

# Agribusiness awards celebrate vibrant sector

BY GRAHAM CLIFFORD

When it comes to agribusiness, Ireland can hold its head higher than most in celebrating the vibrancy of the sector here.

Contributing an estimated €24 billion to our national economy this year, the success of the sector is unique in that there isn't a town or village in Ireland that doesn't benefit from its achievements.

Today it's estimated that at least a quarter of a million people are employed, directly or indirectly, in the agribusiness sector here.

As an indigenous industry it not only helped Ireland find a way through the fog of the worldwide economic downturn, but also it offers a sustainable and structured framework going forward.

Constantly looking at new farming and food production practices it's a sector that brings out the very best of the people involved in it, and at this year's Agribusiness awards they, along with the most innovative of agri-companies in Ireland, will be duly recognized.

"Ireland has long been associated with good food, including meat, dairy, beverages fruit and veg. The awards will recognise those who contributed to Ireland's success in the industry in recent times," said Eugene Bortolozzo, chief executive of Events Strategies which will be hosting the awards.

He added: "Agriculture has been the backbone of the Irish economy for many



generations. Yet it has been largely ignored by the media. The awards aim to give agribusiness the spotlight it deserves and also the ceremony will provide an opportunity for food producers to meet food processors."

Given the huge variety of categories that exist within the sector there will be 25 awards handed out on November 26th at the Ballsbridge Hotel in Dublin 4.

These will range from Agribusiness of the Year to more sector specific acknowledgements such as the agribusiness leader awards in the areas as beef, lamb and sheep, pork, poultry, fish and seafood, fresh fruit and vegetables amongst others.

Companies will also vie for the coveted Food Producer of the Year award.

And the innovative, scientific and constantly evolving aspect of agri-business will be recognised with awards for sustainability, traceability, organic farming and use of technology.

Finally the importance of selling Irish food products

overseas is catered for in the Export Achievement Award.

Indeed attracting new international markets and developing those already gained holds the key to the sector's growth. Last year alone international buyers spent about €10 billion on Irish food and agribusiness exports, and that figure is expected to rise in 2015.

The abolition of dairy quotas this year and the government's commitments to the Irish food and agribusiness industry, as set out in the Harvest 2020 report, means the sector is now, rightly, considered the bedrock of the Irish economy.

Additionally the lifting of the ban on Irish beef exports to the U.S. is expected to generate millions for the industry in the years to come.

Speaking at the launch of the Harvest 2020 report Simon Coveney, Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine said: "Looking back over the last four years . . . what has struck me most forcibly has been the growth in value, confidence and ca-

pability of the sector as well as its absolute determination to succeed."

Those attributes have helped the reputation of the Irish Agribusiness sector to flourish and paved the way for the upcoming awards.

Events Strategies are no strangers to hosting such awards evenings. Indeed the company, which was founded in 2006, has gained a reputation for staging the very best in business conferences, award programmes and networking meetings, across different industry sectors, both here in Ireland and in the UK.



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Awards 2015

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