

Media Kitchen

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The Media Kitchen was established in 1996 to provide a wide range of sterile microbiological, mycological and plant tissue culture, media and disposable plasticware for the Institute's numerous laboratories. The advantage of centralized buying in bulk has meant huge savings for the Institute. Prices for disposable plasticware have actually fallen as the volume of orders has steadily increased over the last five years.

The Media Kitchen operates as a research facility under the central administration overhead, to minimise bureaucracy, with each user site being 'shadow-tolled' for its throughput of consumables etc. It is staffed by two full-time and one part-time members of staff. The facility is supported by the efforts of one full-time and one part-time worker who were initially recruited from The Helm Project in Dundee.

Orders are delivered daily to 13 pick-up and drop-off locations around the site. At the same time, used Media Kitchen glassware is collected to be washed and re-cycled. Agar plates and any other specific media can be ordered by telephone, E-mail or by visiting the Media Kitchen itself. These requests are usually met within 24 hours. The support workers, in addition to delivering the orders, filling tip boxes and Eppendorf pots, also collect, autoclave and dispose of waste microbiological materials.

The Media Kitchen quickly outgrew its original premises and moved to much larger premises at the end of 2000. This much improved working environment has given us greater diversity i.e. the pouring by

hand of larger and smaller plates and slopes etc. We can also carry larger stocks of the most popular media/buffers which relieves the pressure of holiday and sick leave. A lot of progress has been made during the year with regard to achieving accreditation according to ISO 9000, hopefully in 2002. This will prove invaluable as regards future grants and contracts.

Figure 1 shows the output of the Media Kitchen, year by year since the first full year in 1997. From these figures, it would appear that 'saturation point' has been reached. However, the departmental changes that are ongoing are likely to have had some effect on the demand for media.

The work that is carried out by the Media Kitchen staff frees the innovative scientists, visiting workers, trainee students and support technicians from the



repetitive and time-consuming tasks associated with media preparation. It also secures a standardised quality of service throughout the Institute, saves the additional expense of each department maintaining a sterilisation and media preparation facility and saves money by bulk buying. The facility and service the Media Kitchen offers is appreciated and often envied by visiting scientists and students. With the extra

staff to be transferred from Dundee University due to arrive in mid-2002, 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 will continue to be invaluable both to researchers and to those monitoring costs and assessing value for money.

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Boxes of tips (100/box)	13,933	14,300	19,738	19,653	20,609
Eppendorf tubes (c. 200/pot)	2,600	2,620	4,211	4,279	4,130
Agar plates	37,011	43,600	56,084	52,064	51,349
Other items *	24,654	45,080	47,928	51,850	43,389

* Item = anything bottled and capped.

Figure 1 Media kitchen output.