

GRAMPIAN  
**FOOD**  
FORUM

Acting in partnership with industry

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# Annual Report 2012



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Grampian is the main producer of food and drink in Scotland. Its rich arable land and North Sea coastline provide excellent raw materials and fresh, natural produce that is world renowned. The region covers every aspect of the food and drink industry from fishing, farming and food processing to nutrition and food sciences.

## Foreword

*by Mac Mackie, Mackie's of Scotland, Chairman of Grampian Food Forum*

Another year has flown by and yet again trading conditions just seem to get even tougher for food businesses. With commodity prices going up and consumers always looking for a better deal we food businesses are stuck in the middle trying to live off very thin margins.

Against this backdrop, it has to be said that the Grampian food and drink industry is in remarkably good health – we are obviously a resilient bunch! Our drink companies (ok the ones that produce alcohol) seem to be thriving and growing whilst our food businesses continue to innovate, find efficiencies and keep moving forward. The Innovation Awards is always a great success and this year we had another tremendous range of new and innovative products some of which will now be selling all over the world.

The Grampian Food Forum events continue to be extremely well run and well attended and hopefully these activities are contributing to the success of our food and drink industry. We will have another full programme of events for next year and hope that you will all continue to support them.

All the best for 2013.



“I have enjoyed my role in the Forum over the last six years and am delighted to remain as vice-chairman to support Mac going forward.”

*Alan Meikle, Grampian Oat Products.*



“The Food and Drink industry here in Grampian is quite rightly something to be proud

of. The work of the Grampian Food Forum hopes that 2012 and beyond will strengthen this position for all involved, collectively moving forward.” *Keith Whyte, Mitchells.*



# Achievements in 2012



## Innovation Awards

The Innovation Awards were held for the 22<sup>nd</sup> time in March to reward local companies for their new innovative products and recognise best practice.

The awards are judged by a panel of high profile judges, which was chaired by Peter Marks, Chief Executive of the Cooperative Group. Mr Marks judged products along with Craig Stevenson, owner and managing director of Braehead Foods Ltd and freelance journalist Karen Peattie.

Around 180 industry representatives attended the awards presentation dinner, 68 different organisations from across the supply chain were represented.



Judges L to R – Craig Stevenson, Karen Peattie and Peter Marks.



Pre-judges L to R – Scott MacCorquodale, Cooperative Group, and Craig Stevenson

“I didn’t know what to expect as it’s my first time at this event but I have been hugely impressed with the ingenuity and entrepreneurship of all the entrants we have seen. It’s been truly wonderful to see so many great, new and innovative products. I wouldn’t be surprised if we see some of these products on our shelves in the near future.

We often hear from our politicians and economists that we need manufacturing businesses to lead us out of recession and I have seen strong evidence that the enterprising food and drink sector in Grampian is well placed to lead the way in helping the country with its recovery.”

*Peter Marks, Cooperative Group.*

31 companies competed in the awards. 7 of those were entering the awards for the first time - Caledonian Bison Ltd, Deeside Brewery Ltd, Farmlay Eggs, Food for Thought/ Veg in a Box, James Rizza & Sons Ltd, Ria’s Sambal and The Smokehouse (Aberdeenshire) Ltd.





## Taste of Grampian

Taste of Grampian celebrated its 13<sup>th</sup> anniversary in June 2012 showcasing the wealth and diversity of Grampian's producers. The one day food and drink festival attracted an estimated 12,000 visitors and local consumers.

17 new food and drink companies participated including Almondine, Food For Thought, Forbes Raeburn Butcher, Formartine's, Glenshee Kitchen, Glenglassaugh Distillery, J&I Smith, Macrae Foods, North Bay Seafoods, Sweet Indulgence and The Little House of Chocolate.

"I've really enjoyed the day. The producers here are very knowledgeable and positive about what they are doing." *Ed Baines.*

The event overall rated 4.2\*

94% of those who responded wish to participate again in 2013.



