

Brett

Brothers Limited

1940 - 1990



Happy Birthday . . . Brett Brothers Limited feed millers and grain merchants of Callan, Co. Kilkenny, celebrated fifty years in business at "Agriculture '90" at Kildalton College, Piltown. Pictured cutting the cake with Joe Rea, Chairman of Teagasc and Alan Gillis, President of the IFA are company directors (from left): Paddy Brett, Jack Brett, James E. Brett, James J. Brett, James Brett senior and Michael Brett.

(Photo: Tom Brett)

The Brett family has just closed the book on its first fifty years in business. From humble beginnings in Windgap during the war the Company has risen to its present position as one of the leading agribusiness groups in the South East.

As Irish agriculture faces immense changes, the Brett Group is set to tackle the next fifty years with confidence. Bretts are in the business of supplying farmers with a whole range of inputs. The modern farmer demands competitively priced products of top quality. It is on these principles that the Group has expanded over the years and they continue to be the standards for the future.

Kilkenny People





Jimmy Brett is Managing Director

MANAGING DIRECTOR of Brett Brothers Ltd. is 38 years old Jimmy Brett, son of company chairman Jack Brett. He has been with the company since 1980.

Educated in Callan C.B.S., Jimmy later went on to UCD and graduated with a degree in Agricultural Science. He joined RTE in 1975 and worked for a number of years as a agricultural broadcaster and a radio producer of agricultural programmes.

Just over 10 years ago, he returned to the family business when the new mill was opened in Callan.

Keenly interested in politics, Jimmy is actively involved with Fianna Fáil and is a member of the Callan Cumann. He was elected to the County Council for the Thomastown Electoral Area in 1985 and he was the last chairman of the Kilkenny County Committee of Agriculture before it was abolished in 1987.

Some years ago he contested a Carlow/Kilkenny selection convention for the dail and he may well be a contender again in the future.

His interest in community affairs is reflected in his involvement with the Kilkenny Radio Co-Op and he has been chairman of the Board for the past ten months.

Jimmy is married to Frances and they have two sons, David aged 7 and John aged 4.

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A story of courage and commitment

THE STORY of the Brett Group of companies is one of courage and commitment and confidence in the viability of rural Ireland. This family owned company has grown and developed in unison with the ever changing face of rural Ireland. The Brett family business has changed direction many times during its first 50 years, having started during the hungry days of war-torn Europe.

It is a story of vision and courage. Commitments and investments were made many years before anyone dreamed of this county ever enjoying the fruits of full participation in the E.C. Common Agricultural Policy. As Irish farming blossomed into a modern industry so did Brett's.

Today the Brett business stands as one of the finest agri businesses in the South East. The kernel of the group is its modern computerised mill in Callan,

Co. Kilkenny. This produces a wide range of animal feeds in many forms which are sold to farmers in areas as far apart as Cork, Wexford and Kildare.

The Brett hallmark is quality produced with maximum efficiency. Its core marketing area has traditionally been Kilkenny and South Tipperary. However the opening of its 20 tonnes per hour mill in 1980 demanded that new frontiers be breached. Thus the company pushed its sales area to counties Waterford, Wexford and Laois.

investment over the years and it is still very much Board policy.

Last year there was a big investment in integrating the computerisation of the mill. At the moment the bagging plant is being up-graded with the most up to date technology. The company seed plant in Windgap has also been modernised and expanded during 1990.

The acquisition of Brennan Supply Stores in Ardfinnan early in 1990 has helped the Group to expand its base westwards. Managing Director James J. Brett explains that the company already has a substantial market share in this area.

"Having a base there allows us to consolidate this and we are now in a stronger position to push our products

into East Cork and North Waterford, which are strong farming areas", he said.

Mr. Brett is determined that the Group should stay in the forefront of agri-business in the South East.

Invested heavily

"We have invested heavily in technology and we have put a huge effort into developing our feedstuffs to ensure that we are in the front line of millers supplying farmers in this area" he said.

He pointed out the recent course ration plant with unique computerised blending and mixing process as an example of how the Group adjusts to meet market requirements.

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Rations are sold mostly in pelleted form and principally in bulk. A modern fleet of trucks ensures that the company can maintain its boast of never letting down a customer.

Recently a new range of coarse rations has been added to the stable. These are manufactured with the same computerised technology and efficiency which has been developed in the pelleting process.

The Group also markets a wide range of farm inputs and is heavily involved in pig production. The principal products sold to farmers are fertilisers, seeds, chemicals and hardware goods.

In an industry now dominated by large multi-national and publicly quoted companies the Brett family structure is unusual. Most of the old family businesses associated with the grain industry do not trade today or are part of bigger groups.

The Brett philosophy is based on providing an alternative to the farmer. Chairman and founder member Jack Brett believes that farmers have never needed an independent source of competition as badly as today.

"As the companies supplying farmers with inputs and purchasing their produce grow bigger and become fewer in number the farmer needs viable realistic alternatives", he said. Brett's certainly provide this to farmers in Kilkenny and the South East.

Confidence

This family business has never stood still and continues to face the challenge of the future with confidence. There has been a strong emphasis on capital

