

Paula Hawes

The Burren Butcher



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The arrival of budget supermarket Aldi to a nearby town in 2017 spelled the end of Neil and Paula Hawes' retail butcher shop in Lisdoonvarna, Co. Clare.

Despite being founder members of the Burren Food Trail and winner of Ireland's Best Rural Butcher in 2016, awarded by the Associated Craft Butchers of Ireland, the couple shuttered their shop and retreated to rethink their approach.

Firm in their commitment to the trade, and backed by local customers hungry for more upmarket fare, the Hawes pivoted and returned to the market in June 2020 with The Burren Butcher, a new brand identity with a limited range of award-winning beef products traceable to farmers in the Burren hinterland.

Paula and Neil tested their products at local farmer's markets, before fully reconstructing the garage of their home to fit a state-of-the-art production unit. The facility passed the HSE's certification tests and was soon fulfilling online orders for quality cuts of meat delivered to your door.

The pair grow onions and herbs in a polytunnel on the grounds of their home, where they have also hosted a pop-up market featuring other local producers and growers.

Supported by Neil's 30 years' experience in the meat industry, and Paula's 20-year career in marketing, the business has grown since then and now has eight retail and hospitality accounts around Clare. Last year their Artisan 6oz Burren Burger won gold at the Blas na hÉireann awards.

With three children under the age of four, Paula credits ACORNS with helping her focus on the task of getting her business up and running. "I needed the support structure of women who understood what it was like to start a business, especially in the food industry," she says.

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