

KITTY COLCHESTER, SECOND NATURE OILS URLINGFORD, CO KILKENNY

Kitty Colchester was volunteering abroad at refugee camps before deciding that her true passion grew on her family farm in Co Kilkenny in the form of organically grown, cold-pressed oil. Now, Colchester's Drumeen Farm (originally one of the first certified organic farms in Ireland) produces Second Nature organic oils, selling throughout Ireland and internationally.

"It was 2007 before we pressed any oil," Kitty says. "My mother had bought an oil press for personal use as our farm was always as self-subsistent as possible. My father had been growing some rapeseed. I returned home for good in 2008 and started Second Nature then."

It was the height of the recession in 2008 and, remarkably, Kitty was able to start and grow her business without ever going into debt.

"At first, I was just selling a few litres a week at farmer's markets," she remarks. "Now, we're selling up to 90,000 litres of organic rapeseed and flax oil per year."

She credits the fact that, during the recession, local



Kitty Colchester
Catherine Black

individuals and food suppliers became more interested in supporting local food producers. In effect, the recession helped the business blossom.

Rapeseed and flax oil are among the healthiest and most sustainable oil crops you can grow in Ireland. As well as creating a small carbon footprint by producing the oil on-site, Kitty does not let her oil sit in sedimentation vats (as is the norm with most types of oil) – she bottles all of her oils fresh, including the sediment, which adds to the nutritional value of her oils.

Oilseed rape is a multi-purpose crop, so even though just the seeds are used for oil, the rest of the plant goes into making feed for farm animals. Flax is one of the healthiest sources of omega-3 fat. Kitty insists that it often doesn't matter what kind of oil you're eating – it's how the seeds are grown and how it's prepared that makes all the difference.

"I love the organic olive oils I find down in Spain," she remarks. "In my opinion, a well-made, organic oil is always the better option – obviously, buying a local oil is a good thing, too." **CL**

You can find Second Nature rapeseed oil in stockists throughout the country, including select SuperValus and Avoca. See <http://www.secondnatureoils.com>