

# MAYO Food & Drink STRATEGY 2020-2025









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### **Foreword**

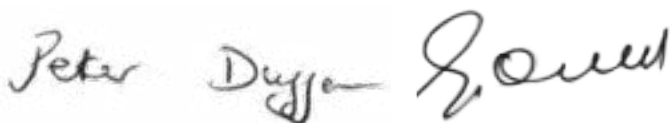
The manufacture of food and drink products is Ireland's most important indigenous industry with a turnover of €27.5 billion. It is deeply integrated into the wider economy spending €18 billion per year on intermediate consumption in other sectors plus a further €2.1 billion on compensation of employees.

In Mayo the food and drink sector is vibrant and growing. It creates employment in rural areas and has become an integral part of our tourism offering. The county's wild, green and healthy identity is reflected in the quality and diversity of food and drink produced in Mayo. This strategy will play a vital role in building on the existing strengths of the sector and allowing it to reach its full potential.

The food and drink sector faces a range of challenges but can also make the most of exciting opportunities. The strategy enables food producers and support agencies to respond to these challenges and opportunities and allows them to chart the next steps for their businesses. It focusses on making the best use of existing resources, developing new products and on embedding innovation and sustainability. The hope is that this will allow the sector to become more efficient, profitable and attractive to both consumers and as part of Mayo's tourism offering, thus making a significant contribution to the broader economic development of the county.

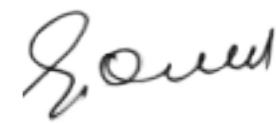
The strategy is a framework for collaboration and promotes an understanding that food and drinks businesses can work together with the various enterprise support agencies including the LEADER Programme and the Local Enterprise Office to grow, expand and diversify their own businesses while making a valuable contribution to both the economy and image of Mayo. Our range of local and natural food and drinks businesses are inspired by our pristine environment and augment Mayo's reputation as a growing tourism destination on the Wild Atlantic Way.

This strategy is the result of a collaboration between South West Mayo Development Company and Local Enterprise Office Mayo with the support of a Steering Committee comprised of key agencies and representatives of the food and drink sector in Mayo. Funding to prepare the strategy was provided by the Mayo LEADER Local Action Group under the LEADER Food Initiative. The strategy is an important milestone in providing a pathway for future growth in the sector that will allow Mayo to enhance its reputation as a food destination of choice for years to come.



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Peter Duggan  
Chief Executive (Interim)  
Mayo County Council



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Gerry O'Neill  
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South West Mayo  
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Councillor Al McDonnell  
Chairperson  
Mayo LEADER Local  
Action Group



## Executive Summary

The Mayo Food & Drink Strategy lays out a new road map for development of these two important sectors, providing clear direction and identifying opportunities for growth, underpinned by Innovation and Sustainable actions. While both hospitality and primary agriculture falls outside the scope of this strategy, their position is important as part of the wider food and drink landscape. The strategy addresses the specific needs of food and drinks producers who add value.

Mayo already has established a reputation for producing high quality food and drinks, and as a food festival venue. An audit of food and drink producers was completed with over 350 producers, potential producers and other stakeholders identified with a view to obtaining their input into the development of the strategy. An impressive variety and range of food and drink producers emerged, providing employment and contributing to the local and national economies.

The food and drink producer sector in Mayo has the potential to be of major economic importance. A sustainable food sector plays an important role in balanced regional development, supporting employment in rural areas beyond the major towns and cities. The food & drink industry in Mayo faces a number of challenges however, including fundamental changes to the economics of agriculture supply and production, increases in business and regulatory compliance costs and the threat of competition through imports from lower cost locations. Furthermore, Brexit and COVID-19 have brought significant new challenges which will continue to impact into the foreseeable future.



## Advantages of and Challenges facing the Food & Drink Sector in Mayo

The advantages and challenges facing Mayo food & drinks producers that have been identified through the General Needs, Training and SWOT analyses can be summarised as follows:

### ADVANTAGES

- Significant number of established artisan producers
- Wide range of quality food and drinks with some unique varieties
- Strong seafood activity
- Mayo is already a tourist destination and food tourism offers an opportunity for growth
- Motivated producers are keen to be active in the development of the sector

### CHALLENGES

- Distribution: distance from traditional markets
- No formal producers network resulting in low levels of structured co-operation
- Competitive national landscape
- Lack of incubator space

### PRIORITIES

The following priorities for development have been identified:

- **Priority 1** Growth of the Mayo Food and Drink sector
- **Priority 2** Develop Mayo Food & Drink Tourism
- **Priority 3** Combine Tradition and Heritage with Innovation & Sustainability
- **Priority 4** Provide support in response to Brexit & COVID-19

These priorities are addressed through the action plan which details the actions required, the supports available and the roles of the stakeholders.



### **European Context**

Food & Drink continues to be important to the European economy, and Food Drink Europe reported an increase in both production output and turnover in Q1 2020<sup>1</sup>.

When introducing World Food Safety Day in June 2020, European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) Executive Director, Bernhard Url, said that sustainable food systems are an important feature of the EU food safety system where European and national organisations together help to make Europe's standards of food safety, animal health and welfare, and environmental protection among the highest in the world.

The GDO European Food Trends Report 2019<sup>2</sup> cites sustainability as a key priority for the future of food. The same report notes that sustainability means less food waste, more ecological packaging solutions, and a more circular economy.

United Nations World Tourism Organisation Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai, in the UNWTO Global Food Tourism report<sup>3</sup>, emphasises the importance of food tourism for rural communities, many of which have struggled with the loss of traditional economic sectors. The location of these communities close to food-producing land gives them a comparative advantage. Tourism, particularly food tourism, allows these communities to generate income and employment opportunities locally, providing jobs for food tour guides or local chefs, while fuelling other sectors of the local economy such as agriculture. The same report goes on to say that tourists travel to those destinations that have established a reputation as a place to experiment with quality local products.

Research from 2015 estimates that the number of annual trips booked in Europe that were primarily focused on food and wine was




600,000; the number rose to 20 million annual trips when these are included as a secondary demand. Annual growth is expected to be between 7% and 12%<sup>4</sup>.

EUREGA (EUropean REgions of GAstronomy) is a European project which states that “Gastronomy, local and regional food heritage is a common European cultural heritage, and as such also a major economic asset. Regional agro-food value chains can have a serious positive impact on local development. They also generate cooperation between various sectors including agriculture, tourism, hospitality, education etc. One way of materializing such cooperation is the growing trend of food related tourism”. The project’s main objective is to have “food, food habits and gastronomy included and recognised in EU, regional and national strategies and policies. These should be seen both as a cultural asset and strong element in regional cultural identity and as a necessary tool to boost sustainable products and services”<sup>5</sup>.

One example of how Ireland differs from European food trends is that of Street Food, which is well established in other countries. In Britain for example, the street food market was forecast to reach £1.2 billion this year, up 9.1% from 2017<sup>6</sup>. The European Street Food Awards<sup>7</sup> are part of a global street food organisation which includes Britain and the USA. The awards were launched in 2018 and will proceed in 2020 despite COVID-19. “The Global Resurgence of Street Food” was also reported by Euromonitor International in 2015<sup>8</sup>, which would indicate that Ireland has been slow to adopt this trend.

Food 2030 is an EU research and innovation policy response to international policy developments including the Sustainable Development Goals and the 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change commitments. It is built on key food and nutrition security priorities including: Ensuring that nutritious food and water is available,



accessible and affordable for all; Building climate smart food systems adaptive to climate change, conserving natural resources and contributing to climate change mitigation; Implementing resource-efficient circular economy principles across the whole food system while reducing its environmental footprint; Boosting innovation and investment, while empowering communities<sup>9</sup>.

## **National Context**

The manufacture of food and drink products is Ireland's most important indigenous industry with a turnover of €27.5 billion and supplies the majority of produce to Ireland's €15 billion domestic grocery and food service sector<sup>10</sup>. The wide range of food choices on our supermarket shelves often means, however, that we still rely on food that has been imported, often flown in from thousands of miles away, all at a considerable environmental cost. The development of a robust, sustainable future for food production in Ireland presents an opportunity for Ireland to benefit both the environment and the economy.