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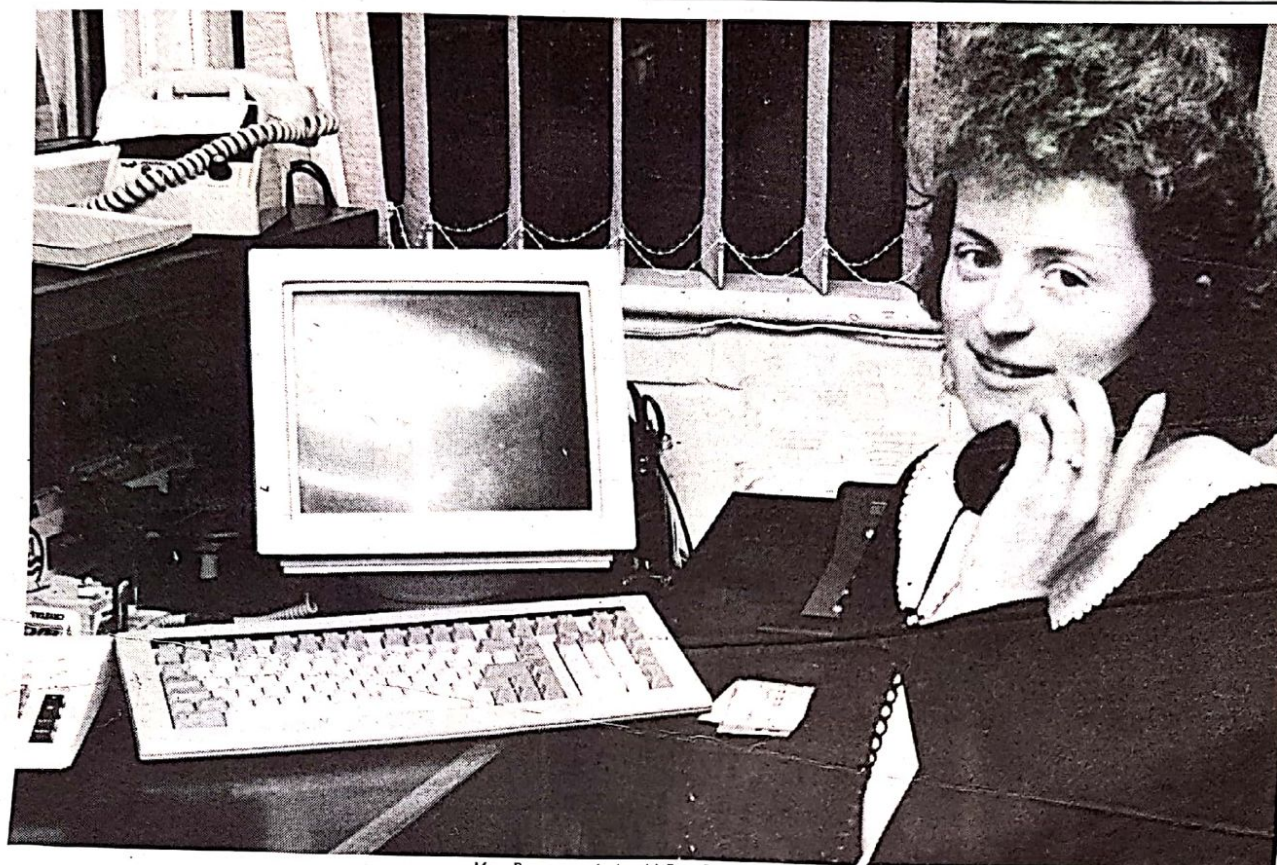
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Mary Ryan, receptionist with Brett Brothers Ltd. in Callan.

(Photo: Tom Brett)

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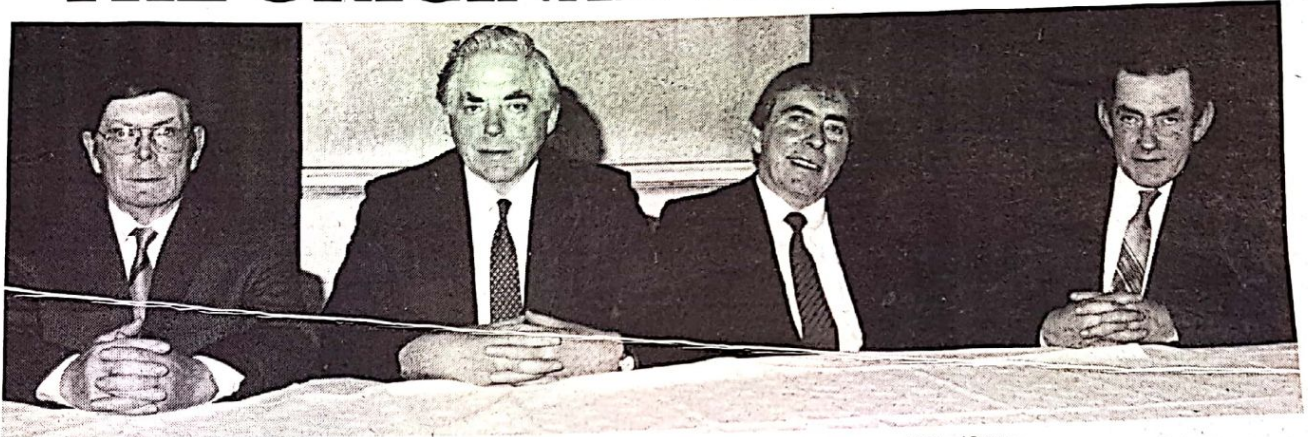
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THE ORIGINAL BRETT BROS.



Founders of the company (from left) James Brett (senior), Jack Brett (chairman), Paddy Brett and Michael Brett.

In the beginning there were rabbits and war!

RABBITS and war may not have much in common, but they were instrumental to the launching of Brett Brothers Ltd. fifty years ago. And it was a modest launching in 1940. For the company was set up to collect rabbits for export to England.

It was either that or probably emigration for Jack Brett who founded the company with the assistance of his brother, James Brett senior.

"We were born on a small farm and as the second oldest I didn't see much future for there", recalls Jack who is Chairman of the Brett Group.

"At one stage I thought of emigrating but my mother was anxious that I shouldn't".

Early in 1940, Jack, who was in his late teens, bought a second-hand V8 and obtained a hackney licence. But business wasn't great.

"I had some experience in trapping and snaring rabbits but they were only barely saleable at the time", Jack remembers.

Canned rabbit

But that began to change in late 1940 when Clover Meats in Waterford decided to experiment with the canning of rabbit for export to Britain where meat was beginning to get scarce because of the war.

