Lincolnshire Poacher – the cheese cutting room (LWCS)

Farming in Protected Landscapes
Lincolnshire Wolds National Landscape

Rind Cutter for Lincolnshire Poacher Cheese

The project introduces a rind scraper machine into the cheese processing line to remove the outer layer of the cheese (the rind) prior to grating, to help meet increased demand for grated cheese from the bakery industry

Brief background:
Lincolnshire Poacher cheese has been produced at Ulceby Grange since 1992, expanding to a larger cheese dairy in 1995. Now almost all of the milk produced on the farm goes into cheese production.

The farm is run as a nature-friendly farm with minimum use of artificial fertiliser and pesticides and has a 'no insecticide' use policy. has recently introduced 174 ha herbal leys and 35 ha of legume fallow under the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) scheme into their farming system which ultimately produces the raw material for the cheese enterprise.

The farm and cheese business has really supported the promotion of the Lincolnshire Wolds area and helped 'put it on the map'. The farm was even honoured with a visit from King Charles in 2023.

The cheese business is a flagship thriving business producing award winning cheeses, which are exported globally with the cheese even been found in Parisian cheese shops.

The cheese starts as a 20kg cheese wheel which is traditionally sliced both horizontally into rings and then vertically to create the cheese wedges which are marketed with the rind intact.

There is increasing demand for grated cheese sold into the bakery industry, which requires the rind to be removed prior to the grating process. This has been a particularly inefficient, slow and laborious process, and the installation of the rind-scraping machine has replaced the manual process, freeing staff for other activities.

De-rinding cheese by hand (LWCS)

Background about the project:
The main market for the grated cheese is with Gail's bakery. This market has become more important to the business as the farm develops a relationship with them. They initially took 400 kilos of grated cheese a week, which is used as part of their ham and cheese croissant product range, selling over 1 million of these each year.

The bakery has ambitious expansion plans as most of their shops are inside the M25 ring. They now have over 180 stores, including 3 in Cambridge and stores in Manchester and Cheshire, as well as a concession store in Waitrose.

Their ethos is to work with producers who are passionate about their product, where it is from, where it is made, who will eat it, and the impact it has on the world.

What the project delivers:
Following the investment in the machine, the time taken to de-rind a cheese has been cut by half to 20 minutes. The process is now part of the processing line, building it into a batch process, rather than the current ad hoc approach.

The task of de-rinding by hand was not a popular job, and the machine has improved morale in the cutting room and increased the overall productivity of the room.

Staff can now be redeployed in other parts of the cutting room process system, particularly as demand for the product grows.

Demand has grown for Lincolnshire Poacher cheese as an important ingredient in Gail's ham and cheese croissants and the dairy is now supplying 1.5 tonnes of cheese a week.

De-rinding cheese made easier! (LWCS)

Key Outcomes for the Lincolnshire Wolds National Landscape:

- More people and wider audiences enjoy, understand and value our natural and cultural heritage.
- Support innovative diversification projects that work with local communities and businesses to create, inspire and support sustainable farming and farm buildings

Facts on funding the project:
FiPL Grant awarded: **£7,402**, at an intervention rate of **40%** of the project cost
The project delivers for the FiPL themes of **Nature**, **People** and **Place**