

Media Kitchen

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The Media Kitchen has been operating since 1996 and provides a wide range of sterile microbiological, mycological, plant tissue culture, media preparations and disposable plasticware for the Institute's laboratory staff.

The advantage of buying in bulk has meant huge savings and prices have hardly risen over the last eight years. The Media Kitchen operates as a research facility under the central administrative overhead, to minimize bureaucracy. Centralising the Media preparation has meant that individual departments no longer have to maintain a sterilization and media preparation facility.

The Media Kitchen 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 and have been here since the start-up in 1996.

Orders are delivered on a daily basis to 13 pick up and drop off locations around the Institute. At the same time used Media Kitchen glassware is collected to be washed and recycled and empty tip boxes and Eppendorf pots are collected to be refilled. This work is carried out primarily by the support workers who also, on a separate run, collect, autoclave and dispose of waste microbiological materials.

Agar plates and any other specific media can be ordered by e-mail, telephone or by visiting the Media Kitchen and we aim to meet all requests within 24 hours. Figure 1 shows the output of the Media Kitchen since the first full year in 1997.

The Media Kitchen outgrew its original premises and moved to much larger premises in September 2000. This much improved facility has given us greater diversity and much more space for holding stocks of media. This relieves the pressure if we are short-staffed.

The work that is carried out in the Media Kitchen frees the innovative scientists, visiting workers, PhD students and support technicians from the repetitive and time-consuming tasks associated with Media Preparation. It also guarantees a standardized quality of media according to ISO 9000. This was attained in November 2002 and is vital regarding grants and contracts.

The facility and service provided by the Media Kitchen is appreciated and often envied by visiting scientists and students. The provision of a standardized, quality assured media and sterile disposable ware facility and the daily removal of waste microbiological materials is now well established at the Institute and is invaluable to researchers and to those monitoring costs and assessing value for money.

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Boxes of tips (100/box)	13,933	14,300	19,738	19,653	20,609	24,000	21,480
Eppendorf tubes (c. 200/pot)	2,600	2,620	4,211	4,279	4,130	4,561	4,690
Agar plates	37,011	43,600	56,084	52,064	51,349	50,974	50,477
Other items *	24,654	45,080	47,928	51,850	43,389	43,180	37,593

* Item = anything bottled and capped.

Figure 1 Media kitchen output.