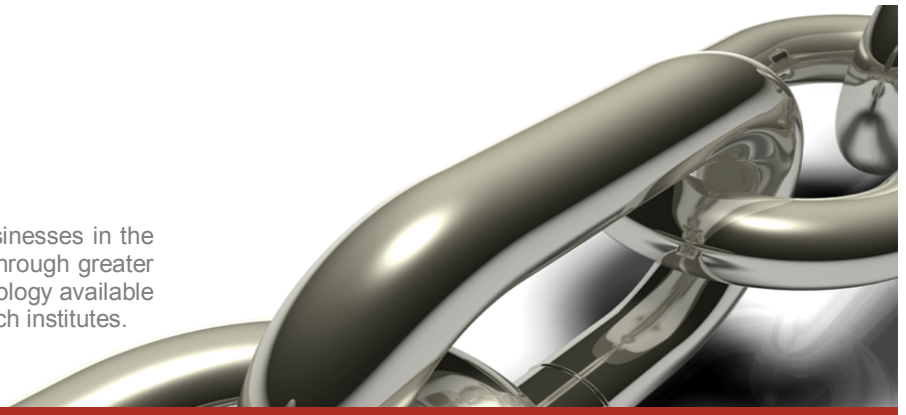




The aim of the HI Links project is to help businesses in the Highlands and Islands develop and prosper through greater access to the knowledge, expertise and technology available in Scotland's universities, colleges and research institutes.



Food and Drink

CASE STUDY

Innovation through collaboration



Highland Park and the Agronomy Institute, Orkney College UHI

Developing a supply chain for malting barley in Orkney

In 2009 The Agronomy Institute UHI and world famous distillers, Highland Park, collaborated on a project to investigate the potential for growing malting barley in Orkney.

Local farmers had previously attempted to grow the barley but had been unsuccessful. Given the scale of opportunity the distillery presented for local agriculture the Orkney based Agronomy Institute, part of Orkney College UHI, was appointed to carry out more detailed research.

A trial investigating the growth and yield of malting barley varieties, chosen by the distillery, was successfully established, monitored and harvested at the Agronomy Institute. Samples of grain of all varieties were provided to Highland Park for micromalting.

Promisingly the results revealed that contrary to previous experience, both good grain yields and high quality malt could be obtained in Orkney.

The benefits for the local community were manifested by Highland Park contracting the Agronomy Institute to organise a local supply chain with five local growers to produce fifty tonnes of grain for the distillery in 2010.

In future years it is intended to continue this collaboration within the supply chain and to develop best practices for growing malting barley in Orkney so that 'locally grown' production can be increased.

Russell Anderson, Highland Park Distillery Manager, commented on the success of the collaboration;

'Highland Park would have been unable to progress this initiative on Orkney without the expertise of the Agronomy Institute'