



Well-known agri-food names turn to crowd lending

Stephen Cadogan

Linked Finance, a leading crowd lending company, has announced their 9,000 members have lent more than €250,000 in total in the last 18 months to 10 Irish agri/farm businesses.

Their borrowers include award winning yogurt producer Killowen Farm, recently awarded the Wexford Business of the Year 2015 title.

Another Linked Finance client is Mossfield Farm in Co Offaly, the organic cheese and milk producer whose awards include a World Cheese Awards Gold Medal.

Carrigbyrne Farmhouse, Co Wexford, has also availed of the company's crowd-funding or peer to peer lending. For over 30 years, the company based on a dairy farm at Adamstown has won numerous artisan cheese awards.

Linked Finance is one of the Irish crowd-funding companies aiming to bring together Irish personal savers with an estimated €90 billion euros in their accounts with businesses looking for credit and finance to grow their businesses.

Linked Finance says its other farming clients include the popular Tinahely Farm Shop food venue in Co Wicklow; the Relihans' Adare Farm food company in Co Limerick; Derek and Brendan Allen's Castlemine Farms business in Co Roscommon; the Old MacDonnells Farm food company in Co Wicklow; the Mullagha Farm goat's cheese producer in Co Meath; Inagh Farmhouse Cheese in Co Clare, the home of St. Tola Organic Goat Cheese; and free range poultry producer Feighcullen Farm, Co Kildare.

Founder of Linked Finance, Peter O'Mahony said; "Businesses need a quicker turnaround and easier process than what the traditional banks

usually offer.

"Peer-to-peer lending bridges that gap and brings the added advantage of creating a community of active investors in Ireland's recovery."

He said their lenders are members of the public who can earn significant returns, and engage with the businesses they invest in, as customers and backers.



Crowd lending client Siobhan Ni Ghairbhith, left, of St Tola's Goats Cheese, with fellow Co Clare food makers Eva Hegarty, Burren Free Range Pork, and Brid Fahy, Linalla Ice Cream. Picture: Yvonne Vaughan