Artisan/speciality food production in Ireland is made up of a large number of small food producers, estimated at 750. The artisan food sector is an important part of Ireland's economy which was estimated to be worth over €706 million in 2016 and is projected to grow by an additional 10% before 2021. Interest in artisan food continues to grow in Ireland as consumers increasingly turn to high quality local food and drinks products. Irish consumers also think that it is important to know where the ingredients within artisan foods come from and connection with producers helps to build trust among consumers and reinforce their quality credentials<sup>11</sup>.

The development of the food sector in Ireland as a major source of income and employment is reflected in the fact that this industry nationally has an annual turnover of €25 billion, exports over €10 billion worth of produce and supports 230,000 jobs.

Food Wise 2025 describes a vision for growth for the Irish agricultural economy for the next 10 years to 2025. On the basis of available data, it is anticipated that the following growth projections are achievable by 2025:

- **Increasing the value of agri-food exports by 85% to €19 billion**
- **Increasing the value added in the agri-food, fisheries and wood products sector by 70% to in excess of €13 billion**
- **Increasing the value of Primary Production by 65% to almost €10 billion**
- **The creation of an additional 23,000 direct jobs in the agri-food sector all along the supply chain from primary production to high value added product development**

National Strategic Outcome 3 in Project Ireland 2040 - Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities of Project Ireland 2040 specifically identifies food as a strategic pillar<sup>12</sup> for the West. The Rural Regeneration Development Fund provides support for various types of projects which could be accessed to support Mayo food & drink producers.

Future Jobs Ireland<sup>13</sup> has identified Food as one of the priority areas for attention, with particular attention paid to Food for Health, and Smart Sustainable Food Production and Processing.

The programme for Government 2020 - Our Shared Future<sup>14</sup>, identifies the Agri-Food Sector for particular attention with a view to achieving balanced regional development. It also commits to “supporting Fáilte Ireland to further develop food trails to build on our reputation for high quality produce”. Elsewhere, and while outside the scope of this strategy the programme commits to “building on Ireland’s relative carbon efficiency in food production and ensuring the delivery of the measures identified by Teagasc to the fullest extent possible”.

The Climate Action Plan 2019 states that “The majority of farm enterprises and food processors have engaged positively in sustainability initiatives, by Teagasc and Bord Bia, making food production more efficient and enhancing environmental outcomes”. Sustainability is an important element of any Food & Drink Strategy, and Mayo is no exception.






## Food Tourism

Fáilte Ireland<sup>15</sup> estimates that over one third of tourist spending is on food and that 10% of all tourists are “culinary tourists” seeking unique, memorable eating and drinking experiences and who want to try new foods and taste foods in their traditional context. In 2017, an estimated €2 billion was spent by overseas tourists and domestic holiday makers on food and drink. Fáilte Ireland also reports that Food in Tourism accounts for around €2 billion or 35% of total revenue from visitors to Ireland (2017).

Visitor Experiences & Food Trails in Ireland have increased in number over the past 5 years. Fáilte Ireland promotes food tourism and many counties have developed food producer networks and food trails with the support of the local agencies. Examples include the Donegal Food Coast, Sligo Food Trail, Taste Leitrim, Boyne Valley Food Series, Savour Kilkenny and the Burren Food Trail, among others. Food tourism growth is supported by Fáilte Ireland’s Taste the Island. There are close to 100 dedicated food and drink festivals held in Ireland every year, including some dedicated to seafood, street food and craft beer (with 2020 being the exception due to COVID-19).

Ireland is not synonymous with Street Food. There has, however, been some growth in this sector, although it can sometimes be challenging to meet requirements around trade permits and food safety regulations. While the quality of food trucks was limited to fast food/burger and chips, this has changed for the better. A good example of this is the award-winning “Misunderstood Heron” in Killary Harbour, which was recently named by Lonely Planet as among the ten ‘Coolest Food Trucks’ in the world, it’s also been awarded ‘Street Food of the Year 2019’ by food writer Georgina Heffernan. Another good example is Julia’s Lobster Truck, based





in Lisdoonvarna, Co. Clare and others who travel the country to festivals and events. The first Irish Street Food Awards took place in 2017<sup>16</sup> with the winner qualifying for the European Street Food Festival and Awards.

## **Consumers**

The past twenty years has seen a huge change in the way people think about the food they eat. Consumers are now used to having a wide choice, people talk about food in ways they never did before, standards have increased and with them so have people's expectations of quality, value and availability. Consumers like the idea of supporting their own and they want to see money staying in the country, preferably locally. So, sustainable, locally made produce is very much in demand. Retailers are responding by supporting local producers.

Consumers also like the idea of artisan or hand-made foods. More than ever before, shoppers are interested in knowing where the food products they purchase are made. In addition to this, consumers care about health and nutrition, ethics, quality, naturalness, craft and story & heritage. The decision to buy a food or not will more often than not depend on whether that particular food meets these criteria.

Consumers have become increasingly aware of the importance of healthy foods through TV programmes such as Operation Transformation, and schools programmes such as Food Dudes from Bord Bia, which introduces children to fruit and vegetables. The growth in recent years of the healthy, convenient, on the go food market has been in response to consumer demand.

## **Brexit**

Several reports have been published which examine the potential impact of various Brexit scenarios on Ireland's agri-food sector. All of these analyses show that the result would be unambiguously bad





for the sector, which is particularly vulnerable given its exposure to the UK market compared to other sectors of the Irish economy<sup>17</sup>.

The UK accounts for 37% of Irish food & drink exports annually<sup>18</sup>. The uncertainty as to the mechanism for the implementation of Brexit at the end of 2020 continues to put pressure onto Irish food & drink producers. Bord Bia, Enterprise Ireland and the Local Enterprise Offices continue to urge producers to take steps to ensure they are prepared for all Brexit eventualities by examining the six key risk areas that the Brexit Barometer has identified: Customer Relationships, Supply Chain, Customs & Controls, Financial Resilience, Market Diversification and Emerging Risks<sup>19</sup>.

A hard Brexit on December 31st 2020 could result in the imposition of tariffs and other trade costs which have the potential to negatively affect cross-border trade in goods. InterTrade Ireland reports<sup>20</sup> that the majority of the effect would be felt by food producers, as this is the sector where the EU's external tariffs to countries without a trade agreement in place are highest. At the time of writing, Food Drink Ireland (Ibec) has called for a funding support package specifically for market diversification and product innovation for food & drinks producers<sup>21</sup>.

## **COVID-19**

The “COVID-19 Regional Economic Analysis” report prepared and published by the three Regional Assemblies in Ireland in May 2020 states that “Having been considered one of the fastest growing economies in the EU in recent years, the Irish economic landscape has profoundly changed due to the outbreak of COVID-19”<sup>22</sup>. The same report states that Mayo is deemed to have a 49.7% COVID-19 exposure ratio, the second highest on the scale (along with just three other counties); Westport town has a 58% exposure with 276 units operating in sectors likely to be worst affected; Ballina 48.3% and Ballinrobe 48% exposure.

Bord Bia has said that “The Covid-19 global crisis presents unprecedented challenges to the Irish food and drinks industry, both in the immediate and longer term”<sup>23</sup>. The Department of Finance issued their “COVID-19 Policy Response: Overview of economic support measures May 2020” which describes the range and scale of business supports that will be needed.

The supports needed are likely to fall into the short- medium- and long-term categories and these are addressed as far as is possible in this strategy.





Photographs www.northmayo.ie







## The Mayo Food & Drink Landscape

The Mayo Local Economic and Community Plan published by Mayo County Council lists food as one of Mayo's strengths with an opportunity identified for "Interaction between tourism and food sectors." Furthermore, it states "Economic development within the context of this plan includes, but is not limited to:

- Creating and sustaining jobs
- Promoting the interests of the community including enterprise and economic development
- Supporting training and upskilling
- Identifying local strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats"

The Mayo Food & Drink Strategy lays out a new road map for development, providing clear direction and identifying opportunities for growth, underpinned by actions with a focus on Innovation and Sustainability. The Sustainable Agriculture Policy for Mayo<sup>24</sup>, published in 2019, aims to improve farm incomes in the long-term and maximise the value of all food produced, while operating in an environmentally sustainable way. It cites food processing as an important indigenous sector in the county. While primary agriculture falls outside the scope of this strategy, its position is important as part of the wider food and drink landscape. Farm diversification and adding value to primary products are essential to the long-term sustainability of farming.

