre of 14 individual food business units offering world class food production facilities, not only unique to the area but as one-of-its kind in the country.

Years of planning, research and funding applications resulted in the financial backing of key stakeholders such as International Fund for Ireland, Arigna LEADER, Clár, Enterprise Ireland, Interreg IIIA, Leitrim County Enterprise Board, Green Box, Bord Bia, Musgrave Group, Leitrim County Council Peace II funding and Leitrim Development Company. The final result is impressive, a 14 unit world class food production facility fully compliant with environmental health regulations which is now open to interested parties.



Official Opening 1983



Official Opening 2007

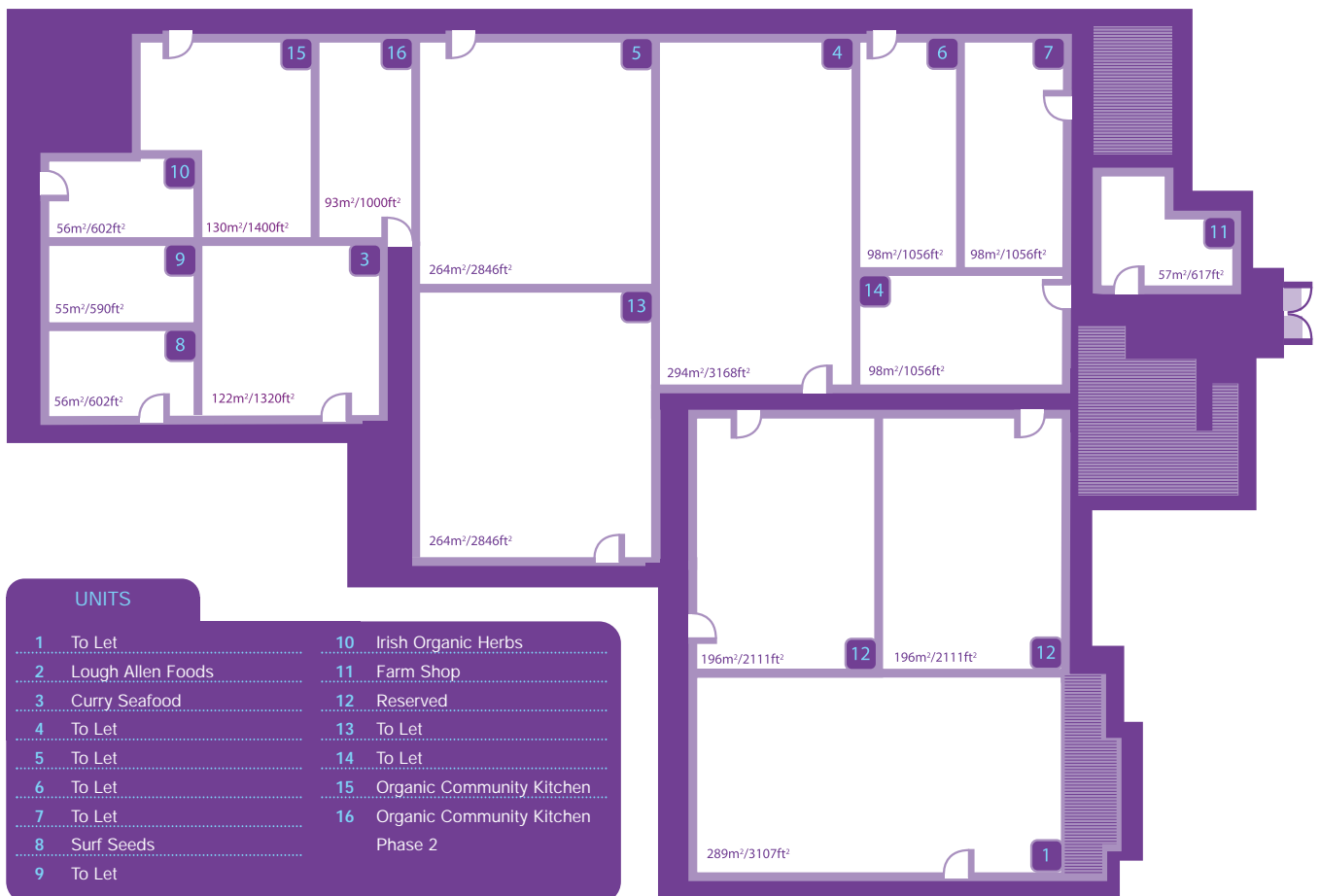
# let's talk specifics...

