

Media Kitchen

W. Ridley

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

Operating as a research facility under the central administration overhead, to minimise bureaucracy, each user site is 'shadow-tolled' for its throughput of consumables, etc. The outputs of the Media Kitchen and the increase year by year can be seen in Figure 1. Overall, through bulk purchasing agreements, prices have held since 1996 and huge savings have been made for the Institute.

The Media Kitchen is staffed by two full-time and one part-time worker, and the facility is also supported by the efforts of Walter Burry (full-time) and James McMillan (part-time), who were recruited from the Helm Project in Dundee.

Orders are delivered on a daily basis to 12 pick-up and drop-off locations to top up each Unit's supplies. Agar plates and any other specific media can be ordered either by telephone or by e-mail for delivery, usually within 24 hours. The support workers, in addition to filling tip boxes and Eppendorf pots, also collect and recycle the glassware and collect, autoclave and dispose of waste microbiological materials. This frees the innovative scientists, visiting workers, trainee students and support technicians from the repetitive



and time-consuming tasks associated with media preparation, and secures a standardised quality of service throughout the Institute. At the same time, this saves the additional expense of each Unit maintaining a 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 media and sterile disposable ware facility, with its daily delivery service and daily removal of waste microbiological materials, has proved to be invaluable both to researchers and to those monitoring costs and assessing value for money. The success of the Media Kitchen indicates that a larger working area will be necessary in order to meet the ever-increasing demand for this essential core facility

	1997	1998	1999	Increase 1999 on 1997	Increase 1999 on 1998
Tips	1,393,350	1,430,000	1,973,800	+ 42%	+ 38%
Eppendorf tubs	520,095	524,000	842,200	+ 62%	+ 61%
Agar plates (poured)	37,011	43,600	56,084	+ 52%	+ 29%
Other items	24,654	45,080	47,928	+ 95%	+ 7%

Figure 1 Media kitchen output.