"I got an agency from Clover Meats for the collection of rabbits in South Kilkenny and South Tipperary", says Jack. "At first, the prices were poor but as the war progressed and the market developed, the prices improved".

Jack acquired a trailer for his V8 and travelled the highways and byways of the two counties collecting the rabbits from the trappers and snarers.

"During the first winter (September to March was the rabbit season) the numbers were small - about 2,000 a week", Jack recalls. "But during the following two winters I set up sub-agents and the numbers rose to between 6,000 and 8,000 rabbits a week".

In the third year of production, Clover Meats extended their canning to a mixture of rabbit and chicken, and Brett Brothers were appointed agents for the collection of chickens as well as rabbits.

Recognising the potential of the export market for rabbits and fowl, Jack and James spent several summers preparing their own premises in Windgap.

On their own

In December 1943 they obtained an export licence for poultry and game and went into the export business on their own.

By the winter of 1944 they employed between 70 and 80 people part-time, skinning rabbits and plucking chickens and turkeys and packing them for export.

The produce was exported mostly to England but some was also sent to US troops based in Europe.

In the mid-1940s Brett Brothers extended their business to the exportation of fruit.

"Transportation was our biggest problem because of petrol rationing", says Jack. "But we overcame that by adapting a few lorries to gas obtained from anthracite or charcoal".

Grain agents

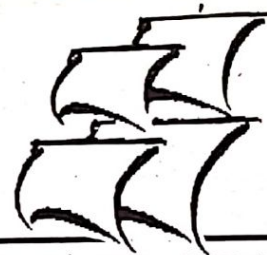
In the late 1940s Brett Brothers became grain agents for Campile Co-operative and with grain growing now becoming popular with farmers, they obtained a grain agency from Waterford Flour Mills in 1951.

To complement the grain intake, they also broadened their business into the supply of fertilisers and other farm inputs.

In the mid-1950s they built an extensive grain store in Windgap and installed grain-drying equipment. They also started milling grain into animal feeds. The expansion of the Company continued and equipment was installed for the preparation and processing of certified wheat, oats and barley seed.

Brett Brothers also acquired a number of farms and they became extensive grain growers themselves.

The company also obtained a haulage licence and became involved in general haulage.



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Continued from
Page 5.

Expansion

During the 1960s and 1970s, the Company continued to expand and towards the latter half of the '70s it became obvious that because of changing trends in agriculture they would have to adopt a more modern approach to milling.

The decision was made to invest £1½ million in a modern new provender mill and grain-drying facility and it was also decided to locate in Callan on a site provided by the Callan Industrial Development Association of which Jack Brett was a founder member. The new mill was opened in 1980.

Since then, Brett Brothers have diversified into pig farming with the acquisition of the Sunglen Piggery at Threecastles, and they have acquired a major base in Tipperary with the purchase of Brennans Supply Stores in Ardinnan.

Now, as the Group start into their second fifty years, the success story continues.

Four brothers

FOUR Brett brothers have been involved in the Company from the early years. Jack and Jimmy were there from the beginning in 1940. Patrick J. came into the business in 1945 and Michael joined his brothers in 1949.

In later years, Patrick and Michael mainly specialised in running the farming end of the business.

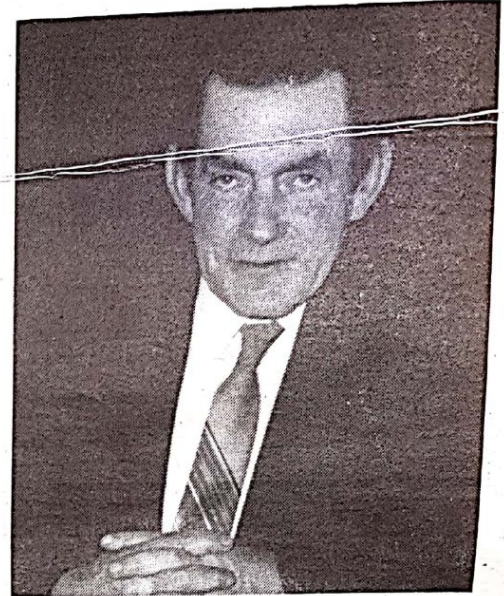
All four brothers are still active directors of the Brett Group and the Chairman of the Board is Jack Brett.

Kilkenny People

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Patrick Brett



Michael Brett

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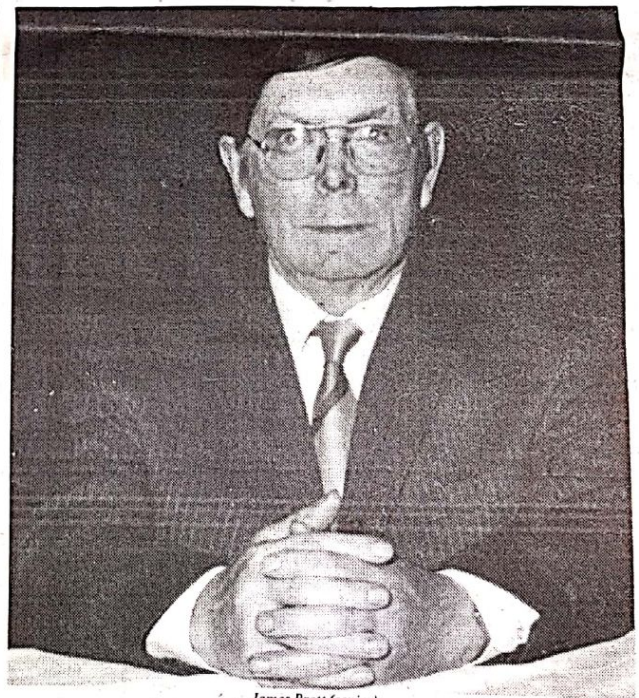
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The wives of the four senior Directors of Brett Bros. Ltd. - left to right - Mary Brett, Mary Ann Brett, Stella Brett and Aileen Brett.

