



L-R: John Byrne, BLF Nutrition, Jim Woods, Local Enterprise Office Carlow & Ronan Byrne, BLF Nutrition



Much of the analysis and research undertaken by Economists and Business Advisors provides similar findings - that family-owned businesses are the corner stone of national economies. Their success can be greatly attributed to the fact that they are more likely to diversify, because they think in generations.

This can certainly be said for BLF Nutrition, founded by John & Geraldine Byrne in the early 1980's and today successfully scaling new heights in the capable hands of their sons. Whilst John and Geraldine remain active in the business on a daily basis, strategic business decisions are now also being made by the introduction of the next generation of Byrnes, Ronan, Robbie and Graham into the business.

In the early days of BLF Nutrition, the objective was to always manufacture mineral and vitamin trace element supplements tailored to individual requirements at farm level. By conducting analytical work on a case by case basis and to know what the animals needed, BLF Nutrition could manufacture product for that individual farmer. The business grew organically due to consistency and attention to detail, along with a tailored

approach to suit each individual customers requirements.

Today BLF Nutrition finds itself in a very competitive environment, where multinational businesses in the same sector have come to Ireland and set up their plants. This has transformed BLF's Nutrition's business objectives. Where once they operated a very direct customer based business, they now find themselves progressing to wholesale markets.

This change in the markets was timely with the introduction of Ronan Byrne and his brothers into the business in 2014. Facing into changing market environments, they chose to heavily invest in the business and add further infrastructure and machinery, enabling the business to expand and service the wholesale markets and additionally provide own branded products to retailers. The evidence from research they gathered shows that there is a large gap in the market to service the wholesale market and this is the direction that BLF Nutrition intends to go further in.

Ronan explains that during this transition and growth period for BLF Nutrition:

“The backing and help from Local Enterprise Office Carlow has been fantastic. The mentorship ensured no decisions were made on a whim, which worked well for us, being a family run business as we never want to make decisions that put the business in a precarious position”

As part of their growth strategy BLF Nutrition received financial support from Local Enterprise Office Carlow in 2020, enabling them to purchase further machinery. This funding supported the implementation of a control system to monitor, maintain and run all of the weighing, mixing and screening elements in the plant, doubling the manufacturing capacity of the business. It is a greener, more efficient system and has assisted greatly in their ability to look forward and consider the export market, competing for business on a far greater scale. According to Ronan:

“We now have the confidence to double the output, without any reduction in quality. It has also allowed for the creation of further jobs and enables us to grow our business further. We now find ourselves in the position where we want to progress and look at further development, exporting and bringing our business to the next level”.

Ronan is keen to highlight that the growth of the business was as a result of support from local farmers in the South-East, and while they look further afield to wholesale and international markets they are very mindful to recognise those farmers and to always ensure that the core of their business will be to support and supply the local market.

With increasing dairy numbers nationally, alongside worldwide recognition for the quality of Irish meat in the international market, it is clear that the market is there, and that opportunities exist for BLF Nutrition as a manufacturer of individual produce.

Ronan explains that BLF Nutrition hopes to be an international business in the long run and

“We would like to acknowledge the work and mentoring that Local Enterprise Office Carlow have put in with us over the years in helping us move from what was a small family run business to a larger business. The work they have put in has been truly invaluable and we thank them for that and look forward to working with them in the future”.

As well as financial supports the LEO has assisted us in

“Overcoming certain challenges such as bringing our business to a more digital space in terms of advertising and selling our produce on digital platforms - the mentorship they gave us over that period was phenomenal”.