Funded by UK Government

Accelerator Case Study

Rigsby's Seasonal Foods

Sector: Food & Drink **Size:** Micro **Location:** Broxtowe

About the business

Rigsby's Seasonal Foods is based in Beeston, Nottingham and is run by sole trader, Dr James Marsh and his foraging buddy Rigsby Dog!

This unique business is coming up to its first anniversary. All Rigsby's products are either foraged, homegrown or made from surplus food donated by supermarkets and food banks. It covers the entire value stream from growing and foraging locally through to development, manufacture, packaging and logistics. It has zero product waste and reuses bottles and jars through a returns policy to reduce CO2 impacts.

Its products include shrub cordials, liqueurs, compotes, chutneys, pickles, ketchup, chocolates, infused honey and more. On top of this, being an agile business with the ability to make small batches cost-effectively and in-house, it makes products for customers and keen collaborators including Oak Tree Alpacas, The Mammoth Cinema, The Moot Bar and Nottingham Forager.

Challenges faced

For Rigsby's the challenges can be seasonal as ingredients are only available at certain times of the year. This has led to drying out ingredients to allow for these 'lean' times.

Broxtowe Borough Council

east midlands chamber

Accelerator Case Study

Another issue is capacity. Due to the equipment it has as a start-up business, Rigsby's is continually looking at ways to increase capacity but on a tight budget.

The operation is run on low-tech which Dr James would like to improve as the business grows. There is an ambition to become carbon neutral which is in keeping with the ethos of the business, but additional skills and knowledge are needed to achieve this and how to develop its in-house live KPIs.

Finally, there is hope for the business to become a vegan company, but this requires additional funding which it doesn't have at present.

Solution and impact

Dr James heard about free business support via the Accelerator project through a networking event held in Beeston, Nottingham at the Yellow Wood Café.

The Accelerator project is delivered by East Midlands Chamber and funded by Broxtowe Borough Council's share of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

He recently attended a two-day New Product Development session organised by Accelerator project partner, the Food & Drink Forum. From this course, he has developed two new products – artisan pasta from waste bread and foraged herbs (i.e. spaghetti, tagliatelle and ravioli) and clear fruit honey.

Although it's early days with his new products, Dr James believes his idea of diverting waste bread from landfills into pasta, will help companies save money in disposing of bread and reduce CO2 impacts. (Research shows that around 32% of all bread is wasted which is around 680,000 tonnes each year costing £1.1bn. Source: BBC News.)

His long-term aim would be to teach people how to make pasta from waste and enable food banks to generate extra income from selling the pasta or providing the pasta as food for those in need. In turn, this would provide environmental benefits both in Nottingham and nationally.

Dr James has also attended training workshops on shelf life and preservation and turning food waste into products with the Food & Drink Forum, helping him towards his carbon neutral goals.

Accelerator Case Study

In addition, business surgeries at the Beeston library held with Alison North of Nottinghamshire County Council have been very helpful to Dr James in guiding potential funding routes for his sustainable eco-business.

A word from the business

"The support and advice has been excellent. It has given me a confidence boost to take my business to the next level as we seek to inspire others to reduce food waste and eat better using what we have in our environment and what we can grow in our gardens.

It has helped me move RSF to another level."

Dr James Marsh, Co-Founder & Company Owner

Accelerator has provided:

- Food and Drink Forum workshops
- Business advice

Impact to business:

- Two new products
- New skills and confidence
- Increased business network