In Mayo, as with the rest of Ireland, the food & drink industry faces a number of challenges, including fundamental changes to the economics of agriculture supply and production, relentless increases in business and regulatory compliance costs and threat of competition from lower cost locations<sup>25</sup>. The food and drink producer sector in the county has the potential to be of major economic importance and has been specifically selected for

support. A sustainable food sector plays an important role in balanced regional development, supporting employment in rural areas beyond the major towns and cities.

Mayo already has established a strong reputation as a food producing and a food festival venue. However, a strategy for development is needed to ensure a structured approach and identify a clear roadmap of actions.

Ireland has a unique social, economic and physical landscape. Rural and regional economic development is a key part of improving the quality of life in rural areas, small towns and villages, according to the 2018 Government paper on Rural Development<sup>26</sup>. The creation and maintenance of employment and income generating opportunities are critically important to sustaining vibrant rural communities. There must be an economic basis for communities to remain in rural areas. A sustainable rural food business sector plays an important role in balanced regional development, supporting employment in rural areas beyond the major towns and cities.

## Food Tourism



The latest figures from Fáilte Ireland indicate that over 306,00 tourists visited Mayo in 2016<sup>27</sup>. Culinary Tourism is tourism where food plays an essential role, where food is a

primary consideration for the traveller. The World Food Travel Association (WFTA) defines it as “the pursuit and enjoyment of unique and memorable food experiences”. For 88% of tourist destinations, gastronomy plays a strategic role in their image and brand. Most culinary travellers are more interested in local food culture than in gourmet<sup>28</sup>.

## Mayo Tourist Figures 2017<sup>29</sup>:

Mayo - 2017	Overseas	Tourists (000s)	324
		Revenue (€mn)	78
	Domestic	Trips (000s)	503
		Revenue (€mn)	108

The Mayo Local Economic and Community Plan cites food as one of Mayo's strengths with an opportunity identified for interaction between the tourism and food and drink sectors.

Food tourists want to experience local heritage, culture and people through food and drink. Mayo has the potential to become a premium food tourism destination, with international visitors seeking authentic food experiences, driving economic opportunity to the food and drink and hospitality sectors. While there are a great many food tours operating in Dublin, Belfast and Cork, there are just a few smaller operators in the West of Ireland. In Mayo these include:

- Wild Atlantic Cultural Tours based in Killala
- Cabot's of Westport offers occasional food tours in and around Westport
- Connemara Pub Tours leaving from either Westport or Galway

Some food and drink producers offer Visitor Experiences, such as Kelly's of Newport (Économusée), Achill Sea Salt, Calvey's Achill Mountain Lamb, Lough Mask Distillery, Connacht Distillery and Mescan Brewery. However, these are in the minority. Fáilte Ireland has identified experiential tourism as an area for attention as tourists want to feel immersed in a place or an activity. *Taste the Island*<sup>30</sup> on the Wild Atlantic Way talks about fresh seafood and the combination of tradition with 21st Century techniques. The *Taste the Atlantic Seafood trail* in 2019 included Clarke's Salmon Smokery, Croagh Patrick Seafoods and Keem Bay Fish Products.



Mayo County Council has identified the following food tourism opportunities:

- Develop and integrate the food and drink sector into the tourism sector
- Facilitate communities in coming together to support each other and to develop and promote the local food and drink sector
- Facilitate and promote food tour packages
- Encourage the development and promotion of food related activities such as skills courses, and food and drink trails as part of tourism packages

## **Cookery Schools**

The growing interest in food and drink and the growing number of people entertaining at home means there are positive signals for cooking schools, according to Bord Bia (October 2012 report on Food Tourism). At present there is no dedicated, purpose built cookery school either in Mayo nor in Connacht, albeit some restaurants, small bakeries and accommodation providers offer classes and demonstrations. There is scope for a dedicated cookery school in Mayo.

## **Street Food & Food Markets**

Fifteen mobile units were found to be operating in Mayo, including four coffee vans (three of which catering primarily to the events and wedding market), two pizza trucks, two mobile butchers, two bakeries, one vegan and health food, three seafood and one fast food. While there are no large outdoor events or weddings planned in 2020 due to COVID-19, this is a growing sector and holds considerable potential to animate locations around the county. Food trucks may also offer the potential to producers to provide a visitor experience without the need for tourists to enter their production premises.

Mayo has eleven year round or seasonal Farmers and Country Markets, a combination of indoor and outdoor venues, albeit not all of the indoor venues are ideally suited for such operations. For example, the Westport Country Market is located within a boxing club. Others are inside community centres and parish halls. There is no dedicated, permanent, outdoor space to accommodate food markets in the county.

## **Food Networks**

Food Networks in Mayo are limited to the Cong Food Village<sup>31</sup>, made up of producers and food service operators, some sectoral producer groups (beekeepers, horticulture, lamb, sheep and aquaculture) and the organising committees of the various food and drinks festivals.

## **Food & Drinks Festivals**

Food festivals attract large numbers of tourists every year who are attracted by food and drink-based events or associated with music and other events. In Mayo, there are a number of annual<sup>32</sup> dedicated food and drink festivals including:

**a. Mayo Street Food Festival**

**b. Food Fleadh Ballina**

**c. Ballina Salmon Festival**

**d. Cong Food Village Festival**

**e. Westport Food Festival**

**f. Gráinne Ale Craft Beer Festival**

Initiatives such as the nationwide Street Feast<sup>33</sup> event which is held on fixed dates, encourages communities to come together to share food in an outdoor space. Other festivals often have food stalls and producer participation, including Agricultural Shows, with the Bonniconlon Agricultural Show claiming to be the third largest of its kind in the country, in addition to Mayo Day and others.

The following Food & Drink Tourism opportunities have been identified for attention through the strategy:

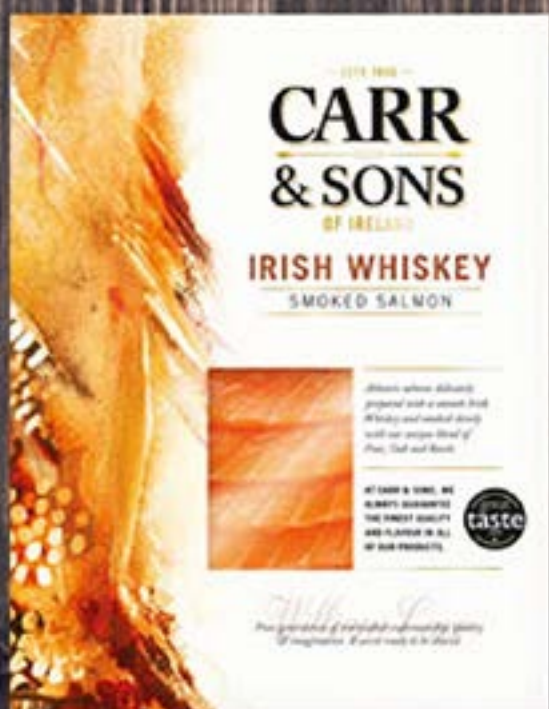
- Develop and integrate the food & drink sector into the tourism sectors
- Facilitate and promote visitor experiences
- Encourage the development and promotion of food related activities such as food courses in traditional skills (for example, butter and cheese-making, brewing & distilling, bread baking, smoking fish, cheese and meat, bee keeping, foraging, brewing and distilling)
- Identification and development of a space suitable to host a permanent food market, food & drink festivals, food trucks, distribution hub and other associated activities. There may be some potential to locate this in the Castlebar Military Barracks or other similar buildings, subject to funding







— ESTD. 1946 —  
**CARR**  
**& SONS**  
OF IRELAND



— ESTD. 1946 —  
**CARR**





## Why Does Mayo Need a Food & Drink Strategy?

The local food sector has many features and benefits as well as challenges. The new Mayo Food & Drink Strategy comes from an increased awareness of changing needs and the particular challenges which face food businesses in the county. Food producers will be enabled to respond to challenges in the market and chart the steps needed in their business. Businesses require assistance in understanding how marketing and business planning is relevant to them, how to make best use of their resources, developing their services, operations, product development, and embedding innovation and sustainable practises. As a result, their businesses will be more efficient, profitable and more attractive to customers. In doing so, with the assistance of the support agencies in Mayo, food businesses can make a significant contribution to the broader development of the area.

Specific challenges affect growth and development opportunities, and the scope and breadth of the sector is such that a range of supports are required to meet the challenges of market pressures, the cost environment and competitiveness. It is in this context that the Mayo Food and Drink Audit and Mayo Food and Drink Strategy 2025 is required.



