



## Developing a product to sell in a farm shop

An Enterprise and Employability Challenge for Welsh Baccalaureate, KS4 National/ Foundation, set by LEAF Education Cymru



### Why this challenge?

Producing locally grown and reared food for local sale is important for many reasons. It supports the farming sector, thus helping to ensure our food supply. It puts more money in the pockets of local businesses and creates jobs, boosting the local economy. It's also important as part of our culture – think of Welsh cakes and cawl – and it is appreciated by tourists.

Most of our food comes to us through supermarkets, canteens and cafes, often imported from halfway around the world, but it is also possible to buy local food through farmers' markets, farm shops and small high street shops – and there is growing interest in this.

There is a great business opportunity here, one that combines sustainability with profit. People are often willing to pay a bit extra for food if it comes with a good story or if it is particularly fresh, tasty or distinctive. Can you see a gap in the market?



## The Challenge

You will work with other pupils in a team of three to six to design and develop an idea for a product using locally sourced ingredients which will be suitable for sale in a farm shop, or a similar setting. You will display your idea and pitch it to a panel answering any questions asked. This will mean that you will need to develop and demonstrate some skills essential for **employability**, such as communication, numeracy, critical thinking, digital literacy and so on.

## Getting ideas

Here are some ideas to help you think of a good product, and to market it.

- Find out what food is grown and reared in your local area. Contact LEAF Education, NFU Cymru or the Farmers Union of Wales who will be able to tell you more and put you in touch with a farmer. You might also find a community garden or orchard, or some other food growing enterprise.
- Visit a local farm shop or farmers' market to get ideas for products. You could also visit supermarkets to study branding and pricing and see what people pay more for. You can find a list of food businesses here: <http://foodinnovation.wales/directory/>.
- Find a food business representative to come and talk to your school: try Big Ideas Wales or Tasty Careers.
- Interview parents, teachers, your friends – what do they like to buy? What attracts them to particular products? Think also of special dietary needs people might have, or concerns about the environment. Do you want to make something for regular purchase, charging a premium for quality, or a luxury gift item?

You also need to think what you would like to make. That could mean using vegetables for soup, fruit for tarts, cheese for a quiche, mushrooms for a sauce, meat for a ready meal, or some combination of these. Try out some recipes and see what works. You might want to do an online food hygiene course if you want to take your cookery further.



## Feasibility study

Next you need to carry out a feasibility study which will involve researching your market, identifying potential customers, looking at the competition, and further developing the idea.

You will need to think of a brand name for your product and identify its main selling points – local, healthy, luxury, novelty – who do you think will buy it? You can get ideas from looking at similar products in the shops. You will also need to cost your product and think about packaging. Can you avoid using plastic? How will you tell the story of your food?

## Marketing strategy

Key to a good marketing plan is a clear and positive story, one that makes your product stand out. This is sometimes called its Unique Selling Point, or USP. One way to start is to think about your values, that is, what you really care about. This will help you connect to your customers.

Remember that food is about lots of things – it's about taste and enjoyment, it's about health, it's something we share with friends and family, and it also connects us with the natural world. Many people are looking for food that is produced in a way that is good for wildlife, that uses traditional skills, that provides rewarding employment for people, or that has some other wider benefit. In Wales, people have a particularly strong attachment to the landscape and like to think that they are helping to preserve it.



In other words, people are looking for food that is good for them, and good for society and the environment, and they are often willing to pay extra for this. It isn't all about the price; it's more about value. What value does your product deliver and how will you tell that story?

Once you have an idea for a product and a marketing message, you can start to develop it for real. You could hold tasting sessions, try out different packaging, design an online campaign, think of unusual places to sell it – be creative!

Many people have started successful food businesses on the basis of an original idea and a lot of hard work. You can find some inspiring examples of food entrepreneurs in the Resources section below. Why not give it a go?

## RESOURCES

Here are some ideas to get you started.

- Visit a farm: contact LEAF Education for ideas [www.face-cymru.org.uk](http://www.face-cymru.org.uk) and <https://leafuk.org/education/leaf-education>
- Find a farmer: NFU Cymru [www.nfu-cymru.org.uk](http://www.nfu-cymru.org.uk) and Farmers Union of Wales <https://www.fuw.org.uk/>
- Find out more about British farming: [www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk](http://www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk)
- Find a farmers' market: <http://www.fmiw.co.uk/>
- Find local Welsh food businesses: <http://foodinnovation.wales/directory>
- Find out about careers in food and drink: <http://tastycareerswales.org.uk/>
- Meet a food entrepreneur <https://businesswales.gov.wales/bigideas>
- Be a food entrepreneur: <https://www.newfoodentrepreneurs.org.uk>
- Technical support for the food and drink industry: <http://www.foodcentrewales.org.uk/>
- Government support for the Welsh food and drink industry: <https://businesswales.gov.wales/foodanddrink/>



## Acknowledgements

Farm shop pictures courtesy of Rhug Estate Farm Shop, <https://rhug.co.uk/>.

Soup pictures courtesy of Powys Pupil Referral Unit