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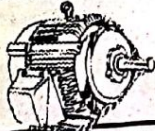
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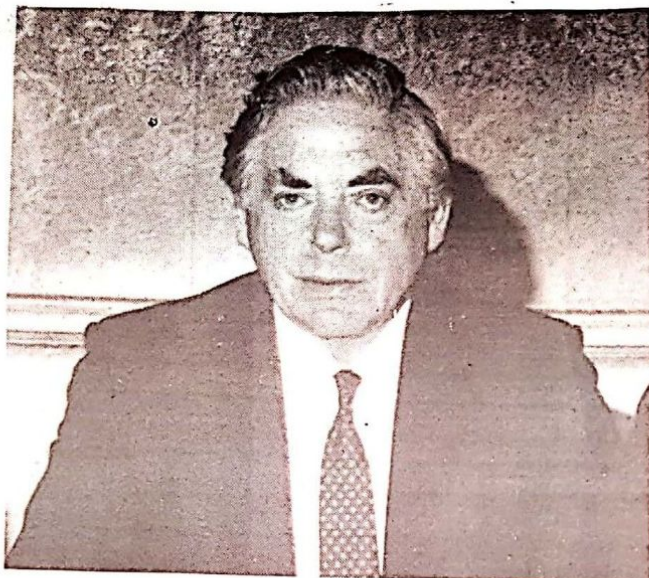
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4344 B102



Helen Grant, receptionist with Brett Brothers Ltd., Windgap.

(Photo: Tom Brett)



Jack Brett, chairman of Brett Bros. Ltd.

German lager from Callan barley

BAVARIAN drinkers can thank the Brett Group for the high quality of some of their beers. For the malting barley from which some of the best lagers are made comes from Callan.

For a number of years the Group have been assembling barley for export and the majority goes to Germany for brewing.

Most of the barley is grown in Co. Kilkenny but some also comes from South Tipperary. Brett's Farms grow a considerable acreage of the barley which is processed by the Company before it is exported.

"This is one of the value-added farm products which is independent of the intervention system" says Group

Managing Director James J. Brett.

"We see it as having great potential for the future, particularly as feeding barley is coming under pressure from the Common Agricultural Policy."

"We hope to expand this part of our business and provide a guaranteed outlet to local farmers for quality malting barley".

500 pigs produced weekly

THE Brett Group became involved in the meat industry in April, 1988, when they purchased the Three-castles Pig Farm.

Since then, the complex, now renamed Sunken Piggery, has been modernised and extended and transformed into an ultra-modern and highly efficient production unit.

The self-contained pig

farm is supplied exclusively with rations from the Brett Mill in Callan.

The complex consists of a 1200 sow unit with a full capacity for followers and fatteners.

The normal pig population is around 12,000 and over 500 finished pigs are produced every week.

The farm, which employs 15 people, is managed by

James E. Brett, an engineering graduate of Galway University.

Son of one of the Group's founding brothers James Brett Snr., James Jnr. joined the company in 1976.

With the piggery now operating efficiently and smoothly, Brett's say they have plans to increase their involvement in the meat business.

A base in Munster

AS PART of their policy to extend the area of their operations, Brett Brothers established a base in Tipperary last March when they purchased Brennan's Supply Stores in Ardinnan.

The Company, which was owned by the late John Brennan, had been trading extensively in feedstuffs, fertilisers, hardware and

general farm inputs in the Tipperary area for many years.

Now, it gives Brett Brothers a new base in the county and provides ready access to the East Cork area down to Mitchelstown, and into Waterford as far as Ballymacarberry.

"The Company have plans to develop this new Munster base with a view to

extending the market for Brett Animal Feeds right into Co. Cork", says Managing Director James J. Brett.

The Ardinnan branch is managed by Sean Barrett who previously worked with Barlo Machinery and before that with Mitchelstown Co-Op.

The receptionist at the branch is Kathleen Johnson.

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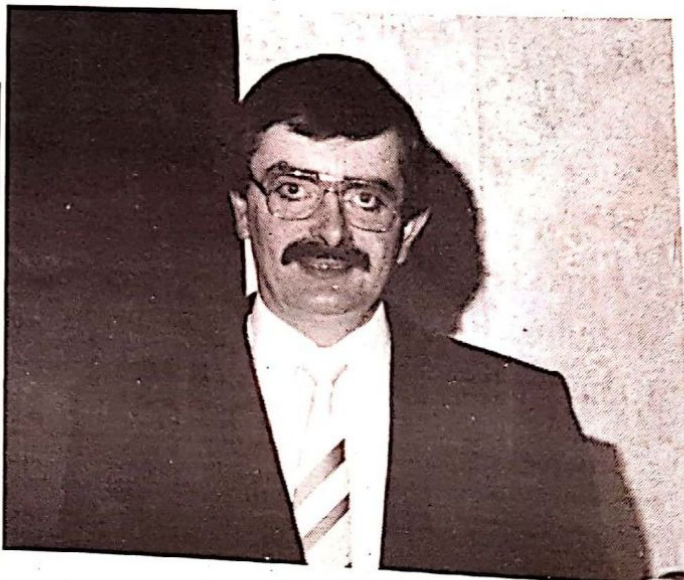
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The Board of Directors of Brett Bros. Ltd.



James Brett Snr., James E. Brett, Jack Brett (Chairman), Patrick Brett, James J. Brett, Michael Brett.

