



## EXPERIENCING SCOTLAND

### Driving business through provenance

Quarterly Update November 2015

Welcome to the latest Quarterly Update from Experiencing Scotland, the initiative which supports tourism companies to provide and promote the high quality food and drink produce Scotland offers.

Read on for some inspiring examples of how businesses and events across the country are reaping the benefits of showcasing Scotland's fantastic natural larder to visitors.

### Case Study – Benugo at the National Museum of Scotland

Benugo is one of the UK's most innovative contract caterers, currently operating a variety of businesses from high street cafes and restaurants to dining areas within some of the UK's most iconic tourism sites.

Part of the WSH Group, the UK's largest independent foodservice and hospitality operator, Benugo holds two significant contracts in Scotland – the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh and Historic Scotland's group catering contract.

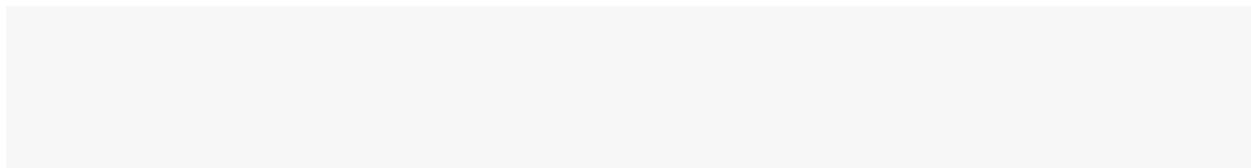


Jason Fox, Operations Director at Benugo says: "Research shows that food is a prime influencer on days out and as such is an essential element of the commercial proposition at visitor attractions.

"At Benugo we have taken this on board, firmly believing that catering should be a memorable part of the visit and appreciating the potential impact of food and drink on the overall visitor experience".

To help them develop the food and drink offer within the National Museum of Scotland and to review their general business approach, the company recently signed up to receive bespoke advice and support from Experiencing Scotland.

[Click here](#) to read their story.



## Seeking help and advice to develop your food and drink offer?

Experiencing Scotland's one-to-one business support provides an induction to business tools and support networks; up to 2 days direct consultancy support delivering a bespoke diagnostic analysis of food operations; a bespoke action plan; referrals to suppliers, events and support organisations; and ongoing telephone support as required.

[Click here](#) to find out how Experiencing Scotland could help **your** business.

Don't forget! Tourism groups can now access workshop support covering: an introduction to the opportunities; Scottish business success stories demonstrating how to increase profits, tell food stories and delight visitors; business tools and support networks; action planning; top tips on purchasing and innovating through your menu offer and service delivery; and an opportunity to meet producers based in your area.

[Click here](#) to find out more about eligibility for the one-to-one support and group workshops.



## East Lothian bids to become national food and drink destination

A ground-breaking scheme is under way to transform East Lothian into a national food and drink destination.

Over 120 companies in the area have been invited to come together to create a business improvement district (BID) specifically focused on food and drink.

More than 30 BIDs have been set up in Scotland in recent years to allow businesses with shared interests and ambitions to come together to generate funds and decide how they should be spent locally to improve their business and competitiveness.

A steering group is now being established with a view to developing a five year business plan for the area, with participating businesses being asked for their views on how the BID could create improvements to the local economy as well as individual businesses. Actions agreed by the majority could be operational within the next 12 to 14 months.

Ian Davison Porter, director of the national body for BIDs said: "The collective working of the businesses involved in the food and drink BID will help to drive local and international trade and create an opportunity to reduce business costs".

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Food and Environment, Richard Lochhead added: "Scotland's food and drink sector is growing at an exponential rate. The BID model will further aid the growth and profile of this sector. I encourage other areas in Scotland to follow East Lothian's lead and consider how they too can benefit from a food and drink BID".



[Click here](#) for more information about the BIDs programme. Alternatively contact Ian Davison Porter at [ian.davisonporter@bids-scotland.com](mailto:ian.davisonporter@bids-scotland.com), tel. 0780 106 4733.

## Local food climbs to new heights at Nevis Range

Serving up local produce has helped Nevis Range to become the first ski area in Scotland to be awarded VisitScotland's Taste Our Best award.

The award recognises the high quality of the eating experience, including the hospitality, quality of the food and menu variety, with an emphasis on the use of Scottish produce and ingredients.

Head Chef Will MacDonald has worked hard to create a menu with a strong Scottish identity. Customers can sample some of the best Scottish produce all year round in the Pinemarten Café Bar and the Snowgoose Restaurant at the top of the Mountain Gondola on the slopes of Aonach Moor.



The company's new catering manager Sarah Shepherd said that over the years it had chosen to source as much food and drink as possible from local and Scottish-based companies.