Photograph Mack & Spud



## Approach, Scope & Methodology

As part of the audit process, primary producers were identified along with operators within the hospitality sector and specialist retailers such as butcher shops, delicatessens, bakeries and others. However, the scope of the strategy addresses the specific needs of food and drinks producers who add value.

Information about existing food and drinks producers was obtained from the local and national support agencies. Producers and stakeholders were invited through a social media and email campaign to take part and contribute. A range of approaches were undertaken to ensure comprehensive stakeholder engagement. In all, over 350 producers, potential producers and other stakeholders were contacted with a view to obtaining their input into the development of the strategy. Consultations were carried out through three online workshops, and a General Needs and Training Needs Analysis survey.







Photograph Joe Keogh, Keogh Photography



Photograph Shane Smith



Photograph Joe Keogh, Keogh Photography



## Findings

The list of confirmed producers (as at June 30th 2020) was analysed to determine the number, range, size and sector. An impressive range and variety of producers emerged, across over eighteen different food and drink types:

Sector	Number	%
Aquaculture	1	1%
Desserts	1	1%
Coffee	2	2%
Poultry	2	2%
Various	2	2%
Brewery	3	3%
Eggs	3	3%
Ingredient	3	3%
Drinks - Non Alcoholic	4	3%
Dairy	5	4%
Distillery	5	4%
Confectionery	6	5%
Honey	6	5%
Horticulture/Vegetable growers	12	10%
Prepared foods	12	10%
Bakery	15	13%
Meat	15	13%
Fish/Seafood/Shellfish	18	16%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>115</b>	

Organic producers – 23 producers claim to be organic, although not all are registered with either Irish Organic Association or the Organic Trust, and of which all but 2 are farm based.

The majority of those surveyed (68%) were established for over three years, with just three pre-startup and sixteen (12%) at the start-up stage, being less than three years in business. The needs of these groups are addressed in the action plan.



As per national figures<sup>34</sup>, the vast majority (82%) of food and drinks producers are micro businesses (having less than 10 employees). There are only five large companies (4%), including two which are part of a group structure. Sixteen producers are farm-based.

Turnover figures show that 44% of those who provided information have a turnover of <€100k per annum and 30% <€500k.

The Fish / Seafood / Shellfish sector represents the largest number of operators, although some of these are primary producers. As with the national picture<sup>35</sup>, exports of seafood and shellfish exceed domestic sales, and many producers do not add value to their products, but export almost 100% through agents or distributors into Europe and Asia.

## Routes to Market

Most producers indicated that they sell through a combination of routes to market, including retail, food service, online and some direct sales. 24 producers are selling direct to customer only, mainly through Farmers' and Country Markets. An audit of online presence is presented below. However, while just 15 producers indicated that they sell online, the number of producers with an e-commerce site was found to be 24.

Routes to Market	
Food Service / Catering	25
Retail	49
Online	15
Direct to Consumer	42
Other (incl B2B)	9
Not specified	48



## Distribution / Sales Region

The majority of producers sell their foods and drinks within Mayo and Connacht, a relatively small region. Distribution and production capacity issues limit their ability to sell further afield using traditional routes. However, proximity to Knock Airport and access to Shannon Airport via the M17/M18 may provide wider access and export opportunities. Brexit presents a challenge to those who would sell into Northern Ireland, which is relatively close by, or to Great Britain.

### Distribution / Sales Region

Mayo	17
Connacht	13
Rep of Ireland	19
ROI and NI	4
EU	12
Non-EU / International	3
Not specified	45

[www.greenearthorganics.ie](http://www.greenearthorganics.ie)



[www.achillislandseasalt.ie](http://www.achillislandseasalt.ie)



## Distribution Methods

Almost all artisan producers also distribute their foods and drinks which is a significant burden, especially during the start-up phase of their development. However, limited access to finance and other resources such as appropriate vehicles present challenges. As businesses grow, producers may hire a dedicated driver and/or use a local distributor or agent to gain access to markets further afield. As more producers move to online sales, and sales grow, use of third party distributors and couriers is likely to increase.

### Distribution Method

Self	32
Own Vans (pay employee driver)	10
Third party distributor or Agent	20
Shared with other producer(s)	0
Own vans & Third parties	5
Mixture of all	2
Other (Post or Courier)	1
Not specified	43

[www.achillislandseasalt.ie](http://www.achillislandseasalt.ie)

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





## Locations of Confirmed Producers



*Food truck locations (red) as per business address;  
Yellow - distilleries; Purple = breweries; Green = Farmers & Country Markets*



Photograph [www.con-telegraph.ie](http://www.con-telegraph.ie)





## Needs Analysis Results

Feedback from respondents has been summarised below and is addressed in the action plan:

- 51% indicated that they need new / additional production space with 31.5% indicating that they would be willing to share space
- 57% would like improved access to distributors or a distribution network, an essential feature required to support growth. Growth strategies, developing exports, routes to market and sales channels all scored highly and 82% indicated a likely need for more staff in the coming years to support growth
- In terms of the potential benefits that producers might have by utilising a range of expertise / consultants, the results were broadly in line with the training needs indicated, i.e., branding, marketing and social media, followed by issues of compliance such as labelling, legislation, food safety, nutritional analysis as well as food technology. However, support for product development was deemed to be a low priority among producers
- 60% of respondents indicated a need for capital funding in 2021
- A small number of producers currently offer a Visitor Experience, including one Économusée

### **Furthermore:**

- 67% indicated that they would like to see the establishment of a Mayo Food & Drinks trail
- 67% would like serviced food markets in the county
- 45% would like the establishment of areas for food trucks
- 48% want to see a Food Strategy Co-Ordinator appointed
- 45% would like a food hub, with an additional 39% and 33% looking for warehousing and a distribution centre respectively
- Training needs were varied in terms of content and demand, and those which scored highest overall were for Brand Development, Marketing, Digital Media Marketing and Social Media



## Market Gap Analysis

An audit of current Mayo Food Producers database was carried out and compared to national Irish food producers' range. In this instance a gap is defined as either no or less than two producers in the county producing a product/range.

### **Gaps identified were:**

- Plant-based - Vegan and Vegetarian
- Seaweed based products
- Seafood in Mayo is limited to shellfish and salmon with little value-added
- Speciality breads – e.g. Sourdough
- Food ingredients
- Speciality eggs e.g. duck eggs, quail eggs
- “Free From” Ranges such as gluten free, dairy free
- Portable snacks – e.g. bars, crisps
- Food for Health / Healthy snacks
- Products specifically designed for children/babies
- Fermented foods and drinks



## Online Presence Analysis

An analysis of food producers' online presence was completed, including website, social media and activity:

- A number of websites were down (i.e., they were not secure enough to proceed to site, could be inactive or missing SSL certificate or offline but the domain name was active)

- Websites appear in clusters for areas (e.g., Achill, this could be due to funding)
- Facebook is by far the most popular social media platform, followed by Instagram and then Twitter
- There is a wide gap in competency in social media, online photography (image search) and websites. From professional imagery to amateur phone photography, clear product campaigns, marketing campaigns, professional graphics and customer engagement to having an online presence but not engaging or showcasing the product to the best of its ability
- Some businesses have no presence online at all. There is considerable scope for improvement which is addressed in the strategy



## Potential For Growth

Areas which offer potential for growth are viewed in the context of national and export markets where there are forecasted increases and favourable trends. Those which might be reasonably filled by Mayo producers have been identified as:

- “Free from” ranges such as gluten free, dairy free
- Plant based foods to service the growing vegan and vegetarian markets
- Seafood, with value-added ranges developed for the domestic market
- Health foods / healthy snacks / healthy on-the-go food and drinks
- Seaweed-based products – Mayo could claim a competitive advantage here due its long coastline and, as a result, raw material might be easier to access. Wild Atlantic Way positioning provides another advantage for seaweed products



- Fermented products such as water or dairy-based kefir, kombucha and kimchi. While there are some producers of fermented foods and drinks already in the county, there is scope for more as this is a growing market. Dairy ingredients are readily available in Ireland, so there is little competitive advantage for a Mayo produced product other than West of Ireland / clean green image positioning
- Speciality breads e.g. sourdough breads are increasingly popular among consumers
- Street food - Food trucks may also offer the potential to producers to provide a visitor experience without the need for tourists to enter their production premises. Mayo could establish itself as a Street Food innovator
- Development of a dedicated cookery school in Mayo - with all ingredients used being sourced within the county as far as possible
- Visitor Experiences - while there are restrictions in terms of access due to hygiene regulations as well as the COVID-19 restrictions at the time of writing, there is also potential to grow the number of Visitor Experiences perhaps through the use of technology
- Wider distribution within the Republic of Ireland
- Increase / develop export sales into Northern Ireland, Great Britain and Europe





