

OVERVIEW OF MENTER MÔN ACTIVITIES IN THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR

Menter Môn have been involved in projects in the agriculture sector over many years and has recently been successful with several funding bids to continue this work. This has provided an opportunity to establish an Agriculture Department and the new Agriculture Director will be responsible for managing this portfolio. This is a unique opportunity to deliver a range of innovative projects across rural Wales and join the dots between different activities.

Provided below is an overview of these activities along with a summary of the successful funding activities.

Môn Larder (<http://www.monlarder.wales/about/>)

Môn Larder is a local food and drink hub bringing regional producers and processors together so that they are in a better position to respond to the opportunities arising from major infrastructure development projects and public procurement requirements in north Wales. The project has been delivered since 2018 and we have recently secured £400,000 to continue the work. Below is an extract from the application:

Môn Larder was established in spring 2018 with the objective of bringing regional food and drink producers and processors together so they are in a better position to respond to opportunities arising from major infrastructure development projects and public procurement requirements in north Wales.

This project will continue to open more opportunities for food and drink SME's to supply into the public sector and respond to short, and medium-term issues for the sector, helping businesses in the region to survive and recover from the pandemic. Supporting businesses to develop capacity and capability to respond to the opportunities and challenges presented by Brexit and to embrace and plan for a future that will be guided by agricultural and environment legislation.

The total spend on food and drink by public sector organisations in Wales is estimated to be in excess of £70 million per annum. Working with stakeholders across the public sector supply chain, the project will inform and support Welsh food and drink business to access this route to market and evaluate the social value and local multiplier effects of shorter supply chains.

Neges@home

Menter Môn developed the Neges project in 2020 to deliver food to vulnerable people during the pandemic. This established a broad partnership and demonstrated what could be achieved in a short period of time. Valuable lessons were learnt, and it was decided to build on them to develop the Neges@home project. A funding application was submitted with a value of £390,000 and an overview is provided below.

Neges@home will build on the success of Neges to create 'local food' boxes. These will provide visitors with a sense of place through local produce.

To help deliver Neges@home we've established a cross sector partnership including leading private sector food and tourism business, local authorities, Snowdonia National Park, North Wales Tourism and the Food Technology Centre.

The target market will be tourists staying in self-catering accommodation. This sector has seen a circa 300% growth since 2017 with 5,852 rentals in Gwynedd, Conwy and Ynys Môn (data via airdna.co)

Sales will be driven through Siop.io. This local e-commerce site allows customers to 'click 'n collect' or arrange delivery. Information will be provided on opportunities to purchase locally.

The main work packages are:

- Partnership facilitation: Work with producers and local chefs to develop food offer. These will include 'recipe kits and local food hampers.*
- Specialist support: Provide support to create the boxes. This will include packaging, branding, recipe development, distribution, food-safety and online content.*
- Communication and stakeholder engagement: Collaborate with the tourism industry to align key messages and establish partnership with tourism businesses.*
- Evaluation and share best practice: The project will set criteria for participation and will support a range of responses. This will provide an opportunity to learn and share best practice.*
- It's needed to provide a local option rather than arranging supermarket deliveries on arrival. It will establish links between the food and tourism sectors, develop short supply chains and provide new outlet for producers.*

Tech Tyfu (<https://techyfu.com/cy/>)

Tech Tyfu is an innovative controlled environment agriculture project that seeks to pilot new methods of growing crops, develop capacity and awareness across the region and support local supply chains. Work started on Tech Tyfu in 2019 and it has since attracted funding to develop in new areas. An overview of the various Tech Tyfu projects are available on the website. The extract below is from the latest project application which has succeeded

Tech Tyfu Scale to Success will build on the successes, opportunities and results of the Tech Tyfu pilot scheme to embed vertical farming into the Welsh economy. It will pioneer the use of vertical farming and develop sustainable supply chains for vertically farmed produce in the region. Key crops have been identified and grown successfully which are of increasing demand in local restaurants but are not being grown commercially in the area. Funding will be used to develop what has been piloted in several key areas:

- *Self-sustaining supply chains: Key crops identified from the pilot will be grown at larger, marketable quantities and more permanent supply chains will be established*
- *Collaboration with Coleg Glynllifon: In partnership with the college, vertical farms will be designed locally and students at the college will receive training in vertical farming methods. Innovative techniques pioneered through the pilot scheme will be developed into commercially viable methods*
- *Developing new brands: existing growers have pioneered brands which have the potential to grow and develop “critical mass” to allow them to self-sustain*
- *Partnerships with supply chain stakeholders will be developed to allow the scale of vertically farmed produce to meet specific market demands*
- *Studies will be carried out to identify opportunities, market trends, refine approaches and develop techniques, which will bring in wider partners such as the universities*

Gwlâd y Gwlan (working title)

Menter Môn started to investigate opportunities in the sector in 2019 as part of the study commissioned through the Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig project. The link to that work is <https://www.arloesigwyneddwledig.cymru/en/prosiectau/gwlan-gwynedd/> This created a lot of interest and we have since engaged more widely throughout Wales and submitted an application to scale up the work. The £670,000 application succeeded and an overview has been provided below.

Bringing Welsh Wool stakeholders together to realise the potential of wool as a natural, sustainable and versatile material, by building on its rich heritage, enhancing understanding, facilitating collaboration and offering innovative product solutions to current challenges.”

The Welsh Wool sector is in crisis with the cost of shearing on many farms outstripping the income generated by wool. Further disruption has been caused by the COVID19 pandemic and its impact on global wool sales, and the completion of Brexit affecting established supply chains.

Uncertainty in the sheep industry, a backbone of rural communities across Wales, has focused attention on finding ways forward.

This pan Wales project brings together an extensive network of stakeholders that represent every part of the wool supply chain.

Built on the back of 2 years of engagement activities and working closely with project partner ‘British Wool’ (www.britishwool.org.uk), the project will deliver:

- 1. Support to develop a vibrant ecosystem for a Welsh Wool Cluster, to facilitate capacity building, networking, knowledge sharing, signposting and training opportunities.*
- 2. Identify and facilitate the take-up of existing opportunities for supply chain integration through animation support, commissioning specialist guidance for micro and SME businesses, piloting a mentoring provision for wool stakeholders and raising awareness of how to measure and improve the quality of wool.*
- 3. Pilot high-value innovative products made from Welsh wool by partnering with 'The BioComposites Centre' (www.biocomposites.bangor.ac.uk) to identify opportunities free of Intellectual Property conflict and undertake a product development process leading to piloting 5 commercially viable novel applications of wool.*