Occupying an area of 32,000 square feet the premises includes 26,000 square feet of food production space and 6,000 square feet of office space. The production space spans 14 units varying in size...

6 x 600 sq ft units  
2 x 2,200 sq ft units

1 x 1,000 sq ft unit  
2 x 2,800 sq ft units

1 x 1,200 sq ft unit  
2 x 3,100 sq ft units



The units have been designed to address the needs of two distinct food group manufacturers:

- entrepreneurs who may not have the initial seed capital to invest in a start up production facility
- existing businesses who demand cost effective greater production capacity as their sales volumes increase.

## What the food hub offers...

Designed to run operationally as independent units, the facility has much to offer the prospective client. During the development phase of this project much focus and attention was given to understanding the ergonomics of a well designed food facility. Specialist food development architects and engineers worked exhaustively to ensure strict adherence and compliance to a well thought out specification. No stone was left unturned in terms of satisfying the requirements of modern day food manufacture, this has taken time, but the investment is very impressive.

## tenants

### **lough allen foods** [www.loughallenfoods.com](http://www.loughallenfoods.com)

**the food hub's** first tenant was Lough Allen Foods, a company passionate about producing wholesome ready meals. Established in 2006 by award winning chef Stephen Dowd, the company excels in the manufacture of restaurant quality ready meals. The team use only the freshest local Irish produce carefully selected and cooked to ensure that the consumer will enjoy a flavoursome and fulfilling meal, ready in just 4 minutes! Employing 11 full time staff, the company now distributes its products in over 400 retail outlets on an all island basis. They are also sub-

contract manufacturers for the food service, hospitality and retail markets. Exciting new product development is under way as Lough Allen Foods grows its business - additional production space has been secured in **the food hub** to facilitate that growth.



### **surf seeds** [www.surfseeds.com](http://www.surfseeds.com)

When our Dragon's Den champion Tim Rooney set up Surf Seeds, his innovative snack food company at **the food hub**, success was just around the corner for this range of healthy snack foods. Tim has been working on the Surf Seeds concept for many years. He saw a gap in the market for a more trendy but healthy snack product. Surf Seeds has emerged with the first resealable seed container ideal for snacking, iconic packaging, delicious product ranges of savoury and sweet flavors and the first company to use chocolate and natural seeds in a snack mix. **the food hub** was the ideal location for Tim, an experienced chef he held the celebrity TV chef spot on TV3. Access to onsite technical and funding expertise and world class facilities made the production set up very straightforward. Now firmly established in **the food hub** the company's products are distributed in Ireland through Pallas Foods and Surf Seeds are cracking export markets as far away as New Zealand.



### **irish organic herbs** [www.irishorganicherbs.com](http://www.irishorganicherbs.com)

Irish Organic Herbs is the first company to have pioneered the organically certified field-scale cultivation of medicinal herbs in Ireland. The herbs used to produce the Irish Organic Herbs range are mainly grown on certified organic Irish farms. This guarantees the purity of product, with full traceability from seed to sale, independently audited. The company's herbal tinctures span a range of 12 single herb tinctures and 4 herbal tincture blends sold through Health Food stores and selected Pharmacies around the country and through the company website.



