

# The Golden Spurtle awarded financial support

No this does not refer to the [Broughton publication](#) but a porridge championship! New funding for a series of events in the Highlands to mark the year-long celebration of Scotland's iconic produce has been announced.

As part of the national drive to promote Scotland as a land of food and drink, additional funding of £25,000 has been awarded to events in the Highlands. This funding, which is in addition to financial support already being provided to a wide range of events across the Highlands, will support activity showcasing the finest Scottish cuisine and encouraging greater use of local and seasonal produce.

The events aim to build on the success of Homecoming 2009, which generated an additional £53.7 million in tourism revenue for Scotland's economy and helped secure 372,000 more visits to Scotland than in 2008. As a legacy of Homecoming Scotland 2009, Scotland's Year of Food and Drink (May 2010-May 2011) is the first in a series of focus years highlighting some of Scotland's great assets. The year will help support two of Scotland's key sectors – tourism and food and drink.

Speaking at a reception to recognise local food champions at the Clashmore Village Hall in Dornoch last night (Monday) which was hosted by the Cabinet, First Minister Alex Salmond said:

“The Year of Food and Drink is a fitting opportunity to celebrate the work of our wonderful local food and drink producers. The events in the Highlands that have been chosen to receive funding can help enhance Scotland's reputation as a land of food and drink.

“The food and drink sector is key to our economic recovery.

Visitors to Scotland spend one pound in every five on food and drink-related activity and we produce some of the finest produce in the world. As one of Scotland's most distinct attributes, food and drink has played, and continues to play, a strong role in shaping our cultural identity and heritage.

"We have a busy programme on the horizon to keep up momentum and help the industry-led Scotland Food & Drink meet its target of growing the value of the sector to £12.5 billion by 2017."

Speaking about the food and drink reception, Rural Affairs Secretary Richard Lochhead said:

"This reception is recognition of the hard work, preparation and passion that lies behind the wonderful produce on offer in this part of Scotland. It was inspiring to meet some of our local food champions.

"This is a true reminder of the richness of what Dornoch and Sutherland has to offer the visitor and tourist – including superb produce, widely available in shops and at the Dornoch Farmer's Market – and breathtaking scenery. The ingredients are all there to cook-up a food and drink revolution – and the Highlands has a key role to play in delivering that.

"Scottish food and drink exports increased by 10 per cent in value up to the end of March this year, however that doesn't begin to tell the full story behind the success story of our national larder. At the moment tourism contributes £737 million towards the value of food and drink in Scotland – our ambitious target is to raise that to £900 million by 2017."

Malcolm Sutherland, Event & Race Director, Baxters Loch Ness Marathon & Festival of Running.

"We are delighted to be associated with Scotland's Year of Food and Drink, and we look forward to showcasing the best of Scottish and Highland produce at the forthcoming event in

October. This will be an exciting new attraction at this year's Festival of Running, and we are pleased to work with EventScotland to raise the profile of Scotland's food and drink to our runners and spectators from Scotland, the UK and overseas."

David Broadfoot of Cawdor Castle added:

"Cawdor Castle is one of the most iconic venues in the Highlands and proudly maintains its orchard and kitchen gardens under organic principles. Living Food has grown year-on-year since 2006 and we're confident of delivering an unforgettable event in 2010 as part of Scotland's year of Food and Drink."

The Food and Drink Year events being supported in the Highlands during summer/autumn 2010 are:

Blas Festival: September 3-12 , across the Highlands Blas Festival is an annual 10-day programme of events which celebrates the culture of traditional music and Gaelic in the Highlands. Staged in some of Scotland's most spectacular and iconic landscapes, the festival showcases the very best of Highlands music and culture whilst creating and widening opportunities for young musicians and communities to play with and learn from leading Gaelic artists whose music and performances underpin Highlands culture. £3,000 will be provided for the Promoter Food Challenge to improve the visitor experience and quality of produce on offer.

The Royal National Mòd: October 8-16 , Thurso & Wick The Royal National Mòd is a nine-day festival of events which celebrate Gaelic linguistic and cultural heritage and provides a platform for people of all ages to perform across a range of competitive disciplines including music and song, highland dancing, instrumental, drama, sport and literature. For the first time food and drink will feature allowing Caithness food producers to showcase their produce thanks to funding of

£6,000.

Living Food at Cawdor Castle: September 25. Around £6,000 will go towards supporting a day-long celebration of organic and local produce set in the grounds of one of Scotland's most iconic buildings, Cawdor Castle. In addition to the high quality food on offer at over 50 stalls, the event features food and drink education and information sessions, live music as well as food demonstration from Michelin- starred chefs.

Baxters Loch Ness Marathon & Festival of Running: October 3. The Baxters Loch Ness Marathon & Festival of Running is the largest participatory sporting event in the north of Scotland, and the third largest marathon in the UK. Held along the shores of the world famous loch, the 2009 event saw a record field of 7800 runners. This year £5,000 will go towards an arena that will showcase the best of Highland produce to the local community, participants and spectators from the rest of the UK and overseas. Tastings, demonstrations, promotion and selling of produce will all take place with a focus on quality, provenance and health.

Golden Spurtle World Porridge Making Championship 2010: October 10 . Held annually in the Highland village of Carrbridge, the event is organised with the support of the local community and receives widespread local, regional, national and international media coverage. £4,000 will be used to help local businesses promote their produce by increasing capacity for producers. A fringe programme to be staged in the week proceeding the championship will include whisky tasting and a local food and drink trail.

Scotland's Year of Food and Drink is a Scottish Government initiative being delivered by EventScotland and VisitScotland, supported by Scotland Food & Drink. The year has a core budget of £500,000 and will end with The Food and Drink Excellence Awards in May 2011.

In its first ever worldwide study, the International Culinary Tourism Association researched food and drink at locations around the world in 2010 and described Scotland as one of the most 'unique, memorable and interesting places' for food and drink on the planet.