

Firm to supply Tesco with clotted cream

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DAIRY firm Langage Farm has signed a £1.7 million contract to supply Tesco with clotted cream.

The three-year deal, which has created five jobs, will see the Smithaleigh-based business supplying 10 Tesco depots, from where the cream will be sent to stores nationwide.

Langage Farm's general manager Paul Winterton said: "Clotted cream from Devon is going all over the country.

"We have secured it initially for a three-year period, but indefinitely provided it goes well.

"Sales are very strong."

The deal comes hot on the heels of other major contracts secured this year to supply dairy products to trendy restaurant chain Nando's and yoghurt to a leading national coffee chain.

Mr Winterton said that up to £2 million in contracts are in the pipeline.

He predicted up to 30 jobs could be created in the next 18 months with annual turnover growing from the current £3.1 million to £6.4 million by 2013.

"We have high street names interested in our company," said Mr Winterton. "We are in negotiations now. We are going from strength to strength."

Langage Farm's growth will also have repercussions for Devon's dairy industry with the firm estimating it could double the 40,000 litres of milk it uses a day within 18 months.

The company, which currently has 50 employees, is already campaigning to gain Protected Designation of Origin status under European law which would ensure only Devon products are used in Devonshire cream teas.

Mr Winterton said: "We are trying to get most of our milk from Devon."

The company is also building a £4 million anaerobic digester to turn food waste into methane gas and then generate electricity, supplying the national grid and making the plant self-sufficient in energy.

"The impact on the environment will be zero," Mr Winterton said.

He said the firm's success was down to its workforce and the strategic thinking of owner James Harvey and the senior management team which includes commercial manager Richard Scutt and engineering manager Gary Jones, alongside himself.

"It goes to show what can be done in a recession by a forward thinking business," he said.

Langage Farm also produces pouring creams, soft and cottage cheeses and ice cream.

It said sales were already 15 per cent above forecasts and the firm was geared up for a successful August bank holiday weekend.