

## Tesco displays promote NDC's Guarantee

National Dairy Council (NDC) is working with one of Ireland's biggest rugby stars, Garry Ringrose who is featured on in-store promotional displays at 103 Tesco stores across Ireland throughout September and October. The campaign is promoting NDC's Guarantee mark which ensures that the milk you are purchasing was farmed and processed, locally, on family-run dairy farms.

"Tesco Ireland has been a long-standing partner of the National Dairy Council for several years now," said John Brennan, fresh category director, Tesco Ireland.

"We're once again proud to partner with NDC, whose commitment to quality produce and

promotion of dairy products in creative ways supports in attracting new customers to the categories. We're looking forward to seeing this campaign in stores in the coming weeks."

Garry will be working with the NDC on several activities over the next year, including a content series which was recently filmed with Irish dairy farmer John Wynne on his farm in Co Wicklow. The short film shows Garry and John interacting and giving him an insight into life on a farm while Garry practices a few rugby kicks in his field. The short video will be featured on NDC's social media channels, including Instagram, Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter) and Tik Tok, over the coming weeks.



## Lakeland Dairies introduces clear bottle tops on milk cartons

Lakeland Dairies has continued its long-term commitment to reducing plastic packaging by rolling out new clear caps for all two-litre and three-litre milk cartons on its Champion brand, as well as for retailers' brands. The traditional red or blue coloured carton tops cannot be easily recycled into food-grade packaging. Replacing coloured milk caps with clear caps makes it easier to recycle and helps reduce colour contamination with high-density polyethylene (HDPE).

This is the latest in a line of commitments made by Lakeland Dairies to reduce the environmental impact of retail milk packaging. In 2017, Lakeland Dairies reduced the weight of the two-litre bottles by 10%. In 2020, Lakeland Dairies reduced the weight of the three-litre bottles by 4%. This was followed by the introduction of 20% recycled material into the bottles in 2021. The bottles, caps and sleeves are now 100% recyclable and are widely recycled in Ireland and the UK. Separately, in 2020, Lakeland Dairies became the first-to-market with an innovative and pioneering paper straw for their market-leading range of VIVA flavoured milk.

In addition to shaking up the sector with eco-friendly alternatives, the 100%



recyclable straw has saved an equivalent of 20 tonnes of plastic since 2020.

Pictured are Tommy O'Donoghue, head of consumer foods with Lakeland Dairies

and Eimear Hanley, marketing manager with Lakeland Dairies, announcing the use of clear bottle tops by Lakeland Dairies on all two-litre and three-litre cartons.

## SME advisors call for cap on national minimum wage hike

Professional services firm Azets Ireland wants the government to use the budget to support SMEs with the 'increasing cost of doing business'. Azets Ireland has recommended limiting any increase in the national minimum wage to the rate of inflation prevailing on Budget Day. This would likely be between 4% and 5%, rather than the 12% increase recommended by the Low Pay Commission, which Azets says would place a 'significant burden on SMEs'. The company is also calling for a €2 billion SME Innovation Fund to support SMEs

through the digital and green transition and diversify Ireland's economic model, and has suggested the creation of an SME Talent Taskforce to address challenges facing SMEs in attracting and retaining talented people within the domestic economy. Formerly known as Baker Tilly, Azets specialises in providing professional services to mid-sized owner-managed or family-owned businesses. Neil Hughes, chief executive of Azets Ireland said that, despite high inflation, there was "positivity" surrounding the future of SMEs. The firm's

SME Pulse Survey shows that fewer than one in five small and medium-sized business leaders expects revenue and profits to fall this year. "But we should not be complacent," he said. "Challenges lie ahead. Rising prices are putting a squeeze on already-tight margins, while many businesses are facing difficulties in attracting and retaining talented people. Our pre-budget submission for SMEs sets out changes that can help ease the rising cost of doing business and staff shortages, as well as developing sustainable firms."

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