



Digital School of Food

A new 'Digital School of Food' has been launched in Dublin, aimed at attracting a new stream of food start-ups and helping them succeed. An initiative of the Dublin Food Chain and the Local Enterprise Offices in the Dublin region, the online programme is the first of its kind in Europe, giving food entrepreneurs access to expert advice from their own home or office.

The new Digital School of Food is an e-learning initiative that targets food producers from idea through start-up and growth stages. It consists of an online platform that will help new and innovative food businesses to start-up and succeed.

Supported by Enterprise Ireland, Bord Bia and the Dublin Institute of Technology, the idea for the project came as a result of the strong interest among food entrepreneurs to learn about succeeding in business from key industry experts.

Announcing the launch of the new platform, the Chair of the Network of Local Enterprise Offices, Oisín Geoghegan, highlighted the importance of cultivating the food sector, saying: *"We have seen a lot of innovative and excellent food start-ups emerging in Ireland over the last number of years across the country. Local Enterprise Offices are very keen to ensure that start-ups in the food sector are given every opportunity to not just survive, but to grow and scale. Setting up a new food business, of itself, can be relatively straightforward. However, growing that business to make it successful and sustainable in the long term presents a far greater and more complex series of challenges. That is why we need to ensure that our food entrepreneurs are provided with the right mix of support services so that they can identify opportunities and avoid pitfalls. This e-learning platform is a clever and very practical way to help small food businesses to learn the ropes at their own pace and in their own work environment."*

The Digital School of Food gives entrepreneurs access to sound commercial guidance and mentoring to help them get their products onto shelves, and also gives emerging food entrepreneurs and those who want to begin their food production journey, practical support to bring their idea or product to life. The model is based on an e-learning platform which contains tips, advice and information from existing

producers, all related to succeeding in the food sector.

The programme is available to food businesses in the Dublin region initially, following which, it will be rolled out nationally. It will be made available free of charge to qualifying businesses that register online through <http://www.digitalschooloffood.ie/>

Digital School of Food Course Content

- The content of the Digital School of Food is grouped under six broad themes:
- Plan your journey
- Route to market
- Think about finance
- Grow your sales
- Expand your business
- Support for experts

Each course has a real producer who contributes tips and advice on video based on their own journey. Examples of producers who contributed include:

- Maria Betts (Maria Lucia Bakes), Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown <https://marialuciabakes.com/>
- Ken Mc Hugh (Fresh From the Pier), Fingal. <http://www.freshfrom.ie/about>