

Mary-Thea Brosnan

Kerry Kefir



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Having suffered from digestive issues for years, Mary-Thea Brosnan was prescribed tablets to be taken before every meal for the rest of her life.

She spent years looking to help her symptoms through diet until a nutritionist advocated milk kefir, a fermented milk beverage packed full of beneficial bacteria and yeast for your gut health.

Mary-Thea sourced kefir grains and started making it herself. Within a week, the kefir had made a huge difference to her symptoms and she told everyone about the transformation.

She noticed that none of the milk kefirs on the market were made in the traditional way using kefir grains but were instead using powdered, lab-manufactured cultures.

Mary-Thea decided to create a premium product using the living organisms to produce the most natural form of milk kefir as it was traditionally made.

After 14 years living in Dublin, she moved home to Castleisland in Co. Kerry in October 2018 to start Kerry Kefir. She continued to work part-time as an Optometrist (she has a BSc in Optometry) before going full-time with Kerry Kefir in January 2020.

Starting the company in her parents' kitchen, she soon moved to a converted truck container behind the house. For the first year, she sold directly to customers in Castleisland but is now stocked in SuperValu stores throughout Kerry.

ACORNS provided Mary-Thea with a support network that was a massive advantage in the early stages of setting up a business. She won the 'One to Watch' award in the Connect Kerry Women in Business Awards in July 2019 and her plans for the future include a larger production facility, increasing output and hiring staff. Last year she won "Best Start Up" in the country at the Blas na hEireann 2020 awards, and she won Gold for Kerry Kefir in her category at the awards too.

Providing early stage female entrepreneurs, living in rural Ireland, with the knowledge, support and networking opportunities to meet and even exceed their current aspirations.



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine