

# Knowledge Transfer Ireland Impact Awards

John Halligan, TD, Minister for Skills, Training and Innovation, presented the KTI Awards. Pictured are all the KTI Impact Award winners, including Miriam Walsh, Tim Guinee and Mark Fenelon of Teagasc and Mary Kenry of Ornu.

Knowledge transfer success stories were celebrated at the recent Knowledge Transfer Ireland Impact Awards, where **TEAGASC** and Ornu took home the Licence2Market award.

The annual Knowledge Transfer Ireland (KTI) Impact Awards showcase success stories in knowledge and technology transfer carried out in Irish higher education institutions and publicly-funded research organisations (PROs). As well as recognising top performance in industry engagement and commercialisation of publicly-funded research, they celebrate the role of technology transfer offices (TTOs) in facilitating the formal knowledge transfer process. Along with supporting business and the research base to maximise innovation from State-funded research, KTI has a significant role in supporting Irish PRO TTOs, and these awards are an important means of publicising such knowledge transfer success stories and highlighting the role of the TTOs.

## Teagasc award

The award categories included collaborative research, consultancy, Licence2Market and spin-out company, and the focus was on engagements with the most significant impact evident in 2016. Following a successful submission through its TTO to the Licence2Market award category, and selection as a finalist on the night, Teagasc and Ornu Co-operative were presented with the Licence2Market award, against competition from Trinity College Dublin and Dublin City University. This celebrates the significant impact from a commercial licence between Teagasc and Ornu executed in 2012, which granted Ornu exclusive rights to commercialise a Teagasc-patented technology, to manufacture and sell white cheeses in the Middle East. The licensed platform cheese-making technology, led by Tim Guinee at Teagasc Moorepark, represents a novel approach to cheese-making, without whey expulsion, and is based on reassembly of functional dairy powders into cheeses. Following Teagasc marketing, Ornu realised the

opportunity to secure significant new routes to market for Irish dairy produce, through the manufacture and sale of cheeses in countries with a shortage of fresh milk supply. Subsequently, a collaborative agreement with Teagasc was established to refine the technology, and a commercial licence secured for specific markets and cheese types. Significant economic impact was demonstrated in 2016, with Ornu opening its multimillion Euro cheese-manufacturing plant in Saudi Arabia and the launch of its first product. With plans to extend its product range in 2017 and to sell to extended Middle East and North Africa regions, Ornu forecasts strong sales growth over the next five years, while Teagasc will secure a royalty on such sales, as a return on State investment. This is a great example of successful technology transfer, with significant economic and societal benefits to both parties, the dairy industry and the economy. It also acknowledges the important role of the TTO in intellectual property management, formal licence negotiations and relationship management for such licences. For further details see: <http://www.knowledgetransferireland.com/News>.

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