"We work with local Cobbs Bakery and Great Glen Game and serve Macsween Haggis and Stornoway Black Pudding.

"We also prepare our own dishes in our kitchen at 650 metres on the slopes of Aonach Moor, which can only be accessed by our gondola.

"During 2015, we have introduced even more local and Scottish produce to our menu to celebrate the Year of Food and Drink Scotland 2015 themes".

If you're thinking about applying for Taste Our Best accreditation, a one-to-one diagnostic of your food and drink operation from Experiencing Scotland could be an important first step in ensuring you meet the criteria.

[Click here](#) to find out more about how Experiencing Scotland can help your business.

## Eat Drink Outer Hebrides trail to be launched

Outer Hebrides Tourism (OHT) have announced the development of a new food and drink trail.

OHT's Victoria Harvey, who has been developing the trail, says: "Visitors to the islands spend 21% of their holiday budget on food and drink. With 120 food and drink businesses on the islands, the opportunity is there to provide visitors with an attractive food and drink experience, giving them another reason to want to come to the islands".



The proposed trail will be self-guided from Barra to the Butt of Lewis and will be complemented by web-based information and a leaflet.

OHT is now encouraging their members to get involved in the initiative, ranging from people who could act as ambassadors and story tellers to team players who would promote each other's businesses.

[www.visitouterhebrides.co.uk](http://www.visitouterhebrides.co.uk)

### Cuddybridge Apple Juice core out award

Borders-based apple juice producer Cuddybridge Apple Juice is toasting its success at the Great Taste Awards where it achieved a two star award for its Braeburn varietal apple juice.

The Great Taste Awards are organised by the Guild of Fine Food and have been described as the 'Oscars' of the food world.

Cuddybridge Apple Juice is hand-produced in small batches by Graham Stoddart and his wife who jointly run the company. It is free from flavourings, colourings, stabilisers and has no added water.



The company was launched in 2007 and has since gone on to win numerous awards and has also achieved approved supplier status from the Sustainable Restaurant Association.

[www.cuddybridgeapplejuice.com](http://www.cuddybridgeapplejuice.com)

For more news from the food and drink industry across Scotland go to [www.foodanddrink.scot/news.aspx](http://www.foodanddrink.scot/news.aspx)

Are you keen to include more Scottish and local produce on your menu? Scotland Food & Drink's website [www.foodanddrink.scot](http://www.foodanddrink.scot) includes a free to access [Showcase](#), where tourism businesses can search a catalogue of over 1,300 [Scottish producers and suppliers](#), by area or food sector, and identify those companies that are interested in supplying the hospitality sector. You can also use the [Food Map](#) to source suppliers located near to you.

### Looking to sell at events?

The Event Ready Producers' project offers **one-to-one expert business support** to review food and drink companies' readiness to supply events. Over 20 food and drink producers have already benefited!

The project continues until the end of this year and we are still keen to hear from Scottish food and drink companies who want to get involved – but you'll need to be quick!

[Click here](#) to find out more about the one-to-one support and how to register.



The ['Ready for Events'](#) website has a range of practical tips and advice for food and drink companies looking to expand into the events market, as well as links to helpful guides and resources.

The handy [Events Finder](#) will also enable you to search for events in your area that potentially include food retail or catering operations.

If you're an event organiser looking for food and drink companies who can sell at your event, remember to check out [Scotland Food & Drink's Showcase](#), which highlights producers and suppliers in each area of the country that are specifically 'event ready'.

Remember, too, to upload your event catering specification direct to the [Ready for Events website](#) where it can be seen by suppliers searching for events. This is a fantastic opportunity for you to highlight your needs and engage with producers, who in turn may help you to provide a unique selling point, keep your event fresh, and encourage your visitors to return year after year.

## Case study – Highland Hog Roasts

Highland Hog Roasts (HHR) is based at Invercannich Farm, near Beaulieu. Operated by Ann and Karl Falconer, HHR, which developed from the farm's core business of rearing rare breed pigs, is a highly experienced events caterer capable of providing up to four units and a range of build-ups to cater for everything from large scale, high volume events to smaller private parties.

Events attended include a variety of game fairs and agricultural shows, music festivals including T in the Park and Belladrum and national events such as World Pipe Band Championship and Edinburgh's Hogmanay. New events for this year have included the Royal Highland Show and Piping Live in Glasgow's George Square.



HHR was also a key player at BT Murrayfield as part of a group of independent traders forming a Scottish food 'village' at the Scotland v Italy friendly in August 2015.

The core menu for outdoor events is spit roasted, home-reared hog meat in traditional bread rolls, accompanied by a choice of relishes and condiments. To provide an added element of theatre at larger events, the hog roast is often presented as a whole beast and carved in front of customers.

