



Harper Adams University

This new award is given to the business that can demonstrate the most imaginative and effective partnership with a university or universities.

With its decision to relocate research and development and technical staff to Harper Adams University, as part of a major restructuring programme, Dairy Crest achieved impressive results and is a worthy inaugural winner of this award.

The closure of one of the company's processing plants near to the university - in order to consolidate production in Liverpool - left the factory's R&D and technical team in limbo until they explored the possibility, with the help of Harper Adams, of moving them on to the campus. After an investment of £4 million to create a new innovation centre on Harper Adams' campus, 40 R&D staff took up residence at the university.

The relationship has since flourished. In opening up new domestic and international markets for dairy products, Dairy Crest realised that further livestock research expertise was vital to meet its objectives.

Among numerous mutual benefits, Dairy Crest has jointly funded a lectureship in animal science and bioinformatics, and this researcher is now engaged in numerous company-led research projects. Success of this work led to a £2 million budget increase for Dairy Crest research into a specific prebiotic food ingredient, to identify new commercial applications for the product.

"Embedding research scientists in one of the country's top agricultural colleges was a pioneering collaboration in an industry with traditionally low R&D," the judges noted.