Photo: Tom Brett

Brett
Brothers Limited

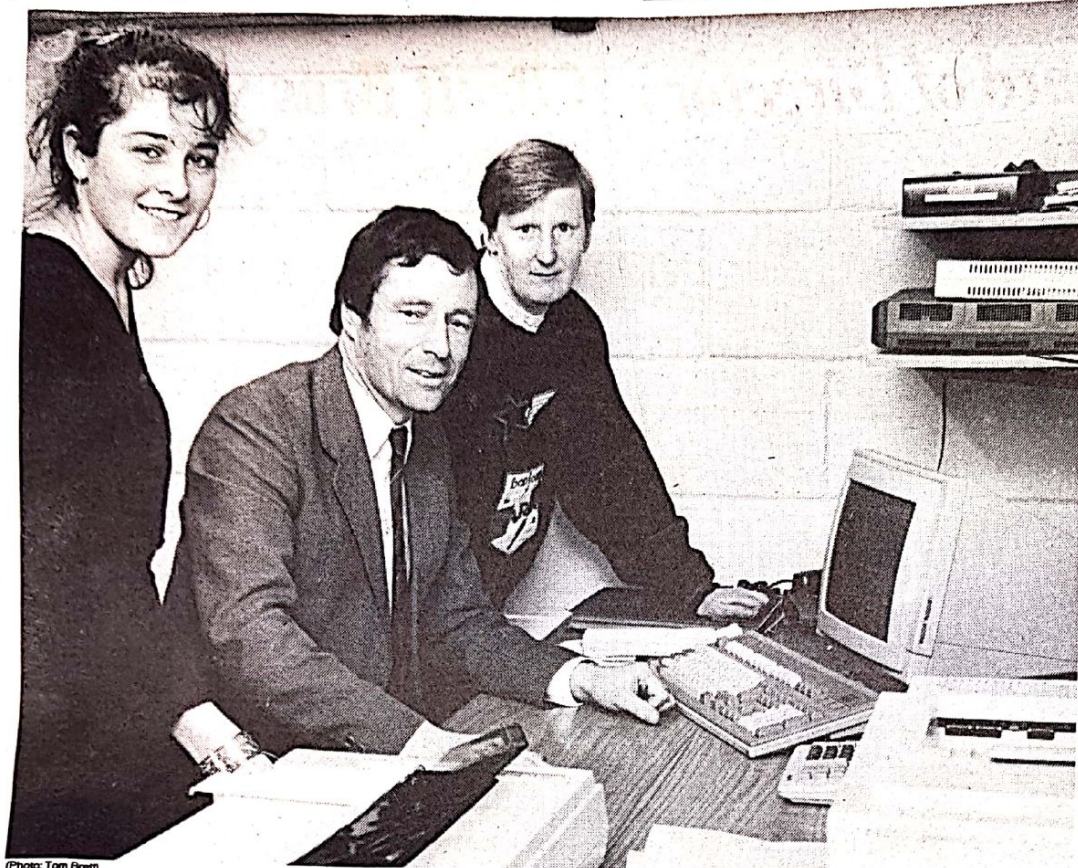


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(Photo: Tom Brett)

Accounts fully computerised

THE ENTIRE accounts system for the Brett Group is now fully computerised and is under the management of Michael Walshe from Kilkenny City.

Last year, a new accounting computer was installed and this gives on-line communication between the various offices.

Michael Walshe previously worked with Fit Remoulds in Kilkenny until their closure a few years ago.

He is heavily involved with basketball and is a junior soccer referee.

In the computer department at Bretts, he is assisted by Eleanor Quirke from Mullinahone and Suzanne Duggan from Tullahought, whose father John is a truck driver with the Company.

In the accounts department of Brett Brothers Ltd. in Callan (from left) Suzanne Duggan, Michael Walshe (Accounts Manager) and Eleanor Quirke.

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Another load of Brett Brothers animal feeds on the Weigh Bridge in Callan.

No delays with deliveries

ONE OF Brett Brothers' main lines is the retailing of fertilisers in bags and in bulk.

Says Managing Director James J. Brett: "We market a wide range of brands and the emphasis at all times is on value to the farmer."

To improve the efficiency of distribution, the Company this week added a new

20-ton flat truck to the delivery fleet.

The eight-wheeler has a Moffet piggy-back fork lift sitting on the back which enables the driver to unload

full pallets and stack them for the farmer.

Distribution at the Ard-finnan branch is by a new 10-ton truck with a Hiab crane.

"These new trucks have widened our delivery options," says Mr. Brett. "Our objective is to ensure a quick response to delivery. Nowadays, farmers

don't want any delays with deliveries. And our aim is to deliver to the farm quickly, efficiently and with the least cost."

