

Alison Chambers

Slieve Bloom Organics



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Alison Chambers took the reins of her business, Slieve Bloom Organics, in November 2023, when she bought out the owner who she had been working for as a horticulturist for three years.

Slieve Bloom Organics, which is based on a farm Alison rents at Lough Boora, Co Offaly, delivers organic produce to domestic and wholesale customers across the Midlands.

As well as growing organic vegetables, Alison sells dairy, meat and bread products.

When Alison studied horticulture 35 years ago, she had wanted to grow and sell organic produce but at the time it wasn't considered commercially viable.

So, she worked in landscaping and garden design – her first foray into entrepreneurship – and subsequently retrained as a graphic designer before returning to her 'dream job' as an organic gardener.

Alison signed the paperwork to take over the Slieve Bloom Organics business on a Friday and was trading as its owner on the Monday without ever having met a single customer – having just worked as a horticulturist there.

An intense period of creating proper accounts and understanding pricing followed and Alison is still in the process of establishing operational processes and getting a website created for the business.

When she took over Slieve Bloom Organics, it had one employee apart from her, and she has since hired a second one.

Alison says the ACORNS programme gave her the opportunity to step out of the day-to-day of running the business and analyse how it was going. She found it good to share feedback and encouragement with the other participants on the programme.

She plans to acquire more polytunnels and ground to enable her to service high demand for organic vegetables. Ultimately, she hopes to buy land instead of renting it and to build a packing shed and other facilities.