136 exhibitors



"As it was our first year we were unsure as to what to expect, however, our product sold very quickly and it has given us a great platform to go further with our new business. Also to win the award for Best Small Stand was such an achievement for us and we were delighted to receive it. Thank you to the organisers for all their efforts in making it a fantastic day."

*Susan Williamson, Almondine.*

For the fourth consecutive year, a number of local companies exhibited under the Taste of Grampian banner at the Royal Highland Show in June. Those taking part included Mackie's of Scotland, Dean's of Huntly Ltd, Huntly Herbs, Ola Oils and Glenglassaugh Distillery. Joining them was Duncan's of Deeside, Mackintosh of Glendaveny and Grampian Oat Products.



\* Rating given when 4=very good and 5=excellent.

# Food and Tourism



The concept of the Dining Club is for chefs, restaurateurs and food producers to build better relationships and to help promote the greater use of local produce in the region's eating establishments. The Dining Club has taken place in Grampian since 2002 and is now held across Scotland via the Scotland Food & Drink Forum Network.

In total, 205 representatives from 74 different organisations attended Dining Club events, which were held at the Marcliffe Hotel and Spa, Raemoir House Hotel and Formartine's. Guest speakers included author Pete Irvine, Richard Barclay of Rannoch Smokery and John Cooper of The Smokehouse (Aberdeenshire) Ltd.

97% of those who responded said the events were a good use of their time.



100% agreed events like this encourage stronger links across the industry.

"A very enjoyable and useful evening."  
*Jeremy Dixon, Ochil Foods.*

"It was really good to have the cross ethnic slant on the meal, nice flavours and aromas."

*Norman Mundie, The Fjord Inn. (Marcliffe Hotel and Spa in February).*

The average rating over the three Dining Club events is 4.3\*.

"Fantastic event. Food great and nice to be able to wander around and talk to folk as opposed to the normal sit down three course meal."

*Peter Walker, Meldrum House Country Hotel. (Formartine's in September).*



\* Rating given when 4=very good and 5=excellent.



## Further Forum Activities

A total of 31 delegates from 19 different food and drink companies attended awareness visits to Tesco, Inverurie in February and ScotHerbs and Mackie's at Taypack in May.



The average rating over the three visits is 4.1\*.

"There is nearly always a benefit from attending these types of event. This could be from the venue, topic or someone you meet. More doors are opened this way that you might first realise."

*Graeme Ross, JG Ross (Bakers) Ltd.*

100% said they would recommend this type of event and that it had been a good use of their time.

The Innovation and Technology Group events help companies at a more practical level. This year's events included talks from Johnston Carmichael on R&D tax relief, securing working capital and debt management. There was also a visit to Macrae Foods Ltd in Fraserburgh where delegates gained an overview of the company and a tour of their production facilities.

In addition to [www.grampianfoodforum.org.uk](http://www.grampianfoodforum.org.uk), the Grampian Food Forum issues two publications about the industry.

### Grampian Innovations

aimed at retail and food service buyers, highlights new products from local companies.



### Food Matters

provides information on Forum events and other food and drink related news and events.



## Scotland Food & Drink Forum Network

Grampian Food Forum is part of the Scotland Food & Drink Forum Network, which covers all areas of Scotland including Highlands & Islands, Tayside, East, West and South.

Outwith Grampian, each Forum plans to meet four times per year and the agenda will be driven by the market opportunities identified within the industry's Fresh Thinking Strategy. To ensure that each Forum provides a regional focus and perspective, each has appointed its own steering group that will help shape their local activities.

To get involved or for further information on activities outwith Grampian, please contact Alison Beddie, National Forum Coordinator on [alison.beddie@scotent.co.uk](mailto:alison.beddie@scotent.co.uk) or 01224 252075.

\* Rating given when 4=very good and 5=excellent.

# Grampian Food Forum Review

During 2012 stakeholders, members, participants and non-participants in the Grampian Food Forum were invited to give their views on the effectiveness of Forum activities in telephone interviews or via an on line survey.

