

Media Kitchen

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

Buying in bulk has shown huge savings for the Institute and prices have, in the main, held since 1996. The Media Kitchen is staffed by two full-time and one part-time worker, and the facility is supported by the efforts of Walter Burry and James McMillan (part-time), who were recruited from The Helm Project in Dundee. Orders are delivered on a daily basis to 13 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, by e-mail or by visiting the Media Kitchen. These requests are usually met 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 microbiological materials.

The outputs of the Media Kitchen, year by year, can be seen in Figure 1. It would appear from the figures that 'saturation point' may have been reached. However, the reorganisation of the Institute into Divisions and Units, the Open Days, the re-wiring of the Institute and the Media Kitchen's move to new premises are all factors that will have made a significant impact on the year's overall output.

It became apparent during 1998/99 that, if the Media Kitchen were to continue to see growths in produc-



tion, much larger premises were required. To this end, a new location was sought and, towards the end of 2000, the Media Kitchen was moved to an area at least six times the size of the original, with facilities that will, in due course, enable us to achieve accreditation according to ISO 9000. This will prove invaluable as regards future grants and contracts.

The work 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. This secures a standardised quality of service throughout the Institute, at the same time saving 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.

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

* Item = 5ml LB or 1 L 20 x SSC for example: anything bottled and capped.

Figure 1 Media kitchen output.