

## **Huw Thomas – Managing Director, Puffin Produce**

Huw Thomas has a wide ranging knowledge of the food supply chain from primary agriculture, through processing, to the interface with the major retailers. He has worked in farming, research and government - and is currently Managing Director of the successful fresh produce business, Puffin Produce, based in Pembrokeshire.

Huw is a dairy farmer's son from Pembrokeshire, who returned to the County to run Puffin following twenty years in agriculture related roles throughout the UK. This includes ten years as a research scientist at the Department of Genetics, University of Cambridge, followed by a spell in the Agri-Food Strategy Team of the Welsh Development Agency and Welsh Government. Prior to his current role, Huw spent three years as Head of Strategy and Market Information at DairyCo.

Puffin has grown rapidly but sustainably since Huw joined the business five years ago. Turnover has grown from £9m to £20m and employee number from 45 to 125. Puffin now has established long term supply relationships with Asda, Tesco, JS, Morrisons, Waitrose and M&S – and has over the past four years developed a brand 'Blas Y Tir' that has retail sales of over £1m per month. The brand is now recognised and bought regularly by 35% of Welsh shoppers.

Puffin achieved PGI status for Pembrokeshire Earlies in December 2013, raising sales by a factor of x12 over the past two seasons. To deal with the rapid growth of the Puffin business, Huw and his team have implemented a £13m capex programme that has built one of the most efficient potato factories in the UK.

Huw has two daughters 6 and 7 and enjoys watching sport and socialising in his spare time.