17 stakeholders were interviewed and 52 businesses responded to the survey. We would like to take the opportunity to thank those who took part; your feedback is vital to the continuous improvement of the Forum and is used to help secure future public sector funding. Some of the key findings are given below.

## Performance Against Targets

Average overall

rating of

**4.1**

since 2005.

**(target 4.0)**

**7.4%**

increase in people attending events.

**(target 5%)**

Over **30%** of event attendees were from companies with between 1-25 employees in each of the past two years.

**(target 30%)**

However, the targeted 10% increase in the number of participating businesses took longer to materialise than originally planned.

## Business Benefits for Participating Companies

**88%** made new industry contacts

**69%** improved business relationships

**67%** increased knowledge of key industry issues

## Impacts

**77%** either experiencing increased sales or expecting to do so

**71%** experiencing increased employee skills and knowledge

**62%** expecting or anticipating increased competitiveness

As a consequence 90% of businesses reported that their business would be financially worse off if the Forum stopped.

## Economic Impact

The research identified 12 instances where businesses were able to put a value on the increased sales, reduced costs or raised productivity as a result of Forum activity. Cumulatively, these have

- added £6,310,833 to the turnover of the beneficiary companies
- added £2.587 million to Scottish GVA

This should be treated as a cautious estimate of the true value of the Forum.

The Innovation Awards, Dining Club and Taste of Grampian appear to have had the greatest impacts on businesses.

98% of respondents rated the events they attended as either 'excellent', 'very good' or 'good'.

# Acknowledgements in 2012



A big thank you to all those who have given their support and made 2012 another successful year for the Grampian Food Forum.

During 2012, chairman Alan Meikle resigned and was succeeded by Mac Mackie of Mackie's of Scotland. Alan had been in the role for nearly six years and we sincerely thank him for his valuable contribution during this time. Alan will remain as vice-chairman.

A further change was implemented when members of the Strategic and Operations Group came together to form the Steering Group, which resulted in a few changes to the members of the group.

We said farewell to Charlie Devin of Lossie Seafoods, Ian Urquhart of Gordon and MacPhail, Brian Pack who represented ANM Group Ltd, Philip Andrade of International Fish Cannery (Scotland) Ltd and Louise Stratton of Aberdeenshire Council and thank them for their many years of support to the Grampian Food Forum.

And welcomed Amanda Brown of Scotland Food & Drink, Henry Angus of Associated Seafoods, Ewen Mackintosh of Gordon and MacPhail and Patrick Machray of ANM Group Ltd.

## Steering Group

### CHAIRMAN

**Mac Mackie** Mackie's of Scotland

### VICE-CHAIRMAN

**Alan Meikle** Grampian Oat Products

### VICE-CHAIRMAN

**Keith Whyte** Mitchells, Scotland

**Alison Beddie** Scottish Enterprise

**Amanda Brown** Scotland Food & Drink

**Andrew Booth** The Store

**Andrew Stephen** Aberdeen City Council

**Bill Dean** Dean's of Huntly Ltd

**Bill Thain** Mackie's of Scotland

**Claire Rennie** Berry Scrumptious

**Ewen Mackintosh** Gordon and MacPhail

**Graeme Ross** JG Ross (Bakers) Ltd

**Gregor Mackintosh** Mackintosh of Glendaveny

**Henry Angus** Associated Seafoods

**Mandy Holmes** Highlands and Islands Enterprise

**Michael Clark** International Fish Cannery (Scotland) Ltd

**Neil Coull** Macphie of Glenbervie Ltd

**Patrick Hughes** SAC Food & Drink

**Patrick Machray** ANM Group Ltd

**Peter Walker** Meldrum House Country Hotel

## GET INVOLVED

Grampian Food Forum activities are open to all those involved in food and drink in Aberdeenshire, Aberdeen and Moray, from small businesses to international companies.

For further details on the Grampian Food Forum, please contact

Elizabeth Mathie on 01224 664334 or [elizabeth.mathie@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:elizabeth.mathie@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)

