

PRESS RELEASE

3 July 2017

NFU Mutual Food and Drink Forum brings the region's sector together for expert business insights

Food and drink business leaders from across the South East gathered recently to hear fascinating insights into the success of some of the most successful operators in the sector and discuss some of the most important issues they face at the recent 'Mutual Solutions – Food and Drink Forum' organised by NFU Mutual Ashford and Tenterden.

Phil Cornish, Senior Partner in NFU Mutual Ashford and Tenterden, is hugely pleased with the event's success. "Our speakers and the experts who led the afternoon breakout sessions provided some incredibly useful and thought-provoking ideas," he says. "There was excellent advice and useful thinking for delegates to take away and apply in their own food businesses."

Sally Newall, Owner and Founder of Kent-based Simply Ice Cream found the day worthwhile. "It was great to hear about how other people have successfully faced the challenges of running a new food business," she says. "There was so much that compared with my own experience and it was fascinating to hear how they dealt with the problems and made the most of the opportunities."

Keynote speaker Edward Perry, Managing Director of high-end frozen food company COOK, who gave a fascinating account of the challenges he faced as he developed what has become a highly successful family business producing home cooked food for the freezer. He stressed that culture, perseverance and nourishing relationships are key. "Business isn't complicated, you just want people who work hard and stick at it," he says.

Shane Russell from risk management company Red 24 explained how to avoid a potentially business-threatening product recall situation, Sue Nelson from Breakthrough Funding gave some fascinating insights into emerging food trends, and Steve McLaughlin from IT service company Steve Mac Media explained how to address the growth of threats to cyber security.



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Penny Haslam, a senior business journalist and producer for BBC Radio 4, who has also presented the business news on BBC Breakfast, the News Channel and BBC Radio 5 Live as well as reporting for Panorama investigations and The One Show, chaired the event with magnificent efficiency, style and professionalism.

Following lunch, delegates had the opportunity to attend a choice of workshops including 'Brexit and the labour issue', from North Kent based grower and packer of fruit David Long, who looked at the challenge the food industry faces finding staff post-Brexit, Lee Scott and Michael Fountain of Savills who discussed 'Building regulations and planning for food businesses, while public relations and communications expert Suzanne Howe, Founder and Managing Director of Suzanne Howe Communications considered 'The Power of Social Media' in the lives of food businesses.

"I'm so grateful for the excellent job done by all the speakers," says NFU Mutual's Phil Cornish. "I would also like to thank every delegate for the great job they all did contributing to a very useful day for the area's food and drink businesses. We look forward to making the Food and Drink Forum an annual event for food and drink businesses in the South East."

Ends



Attendees at the Mutual Solutions – Food and Drink Forum



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Notes for Editors:

About NFU Mutual:

NFU Mutual offers a wide range of products, including general insurance, life insurance, pensions, and investments. These products and services are delivered through the agency network, as well as through a direct sales and service centre.

With over 300 offices located in rural towns and villages throughout the UK, NFU Mutual has become part of the fabric of rural life and remains committed to serving the needs of people who visit, live or work in the countryside.



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