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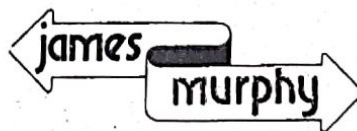
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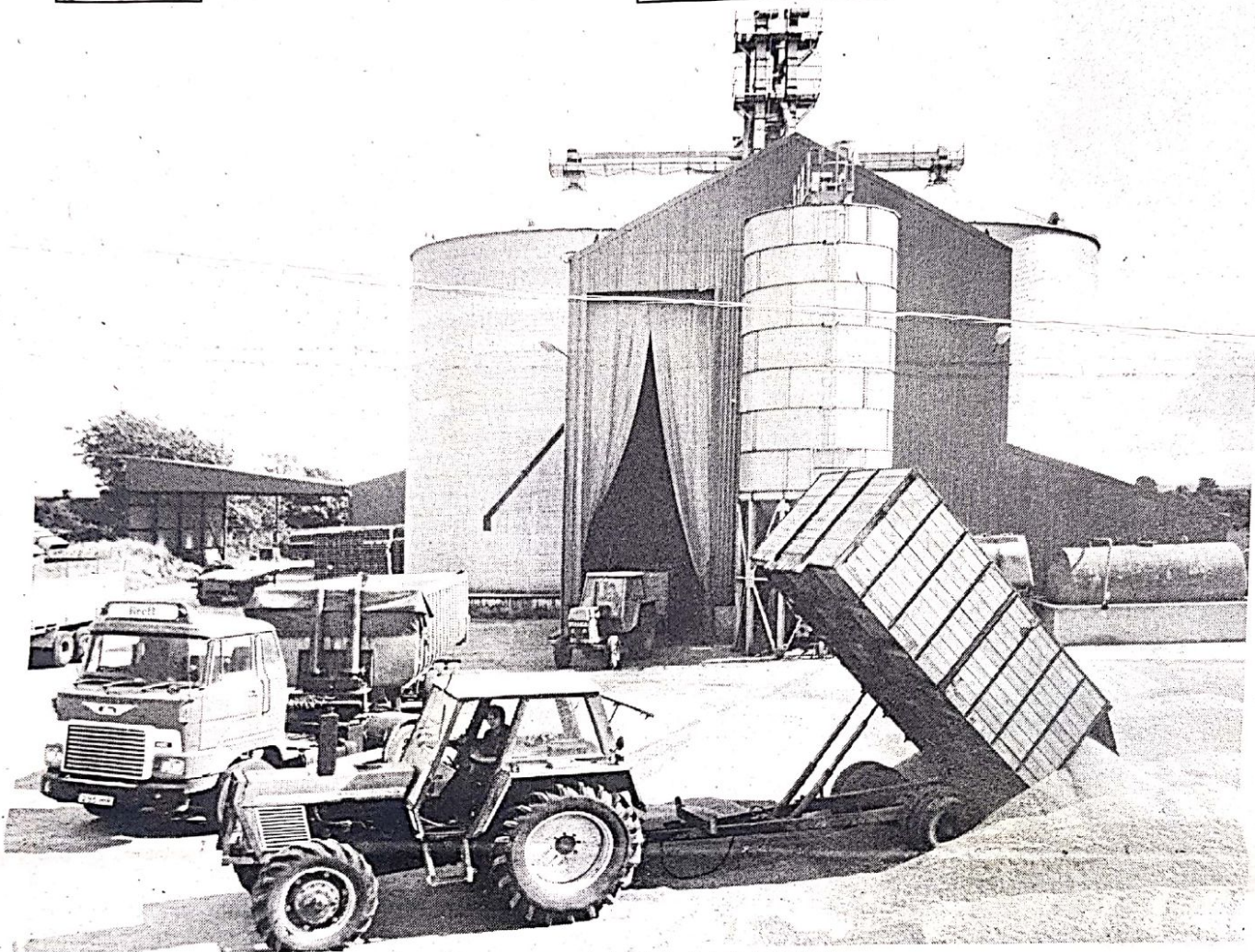
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Busy scene at Brett Brothers, Callan, during the harvest intake.

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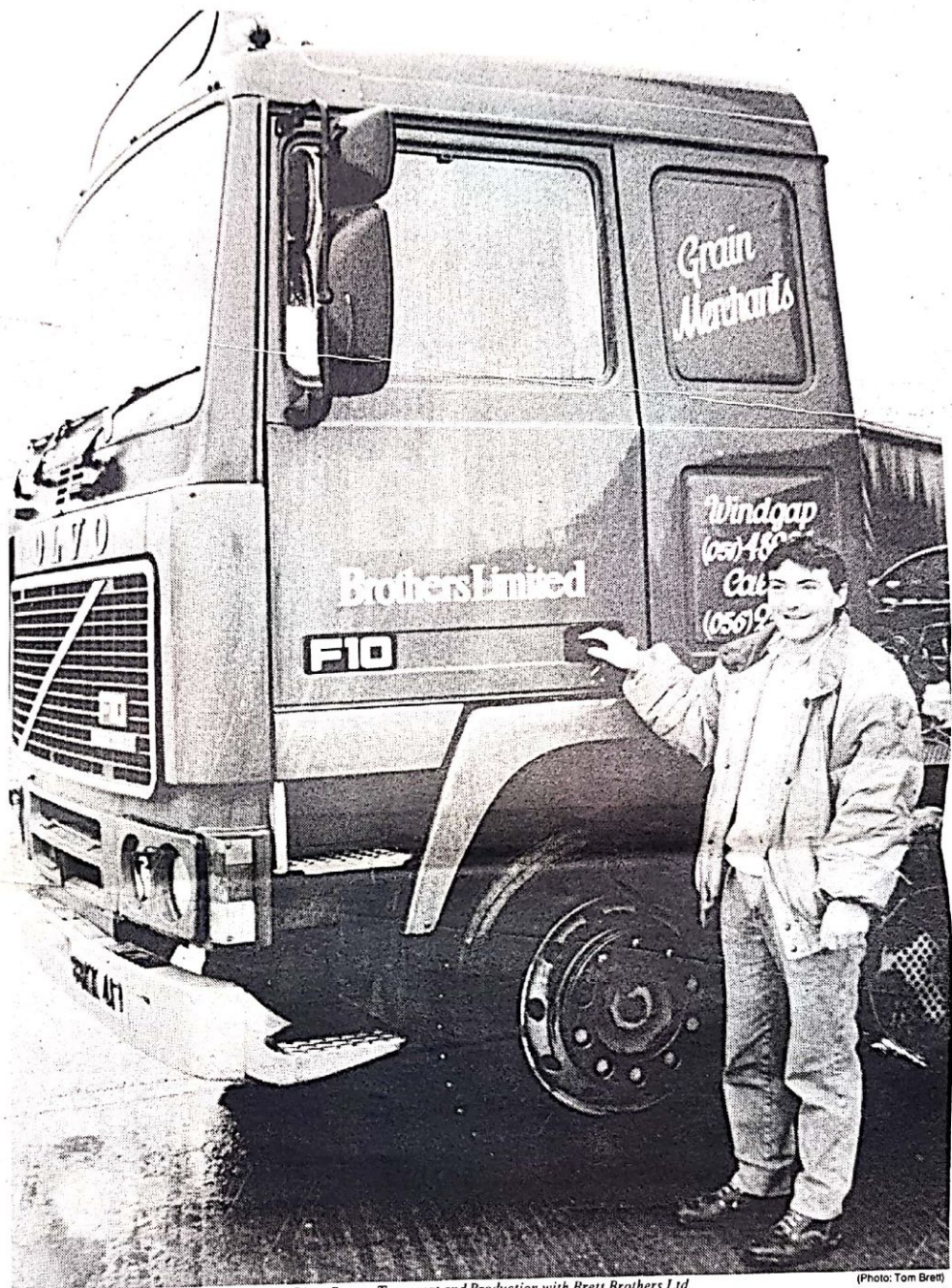
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Liam Brett - Transport and Production with Brett Brothers Ltd.

