



# Harley and Marley hope fish-based pet food will go down a treat on continent

**LIAM COATES**

**T**he pet food market is pretty formulaic with the ingredients typically not deviating significantly from one product to another – with one exception.

What marks Harley and Marley, the Dublin company, out from the rest of the pack is its use of fish rather than red meat in its food products for cats and dogs.

According to Portia Quinn, the company's co-founder and chief executive, there's no good reason why fish isn't far more widely used.

"There's nothing at all lacking in giving them a fish diet. They absolutely love it," the ex-financial journalist said. "You're giving them something that's healthy, sustainable, delicious and doesn't have any of the negative effects that red meat can give".

At the moment, Harley and Marley products can be found in SuperValu stores up and down the country, with Dunnes Stores to follow as a stockist. Quinn said that she plans to look abroad to further grow the

business. "Pet food, as anyone will tell you, is a volume business," she said.

"For fast-moving consumer goods, Ireland is always a really great test market, but in order for us to really scale and grow, export is where our future lies".

She pointed to major interest from Eastern Euro-

pean markets in Irish fish, which she hopes will propel her business to €600,000 in revenues by the end of the year, and €1.4 million by 2025.

Allied to this, she is overhauling the brand's website to improve its e-commerce capabilities, and introduc-

ing several new products, some of which will be showcased at the Interzoo pet industry conference in Germany next month.

Sandyford-based Harley and Marley's expanded range will include a range of wet foods for dogs and cats, a bottled fish oil product, which is currently in testing, and further expansions to its treat ranges over the coming years.

The fish, she is proud to add, is all sourced from Irish suppliers, with local hake, haddock and rainbow trout all finding their way into the company's products.

One of her suppliers, John Kenny of Wexford-based Atlantis Seafoods, produces almost 50 tonnes of waste fish a week, she said, which

despite his best efforts, isn't fit for human products.

"We're not taking the nasty bits that nobody wants," she is keen to stress. "We're taking off-cuts of the fish that are just the wrong shape and size, that you and I would be happy to pan-fry with a bit of citrus butter".

On top of quality ingredients, Quinn is hoping that the trend of "humanisation" in the pet industry will carry her brand to new heights.

"Whatever is happening in the human food world tends to then follow on in the pet food world," she explained.

And along the way, Quinn said Enterprise Ireland had been "fantastic" with their mentoring, support and financial assistance.

"I think it's fair to say when you look at their track record, EI is a highly-successful investor," she said. "They don't back businesses that don't have potential".

"We've come across some fabulous people who've had really superb experience. We have a mentor who has a huge amount of specific pet food experience, which is invaluable to us."



**You're giving them something that's healthy, sustainable, delicious**

**Harley and Marley**

**Founded:** in 2021 by Portia Quinn and Robin Thompson

**Staff:** 4

**Projected revenue in 2024:** €600,000



Portia Quinn of Harley & Marley Pet Treats, with her dog Marley

Fergal Phillips