

THE ARGUS

Cashing in on 'eggcellent' business idea

By Olivia Ryan

A Dundalk man has hatched an ingenious way to ensure his produce is available to consumers whenever they need it, with the new 'Eggspress' vending machine!

Paddy Muckian, owner of well known local company Muckian's Eggs which was launched by his parents in 1946, says he came up with the idea after seeing a gap in the market.

'I would sell a lot of eggs directly from the store, and I realised that a lot of people were calling out when I wasn't there, so I began to think of ways to tap into that.'

Busily running his business, they are major egg suppliers in the area, it took some time to 'crack' the best solution to his prob-

lem.

'The plan was about five years in the making, but I came up with the design for a vending machine that could be used by anyone, even when we weren't open here.'

With support from Louth County Enterprise Board, he had the machine designed and built locally before the inaugural vend at Muckian's Armagh Road store.

Paddy added that the machine, which he cleverly named 'Eggspress', has already begun to make an additional 500 every week, and with little or no overheads!

'It has worked out very well, and it is stocked when needed, as the machine will send me a text message to let me know when it is down to the last four trays

of eggs.'

So successful has Eggspress been that Paddy has patented his design and is marketing it for sale to other farm producers.

'The machine is insulated and chilled so the eggs are always stored properly. It is so effective that it can be used to sell a wide range of produce from the farm gate.'

Paddy has already taken his design to a trade show in Warwickshire, where he adds there was a lot of interest from producers.

'It can be used for vending such a wide range of organic and fresh produce, and also at places like farmers markets. I'm delighted with the interest we've had so far,' said Paddy.

• For more information, check the website www.eggspress.com



RTÉ RADIO 1



POULTRY WORLD

NEW PRODUCTS

Fresh eggs on request

■ A vending machine for fresh eggs was one of the more unusual items to make its debut at the Fair.

Exhibited by Liberty Livestock Systems, it was the brainchild of Irish egg producer Paddy Muckian, who keeps 21,000 birds near Dundalk.

The unit holds 32 Keyes trays in individual drawers.

The customer puts the money in the slot, which opens one of the drawers so the tray of eggs can be taken out.

Despite the slightly awkward sales format, Mr Muckian claims the machine is very popular with

customers.

It stands outside his farm shop, and he maintains it can need filling several times a day.

'On one occasion I sold two cases of eggs between 9.30pm and 7.30am,' said Mr Muckian.

He suggests the unit can be sited at the farm gate, at filling stations and other suitable locations.

It will text a message to a mobile phone when the stock level drops to 10 dozen, and is available in insulated or cooled versions, said Mr Muckian.

■ For more new product launches, see page 38



Mobile egg shop.