(Photo: Tom Brett)

Liam oversees seed section

THE Seed Division of the group, which is based in Windgap, is the responsibility of Liam Brett, Kilmoganny, who is a son of Paddy Brett, one of the original directors.

Liam also has a role in running the production of the Feed Mill and in managing the transport fleet.

The Company now has 13

trucks which are used to distribute animal feeds, fertilisers, seeds and chemicals to farmer customers throughout the South East and an ever expanding area of the South

In keeping with the family tradition, Liam is very active in sport. He is a playing member and officer of the Dunnamaggin Hurling Club and he plays soccer with Glen Rovers.

A reputation for high quality seeds

OVER THE years, Brett Brothers have earned a solid reputation for high quality cereal and grass seeds.

The Group have a modern seed assembly plant at Windgap, under the management of Liam Brett.

Cereal seeds are sold under the Brett brand names and they are now clearly established throughout the tillage growing areas of the South East.

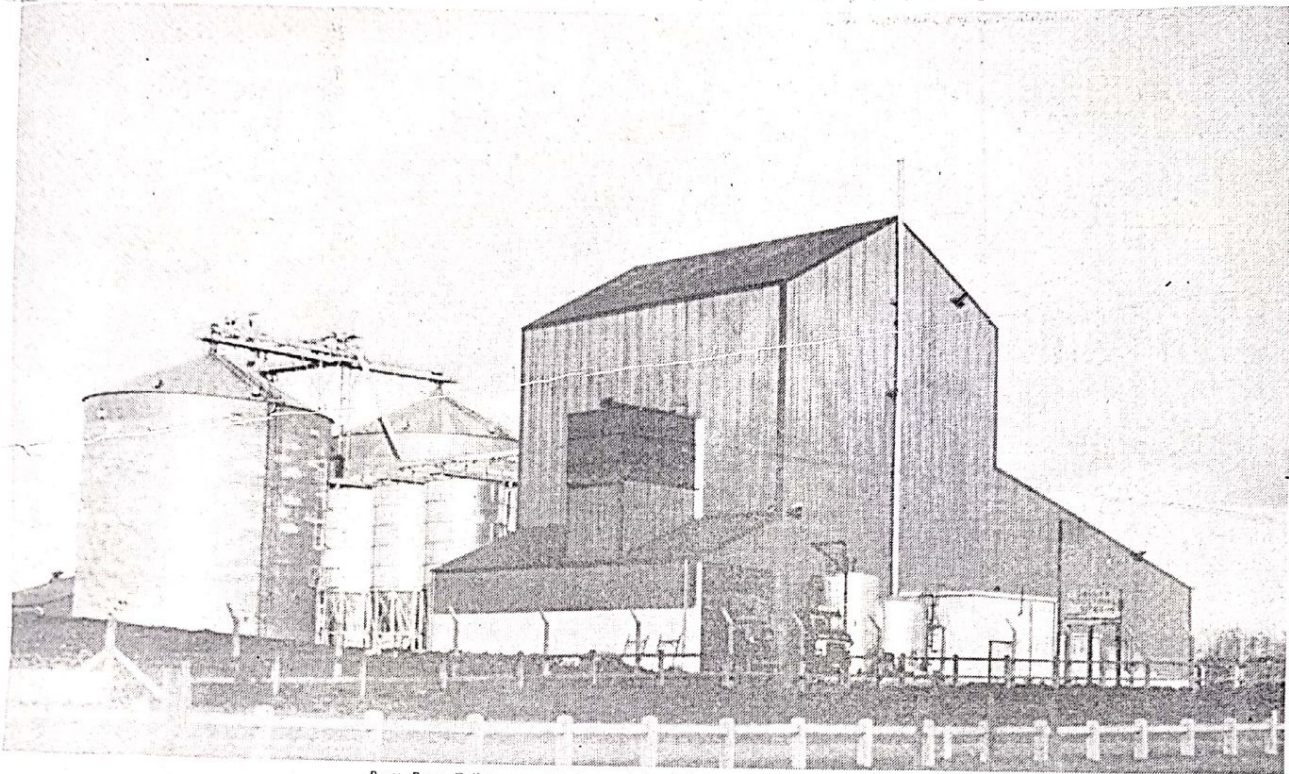
Some of the seed is grown on Brett-owned farms and the rest is grown on contract by farmer customers.

The Windgap plant was extended in 1990 and four new seed silos were added which allows for a wider choice of varieties.

Both Winter and Spring seeds are assembled and the Company does a complete range of barley, wheat and oats varieties.

While most of the seed is retailed to farmers, some of the seed output is wholesaled to other merchants in Leinster and Munster.

Some years, seed is also exported, mainly to Britain. Brett grass seeds are sold under the Master Grow and Master Cut brand names.



Brett Bros., Callan - complete plants - design and construction by Turner-Grain (Irl.) Ltd.

