



*G* **rampian**  
**food forum**

Annual Report

2007

# GRAMPIAN FOOD FORUM ANNUAL REPORT

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## FOREWORD

ALAN MEIKLE, CHAIRMAN  
GRAMPIAN FOOD FORUM



Grampian plays a crucial role in the food and drink industry of Scotland. The region employs 10,500 people within the industry, which is just over 20% of the total food and drink employment throughout the country. It accounts for 30% of Scotland's food and drink exports and 20 percent of the country's gross value added food and drink production.

"The Grampian Food Forum has been delivering success to the region's food and drink industry since 1993.

The first initiative of its type in the country, it has provided the blueprint for similar Fora throughout the rest of the Scotland, with a dynamic range of activities and events that help businesses work more effectively, build mutually beneficial relationships and showcase the region's success stories.

Led by the food and drink industry in Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray, we employ a partnership approach with the main economic development agencies in the area, to deliver our strategy which helps the industry work together to be more competitive and sustain long-term growth.

The Grampian Food Forum is now seen as an integral part of the local food and drink industry with 137 companies across all aspects of the food supply chain engaged in Forum activities during 2007. We look forward to continuing to help the industry flourish in 2008."

"Networking is the biggest benefit of participating in the Forum. Problem solving and sharing is a regular occurrence and works because we are not all competing in the same markets. Individual companies would not have achieved this without the support of the Forum." Denis Emslie, Mackie's of Scotland.

# ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2007



Over 40 new products

## Innovation Awards

Established 18 years ago, the Innovation Awards are the Forum's flagship event where companies present recently launched products to a high profile panel of judges.

Sponsored by the Press and Journal, the Taste of Grampian Restaurant of the Year Award attracted 24 entries in its inaugural year.

Chairman of the 2007 judging panel, Ken McMeikan, Retail Director of Sainsbury's said: "I loved the enthusiasm of the entrants and the overwhelming quality of products has been outstanding. It is incredibly inspiring to spend time with so many passionate people who care so deeply about food. Grampian's future continues to be in safe hands with such great innovators".

## Taste of Grampian

Held at the Thainstone Centre near Inverurie and now in its 8th year, the highly popular Taste of Grampian festival showcases the richness and diversity of the food and drink produced within the region to over 12,000 visitors and local consumers.

Guest chef, Nick Nairn said: "The great thing about the north-east is that it is almost embarrassing how much fabulous produce you have. The game from the estates, the brilliant farming countryside, brilliant beef, especially Aberdeen Angus beef, great lamb, great fish – you have it all".



116 exhibitors

“Taste of Grampian was a fantastic opportunity for our company to show a wider range of people what we do”. Alison Pearson, The Fish Plaice, Fraserburgh.



## 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 Woman Who Ate Scotland, Nell Nelson attracted over 90 guests, the highest number at a Dining Club so far, to the Marcliffe Hotel and Spa in February. Further events took place throughout the year at The Cullen Bay Hotel and the Mercure Ardoe House Hotel.

The Forum is a strong supporter of Grampian Chef of the Year. It not only showcases the chefs' skills, it highlights the local produce used in their winning menus. Senior and Young Chef winners go onto show these skills at Taste of Grampian.

80% of respondents positively rated the networking opportunities and 85% had increased the number of contacts made within the industry through attending Forum events.

## Accessing Premium Markets

55 people attended an Open Meeting which focused on opportunities within the foodservice sector and included guest speakers, Ronald McDonald of Craig Group Foodservice and Nick Bird of the Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre. 64% of delegates felt their business would benefit as a result of participating in the event.

“We were delighted to share our vision of how we can work in partnership with local suppliers and producers. We believe these partnerships can assist business to grow by adding their products to our range and offering distribution not only to the local market, but also the national and international markets in which we operate.” Ronald McDonald.

Two workshops on behalf of Scotland Food and Drink were held to disseminate Dunnhumby data - a rich source of consumer information. The 23 companies who attended found this to be very valuable resource for their business.



Photo courtesy of the Evening Express

An awareness visit to Finzean Farm Shop and Tearoom was particularly suited to smaller sized businesses and attracted representatives from 13 local companies.

Nino Khan, Nino's Masala and Fine Indian Cuisine said: “I enjoyed the visit and meeting others company representatives. It was good to learn about how Finzean started and to learn new experiences.”

## Innovation and Technology Group

The focus of these events is to help companies at a more practical level. One of this year's talks was a presentation by the Food Standards Agency on Traffic Light Labelling.

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 foodservice buyers, highlights new products from local companies.

**Food Matters**, issued electronically for the first time this year, gives details of Forum events and activities and local food and drink news.

## DELIVERING SUCCESS

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Results are taken from feedback following activities and a survey carried out amongst food and drink companies in November 2007, which has shown that the Grampian Food Forum has had a highly positive impact on the local industry.



**87% of respondents rated the quality of the Forum events as 'good' to 'excellent'.**

Membership of the Grampian Food Forum is free and activities are open to all involved in food and drink, from small business 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).