

## Media Kitchen

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Cognisant of changing work practices and an increasing emphasis on laboratory-based tissue culture and molecular biological research techniques which require consistent, accredited and high quality standards of media, plasticware etc., a central Media Kitchen facility was established at SCRI at the beginning of fiscal year 1996/97. The daily provision of fresh materials to 12 pick-up and drop-off locations around the SCRI laboratory complex began in earnest during the early summer of 1996 and expanded steadily to accommodate the increasing requirements of the various user groups. The outputs of the first full year of operation of the Media Kitchen facility, 1997, are summarised in Figure 1. Overall, through

Tips	1,393,350
Eppendorf tubes	520,095
Agar plates poured	37,011
Total items*	41,187

\* 1 item = 5ml LB or 1000ml SSCx20

**Figure 1** Media kitchen outputs 1997.

central bulk purchasing agreements, the Media Kitchen has created savings of up to 50% on disposable plasticware and media ingredients. Moreover, innovative scientists, visiting workers, trainees, students and support technicians alike, have been freed from repetitive tasks connected with the preparation of standard microbiological, mycological and plant tissue culture, media preparation. By centralising the production facility, by applying stringent quality controls, and by encouraging interactive feedback from user groups around the Institute, Media Kitchen staff have been able to sustain the highest level of service and customer satisfaction throughout the year. The Media Kitchen operates as a research facility under the central administrative overhead, to minimise bureaucracy; nevertheless, each user site is 'shadow tolled' for its throughput of consumables. The day-to-day oper-

ation of the facility is supported and greatly enhanced by the efforts of Walter Burry and Jimmy McMillan, who were recruited from the HELM Project Centre in Dundee and provided with skills training. The range of products, services and facilities made available by the Media Kitchen to all SCRI staff has continued to expand during 1997 to meet an ever-increasing demand for this essential core facility. Media Kitchen



Wendy Ridley and Evelyn Warden (foreground) prepare over 60 different sterile microbiological and plant tissue culture media and pre-pour petri dishes for SCRI staff in all research departments.

staff also collect and recycle glassware, as well as autoclaving used microbiological materials. In this way, it has been possible to secure a standard quality of service amenable to accreditation and resistant to the vagaries and additional expense of Departments establishing their own sterilisation and media preparation facility. Given the large number of visiting scientists and students (of all standards and backgrounds) who work at SCRI, the provision of a standardised, quality-assured central media and sterile disposable-ware facility, with daily delivery service throughout SCRI, has proved invaluable both to researchers and to those monitoring costs and assessing value-for-money.