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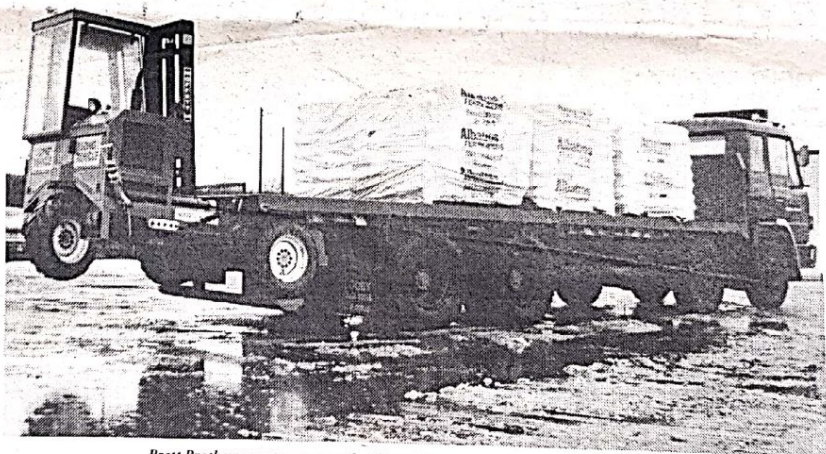
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Seán joins the team

THE most recent member of the Brett family to join the management team is Seán Brett of Mullinahone, a son of Michael Brett, one of the original directors.

Seán is in charge of sales and he also has direct responsibility for the Ard-finnan branch.

As well as handling telephone sales, he also deals with all retail sales.

A keen sportsman, Seán is a senior county footballer with Tipperary and he was also a member of the Tipperary junior hurling team defeated by Kilkenny in last year's All-Ireland final.



Seán Brett, Retail Sales, with Brett Brothers Ltd.

Chemicals - backed by good advice

A COMPLETE range of crop protection chemicals, including all the leading brands, is marketed by the Brett Group.

And this is backed by a professional crop advisory service under the direction of Managing Director James J. Brett who is a graduate in agricultural science from UCD.

As well, Paul Brady, a retired Teagasc cereals spe-

cialist from Carlow, was employed in this division during the growing season last year.

Seán Brett also plays a role in the crop advisory division and the Company can also call in the experienced knowledge of Michael Brett who has been managing the cereal growing side of Bretts Farms for years.

Congratulations to Brett Bros. on their 50th Anniversary - from:

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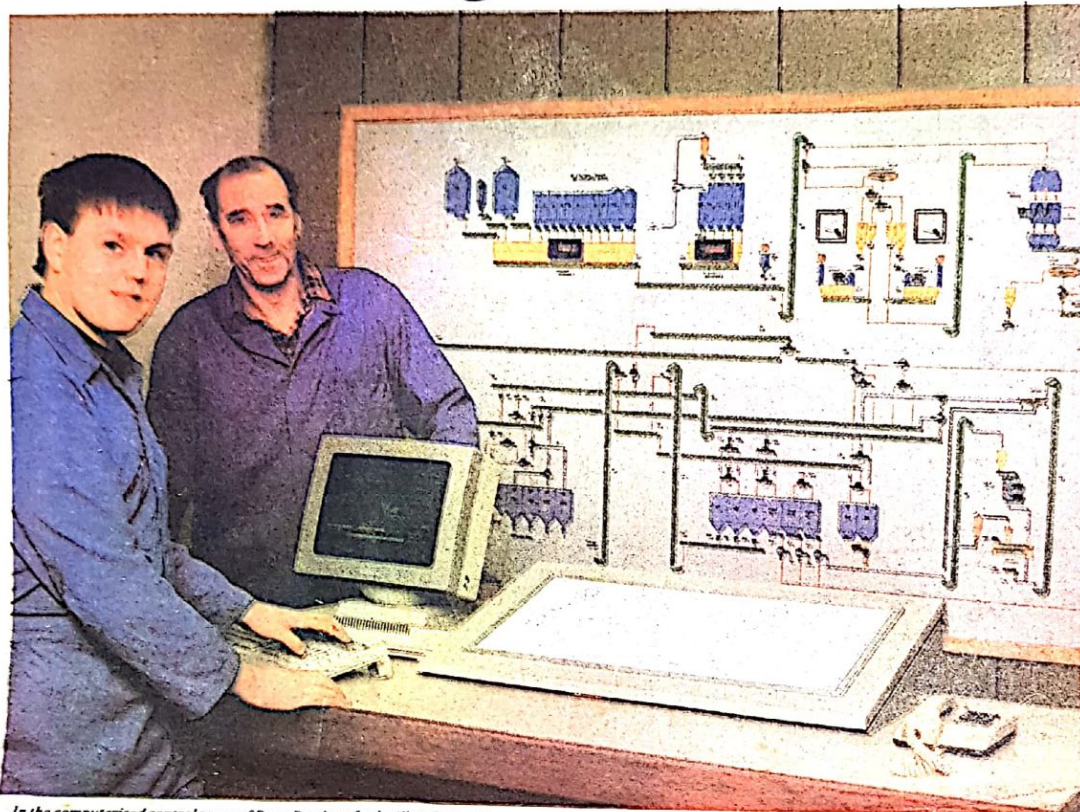
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Colm is longest serving staff member



In the computerised control room of Brett Brothers feed mill at Callan, Eamonn Murray, control panel operator (left) and Colm Ryan, Production Manager, who has completed thirty-two years with the company.

LONGEST serving staff member with the Group is Colm Ryan of Rogerstown, Kilmaganny, who is Production Manager of the Callan Mill.

He joined the company as a general worker 32 years ago and subsequently he became a truck driver. He was appointed Production Manager when the new Mill opened in 1980.

Colm has responsibility for all production in the computerised Feed Mill which is currently working 24 hours a day. The peak production period of the year is from January to March when the plant is in operation around the clock.

Colm oversees the manufacturing of up to 150 products ranging from cattle rations, through dairy, pig and poultry rations, to sheep rations.

The plant is fully computerised from raw material intake to the finished product being deposited in holding bins.

Eighty-five per cent of through-put is sold in bulk form with the balance being marketed in 25 kgs paper bags.

This week, a new packing plant is being installed to increase the output and efficiency of the packing section.

As a young man, Colm Ryan was a well-known hurler with Dunnamaggin and he was also on the county intermediate team.

He is married to Ciss and has one son and two daughters.

Photo: Tom Brett

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