

## Fivemiletown Creamery

### The Taste of Success

Through the art and science of cheesemaking

**Fivemiletown Creamery is a small farmer-owned co-operative in the Clogher Valley making delicious cheeses that are in demand around the world. Managing Director Mervyn McCaughey tells how the Rural Development Programme helped the Creamery turn a by-product ‘problem’ into a positive asset.**

Making mouth-watering cheeses from fresh, local Clogher Valley milk is what Fivemiletown Creamery does best.

It has a long tradition for producing exceptional dairy products, cheese especially, perfecting the art for 110 years. And today their specialty cheeses such as Ballyblue, Ballybrie and gently smoked Ballyoak star on select cheese boards from New York to Hong Kong.

Fivemiletown Creamery also export their award-winning cheese to virtually every European country, including, of course, France.

But even the best product has a troublesome by-product — in this case, whey. Whey contains about 6% solids which traditionally went to pig feed. But, today, there’s a new and more valuable market for this by-product, in modern isotonic drinks.

Fivemiletown Creamery received funding under the Rural Development Programme, **Processing and Marketing Grant Scheme**. It seeks to improve the economic performance and international competitiveness of the agri-food processing, horticulture and forestry sectors.

The Creamery used the grant to expand and upgrade their cheese and whey processing facilities. They installed a state-of-the-art reverse osmosis plant which concentrates the whey from 6% solids to 24%.

As Managing Director Mervyn McCaughey explains: “Essentially that means that for every four lorries we were sending out, we now only need to send out one.

“It’s also changing a by-product which was waste into something that has a commercial value.”

Mervyn continued: “We had looked at this project for maybe the last 7-10 years. Without the grant we wouldn’t have been able to fund it under our own resources in this timescale.”

The application process was straightforward. “We got very good advice from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Invest NI and from our own financial people.”



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