

Following another rollercoaster year for the food industry, the Chair of the Greater Lincolnshire LEP Food Board Sarah Louise Fairburn shares her highlights from the year with us in her blog here.

I'm proud and delighted to share my thoughts on 2021 in this special festive edition and would like to start by thanking all of our incredible food and drink businesses who have gone above and beyond again this year, and are right now busier than ever ensuring that Great British families and friends can enjoy and share the finest locally produced food and drink this Christmas. For those who don't know me, I'm Sarah Louise Fairburn, Chair of the Greater Lincolnshire Food Board, Deputy Chair of the Greater Lincolnshire LEP, and founder of [IMP & MAKER](#) – my gourmet food and drink hamper experiences.



It is my privilege to be leading on our exciting venture to create a top 10 global cluster through our ground-breaking UK Food Valley. I am passionate about high quality and sustainable food, drink and farming, and in harnessing and promoting the opportunity and talent we collectively share across this field.

The last 18 months have continued to be supremely challenging, and we have been listening to your biggest concerns surrounding labour supply and the huge inflation driven costs across raw materials, fuel, logistics, and trade, and then elevating these concerns with Government, whilst also busy building local solutions.

Continued...

SECTOR PROGRESS & HIGHLIGHTS

- 2021 HIGHLIGHTS FROM SARAH LOUISE FAIRBURN
- UKFV BULLETIN EXCLUSIVE OFFER
- CHRISTMAS IN LINCOLNSHIRE
- PIN GIN – BOTTOMLEY DISTILLERS, LOUTH
- THRIVE BOX MEALS, SLEAFORD
- ALFRED ENDERBY LTD – TRADITIONAL FISH SMOKERS, GRIMSBY
- WILD JACKS LTD
- BELL BROTHERS NURSERIES

SARAH LOUISE FAIRBURN BLOG



Continued...

We do know however that our economy has been more resilient than most, with lower levels of job losses, furlough, and economic contraction.

This year also marks 10 years since LEPs were launched, and over that time the Greater Lincolnshire LEP has developed into a well-established partner, firmly embedded within the fabric of Greater Lincolnshire and Rutland. We have used our convening power to deliver innovative programmes that are transforming local communities and economies including the South Lincolnshire Food Enterprise Zone, Bishop Burton Riseholme College, and the Agri-Food Centre of Excellence to name but a few within our sector, and preparing people for future jobs through our universities, catapults, centres of excellence, and through the Greater Lincolnshire Skills Capital Programme.

But the highlight for me this year was launching the UK Food Valley to over 250 delegates and industry leads at the Lincolnshire Showground last month. As you are know, here in Lincolnshire we have an international reputation for growing and processing super high-quality food, and we're home to one of the largest concentrations of agriculture, food manufacturing, storage and distribution in Europe, with an incredible focus and infrastructure in technology and innovation, and it was my job to sell this fantastic opportunity!

Not only do we grow 30% of the nation's vegetables, we produce 18% of all poultry, with our total agricultural output alone in 2019 topping a whopping £2bn; a massive 11% of England's total agri-food output. Since 2016 there has been over £2.25bn investment in the food chain in Lincolnshire, creating over 7,000 jobs.

But our UK Food Valley programme is not just about food businesses either. It brings together the food and drink industry with valuable supply chains, tech suppliers, local and national government, and academia with strong links to industry. The UK Food Valley will bring together marketeers, brand experts, photographers, ecommerce and digital businesses as well as solicitors, and linguists to name but a few!

We are also eager to expand on connections with our health sector as the correlation with diet and health outcomes is undeniably significant. We believe strongly in the importance of cross-fertilisation and are driving a holistic approach to supporting a wider agenda from manufacturing to skills, logistics to low carbon, and from health and diet to tourism.

On a personal note, I also launched my new business venture this year. Thanks to working with an enviable list of fantastic partnerships, I am thrilled to combine artisan food and drink into beautiful hamper experience collections. I love sharing stories of my suppliers to captivate genuine interest in the real value of high quality, ethically sourced, food production processes.

