

## MEDIA RELEASE

### INVEST NORTHERN IRELAND AND BORD BIA JOIN FORCES FOR FIRST EVER CROSS BORDER INITIATIVE

13TH OCTOBER 2014: Over 30 Irish food and drink companies have taken part in the country's first ever cross-border initiative between Northern Ireland's Regional Business Development Agency, Invest Northern Ireland, and Ireland's Food Board, Bord Bia.

Hosted by Brakes, a dedicated supplier to the foodservice sector in Ireland, the Brakes Innovation Day provided a unique opportunity for over 30 Irish produce suppliers to showcase their products to a panel of Brakes buyers from across the hospitality and catering industries. The panel judged products from each supplier scoring, them on their innovation, taste and quality.

The winners on the day were the Penny Loaf Co. from Tullamore in Co. Offaly who will receive a listing for their yeast-free mini soda breads with Brakes UK and Brakes Ireland. Runners up, M&D Bakery's Waterford Blaa range and Loughanes' Stout and Leek sausages will be listed with Brakes Ireland.

Speaking to attendees at the event, hosted in Dublin's Griffith College, Maureen Gahan from Bord Bia discussed the importance of supporting the Irish food and drink industry and the positive impact this has on the economy.

Ian Wilkinson from Invest Northern Ireland added that Ireland's food export industry continues to experience good growth and stressed the importance of commercial innovation to create export opportunities for local producers.

Committed to working with local suppliers, Brakes UK and Brakes Ireland currently list over 140 Irish Suppliers with more than £80 million of Irish products being exported to the UK market through Brakes UK every year.

Commenting on the Innovation Day, CEO of the Brakes Group, Ken McMeiken said:

"Food provenance and innovation is of huge importance to us and we are committed to supporting local suppliers. The Innovation Day was designed to provide a platform for our customers to meet with Irish suppliers in person and become more involved in the product selection process.

"After investing heavily in our Irish business with the opening of our new 70,000 sq. ft. facility in Park West Dublin, we are now keen to grow our offering further and play an even greater role in improving quality, reliability and innovation of product and service needed to meet our clients' business needs.

"I am delighted to welcome The Penny Loaf Co., Loughnanes and M&D Bakery on board as Brakes suppliers and look forward to introducing their product ranges to our customers."

Louise O'Donaghue, Sales Manager for The Penny Loaf Co. added:

“We are completely overwhelmed and extremely excited to have received such a positive response from judges at the inaugural Brakes Innovation Day. The Penny Loaf Co. is just under a year in business and to be awarded product listing with both Brakes UK and Ireland is mind-blowing. We look forward to working with Brakes on this new venture.”

Previously known as O’Kane Foodservice, the company was purchased by Brakes in 2008 and operates depots in Dublin, Galway, Cork, Lisburn and Strabane.

