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**INVESTMENT AND PRODUCT INNOVATION HERALD NEW DAWN**

A substantial investment in product innovation is paying dividends for Dawn Farm Foods, one of Europe's leading cooked meat ingredients companies.

The investment programme, principally focussed on the development of a state-of-the-art meat science innovation centre, has helped boost Dawn Farms' position at the leading edge of product creativity.

"In this recession, consumer hunger for innovative new products has if anything increased," said Conor Cahill, Head of Science and Innovation at Dawn Farms' modern factory in Naas, 25km south of Dublin. "And to stay one step ahead, we have always understood the paramount need for product inspiration at the right price to entice the consumer to spend."

Dawn Farms supplies cooked and fermented meat ingredients to major European and UK food manufacturers in the sandwich and pizza industries, ready meal and recipe dish sector, foodservice and multiple retailers. Its products are eaten by millions of consumers every day and 80% of its current output is exported to over 30 countries worldwide. It recently launched its own Branded Foodservice Range.

"We operate in a highly competitive marketplace," said Conor. "And with household budgets squeezed over the last few years, we have increased our focus on bespoke products that deliver quality, while at the same time reflecting value. It's a deft balancing act but one we have successfully managed thanks to the investment we have put in."

A by-product of this investment is NECTAR (an acronym for Need, Explore, Create, Test, Action, Review), Dawn Farms' own new stage-gate product development process where a dedicated team of meat technologists and culinary experts work in partnership with customers to develop new products in a state-of-the-art Meat Science and Innovation Centre. Here, there is strong focus on research into emerging consumer trends in convenience, health and wellness, and speciality meat products, delivering solutions that are time saving and hassle-free for the end user.

“We assign clear roles and responsibilities at each stage of the process,” said Conor. “This ensures accountability and gives us the impetus to see everything through from initial concepts to product launch as quickly and successfully as possible. NECTAR allows us to become a better, smarter supplier to our partners in the crucial area of menu development.

A recent new product to come out of the NECTAR think tank is a pepperoni meatball, bringing a new and distinctive fun flavour to a traditional product to the market in response to some specific consumer lifestyle trends.

Another initiative has been the development of the company’s Branded Foodservice Range, now being sold through distribution partners in the UK, including 3663, and throughout Europe in France, Spain, Denmark, Ireland, Sweden, the Netherlands and Italy.

In England, Dawn Farms’ subsidiary TMI Foods is the UK’s leading manufacturer of cooked bacon, sausages and roasted vegetables. An investment of £16 million at its Northampton plant has seen the creation of the most modern cooking facility of its type in Europe.

As in Naas, the ethos of product innovation holds centre stage. TMI has recently hired Christian Binney as its Head of Food Innovation, a move which underlines the company’s commitment to new product development as a key driver of its ambitious growth plans.

“We see strong signs that consumers in the sandwich market are looking again for quality and products that are a bit different and we are working on a number of fresh innovations to bring to market,” said Christian.

With such a strong focus on innovation as the key driver in delivering value to its customers and the consuming public, and by anticipating change and having the resources in place to grow, both Dawn Farms and TMI Foods are well-placed to benefit in the future.

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**For further information on TMI Foods, contact Nigel Richmond, Tel: +44 1604 583421, Mobile: +44 7970 993040, [www.tmifoods.co.uk](http://www.tmifoods.co.uk)**

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