

Who We Are



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Dewi Williams

Over the past 18 months Dewi has built up his business—**Marlborough Mushrooms**—using the system we have devised. Dewi Williams has extensive experience of the food industry , from production to sourcing and marketing and has worked in senior management positions in both the private and public sectors.



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Marlborough Mushrooms' units in Wiltshire

Shiitake Mushrooms Growing on our blocks at The Mushroom Garden, Snowdonia



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Cynan Jones

Cynan was the original participant in a project investigated a number of alternative crop options to help diversify agriculture in North Wales . Since 2004, **The Mushroom Garden** has flourished and won awards, including a True Taste of Wales bronze medal in 2011 and 2009 National Trust Fine Farm Produce Award.



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Quick Guide & FAQs



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Your own business, but not on your own.

Frequently Asked Questions

I gather the system works in units / pods. How much space does a unit take up?

The units are built within insulated containers. These are 7m x 2.5m and 2 are needed. In my own set up I have a 4m space between them which I have roofed over to give me an external working area, which may not be necessary for everyone. An area of 8x10m plus turning and parking space is enough.

What are the initial costs of purchasing a unit?

A fully functioning unit - kitted out and ready to plug in, together with the licence, technical manual and 5 days initial support and a defined territory is £19,950. There are no ongoing franchise fees thereafter. Additional ancillary equipment such as some refrigeration capacity and drying equipment may be required, depending on how individual licensees decide to develop their business.

What are the initial cost of purchasing supplies e.g. compost, spores, etc? And do you have recommended suppliers?

Shiitake grow on an oak based substrate which is a block of about 2kg. These are made exclusively for us and it is part of the agreement that all substrates used in the units are bought through us. We have a mycologist supporting us who produces all the spawn we need

and we also have a back up mechanism to this if needed.

What are the running costs for a single unit?

The cashflows are attached and these give you all the detail. The big costs are substrate blocks (at £4 each, delivered) and electricity (about £30/wk) other costs vary according to circumstances and the way people choose to develop their business. At capacity the unit has running costs of about £27,000/yr and should generate a net income of about £17,000/yr.

How big and regular are the yields / production from a single unit?

The units are designed to produce 50 - 60Kg/wk. Production is very predictable as long as you keep the conditions at optimum.

Any idea what the market value of produce from a single unit would be?

A diligent and organised person should be able to realise £15 - £20k/yr from an input of around 4-5hrs/day. Focussed marketing and sales effort is important in the early months.

Which species of mushrooms have you tried growing in these units, and is it possible to grow a mixture of species in 1 unit?

Oysters grow very successfully alongside Shiitake and we would encourage people to grow them once they have got the system running smoothly with Shiitake. Some

other exotics will also grow but we have found these have limited marketability so we do not encourage this unless a market has been identified beforehand.

What are the approximate labour hours per unit i.e. is this something we can easily do while also holding full-time jobs?

Yes, the system is designed to be a part time operation. 4-5hrs/day is a reasonable target at full capacity - and these can be put in flexibly. Farmers markets are fixed, of course, so you need to be prepared to put in a few days a month for those - but how many is up to you.

Do you also offer an advice / training / support service (or plan to in the future)

The package comes with 5 days of support within it. Additional support will always be available at a daily rate of £500/day. We might set up a subscription type service if it looks like it's needed. In our experience, 5 days is a significant time input. - a lot can be discussed over the 'phone.

How is the operating area for the licence defined?

Each licensee gets a territory which is defined by a given population. In the majority of situations this would be from around 500,000, defined by National Statistics data and Local Authority and Borough boundaries.