



# Offaly's **Glenisk** And Mossfield Cheese Triumph At Organic Awards

By Joseph Condon

**THERE** was much to trump about from an Offaly viewpoint as two organic products achieved success.

**Glenisk** won the overall National Organic Award 2008 for **Glenisk** Irish Organic Butter. This marked a very good week for Offaly in the organic sector as an Offaly organic product won an international award.

A silver prize was given to Ralph Haslam from Mossfield Cheese for his cow's milk cheese with garlic and basil at the World Cheese Awards.

For the first time, the World Cheese Awards were held in Ireland and judged at the SHOP event. Over 2400 cheeses from around the globe were entered.

"Success at award ceremonies such as these are a testament to the innovative, hard working, small scale, organic producers around the country and it illustrates how the organic sector is going from strength to strength",

said Grace Maher, Development Officer, Irish Organic Farmers and Growers Association.

This new product will be launched onto shop shelves in the coming weeks. The awards, organised by Bord Bia in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, attracted over 100 entries from organic companies nationwide.

Accepting the award, Vincent Cleary, Managing Director, **Glenisk**, said 'We are delighted to receive this award, particularly because our new butter will be the only Irish organic butter on the market. With each new product that **Glenisk** launches, we aim to achieve the high standard our customers expect, while also growing the organic dairy sector and thus helping to secure the future for the dedicated organic family farms across Ireland. We are grateful to the judging panel for recognising our efforts and to Bord Bia and Minister Sargent for their work to promote organic

food in this country.' Speaking at the ceremony Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Mr Trevor Sargent said 'It is encouraging to see the high standard of entries this year and it strengthens my belief that the future is bright for organic food and farming in Ireland. Last month I announced a new scheme to allocate additional milk quota to organic producers, which will allow existing producers to expand their output and also encourage new entrants to organic milk production.'

According to Aidan Cotter, Chief Executive, Bord Bia, 'These awards seek to recognise and highlight the achievements of Irish producers within the organic sector. Organic food is a growth category in Ireland offering sizeable opportunities for Irish producers. A recent study of the organic market in Ireland has shown that sales have increased by 82% in two years, reaching a value of ?104 million in the year to

July 2008.'

There has been a huge reversal of Irish consumer trends. Instead of being an esoteric, select product, organic food is now entering the mainstream consciousness and more and more people are now preferring to use organic produce as the healthier option.

Research conducted studied how Irish consumer attitudes and 'mind sets' are changing in relation to ethical shopping and organic food. The findings showed the label 'organic' has the greatest recognition of all ethical food labels with 91% of those surveyed stating they are familiar with the term, compared to 50% who are familiar with the term 'food miles'. Research also found 45% of Irish grocery shoppers had purchased an organic product in the last month, a significant increase from 20% in 2003. Bread, beef, preserves and cheese were highlighted as some of the organic produce most likely to increase in popularity over the coming years.



*Pictured at the Awards ceremony in Dublin were l-r Vincent Cleary, Managing Director of **Glenisk**; Mr. Trevor Sargent TD, Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and Eileen Bentley, Manager of Small Business Department, Bord Bia.*