### **curry seafood** [www.curryseafoods.ie](http://www.curryseafoods.ie)

Curry Seafood's Ltd was started in 1998 by Peter Curry a qualified chef passionate about seafood. He saw an opening for a supplier of top quality fish to hotels and restaurants and retail units all around the island of Ireland at an affordable price. Their Food Hub state of the art processing unit adds value to harvests of fish from the clear sparkling water of the Atlantic Ocean. All the fillets are cut by hand by professional fish filleters and presented according to the customer's requirements. Peter was joined in the business by his brother Paul, also a qualified chef and together they have expanded the business to add value to the fish by developing a range of smoked products which are proving to be a winner with consumers and food critics alike.



# shared use community kitchen

**the food hub** is home to Ireland's first time-share community production & training kitchen which acts as an important first step for emerging food companies. It is a unique way to provide aspiring food entrepreneurs with time-share access to production facilities and the opportunity to start and expand specialty food and catering businesses without the prohibitive cost of building their own commercial kitchen. It is available for hire 7 days a week from 7am to 11pm at very reasonable hourly or daily rates.

Current clients of this service include a chocolate maker, vegetarian food producer selling through Farmers Markets, boxty producers, sauce producer and artisan bakers.

The facility doubles as a training kitchen for specialist food and hospitality training courses and is utilised by Failte Ireland, Rural Food Skillnet, BMW Smallholders Skillnet, Irish Egg Chain Supply Skillnet, Leitrim Development Company and a private cookery school amongst others.

The shared use community kitchen is part of **the food hub's** unique and compelling features. It is resourced with the following equipment :

- Industrial 3 phase and 1 phase electricity points
- Floors, ceilings & walls of high food grade materials
- Cold storage facility
- Supply of UV filtered water
- Four burner stove with two ovens
- Dishwasher & electric steam convection oven
- Stainless steel tables on casters & racking
- 1 upright fridge & 1 upright freezer
- Blast freezer/shock freezer
- Vegetable prep machine
- 20. qt robocoupe mixer
- Industrial microwave
- Meat slicer
- Insect & pest control equipment



## other facilities

### onsite manager

Fergal McPartland was appointed as full time Business Development Manager of **the food hub** in March 2009. Fergal is responsible for the operation, marketing and administrative progression of **the food hub**. He is supported by **the food hub** management committee (who in turn report to the full Board of Drumshanbo Community Council Ltd). This committee has an excellent mix of commercial, community and public sector expertise to maintain the broad base of support for the project and to ensure that it is managed effectively.

### business plan consultants

Momentum Consulting based in Co. Leitrim has worked with **the food hub** committee since 2002 in initially devising the innovative business model and securing the capital funding to realise the project. Working with the individual tenant and prospective tenants Momentum works with the client to develop a compelling business case. This service is a tremendous benefit when one considers that tenants may be eligible for funding of up to 50% of investment costs. Orla Casey can be contacted on 086 260 6304 and [orla@momentumconsulting.ie](mailto:orla@momentumconsulting.ie)



### resident food technologist

The resident food technologist Louise Kennedy offers an assistance programme for all tenants and potential tenants. Louise provides on site expertise to the client by developing the production unit tailored to meet the specific requirements of the client's business. For new start ups, Louise will work with tenants to dictate a firm foundation in work flow and process management. How will you design your unit? What facilities do you need? What is the optimum work flow for your business? All of these questions are critical to the success of any food production facility but also require food management & technology expertise. For established businesses, access to a food technologist on site and on contract can be the ideal alternative to a full time position in their company. Louise Kennedy can be contacted on 086 170 6939 and [louiseakennedy@gmail.com](mailto:louiseakennedy@gmail.com)



### IT training suite

Adjacent to the Community Kitchen is a separate training classroom fully equipped with ten PCs and internet access which can be used for training or for academic purposes in conjunction with or separately from the Community Kitchen.



the food hub, carrick road, drumshanbo, county leitrim, ireland  
tel: 071 96 41848 email: [info@thefoodhub.com](mailto:info@thefoodhub.com) [www.thefoodhub.com](http://www.thefoodhub.com)

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