

News Release**News Release****News Release****Innovation Park is Market Leader**

An innovative new market has been established by Stirling University Innovation Park for employees of tenant companies.

Unusually for the Innovation Park companies it doesn't involve them in seeking out government funds for product development or export advice.

All they have to do is to turn up for the only Farmers' Market to be held in the premises of an innovation centre!

The market is a collaboration between the Innovation Park and Evelyn Crawford whose family own Craigend Farm and McNaughton's butcher shop in Bannockburn.

Customers from the Park are offered a wide range of home produced, beef, lamb and pork. Home made jams, jellies, chutneys, baking and organic eggs are also available.

Evelyn, who was one of the founder members of the Stirling Farmers' Market, explained how the mini-market originated: "My daughter Iona is a successful designer and artist and she held an exhibition of her work at the Innovation Park. I provided some catering for the opening of her exhibition and that led to a conversation with Lynn Blaikie who manages the Innovation Park. Lynn came up with the idea of the Farmers' Market and we held the first one in September."

She added: "The initial event was very successful. We had very positive feedback from customers who found the experience of being able to buy locally produced food on their office doorstep very convenient."

Evelyn can also source local game such as venison, pheasants and rabbit and even more exotic products: "Last month a lady from Romania asked if I could supply her with pork tongue which is a delicacy in her homeland. She was delighted when we were able to meet her request."

Lynn Blaikie, the Innovation Park's Operations and Business Development Manager, commented: "The growth of large scale Farmers' Markets demonstrates their popularity with the shopping public. Talking to Evelyn generated the idea of making that service even more accessible to the five hundred people working for the companies based in the Innovation Park. They all lead busy lives and this service makes it a bit easier to fit some of their shopping into their working day and more importantly help reduce their carbon footprint. The Market also offers a local company the opportunity to extend their reach into the local community."

Customer Anne Martin who works on the Innovation Park for the Scottish Agricultural College, said: "This is an absolutely great idea. It saves me having to drive to the supermarket at lunchtime. Everything is home produced, you know where it is coming from and it tastes fantastic."

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Caroline Crawford an employee of Scottish Natural Heritage based on the Park, commented: "I'm just pleased to be able to buy local produce. This is a really innovative service."

Evelyn and several other local businesses will be back at Scion House on the Innovation Park on Thursday 27th November for the highly popular Christmas Fayre now in its third year.

The Farmers' Market is one of many innovative facilities offered by the Park to its tenant companies including advice on finance, tax, VAT, legal issues, human resources and marketing and public relations.

Iona Crawford's art exhibition was part of the 'Art on the Park' initiative run in collaboration with Stirling University's art department to give local artists a platform to exhibit and sell their work. Iona is one of Scotland's leading young fashion designers and artists. Her work can be viewed at www.ionacrawford.com .

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Issued on behalf of SUIP by fs communications

For further information contact Frank Sullivan
Telephone: 07718660122
Email: frank.sullivan@btconnect.com