I was very proud to sponsor a celebrity book launch last month launching our luxury Christmas Cocktail Hamper range at legendary London Soho private members Club, Blacks with a scrumptious gathering of UK based celebrities to launch the leading psychic Sally Morgan's new book alongside delicious delicacies, and I was over the moon to exclusively showcase our cocktail and charcuterie range with our infamous IMP & MAKER Blackcurrant Vodka Liquor.

What we're creating together here in Greater Lincolnshire is something that is nationally and internationally significant. I personally believe we are building something very special, but it is ultimately the power of the individuals and collaborations that will make it a success.

Thanks to everyone who has supported me personally and professionally this year and for being part of the journey. I'd like to end by wishing everyone a very Merry Christmas and prosperous and sustainable New Year.

Love,
Sarah Louise Fairburn
xxx

YOUR NEWS



UK FOOD VALLEY BULLETIN EXCLUSIVE OFFER

Our festive contributors have teamed up to offer a discount on their seasonal products to all our UK Food Valley readers.

Simply enter UKFV10 as the promotional code for Imp & Maker, Pin Gin, and Thrive. This offer can also be used on orders from Wild Jacks over £50. Alfred Enderby is offering the same promotion for the New Year across the whole of January due to an earlier Christmas order deadline. And Bell Brothers are offering a Christmas promotion: spend £50 on Christmas accessories up until 24th Dec and get a £10 voucher free. Links can be found in their individual stories.

Cheers!



YOUR NEWS



CHRISTMAS IN LINCOLNSHIRE

This month is our special Christmas edition, and we are showcasing some of the innovative smaller, new or high growth businesses in the Greater Lincolnshire festive food chain and horticultural industry.

While Lincolnshire is renowned for its large vegetable, fish, meat and cereal producers, whose products will feature in millions of Christmas dinners across the country, we are also seeing an explosion of innovative, fast growing smaller producers at the forefront of change, such as Bottomley Distillers, and continued growth in some of our heritage businesses, including Alfred Enderby. The Bell Brothers story also reminds us that our industry also supplies high quality plants all year, not only with Christmas specialities, but a product for every season.

These businesses are championing UK production of wholesome, sustainable products with clear provenance, regional branding, and a good splash of Christmas indulgence.

We hope their example inspires you to buy Lincolnshire food products this Christmas and to engage with some of our most exciting and entrepreneurial businesses. Cheers!



YOUR NEWS



PIN GIN - BOTTOMLEY DISTILLERS, LOUTH

[Pin Gin - Bottomley Distillers](#) is based in Louth and was founded in 2016 by Alan Bottomley and Amy Conyard, and now produces one of Lincolnshire's most recognisable brands – Pin Gin.

The company's heritage dates back to the 1950s when Alan's father was a small-scale whisky producer, inspiring Alan from a young age. With inherited enthusiasm and skill coupled with the rise in the craft market, Alan decided to modernise those traditional techniques and in 2016 with partner Amy realised that there were no other commercial distilleries in Lincolnshire producing a London Dry Gin. With the agreement of daughter Molly, Lincolnshire's oldest distillery was founded.

Alan and Amy began making gin in their garage and launched Pin Gin in 2017. This was so successful that a year later they moved out of their garage and into a unit in Louth, allowing them to invest in larger equipment and launch an entire range of Pin Gin flavours as well as a new product, Rum Cat.

In 2020 Bottomley Distillers merged with leading wellness and beverage organisation Next Frontier Brands, with big plans to expand and take Pin Gin to the next level as a global brand. This has allowed the business to build its team to 10 employees as well as move again to a new distillery ten times the size of the previous unit. See a time lapse of the distillery build in process [here](#).

