



Eco-Health in Action: Ballykilcavan Farm and Brewery's Sustainable Journey

Ireland

Case study collected by: Mamta
(Future Cast)

Thematic area: Food business

Type of Initiative:

This case study examines Ballykilcavan Farm and Brewery, a family-owned brewing company located in Stradbally, Co. Laois, Ireland. With a rich history spanning 385 years and 13 generations of the Walsh family, Ballykilcavan has established itself as a dedicated producer of high-quality craft beers. However, the company faces significant challenges in competing against larger brewing corporations, which overshadow them with substantial marketing budgets and presence at festivals and events. This study outlines the challenges faced by Ballykilcavan and proposes innovative solutions to enhance their visibility and market presence.

How it's Different

Ballykilcavan Brewery is deeply rooted in the history and culture of its land, with the Walsh family farming at Ballykilcavan since 1639. Under the leadership of David Walsh-Kemmis, the brewery focuses on producing craft beers that reflect the unique terroir of the region. David emphasizes the importance of sustainability in their brewing practices, highlighting that "craft beer is not just about taste; it's about the land and the people who cultivate it."

“

" Craft beer is not just about taste; it's about the land and the people who cultivate it."

”

David Walsh-Kemmis, Ballykilcavan Farm and Brewery

How is it a Grassroots Initiative?



Ballykilcavan Brewing Company exemplifies a grassroots initiative in terms of sustainability through several key practices that emphasize local engagement, environmental responsibility, and community support:

1. Local Sourcing and Community Support

Ballykilcavan Brewing Company is deeply rooted in its local community, with a commitment to sourcing ingredients from its own farm. By using malting barley grown on the family farm, the brewery not only supports local agriculture but also ensures that its operations contribute to the local economy. This focus on local sourcing fosters a sense of community and strengthens ties with local farmers and suppliers.

2. Environmental Sustainability

The brewery was established with a strong emphasis on environmental sustainability. The founders believe that securing the financial future of the farm should go hand-in-hand with environmentally responsible practices. This includes initiatives such as using 95.9% IGAS-certified grains and implementing a circular process where spent grain is returned to the farm to enhance soil nutrition, thereby minimizing waste.



What products or services are offered and/or sold?



Ballykilcavan Brewing Company offers a range of products and services centered around craft beer production and community engagement.

Products Offered:

1. Craft Beers:

- Varieties include Brickyard Red Ale, Millhouse IPA, Bin Bawn Pale Ale, and Bambrick's Brown Ale.
- Specialty beers made from 100% farm-sourced ingredients.

2. Hamper Products:

- Curated hampers priced at €30 and €50, featuring a selection of their beers and local products.

Services Offered

1. Brewery Tours:

- Guided tours showcasing the brewing process, farm history, and beer tastings.

2. Community Engagement:

- Sponsorship of local sports teams and events, plus educational opportunities about brewing and sustainability.

3. Sustainability Initiatives:

- Participation in the Origin Green program, focusing on eco-friendly practices in brewing.

Who are the key stakeholders?



The key stakeholders of Ballykilcavan Brewing Company include founders David and Lisa Walsh-Kemmis, who represent the 13th generation of the Walsh family to operate the farm and drive the business's vision and sustainability efforts. The local community is vital, having provided support during the brewery's establishment and engaging with it through sponsorships and charitable contributions. Employees play a crucial role in daily operations and community initiatives, while customers influence product offerings and marketing strategies. Local farmers and suppliers are essential for sourcing ingredients like barley and hops, aligning with the brewery's commitment to local sourcing.



This resource is licensed
under CC BY 4.0



Co-funded by
the European Union

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. The author is solely responsible for this publication (communication) and the Commission accepts no responsibility for any use may be made of the information contained therein. In compliance of the new GDPR framework, please note that the Partnership will only process your personal data in the sole interest and purpose of the project and without any prejudice to your rights therein 2021-2-BE04-KA220-YOU-000050778

What were the main challenges and risks faced by the business?



Despite their commitment to quality and sustainability, Ballykilcavan Brewery struggles to compete with larger brewing companies that dominate the market. David Walsh-Kemmis pointed out that the financial power of big brewing corporations allows them to invest heavily in marketing and sponsorships, particularly at festivals and shows. This has resulted in a lack of visibility for Ballykilcavan, making it difficult for them to attract new customers and grow their market.

What solution can be proposed to tackle the challenges?



To address these challenges, we propose a multi-faceted approach focusing on community engagement, brand storytelling, and strategic partnerships:

1. **Community Engagement Initiatives:** Ballykilcavan can host local events, such as beer tastings, farm tours, and brewing workshops, to foster community relationships and build a loyal customer base. By engaging with the local community, they can create a sense of belonging and encourage word-of-mouth marketing.
2. **Brand Storytelling:** Developing a compelling narrative around the history of Ballykilcavan and the Walsh family can enhance brand identity. This story can be shared through various channels, including social media, their website, and promotional materials, to create an emotional connection with consumers who value heritage and craftsmanship.
3. **Strategic Partnerships:** Collaborating with local restaurants, pubs, and food producers can help increase visibility and reach. By creating unique pairings of their craft beers with local cuisine, Ballykilcavan can position itself as an integral part of the local food and drink scene, attracting both locals and tourists.



This resource is licensed
under CC BY 4.0



This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. The author is solely responsible for this publication (communication) and the Commission accepts no responsibility for any use may be made of the information contained therein. In compliance of the new GDPR framework, please note that the Partnership will only process your personal data in the sole interest and purpose of the project and without any prejudice to your rights therein 2021-2-BE04-KA220-YOU-000050778

Conclusion:



By implementing these proposed solutions, Ballykilcavan Farm and Brewery aims to enhance its market presence and compete more effectively against larger brewing companies. The company's commitment to quality, sustainability, and community engagement will not only support its growth but also reinforce its position as a cherished local brand. As Ballykilcavan continues to tell its story and engage with its community, it can cultivate a loyal customer base that values the unique offerings of a family-owned brewery. The success of these initiatives will depend on their ability to connect with consumers and leverage their rich heritage to stand out in a crowded market.



Contact information



Ballykilcavan Brewing Company

Ballykilcavan, Stradbally,
Co. Laois, R32 Y0PK

E-mail: david@ballykilcavan.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Ballykilcavan/>

Twitter: <https://x.com/Ballykilcavan?mx=2>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/ballykilcavan/>



This resource is licensed
under CC BY 4.0



Co-funded by
the European Union

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. The author is solely responsible for this publication (communication) and the Commission accepts no responsibility for any use may be made of the information contained therein. In compliance of the new GDPR framework, please note that the Partnership will only process your personal data in the sole interest and purpose of the project and without any prejudice to your rights therein 2021-2-BE04-KA220-YOU-000050778