The Falconers also work closely with local butcher Munro of Dingwall to specify sausages and bacon made from the farm pork as well as venison burgers and steaks. Local sourcing is at the heart of the business with all meats sourced in the Highlands and full traceability of produce evidenced.

In light of growing competition in the sector, the company was keen to review its current operation and scope out potential avenues for differentiating its offer from the standard hog roast product, and recently signed up to receive bespoke advice and support from the Event Ready Producers' initiative.

Ann Falconer says: "Working with the project, we've been able to identify a range of innovative new product ideas that will help us to stand out in a crowded marketplace and meet the expectations of today's increasingly food-savvy event attendees".

[Click here](#) to find out how Event Ready Producers' is helping the company to achieve its business aims.

## Rugby fans treated to a huge selection of local food and drink at BT Murrayfield

Seven companies supported by the Event Ready Producers initiative had their events catering offer put to the test when they were invited to provide the catering at the Summer Test against Italy at BT Murrayfield on 29<sup>th</sup> August.

The food and drink producers were among 20 companies invited to come together in a 'Scottish Village' at Murrayfield, which sought to provide rugby fans with an alternative to traditional match fare by serving up food and drink with a distinctly Scottish flavour.



In celebration of Scotland's Year of Food and Drink, Scottish Rugby decided to expand the range of food and drink on offer as part of an exciting and varied match-day experience which also included live music. Keen to provide match-goers with the best possible catering experience, the team at BT Murrayfield approached Scottish Enterprise's Event Ready Producers initiative to provide help and support to bring the plan to fruition.

With the help of Event Ready Producers' catering consultant Sandra Reid, the team was able to identify a range of local producers and suppliers who had a proven track record of delivering high quality food and drink at other Scottish events. In the run up to the day, Sandra worked with the companies to ensure they were equipped to deal with the demands of catering at such a high volume event.

Companies including Tomintoul Venison, Loch Fyne, It's All Food, Juicy Meat Company, Perthshire Farmers and Producers, Food from Argyll, Whitmuir the Organic Place and Highland Hog Roast had all received bespoke business advice and support from the Event Ready Producers initiative, to help them improve events catering standards and access opportunities in Scotland's events marketplace.



Other independent suppliers included Three Sisters Bake who had catered at the Commonwealth Games Food Village in 2014; Scoff Foods, a regular at Edinburgh Farmers Markets; Well Hung and Tender and the Buffalo Farm, who recently delivered offers at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe; and Mackie's of Scotland, who served fans the traditional treat of a cone or tub of their award winning range of ice cream, all made on the family farm in Aberdeenshire.

Spectators had the opportunity to eat like a king, choosing from a wide selection of fantastic Scottish produce including sizzling venison and Aberdeen Angus Beef burgers sourced from Highland estates, complete with Lockerbie mature cheddar cheese, delicious fresh salmon and shellfish from Loch Fyne on the west coast, wood-fired pizzas, 'posh hot dogs'. Scottish berries and 'home bakes'.

Dominic McKay, Director of Commercial Operations, Communications and Public Affairs at Scottish Rugby said: "We are always looking to give our fans the best experience possible when they attend BT Murrayfield to support Scotland, and by offering this selection of great food and drink we were able to make it even more special for all of the record Summer Test crowd.

"It was fantastic to receive such positive input from the Event Ready Producers initiative. We needed to be certain that the companies selected could deal with high levels of demand whilst maintaining the highest quality standards, and we weren't disappointed. All of the feedback we have received from spectators at the event suggests they were highly satisfied with the catering offer and appreciated the opportunity to try something a little bit different.

“It was a ‘win win’ for us. Not only did we meet the expectations of our 43,000 + match day visitors for fresh, locally-sourced food and drink, in doing so we were able to support a range of quality, independent suppliers”.

[Click here](#) to read the full story and view feedback from those taking part.

## **Register today for the Digital Tourism Conference**

Digital Tourism Scotland and Edinburgh Tourism Action Group are inviting all Scottish tourism businesses to attend a one day, national Digital Tourism conference on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> November at the EICC.

Personal, customised travel experiences are becoming the norm for today’s tourist but the question is, is your business ready for it? The Digital Tourism Conference will explore how digital tourism products and services can help tourism businesses create these customised experiences for visitors using the most appropriate digital and tech solutions. This must attend event will feature a fantastic line up of speakers from across the globe and is a unique opportunity to hear about some of the exciting new digital technologies and trends for the tourism industry.

[Click here](#) for more information and registration details.

## **Register for FREE updates from Experiencing Scotland**

Experiencing Scotland offers a range of free communications designed to highlight the benefits of offering Scottish food and drink. To register contact Scottish Enterprise, Tel: 0845 607 8787 or email [enquiries@scotent.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@scotent.co.uk)

[www.experiencingscotland.com](http://www.experiencingscotland.com)