## SWOT Analysis Results

A SWOT Analysis on the current status of food producers in Mayo was developed with input from the attendees at the workshops. The main themes identified are:

### STRENGTHS

- Large number and variety of producers
- High recognition factor for Mayo
  - Provenance
  - Quality and Taste
  - Sustainably produced
- Wild Atlantic Way / Tourism and Food Tourism
- Consumer motivation to support local

### OPPORTUNITIES

- Develop Mayo as a hub of artisan food producers
  - Provide facilitated access to knowledge and support
  - Promote provenance of Mayo food
- Provision of dedicated food production facilities
  - Develop a producers' network
- Provide specialist / tailored supports and training
  - Participate in Taste the Island Programme
  - Appoint a Brand Ambassador
  - Establish a "Mayo on the Menu" programme
  - Define a USP
- Provide a dedicated Food Strategy Co-Ordinator
  - Increase online presence / sales
- Develop Food Tourism across the whole county
  - Develop foods and drinks to fill market gaps and in response to market trends
  - Develop visitor experiences including Économusée
- Promote Seafood from Mayo via multiple channels



## **WEAKNESSES**

Distribution / distance from markets

Routes to Market limitations

Competitive landscape nationally

No structure / platform for producers

No directory of food producers on line

East of the county has limited benefit from Wild Atlantic Way tourism

Finance, pricing and costs

Availability of suitable staff

Skills and Training deficit

Business acumen and planning

Lack of awareness among producers of existing knowledge and supports

Lack of appropriate production facilities to rent

No specific Mayo USP or Brand

Vulnerable to Brexit long-term

Digital deficit – few producers with e-commerce sites, digital marketing activities limited

Large number of businesses with turnover <€250k

## **THREATS**

Large supermarkets providing cheaper, sometimes lower quality options

Growth of imports

Closure of Farmers' and Country markets

Brexit

Existing established food networks & trails in other counties

COVID-19 impacts long-term

Insufficient collaboration between producers



## Strategic Plan

The Mayo Food & Drink Strategy 2020-2025 provides a roadmap for the future development of the sector within the county. The goals are to support new and existing producers, helping them to sustain and grow, to be innovative while retaining the tradition of culture and heritage and to be sustainable. Food tourism is a key focus as well as the response of producers to the challenges that both Brexit and COVID-19 present. Resilience-building and reducing dependencies underpin the strategy.





## Key Priorities

The Mayo Food & Drink Strategy identifies the following priority areas for attention through the action plan:

1. Growth of the Mayo Food and Drink sector
  - Increase the number of pre-start-ups and start-ups; grow and sustain existing food & drinks producers
  - Improve the visibility of Mayo Food & Drink producers through support for a Mayo Food & Drinks Producers Network
2. Develop Mayo Food & Drink Tourism
3. Combine Tradition and Heritage with Innovation and Sustainability
4. Providing support in response to the challenges posed by Brexit and COVID-19

Food & Drinks producers are at the core of this strategy and action plan which serves to meet their current and future needs.





Rockfield & Velvet Cloud by Julia Dunin Photography



Phill Doyle Photography



Rockfield & Velvet Cloud by Julia Dunin Photography



## Action Plan

The actions and supports needed to develop the priorities identified above have been addressed through a comprehensive action plan. The plan also addresses the issues raised from the SWOT Analysis.

### **Success Factors / Enablers**

Success depends on several factors including:

- Building a network of producers
- Co-operation between producers and agencies
- Further collaboration between agencies and local authorities
- Provision of a dedicated Food Strategy  
Co-Ordinator / Specialist
- Capacity building through skills development
- Increased awareness of the potential for growth and development and how to achieve it
- Supported access to specialist Third Level Institutions in the region
- An implementation programme based on the action plan, adding to existing measures and ensuring no duplication of effort

All of this is contingent on volunteerism (formation and management of a Mayo Food & Drink Producers Network), collaboration and funding availability for programmes and development.





## Conclusion

The advantages and challenges facing Mayo food & drinks producers have been identified through the consultation process and through comparison with the national landscape. The food & drink sector in Mayo is vibrant with a significant number of artisan producers, and a high level of activity from start-ups. Seafood offers strong potential for developing added-value produce. Mayo is already a tourist destination so food tourism development would fit well with current tourism activities.

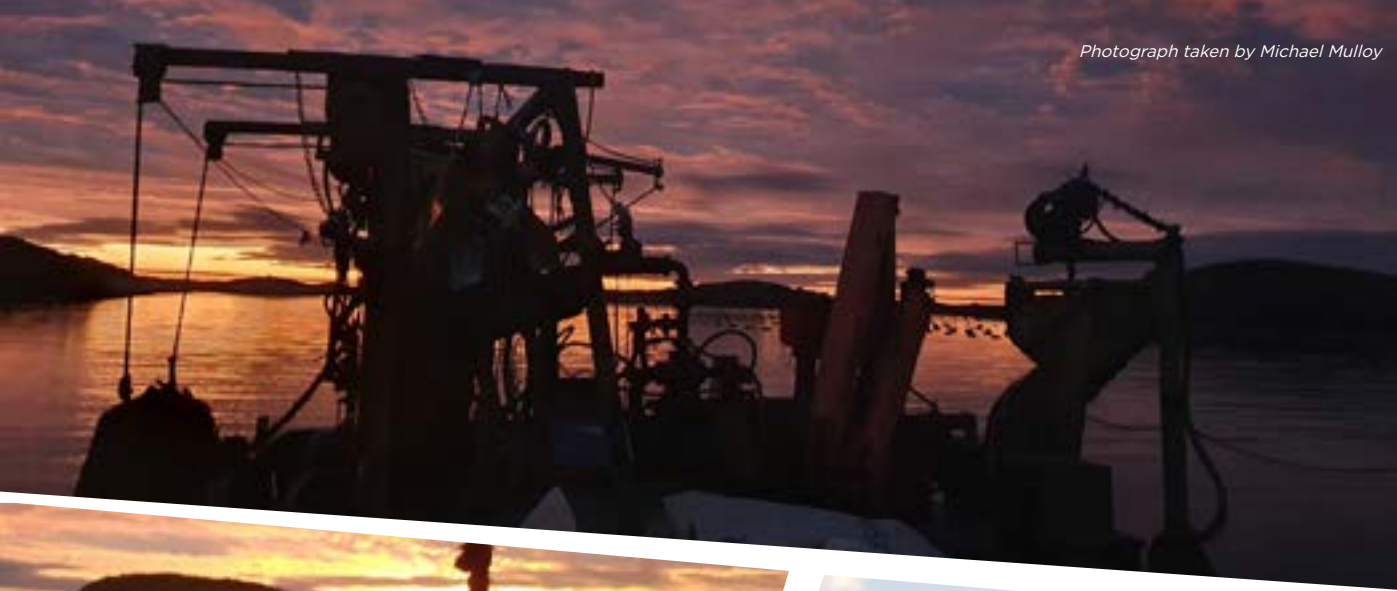
Distance from and access to markets, Brexit, COVID-19 and competition of producers and networks / trail in other counties present significant challenges. However, the food & drink producers are motivated and ambitious and the local support agencies are keen to develop the sector.

Opportunities in food tourism including Street Food, markets and festivals, the establishment of a Mayo Food & Drinks Network and Trail and the potential for increasing sales through product development, national distribution and exports are available to all producers. Mayo producers also have the opportunity to demonstrate innovation and sustainability as part of their USP in a bid to meet the challenge of competition from within Ireland.

The priority areas for attention through the action plan are to (1) Grow and sustain the number of food and drink producers within the county and improve their visibility nationally and internationally; (2) Establish the Mayo food & drink sector as a sustainable and innovative combination of traditional and modern as its USP; (3) Support food & drinks producers through the impacts of Brexit and COVID-19; (4) Develop Mayo Food & Drink Tourism; all of which is contingent on funding, collaboration, communication and volunteerism.



