

A NEW cold smoked bacon has been launched by Buchanan's Foods, a small Northern Ireland artisan producer.

The company, which is based on a family farm at Upperlands in County Derry, has developed a reputation in creating distinctively flavoured turkey, bacon and lamb meats from its own sources.

The new bacon is cold smoked slowly over wood dust for around 10 hours to create a unique flavour. The technique has been developed by Jonathan Buchanan, the managing director of Buchanan's Foods. The bacon is already on sale across Northern Ireland. It is also

Cold smoked bacon from Buchanan Farm

set to launch its own recipe of black pudding.

Mr Buchanan says: "Our focus is on developing different flavours and products that will set the company apart in our markets. This is the best way to ensure a sustainable business, especially on the back of our success in free range turkey processing and production.

"We do especially well with our turkeys around the Christmas period and enjoyed great success with our introduction of turkey

meats aged using Himalayan salt.

"Bacon has also become a major seller for us throughout the year, and we are working hard on developing new flavours, including our most recent launch of bacon dry cured with fennel, juniper berries, sea salt and herbs. They demonstrate our focus on developing natural, chemicals-free bacon," Mr Buchanan adds.

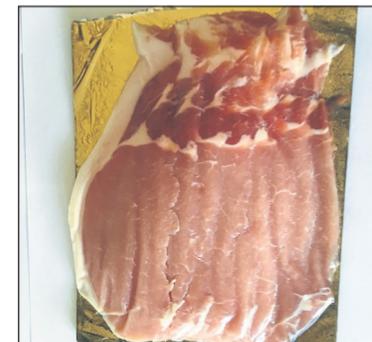
The company is currently developing its own Himalayan salt chamber and has plans to build a smoke-box on the farm. It has also

opened a small shop on the farm to sell its own meats and other artisan foods.

Buchanans produces mutton and lamb, including its successful Yo-Yo lamb burgers, from its own Texel flock.

The lamb is dry aged in a maturation chamber for a minimum of 14 days. The unique YoYo burger is made using a blend of Greek spices.

It has also produced a range of flavoured sausages using the finest ingredients such as pork



and mango, pork and apple, pork and leek, curried pork, honey and mustard, and sweet chilli.

Rural tourism businesses invited to cluster as NW200 announces partnership



■ ABOVE: Sara O'Neill, Éadach, Gladys Smith, Largy Coastal Apartments, Eleanor McGillie, Director, Live It Experience It, and Harold Smith, Largy Coastal Apartments.

RURAL businesses across Northern Ireland are signing up to the tourism cluster Live It Experience It just weeks after it launched with an announcement it is to partner with the Vauxhall International North West 200 for 2017.

Campsites, glamping sites, cookery schools, activity providers, farm diversification projects, food and drink tours, Game of Thrones tours, B&Bs, hotels and much more are now able, through the cluster, to collaborate with other businesses and share what experiences they have to offer together to visitors.

Last year, the North West 200 had 100,000 visitors, generated 60,000 bed nights right across the region and total revenue generated for Northern Ireland businesses amounted to £6.2 million. Twenty per cent of visitors came from overseas.

Live It Experience It promotes

Northern Ireland through land, water and air based activities, food and drink and great places to stay and tells the story of its members by sharing it with its partner.

The move, announced by Vauxhall International NW200 Event Director Mervyn Whyte, MBE, Event Operations Manager, Fergus Mackay and Eleanor McGillie, Director of Live It Experience It, focuses on the tourism opportunities the 100,000 spectators bring to the region during race week.

Mr Whyte told an audience at the iconic Arcadia in Portrush that Live It Experience It provides a platform for businesses right across Northern Ireland to showcase the experiences they have to offer and also tells the story of Northern Ireland's overall offering.

He said: "The Vauxhall International North West 200 has established itself as a premier sporting event. It's the largest outdoor sporting event in Ireland.

