

Nominee: Barry McCleary

Megazyme



BARRY McCLEARY is founder of Megazyme, a research-based biochemical company that develops and supplies diagnostic test kits to the food, feed, fermentation, wine and dairy industries. The company was founded in 1988 in Sydney, Australia, and in 1996 relocated to Bray, Co Wicklow, where it constructed a purpose-built research facility in the IDA park.

Megazyme grew out of the recognition by McCleary that there was a need for improved analytical test methods for the measurement of the carbohydrates and enzymes in cereal grains that dictate their quality for use in the brewing, baking, and animal feeds industries. With the aid of molecular biology capabilities, this vision extended into the wine, food and dairy industries in 2004, and is now developing to meet the needs of the developing biofuels industry. More than 90 per cent of the products supplied by Megazyme have been researched and developed within the company, and in many cases, Megazyme is the sole world manufacturer. Seven of the test methods developed by the company are now world standard procedures and the very first test kit developed by McCleary, for the measurement of the fibre in oats that confer health benefits, is still the world standard after 20 years. In 2008, sales increased by 25 per cent, and McCleary says they look set to do record same growth this year. The company employs 23.

Products

Megazyme provides test kits and reagents to allow the measurement of compounds that affect food quality. The kits measure sugars, starches and dietary fibre, organic acids, amino acids and enzymes. The kits are used in all food and beverage industries, including baking, wine brewing, animal feed and dairy.

Customers

Megazyme exports 98 per cent of its products to over 40 countries,

either directly or through a network of distributors. Ninety-five per cent of the business is online.

Customers include most of the blue chip food, beverage and food ingredient companies including Kellogg's, Kraft, Heinz, Guinness, Unilever, Kerry Bioproducts, Fosters Group, Hardy's wines, Moet and Chandon, DSM, Danisco and Novozymes.

What vision prompted you to start up in business?

I saw a need for improved analytical methods for the measurement of carbohydrates and enzymes in cereal grains and the derived food products. These carbohydrates and enzymes dictate how well the particular cereal product will perform in the final food product, eg bread, beer and animal feed.

What motivates you to succeed?

I absolutely love the work I do. I feel that the work that I and my company do is of value to the various industries we serve. I enjoy any challenge and the opportunity to take up the challenge. Some projects we have were solved in just months, whereas others have spanned over a decade. It is great to see solutions develop for problems that have been there for years, and problems that nobody else has yet solved.

What is the best business advice you ever received?

Become totally independent in regard to raw materials. I was advised to take control of this by manufacturing all key components in house. I have followed this advice, and we manufacture greater than 90 per cent of what we sell.

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