Photograph taken by Michael Mulloy



Photograph taken by Paul Reynolds

Julien Behal Photography



Photograph taken by Paul Reynolds





### Priority 1 -

#### Growth of the Mayo Food and Drink Sector

- Development of a Mayo Food & Drink Producers Network
  - Mayo Food & Drink Producers Network Marketing Plan for 2020-2025
- Feasibility Studies
  - to address market gaps (food & drink)
  - potential for a Food Production Hub
  - potential for a Distribution Network / Hub
- Training and Skills Development
- Routes to Market development
  - Farmers & Country Markets
  - Retail Readiness
  - Food Service
  - eCommerce
  - Exports
- Quality Standards and Awards
- Appoint a dedicated Food & Drink Officer

### Priority 2 -

#### Develop Mayo Food & Drink Tourism

- Develop Street Food
- Develop and implement a Mayo Food & Drinks Trail
- Increase the number of Visitor Experiences including farm trails and food & drink heritage

**Priority 3 -  
Combine Tradition and Heritage with  
Innovation & Sustainability**

- Mayo Food & Drinks Trail interactive map
- Sustainability Actions
- Environment / Green Businesses
- Address the Digital Deficit
  - Development of virtual Farmers Market
  - Online Producer collaboration
- Promote B2B collaboration and trade
- Fostering Innovation

**Priority 4 -  
Provide Support in Response to  
Brexit & COVID-19**

- Resilience and Confidence Building
- Product Development to access new markets
- Sustainable development
- Quality Standards / Awards
- BREXIT response
- COVID-19 specific short-term marketing plan





# Action Plan

## PRIORITY 1 - Growth of the Mayo Food and Drink Sector

	Issue	Actions Required	Deliverables	Timeframe	Who?	Support provider
1	Mayo Food & Drink Producers Network	Form a voluntary Committee of producers, relevant agencies & other relevant stakeholders  Criteria to be agreed	Network established  Increased number of Mayo Food & Drinks Producers  Brand Ambassadors identified  Increased visibility / awareness	2021	Mayo Food & Drinks Producers  (Start-Up and Established)	LEO / Rural Development Programme (LEADER)
2	Mayo Food & Drink Producers Network Marketing Plan for 2020-2025	Marketing Plan developed	Programme of events  Mayo Food & Drink website  Food provenance guidelines for menus  List of products suitable for corporate gifts developed and marketed	2021	Mayo Food & Drinks Producers Network  (Start-Up and Established)	LEO / Rural Development Programme (LEADER)
3	Feasibility Studies for sectoral, product and service market gaps as identified	Apply for funding for Feasibility Studies	Feasibility of filling specific gaps addressed	2021	Agency / Appoint consultant	LEO / Rural Development Programme (LEADER)
4	Food Hub	Feasibility Study for community / Timeshare / Demo Kitchen  Training Room	Feasibility established	2023	Agency / Appoint consultant	LEO / Rural Development Programme (LEADER)  Private funding
5	Distribution Hub / Network	Feasibility Study  Linkages with hauliers / distributors as a Network  Co-Ordinated online booking system developed	Co-Ordinated regional / national distribution network established	2023	Agency / Appoint consultant	LEO / Rural Development Programme (LEADER)  Private funding
6	Priorities for training and skills development to be identified for pre-start-up, start-up and established businesses	Training calendar developed and implemented  Training and Skills development courses established and booked	Confidence, capacity and capability building  Increased skills through participation  Measure numbers and frequency	2020	Producers	Rural Development Programme (LEADER)  LEO
7	Routes to Market - Farmers and Country Markets	Farmers and Country Market development (seasonal / year round)	Map / details available	2022	Producers	Rural Development Programme (LEADER)  Mayo County Council

	Issue	Actions Required	Deliverables	Timeframe	Who?	Support provider
8	Routes to Market - Retail readiness	Meet the Retail Buyer training Meet the Buyer events	Increased confidence and preparedness Access to Supermarket Buyers increased Additional Sales listings Sales increased	2021	Agencies	LEADER LEO
9	Routes to Market - Food service product development	Meet the Food Service Buyer events	Awareness of food service opportunities increased Access to food service customers facilitated New listings / contracts secured Sales increased	2022	Agencies	LEADER LEO
10	Routes to Market - eCommerce	Specific support for producers moving to sell online, giving consideration to packaging, variety & quantity, customer demographics etc.	Increased number of producers with e-Commerce sites Increased sales	2022	Agencies	LEO / Rural Development Programme (LEADER) Private funding
10a	Development of virtual Farmers Market	Feasibility study to explore the potential for the development of virtual Farmers Market modelled on, for example: <a href="https://ontarioculinary.com/online-market-cornwall/">https://ontarioculinary.com/online-market-cornwall/</a> or <a href="https://www.neighbour-food.ie/markets">https://www.neighbour-food.ie/markets</a>	Increased sales Reduced reliance on traditional sales routes and new markets developed	2025	Producers	LEADER LEO
11	Routes to Market - Exports	Facilitate development of export channels into Northern Ireland, Great Britain, EU and non-EU	Map / details available	2023	Agencies	All-island Agencies
12	Quality Standards / Awards	Support for producers to apply for Bord Bia Quality Standards / NSAI / Awards, e.g., Blas na hÉireann	Increased visibility Improved confidence New retail listings Increased sales	2022	Producers / Agencies	Registration / Awards bodies
13	Food & Drink Officer - Specialist services & technical support provider	Agencies to develop specification and source funding	Co-ordination of sector activities Signposting to supports Co-ordination with all agencies Facilitating access to knowledge in Third Level Institutions Facilitating access to technical expertise, e.g., packaging development	2023	Agencies	Agencies / Government / EU

## Priority 2 - Develop Mayo Food & Drink Tourism

	Issue	Actions Required	Deliverables	Timeframe	Who?	Support provider
1	Develop Street Food	Establishment of serviced locations to be considered when developing public space – future planning for potential food markets to include services	Increased number of Street Food vendors  Increased variety beyond coffee, burger & chips and mobile butchers	2023	Producers	LEADER  Mayo County Council
2	Develop and implement a Mayo Food & Drinks Trail	Develop map of producers  Recruit hospitality sector to feature local producers on menus  Retailers to promote Mayo producers within retailers’ premises  Develop plan of activities for Taste the Island	Map available online to tourists  Menu provenance scheme featuring Mayo producers developed and implemented  Food retailers to sell food & drink from Mayo  Programme of activities / events to promote producers, menus and retailers focus on Mayo  Collaboration with the hospitality sector for “Mayo on the Menu” development	2021	Producers	SWM / MNE (LEADER)  Mayo County Council / LEO
3	Increase the number of Visitor Experiences including farm trails and food & drink heritage  Develop and integrate the food sector into the tourism sectors	Assist producers to develop new visitor experiences to tourists  Capitalise on the Wild Atlantic Way  Develop visitor experiences in the East of the county  Assist producers to develop Économusée Model  Capitalise on the River Moy, Tributaries of the River Moy and River Moy SAC – Inland and coastal link  Facilitate and promote food tour packages  Encourage the development and promotion of food related activities such as food courses in traditional skills (butter and cheese- making, bread baking, smoking fish, cheese and meat, bee keeping, foraging, brewing and distilling) and food trails	Increased number of Visitor Experiences established and launched across the county for 2021	2023	Producers	LEADER  LEO  Fáilte Ireland  Teagasc



## Priority 3 - Combine Tradition and Heritage with Innovation & Sustainability

	Issue	Actions Required	Deliverables	Timeframe	Who?	Support provider
1	Mayo Food & Drinks Trail interactive map	Specification to be developed and project plan agreed	Mayo Food & Drinks Trail interactive map	2021	Producers	LEADER LEO
2	Sustainability Actions	Sustainable production practices LEAN methodologies implemented Waste Reduction strategy developed and implemented Product / service development	Mayo Food & Drink sustainable credentials established and implemented	2023	Producers	LEADER LEO
3	Environment / Green Businesses	Origin Green - applications and management supported  Identify pathways to develop greener business practices	Increased achievement levels of Origin Green credentials of producers identified and improved Increased participation in green business programmes 50 producers to have Environmental Policy Statements in place	2022	Producers	LEADER LEO EPA Enterprise Ireland Other relevant agencies
4	Address the digital deficit	Provide tailored mentoring support for the Trading Online Voucher programme, aimed specifically at meeting the needs of Food & Drink Producers	75% of producers to have e-commerce sites New markets developed Reduced reliance on traditional sales routes, increased sales	2022	Producers	LEADER LEO
4	Online Producer collaboration <sup>a</sup>	Producer Networking Online Forum	Shared ingredients sourcing, distribution, events	2024	Producers	LEADER LEO
5	Promote B2B collaboration and trade	Collaboration with the corporate sector for Mayo Food & Drink corporate gifts	Mayo Food & Drink corporate gifts	2022	Producer Network	Chambers of Commerce / Business Networks
6	Fostering Innovation	Identify priorities Training - building awareness, understanding, capacity & capability Facilitate accessibility to innovation supports & funding	Innovation embedded in food & drink production and services Efficiencies improved Waste reduced, profits increased New products. Processes and services developed	2022	Producers	Agencies including InterTrade Ireland and Enterprise Ireland  Westbic