"Last year we had 100,000 visitors with 20 per cent of these visitors coming from overseas. These visitors generated a total of 60,000 bed nights across the region. Total revenue generated for local businesses amounted to £6.2 million.

"Our spectators explore as much as they can while they are here and that includes getting into the heart of our beautiful countryside where there are many farms which have diversified to offer accommodation, activities or food and drink tours.

"We want to tell our spectators what Northern Ireland has to offer and Live It Experience It makes it possible for us to do that."

Ms McGillie said: "Our tourism cluster is one which aims to help all tourism businesses grow by telling their story in a meaningful and relevant way.



■ ABOVE: Australian chef Dean Coppard being interviewed.

"We will be working with businesses across Northern Ireland at our cluster meetings to create visitor experiences which we will then be writing about and sharing those stories across the North West 200's digital platforms.

"Northern Ireland has so much to offer with many hidden gems off the beaten track. Our website, www.liveitexperienceit.com, allows businesses to showcase what they can offer, it allows visitors to search the region and unveil what there is to do. We give visitors a real flavour of Northern Ireland.

"The Vauxhall International North West 200 is a phenomenal event which is growing year on year. Tourism businesses are key to providing spectators with wonderful experiences.

"There are so many rural businesses which will work well in our cluster - farm tours, walking tours, caravan parks, mountain bike trails, activity providers, angling, forests and parks, restaurants and tearooms and much more.

"What we have on our own doorsteps is phenomenal. We just need to tell our visitors our stories which will in turn present major opportunities to help our tourism businesses grow."

The Vauxhall International North West 200 takes place this year from **May 7-13**.

European entrepreneurs learn from Northern Ireland

MORE than 50 entrepreneurial policy makers and support agencies arrived in Belfast last week to delve into what makes enterprise work in 10 regions across Europe.

As part of a €2.3 million, four year initiative driven by Interreg Europe, participants from Helsinki-Uusimaa, County Kerry, Land Brandenburg, Marche Region, Hauts-de-France, Northern Ireland (NILGA), Southern Denmark, Valencia Region, Westpomeranian Region and West Region Romania travelled to Belfast, Newry and Kerry, co-ordinated by NILGA, the Northern Ireland Local Government Association, who applied and won the coveted "Entrepreneurial Region of the Year" Award for Northern Ireland in 2015.

At the Learning Camp launch in Titanic Belfast, the NILGA President, Cllr Sean McPeake, commented: "Enterprise is a high energy, high risk environment and we are delighted to host a dynamic, multi-national, multi talented group of people putting entrepreneurship into policy and practice.



■ LEFT: Councillor Sean McPeake, NILGA President and Mid Ulster District Council elected member, and Christine Chang, iEER Boost Lead partner.

changing business climate and environment, it is crucial that we, the public authorities and support agencies, keep on developing the local business environment so that it's conducive for enterprises.

"We are pleased to be here and look forward to learning how Northern Ireland creates an entrepreneurial environment and using this opportunity to establish future cooperation and joint actions."

The week-long event drove a series of enterprise clinics and promotions for the world class entrepreneurship qualities and ambitions of Northern Ireland including initiatives and pitches from Ulster University Business School, Catalyst Inc, Belfast Enterprise Academy, Young Enterprise NI, Newry and Mourne Enterprise Agency, Intertrade Ireland and others.

The latter half of the week was taken up by a complementary set of initiatives co-ordinated by Institute of Technology, Tralee, County Kerry.

"NILGA wants to see the next Programme for Government and the new Industrial Strategy creating a simple, effective environment for entrepreneurs to flourish. To do that, central and local government, and our partners need to be more entrepreneurial ourselves."

Lead partner of the incoming group, Ms Christine Chang, from Helsinki-Uusimaa, added: "The iEER is initiated and driven by regional authorities with most of us having won the European Entrepreneurial region award, including Northern Ireland.

"However, facing the ever



■ LEFT: Paul Eastwood, Tughans, Eleanor McGillie, Director Live It, Experience It, and Grant Edwards, Tughans.