The new distillery has three stills; 100 litre, 500 litre and a new 5,000 litre still, as well as five 10,000 litre blending tanks. Together this can create 10,000 litres a day and the next step is to install a state-of-the-art bottling line to fill, label and seal up to 50,000 bottles a day.

The business is an exemplar green distillery, using natural organic produce, 100% recyclable packaging, has control systems to minimise water and energy use. Spent botanicals and grain are used to feed cattle, and it uses solar power and has EV charging points for staff and the public. The aim is to be a completely net zero brand by the end of 2022!

The new headquarters in Louth will eventually host a dedicated Visitor Centre including a spirit school, events space, bar and courtyard, to support the visitor economy in the area.

Amy Conyard, Co-Founder of Bottomley Distillers, said: "We are absolutely thrilled that we have been able to grow our distillery from the garage, into what will be an industry leading distillery!"

"We are hoping that during 2022 we will be launching our Visitor Centre too. We are really excited to be contributing to an already thriving visitor economy in Lincolnshire and cannot wait to see the positive effects of this, from job creation to increased visitor activity in Louth."



YOUR NEWS



THRIVE BOX MEALS, SLEAFORD

Based in Ewerby Thorpe near Sleaford, Thrive Recipe Boxes is a member of Select Lincolnshire and a new business created by farmer Victoria Howe and her family who already run the [Farm Kitchen](#) which Victoria founded in 2006.

[Thrive Recipe Boxes](#) is a new farm-to-fork recipe box delivery company which focus on delivering healthy, tasty and sustainable meal kits direct to your door. All their dishes use beef from the farm's pasture-fed cows, fresh, locally sourced veg, and fermented ingredients, such as kimchi and kefir to support gut health and wellbeing.

Thrive's aim is to help people cook healthy and tasty meals at home while also being gentle on the planet. It uses regenerative farming methods and champions local produce to reduce the boxes carbon footprint, and the packaging is either compostable or recyclable.

Thrive offers some lovely quick and delicious meals such as coconut and turmeric beef with wild rice, as well as some showcase steak and roast meals, including its most popular fillet steak with a black peppercorn and field mushroom sauce.



One of its recent launches is a slow and low range, with these recipe boxes giving you everything you need to create rich, hearty slow cooked meals. But here's the twist - Thrive has done the marinating and then the slow and low cooking for you, so customers get to enjoy an incredible depth of flavour with just 40 minutes of cooking.

ALFRED ENDERBY LTD – TRADITIONAL FISH SMOKERS, GRIMSBY

[Alfred Enderby](#) fish curers have operated from the same smokehouse on Maclure Street on Grimsby Fish Docks since its incorporation in 1961.

Prior to 1961 the smoke house was occupied by JW Stookes and Alfred Enderby worked for JW Stookes from 1936. The process of smoking white fish has remained unchanged in this building for over 100 years.

Continued...

YOUR NEWS



Continued...

Despite a changing economic fortune within the fishing industry over the century and the demise of dozens of smokehouses, Alfred Enderby can proudly boast continued success producing what some consider a superior product across generations.

Alfred Enderby Ltd has enjoyed a long history perfecting the art of smoking haddock and salmon, culminating in many prestigious food awards and accolades including Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) awarded to Grimsby Traditional smoked fish.

The PGI is the same type of protected food name that exists for champagne, Parma ham, Cornish clotted cream and Melton Mowbray pork pies. There are 320 protected food names in Italy, 270 in France but only 82 protected food names in the UK. And there is just one in all of Lincolnshire – Grimsby Traditional Smoked fish.

Patrick Salmon, owner of Alfred Enderby said: “There is nothing quite like the taste from a traditional smokehouse and a far cry from the modern electronic Kiln smoked fish.

“The modern electronic methods and, worse still, the liquid smoked flavored alternatives, simply cannot

replicate the taste derived from many years of smoking the traditional way. The buildup of tar in the fabric of the building is very much part of the process and the old smokehouse is unique, modern stainless-steel boxes cannot compete.”