## Priority 4 - Provide Support in Response to Brexit & COVID-19

	Issue	Actions Required	Deliverables	Timeframe	Who?	Support provider
1	Resilience and Confidence Building	Specific Brexit and COVID related mentoring and training as well as funding to be ring-fenced and promoted	Resilience developed among producers, new routes to market established	2021	Agencies	Agencies
2	Product Development to access new markets	Training and consultancy support	New products to enable producers to compete nationally and identify and service new export markets	2021	Producers	Agencies
3	Sustainable development	Review business models for production and distribution	New / revised business models for production and distribution identified, developed and implemented	2022	Producers	Agencies
4	Quality Standards / Awards	Producers to apply for Bord Bia Quality Standards / NSAI / Awards, e.g., Blas na hÉireann; Green Enterprise Awards  Relevant ISO standards  British Retail Consortium (BRC) accreditation	Sales in new markets, reduced reliance on traditional markets	2022	Producers / Agencies	Registration / Awards bodies
5	BREXIT response	Promote and facilitate access to Brexit supports, training and skills development programmes	Resilience developed among producers  Business models amended as necessary  Financial & other supports accessed by producers  Training and skills development	2021	Mayo Food & Drink Producers	LEO / LEADER  Enterprise Ireland  InterTrade Ireland  Fáilte Ireland
6	COVID-19 specific response	Promote and Facilitate access to COVID-19 supports  Facilitate innovation / agility  Training and skills development	Producers become more pro-active, agile and flexible in their business models  Increased uptake of COVID-19 Safety Charter  Training and skills development	2021	Mayo Food & Drink Producers	LEO / LEADER  Enterprise Ireland  InterTrade Ireland  Fáilte Ireland





Photograph [www.foodpr.ie](http://www.foodpr.ie)

Photograph [www.calveysachillmountainlamb.ie](http://www.calveysachillmountainlamb.ie)





### Appendix 1 - Acknowledgements

The following were the members of the Mayo Food & Drink Strategy Steering Committee

- Breda Butler, Cuinneog
- Marcus Robinson, Reel Deel Brewery
- Mary Corrigan, Noo Chocolates
- Sue O'Toole, South West Mayo Development Company
- Nicola Kennedy, LEO Mayo
- Anne O'Malley, Teagasc
- Seán O Coisdealbha, Údarás na Gaeltachta
- James Golden, Mayo North East LEADER Partnership

Valuable input was also received from all the producers and stakeholders who took part in the surveys and who completed the audit, database and Needs Analysis as well as all of those who participated in and contributed to the workshops.

A word of thanks also to Oonagh Monahan and the Alpha Omega Team; Elaine Moyles, LEO Mayo; John Noonan, Teagasc Mayo; Anne Marie Flynn, Mayo North Tourism; and Fionnán Nestor of Fáilte Ireland for their expertise, advice and support.

## Appendix 2 - List of Stakeholders (in addition to the food & drinks producers)

### Agencies

Bord Bia  
Bord Iascaigh Mhara  
CLAR IRD  
Enterprise Ireland  
Comhar Na nOileán Teo  
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine  
Enterprise Ireland  
Environmental Protection Agency (Stop Food Waste)  
Food Drink Ireland (Ibec)  
InterTrade Ireland  
Local Authorities Water Programme  
Macra na Feirme  
Mayo LAG  
Mayo Local Community Development Committee  
Local Enterprise Office Mayo  
Mayo North East  
Moy Valley Resources  
South West Mayo Development Co.  
Teagasc  
Údarás na Gaeltachta  
Westbic

### Tourism

Achill Tourism  
Visit Belmullet  
Destination Westport  
Fáilte Ireland  
Gourmet Greenway  
Wild Atlantic Cultural Tours  
Rachels Irish Adventures  
Mayo North Tourism  
Tourism Department of Mayo County Council

### Existing Business & Producer Networks

Achill Business network  
Associated Craft Butchers of Ireland  
Beekeepers Associations and Groups  
Chambers of Commerce: Ballina, Ballyhaunis,  
Castlebar, Claremorris, Westport  
Cong Food Village  
Network Mayo  
Slow Food Mayo

### Farmer / Grower Groups

GIY (Grow It Yourself) Ballina  
ICMSA  
IFA  
Irish Organic Association  
Mayo Organic Group  
Organic Trust

### Seafood Producers Groups

Achill Native Oyster Fishermen's Group  
Clew Bay CLAMS (Coordinated Local Aquaculture Management System) Group  
Clew Bay Oyster Co-operative  
North Mayo Oyster Development Co-op

### Lamb & Sheep Producers Groups

Mayo Mountain Blackface Sheep Breeders  
Mayo Mule and Greyface Sheep Group  
South Mayo Lamb Producers

### Third Level institutions

Colleges of Further Education MSLETB  
Galway Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT)  
St. Angela's College, Sligo

### Large Retailers

Aldi (Grow With Aldi)  
Kavanagh Supervalu group  
Lidl (Kick Start)  
Lidl  
Supervalu Food Academy / Food Starter

### Facilities Providers

Balla Kitchen  
Bia Innovator Campus  
Mayo Abbey Organic / St. Colman's Training Centre

### Training Providers

Farm Business Skillnet  
Food Drink Ireland Skillnet  
National Organic Training Skillnet  
Rural Enterprise Skillnet  
Taste for Success Skillnet  
Mayo Abbey Organic / St. Colman's Training Centre



Photograph [www.irishtimes.com](http://www.irishtimes.com)

### Appendix 3 - Grants & Supports Available by Agency

*Note that these are current programmes at the time of publication and others may become available in future;*

**Local Enterprise Office Mayo** [www.localenterprise.ie/mayo](http://www.localenterprise.ie/mayo) - promotes entrepreneurship, fosters business start-ups and develops existing micro and small businesses to drive job creation and provides accessible high quality supports for businesses.

Pre-start	Start	Grow
Feasibility Study Digital School of Food Business Advice Training Mentoring Networking	Priming grant Food Starter Business Advice Training Mentoring Networking Trading Online Voucher Technical Assistance for Micro Exporters Microfinance Ireland	Business Expansion grant Food Academy Business Advice Training Mentoring Networking Trading Online Voucher Technical Assistance for Micro Exporters Lean Microfinance Ireland
Brexit	COVID-19	Enterprise Ireland
Brexit Scorecard Training Mentoring Networking Trading Online Voucher Technical Assistance for Micro Exporters Microfinance Ireland	Training Mentoring Networking Trading Online Voucher Microfinance Ireland	(SMEs and large Companies) Agile Innovation Fund Innovation vouchers <a href="http://www.innovationvouchers.ie">www.innovationvouchers.ie</a> For the full range of supports available through Enterprise Ireland please refer to the website <a href="http://www.enterprise-ireland.com/en/funding-supports/">www.enterprise-ireland.com/en/funding-supports/</a>





Photograph [www.mescanbrewery.com](http://www.mescanbrewery.com)

**South West Mayo Development Company CLG** ([www.southmayo.com](http://www.southmayo.com)) and Mayo North East ([www.mayonortheast.com](http://www.mayonortheast.com)) – local development companies

The LEADER programme provides grants to direct economic and social development through community-led local development for micro, small and medium enterprises, social enterprises, and community projects.

The Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme (SICAP) aims to reduce disadvantage and poverty, strengthening local communities, promotes life-long learning and helps people become more job ready.

