

Clare Colohan

The Galway Food Company

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Clare Colohan has a bluechip background but running a company was always in her blood. Coming from an entrepreneurial family, it was inevitable that she would one day run her own business.

On completing a BA in Business and Marketing from the University of Ulster, Clare worked in high-profile sales and marketing roles for companies including IBM, Rank Xerox, SmithklineGlaxo and Pfizer. After taking time out of the workforce to raise her seven children, Clare began researching a food business idea.

She noticed a gap in the market for a premium food brand from Galway and launched The Galway Food Company in November 2015.

The first range to market was the All Butter Shortbread, with four varieties including Connemara Seaweed and Galway Bay Lavender. A two-pack product — for the food service industry — will launch at the 2016 National Ploughing Championships.

Other products — including savoury and gluten free ranges — will come to market in 2017.

A graduate of the Supervalu/Bord Bia Food Academy Programme, Clare's products are stocked in more than 200 stores nationally, including 75 Supervalus, artisan food stores, tourist outlets and hamper companies. The company currently exports to Northern Ireland.

Clare, who also appeared on RTE's Dragon's Den in May 2016, found the ACORNS programme informative and rewarding and valued the dynamic of sharing experience and knowledge with the other women in her lead group.

Based in Loughrea, Co Galway, the company will employ five people by the end of October with around three more hires planned for 2017, when the company will launch into the UK.