

EAFRD support helped a traditional dairy producer in Scotland to differentiate his production from milk into an organic certified mozzarella type of cheese.

 [Full project description](#) [1] (434.95 KB)



Project summary:

TE Lochhead and sons are a traditional dairy producer who in 2001, saw their herd of cattle wiped out by the outbreak of foot and mouth disease in southern Scotland. Rather than simply replace the herd, Gavin Lochhead and his family looked into opportunities to differentiate from other farmers.

The farmer decided to move into cheese production, aiming to get a higher value product compared to milk. The family realised that an investment into a new cheese making facility was not going to be the only requirement. To be able to devote enough time and energy to cheese production, they needed to increase the efficiency and capacity of their milking processes. They needed a larger volume of milk and to be able to spend less time milking. The answer was to install modern robotic milking equipment on the farm. EAFRD support was used to construct a new dairy parlour and install the robotic milking machines. The investment helped build a new complex for 150 cows with a cubicle house format of dairy parlour that incorporates three robotic milking machines, a new calf-rearing shed and a new slurry store. With the time saved and extra volume delivered, the family was able to carry out a second investment in the farm's cheese production facility, including the processing and packing equipment.

Project results:

As well as adding value to their milk production, the overall business model also took account of the benefits of having a niche product. The Lochheads decided to buy 150 Brown Swiss cows and this helped them become the only producers of cheese from this breed of cows in the UK. They also fulfilled a plan to ensure their production was organic. As a result additional differentiation in a highly competitive market was achieved.

The business started producing and selling their first cheese in 2014, a mozzarella cheese which will be followed by other 'mountain brand' (Swiss style) cheeses.

The new business idea required substantial investment in modernising the farm's production facilities. However, effective support by farm advisors enabled the Lochheads to find ways of adding value to their production and take effective advantage of this through short-chain sales via farmers' markets and local retail outlets, such as farm shops.

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