There are downsides though, as Patrick said: “Maintaining such an old listed building and improving equipment to meet standards is a challenge, without the grant support from North East Lincolnshire Council, we would have struggled. Thank goodness there are ways of accessing help through local authorities and universities for small businesses such as ours, so the traditional family-run business can compete.”



WILD JACKS LTD

[Wild Jacks](#) was formed in 2020 by Lincolnshire born and bred owners Stuart and Joanna Hancock and since then, they have acquired well known, local family businesses, Welbournes Bakery, Odings Butchers, and JH Starbuck Bakery. It forms part of Select Lincolnshire.

A core strategic objective for the business is to continually review and reduce food miles and to ensure optimum sustainability, and they are keen to work with local suppliers and to enhance and extend the range of products they currently sell.

Continued...

YOUR NEWS



Continued...

They are proud of their Lincolnshire heritage and to support their local community through sourcing local suppliers, employing from the locality and supplying local businesses.

The Hancocks are committed to a long-term future having invested £200,000 in refurbishing their production facility in Navenby and securing long term contracts to supply wholesale and catering businesses including colleges, school meal providers, pubs, cafes, and restaurants.

Stuart, Joanna and the Wild Jacks team plan to build on the solid base that has been established over the last year and are working towards achieving higher accreditations throughout the businesses as they continually strive to provide the highest quality to their customers.



Stuart Hancock is also the founder of Elevate Installations. With over 30 years' experience in the food production, storage and logistics industry, Stuart can identify opportunities through the use of robotics to reduce demand on resource and cost in this labour-intensive world of food production and supply. Elevate was developed in partnership with Mark Paterson, an experienced and qualified engineer, who has been involved in the robotics industry for over 20 years but in ambient industries.

Combining Stuart's knowledge of the food industry and Mark's engineering and robotics expertise enables Elevate Installations to offer a unique insight into how existing processes can be automated and achieve payback over two, three or five years depending upon business requirements. With the benefit of this partnership and knowledge, an all-encompassing solution can be offered to companies in the ambient, chilled, and frozen food production sector.

WILD JACKS

LINCOLNSHIRE BRANDS

YOUR NEWS



BELL BROTHERS NURSERIES

[Bell Brothers Nurseries](#) based in Benington near Boston is a fifth-generation farming business founded in 1961 by Bernard Bell. From an initial half an acre, it now has 34 acres of glasshouses and plastic tunnels, producing and marketing plants direct to the public and through other retail outlets, including a growing online presence.

The nursery propagates and grows a range of hardy nursery, indoor, bedding and garden vegetable plants, as well as a range of planters and hanging baskets for summer and winter use.

As Christmas approaches, the outlet shop is transformed into a winter wonderland, offering everything from locally grown poinsettias to Christmas garlands, an interactive wreath workshop, a range of orange and spice decorations, the beautiful Christmas market for gifts and decorations, miniature trees and house plants.

The Christmas trees on offer range from four to 10 feet tall and are all British grown, ethically sourced and sustainable. For the young at heart, of all ages, Father Christmas will be making an appearance at the outlet every Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 4pm.

The business has plants for every season and hosts seasonal events including Mother's Day, spring and summer bedding and plant events. A very popular Pumpkin Festival in the autumn attracts tens of thousands of visitors annually and includes the giant pumpkin weigh-in competition and a pumpkin cannon!

The company's green credentials include biomass heating for the nursery and a reduction of 1,500 tonnes of carbon footprint, year on year.

Bell Brothers Outlet is open seven days a week and is located just off the A52 near Benington, just north of Boston. Look out for the Christmas Market there each weekend.

Like everyone, this year has seen its fair share of challenges, from labour shortages to driver shortages, but the business still plans to expand in 2022. So, why not support a local business selling locally grown plants this Christmas?







**UK
FOOD
VALLEY**

**PIONEERING SUSTAINABILITY
THROUGH INNOVATION**

WWW.GREATERLINCOLNSHIRELEP.CO.UK

