

Auctioneers Retail Bid

HW Irvine, a business founded by the Irvine family in 1922 was acquired in November 2005 by Lawrie & Symington, one of the country's leading Livestock Auction and Agriculture service companies.



Lawrie & Symington recognised the potential in completing the livestock chain from farmer to retailer and after a short time the potential was enhanced with a full refit of both the front shop and the production areas to the rear of the premises.

The arrival of larger Smeva display counters proved an instant success with much more produce now on display and customer numbers steadily increasing.

Remote motors for the refrigerated units create a cool quiet shopping environment, a wide screen monitor shows shots of both the products on sale and the farms that the meat comes from.

H W Irvine has a policy of supporting local producers and growers wherever possible when procuring for the shop. They claim their ranges of beef, lamb and pork to strawberries, eggs and honey are the finest Scotland can produce.

Beef, lamb and pork are all matured for the appropriate time in order for their customers to enjoy the full flavour and tenderness of locally produced Scottish meat. Steaks and roasts from grass fed cattle are matured on the bone for a minimum of 21 days and are growing in reputation with an ever increasing demand.







Cooked meats are also produced from local livestock and prepared in their own factory as are their haggis, black and white puddings and sausages – a pork and beef sausage is the best seller.



Irvines cure and smoke their own bacon and their smoked gammons are renowned for flavour and texture. They still continue with the wet cure since they believe it makes their bacon distinct from others.



Shop Manager John Morrison has been with Irvines since 1995 when he left his father's butchers business in Coupar Angus where he was a YTS trainee. John married Ania a Polish girl from Krakow who came to Scotland to work on the berries and as a result he now speaks the language. This has been a great advantage since the business has two Polish workers, Bogumil and Lucas - one is a foreman, the other specialises in meat products.



New product ideas seem to be well received. John tries all the ideas that come along:- "If it doesn't work, it doesn't work. If it does, it does and nine times out of ten it's successful. We don't put out all the new products at once, we change it around so that customers are getting a choice but if they want something that's not there we will make it."



When owned by Harry Irvine slaughtering was undertaken on the premises. The site that was the slaughterhouse was converted to a bakery in 1998. Complementing their fresh and cooked meat counters they have established a fast growing excellent bakery department. From steak pies, individual meals, fruit tarts, savoury pies:- the range is endless. All this is made possible because they employ a full time baker – Mark Graham - who has created a range of 50 to 60 lines.



Lawrie & Symington are fortunate that people like Mark and John are with them. John says it works both ways:- “They just let me get on with it, I have a fairly free rein as to what I want to do and at the moment they are happy with the way it is going.”

The business supplies customers throughout Perthshire with a fair number coming down from the glens north of Blairgowrie. There’s an element of catering and wholesaling of bacon and puddings and the shop certainly has all the ingredients to be successful. John Morrison has his sights firmly set on winning back customers from supermarkets:-

“Until they try beef from a real butcher, people brought up on supermarket beef think that’s what it tastes like” he claims but he feels that provenance too means a great deal:-

“Customers here appreciate that we are trying to buy and sell local produce. Supporting and promoting local farmers, at the end of the day that matters. We have noticed customers moving away from the supermarket and we try to entice young customers into the shop.”



Irvine’s greatest asset in winning customers has to be the overwhelming enthusiasm of their staff. This is apparent from, the moment you cross the threshold. They number 12 full time and 5 part time but someone always seems to be on hand to advise and help with all enquiries especially if you would like something that’s not in the impressive displays. From individual beef Wellington, boneless lamb loin rolled with a spinach and apricot stuffing to ready meal portion sized for the elderly, nothing appears to be a problem.