Media Kitchen

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The Media Kitchen was established in 1996 to provide a wide range of sterile microbiological, mycological, plant tissue culture, media preparation and disposable plasticware for the Institute's laboratory staff.

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,

etc.

Buying 1.5 million Eppendorf tips and 0.5 million Eppendorf tubes per year in bulk has resulted in savings of over 50%. The media kitchen frees the innovative scientists, visiting workers, trainee students and support technicians from the repetitive and time-consuming tasks associated with the above.

The Media Kitchen is staffed by two full-time and two part-time workers and the facility is supported and enhanced by the efforts of Walter Burry and James McMillan who were recruited through the Helm Project in Dundee.

The support staff fill, on average, 275 tip boxes and 50 Eppendorf tubs per week and deliver media to 12 pick-up and drop-off locations around the site on a daily basis. They also collect and recycle the glassware and collect, autoclave and dispose of waste microbiological materials.

Changes in the Media Kitchen annual turnover are shown in Figure 1.

	1997	1998	
Tips (boxes of 100)	13,933	14,300	+ 3%
Eppendorf tubs (c.200 tubes/tub)	2,600	2,620	+ 1%
Agar plates	37,011	43,600	+18%
Other items (bottled & capped)	24,654	45,080	+83%

Figure 1 Media kitchen outputs 1997 and 1998.

The success of the Media Kitchen indicates that a larger working area and an increase in staff will be necessary to meet the ever-increasing demand for this essential core 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 media and sterile disposable-ware facility, with its daily delivery service and daily removal of waste microbiological materials, has proved invaluable both to researchers and those monitoring costs and assessing value for money.