Pre-start	Start	Grow
<p>LEADER Supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Advice</li> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Grants e.g.</li> <li>• Feasibility Studies</li> <li>• Analysis and Development</li> <li>• Social and Community Enterprises</li> </ul> <p>Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Advice</li> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Mentoring</li> <li>• Business planning</li> </ul> <p>Back to Work Enterprise Allowance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application supports</li> </ul>	<p>LEADER Supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Advice</li> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Grants e.g.</li> <li>• Tourism Experiences</li> <li>• Markets and Festivals</li> <li>• Renovation/upgrade of Premises</li> <li>• Purchase of Equipment</li> <li>• Software development</li> <li>• Renewable Energy</li> <li>• Networking</li> </ul> <p>Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Advice</li> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Mentoring</li> <li>• Business planning</li> </ul> <p>Back to Work Enterprise Allowance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application supports</li> </ul>	<p>LEADER Supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Advice</li> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Grants e.g.</li> <li>• Feasibility Studies</li> <li>• Analysis and Development</li> <li>• Renovation/upgrade of Premises</li> <li>• Purchase of Equipment</li> <li>• Software development</li> <li>• Renewable Energy</li> <li>• Networking</li> </ul>
Brexit	COVID-19	
As above	As above	

**Teagasc** - the Agriculture and Food Development Authority - National body providing integrated research, advisory and training support services to the agriculture and food industry and rural communities.

Pre-start	Start	Grow
Teagasc Rural Development, Advisory and Education - Primary Producer or Farm Family Business	Teagasc Rural Development, Advisory and Education - Primary Producer or Farm Family Business  Teagasc Food - Focus on SME and start up food businesses	Teagasc Rural Development, Advisory and Education -Primary Producer or Farm Family Business
Brexit	COVID-19	
Teagasc Rural Development, Advisory and Education - Primary Producer or Farm Family Business	Teagasc Rural Development, Advisory and Education - Primary Producer or Farm Family Business	<b>Additional Note:</b> Bespoke local Mayo intervention or animation to target diversification within schools and education programmes; for example, young trained farmers who are coming into farms, after being abroad or with good qualifications and skills sets, who have the ability to change and add value to farms through diversification. This is made easier now through distance and virtual platforms

**Údarás na Gaeltachta** - Údarás na Gaeltachta is the regional authority responsible for the economic, social and cultural development of the Gaeltacht

Pre-start	Start	Grow
Mentoring and Advice Financial Supports for Feasibility Studies & Market Research gteic network including Belmullet	Mentoring and Advice Further financial Supports, e.g., capital grants Premises including gteic Belmullet Market intelligence Trading Online Voucher	Mentoring and Advice Further financial Supports including capital and employment grants Premises including gteic Belmullet Research & Development / Innovation Trading Online Voucher Equity Investment
Brexit	COVID-19	Research
Bí Réidh programme Reciprocal trade agreement with Scotland	As per Enterprise Ireland	INTERREG funded programmes, e.g., aquaculture, digital media

**Bord Iascaigh Mhara** - ([www.bim.ie](http://www.bim.ie)) helps to develop the Irish Seafood Industry by providing technical expertise, business support, funding, training and promoting responsible environmental practice.

Pre-start	Start	Grow
Training	Process efficiency development Process capability supports Market information Training Seafood Innovation Hub Funding - innovation and new product development	Business Development Green Seafood development Retail and Food Service supports Process efficiency development Process capability supports Market information Training Seafood Innovation Hub Funding for innovation and new product development
Brexit	COVID-19	
Brexit Support Programme offering: Mentoring Consultancy for assistance with key issues including Currency hedging, Supply chain analysis, Logistics, Raw material sourcing	Temporary Tie-up Scheme (closed at time of writing)	

**InterTrade Ireland** - ([www.intertradeireland.com](http://www.intertradeireland.com)) - helping small businesses in Ireland and Northern Ireland explore new cross-border markets, develop new products, processes and services and become investor ready over the last 20 years.

Pre-start	Start	Grow
Research reports Funding advisory service	Research reports Funding advisory service Guides to cross-border trade	Funding for Innovation through various programmes (FUSION, Impact, Co-Innovate) Sales & Marketing programmes (Acumen & Elevate)
Brexit	COVID-19	
Brexit Advisory Service Brexit planning voucher	E-merge voucher scheme Advice & supports	

**Fáilte Ireland** - the National Tourism Development Authority

Pre-start	Start	Grow
Research and Insights	Hospitality training e-learning	Food Networks training Taste the Island funding Meitheal Hospitality training Trade Events Festival funding
Brexit	COVID-19	
Training Management programme Brexit Readiness Check Brexit Research library Brexit Loan schemes Mentoring	Support suites for re-opening incl. funding programmes COVID-19 Safety Charter COVID-19 Adaptation Fund	



Agency	Named Point of Contact	Types of Supports Available	Stage of Development
<b>South West Mayo Development Co.</b> <a href="http://www.southmayo.com">www.southmayo.com</a>	Sue O'Toole	Rural Development Programme (LEADER) Ref Appendix 3	Pre startup Startup Growth
	Breda Murray	Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) Back to Work Enterprise Allowance	Pre startup Startup
<b>Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Mayo</b> <a href="http://www.localenterprise.ie/mayo">www.localenterprise.ie/mayo</a>	Nicola Kennedy	Ref Appendix 3	Pre startup Startup Growth
<b>Údarás na Gaeltachta</b> <a href="http://www.udaras.ie">www.udaras.ie</a>	Seán O'Coisdealbha	Enterprise development Research	Startup Growth
<b>Mayo North East</b> <a href="http://www.mayonortheast.com">www.mayonortheast.com</a>	James Golden	Rural Development Programme (LEADER) Funding for training SICAP Back to Work Enterprise Allowance	Pre startup Startup Growth
<b>Enterprise Ireland</b> <a href="http://www.enterprise-ireland.com">www.enterprise-ireland.com</a>	Marie Baird (Galway office covering Mayo, Galway & Roscommon)	Innovation Vouchers Innovation Partnerships	Growth
<b>Teagasc (Mayo)</b> <a href="http://www.teagasc.ie">www.teagasc.ie</a> <a href="http://www.teagasc.ie/advisory">www.teagasc.ie/advisory</a> <a href="http://www.teagasc.ie/education">www.teagasc.ie/education</a> <a href="http://www.teagasc.ie/ruraldev">www.teagasc.ie/ruraldev</a> <a href="http://www.teagasc.ie/food">www.teagasc.ie/food</a>	Regional Manager Mayo Vivian Silke; Farm Diversification Anne O' Malley	Mayo Farm Family Diversification Workshops which Facilitate Networking, Linkage & Collaboration	Farm Family businesses and/or Primary Producers pre-start up, start up and growth
<b>Westbic</b> <a href="http://www.westbic.ie">www.westbic.ie</a>	Seamus McCormack	Entrepreneurship Investor Readiness Sourcing finance EU funding Angel investors	Pre startup Startup Growth
<b>Fáilte Ireland</b> <a href="http://www.failteireland.ie">www.failteireland.ie</a>	Fionnán Nestor	Food Tourism	Pre startup Startup Growth
<b>BIM – Bord Iascaigh Mhara</b> <a href="http://www.bim.ie">www.bim.ie</a>	Máirtín Walsh	Seafood development	Pre startup Startup Growth

### *Other supports*

- InterTrade Ireland [www.intertradeireland.com](http://www.intertradeireland.com) - assists small businesses in Ireland explore new cross-border markets, develop new products, processes and services and become investor ready
- Colleges of Further Education (MSL ETB) <http://mayosligoleitrim.etb.ie>
- GMIT (e.g., Empower programme) [www.gmit.ie](http://www.gmit.ie) & other Third Level Institutions including St. Angela's College, Sligo [www.stangelas.nuigalway.ie](http://www.stangelas.nuigalway.ie)
- Digital School of Food (Local Enterprise Office) [www.digitalschooloffood.ie](http://www.digitalschooloffood.ie)
- Local Tourism networks
- Existing business networks
- Sectoral producer groups (e.g., lamb, sheep and aquaculture)
- Training providers including Skillnets [www.skillnets.ie](http://www.skillnets.ie)





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- 31 <http://congfoodvillage.com>
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# MAYO Food & Drink STRATEGY 2020-2025

Designed & Printed by Office Pro 094 902 8009 | 096 74900



This project is part-funded by the European Union, Department of Rural and Community Development and Mayo Local Action Group (LAG) under the Rural Development Programme (Leader) 2014 - 2020.

