



Eileen Buckley, director, Evelyn O'Grady, R&D manager and Dan Buckley, MD of Cloverhill Food Ingredients

The right ingredients

Initially supplying to customers in Munster, Clover Hill Food Ingredients started out in 2003 with just two employees but has since grown into a multi-million euro concern

Based in Millstreet, Co Cork where it now employs 40 staff at its state-of-the-art manufacturing and warehousing facility, Clover Hill Food Ingredients was founded by Dan and Eileen Buckley. Dan Buckley had spent 15 years as a technical sales representative for global food ingredient manufacturers Griffith Laboratories, Dalgety Food Ingredients and Kerry Ingredients and decided it was time for a change.

He had noticed that the larger manufacturers were becoming more inwardly-focused, rationalising their delivery terms and making it harder for SME customers to source ingredients at competitive prices. He set out to exploit this gap in the market and Clover Hill Food Ingredients was born.

The first step for the fledgling company was to establish its own warehouse facility where it could mix ingredients in consignment sizes more suited to the needs of smaller customers. The move proved a huge success and Clover Hill is now a one-stop-shop supplier providing a

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600-strong suite of top quality ingredients and ingredient mixes to bakery product and ice-cream makers nationwide across the retail, catering and hospitality sectors.

Extensive product range

Supplemented by agencies for leading international brand names such as Backaldrin, Foricher, Norte-Eurocao and Dreidoppel, Clover Hill's extensive product range includes everything from flour, chocolate, bread mixes, confectionery mixes and packaging to fruit and vegetables, biscuits, seeds, spices, dairy and raising agents. Delivery is next day via Clover Hill's fleet of temperature-controlled vehicles.

“We offer flexible batch and bespoke ingredient mix solutions for our customers, which helps them to minimise waste and meet the specific needs of their own clientele,” Buckley explains. “We are constantly researching new product trends and new solutions to improve our service and have a team of technical experts who advise customers on how to get the most from their equipment and ingredient mixes. This is particularly important at a time like this when there are labour supply issues and a shortage of qualified bakers.”

The next two years will see further growth at Clover Hill with plans in place to significantly expand the Millstreet facility. Increased automation of some production lines will also add to capacity as Buckley plots the next chapter in the company's story.

“We have a strong presence in Ireland and the next step for us is to look at the export market,” he says. “We have identified significant potential in this area, which we hope will create exciting new opportunities to maintain our strong growth trajectory.”

www.cloverhill.ie

Bags of distinction

Dublin-based Thorn Environmental has carved out a niche for itself with its eco-friendly refuse sacks and liners which are making a big impression in export markets

Thorn Environmental was born out of one family's desire to keep the planet safe for the next generation. Established in 1997, there are now two generations of the Thorn family working in the business, with a third expected to follow soon.

A previous incarnation of the company was the first to launch refuse sacks on rolls on the Irish market. A re-assessment of its operations in the mid-1990s saw a strategic shift towards the production of eco-friendly packaging and waste management solutions that were in line with the EU's new environmental action programme, now known as Agenda 2030.

“Environmental legislation provided the initial spur to realise opportunities that may not have been spotted if it didn't exist,” explains company director Adam Thorn. “We have subsequently been able to carve out a niche for ourselves via a combination of macro-environmental analysis, innovative thinking and ongoing R&D investment to create a product range that meets all consumer and legislative requirements.”

Thorn launched its main earth2earth® brand in 1997, which now includes bio-degradable sacks, liners, films, paper,

compostable films and a new closed-loop, recycled film product which is set to be launched in the coming months. Manufactured at a state-of-the-art plant in Malaysia, clients cover a wide gamut of industry sectors, including food, manufacturing, retail, logistics, hygiene and safety.

Bio-based breakthrough

Three years ago the company began researching the possibility of developing new carbon-negative materials made from bio-based plant resins. A polyethylene resin manufactured from sugarcane was identified as a suitable raw material, which, when added to three other resins, produced a material of suitable strength for manufacturing.

A study by the carbon auditors Carbon Trust confirmed that the resin had a negative carbon footprint of -3.09kg per kg. A new range of carbon-capture refuse sacks manufactured from the new material was launched in October 2019 and has proven hugely successful. “We believe this is a world first,” says Thorn. “We've had a great response from customers across both the public and private sectors.”

Firmly established as the largest supplier of refuse sacks and liners to the Irish market, Thorn believes that the export sector will be its main source of growth over the next few years. “We had already seen robust growth in the UK which levelled off with Britain leaving the EU but is beginning to increase again,” he explains. “We have developed our presence in France, Germany, the Benelux countries and Turkey, while 2020 saw our first move into the Asian market. This year we are targeting Australia and New Zealand and hope to move into the US as well.”

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Adam Thorn, director, and Myles Thorn, managing director, Thorn Environmental

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