



Type: Environmentally friendly/ sustainable
Country: Ireland

Why it is a good practice?
 The essence of this business is health and sustainability in an eco-friendly ethical way. Their tag line is “food to make you feel good” and the owners Virginia and Donal don’t just prepare an array of health –giving foods at their market stalls throughout Cork. Not just that, but they strive to encourage an appreciation for all our natural resources, based on the philosophy of permaculture. The business attempts to have zero waste: by a great use of by-products and reusable bottles and compostible packaging. My goodness is a part of the community and the community is a part of them.

About
 My Goodness is run by husband-and-wife team, Virginia and Donal O’Hara and is an ethical health focused business. They specialise in vegan, raw, sugar-free, gluten-free, and fermented food products. They are also the first company in Ireland producing Kefir and Kombucha from sustainably obtained water. Virginia moved to Ireland from Texas to study permaculture at Kinsale College, at the time that was the only place in the world to offer that course. She feels that the study and the patterns of nature and permaculture design, encourages people to create the perfect sustainable design in their lives and businesses. The My Goodness story is a story of how to overcome adversity in business. They started, as a vegan pop-up café in Cork city but after 6 months of trading there was a fire in the kitchen, so the business closed. The following week the couple had a stall at a local farmer’s market and had their takings stolen. This would have been more than enough for some people to quit, but not Virginia and Donal, they decided to rethink things. They are striving to create a sustainable business model based on mutual respect between the land, the farmers who work it, the people in the kitchen preparing the food, and their customers. They now have a 1,000 square foot production space, and half of that is dedicated to creating rainwater fermented Kefir and Kombucha. The My Goodness Kefirs are also now available on tap at a local Bar in Crosshaven. They were the first customers to have the drinks on tap, swapping between Minted Lime or Hibiscus & Citrus.

Healthy
 My Goodness, now pride themselves in transforming Ireland’s least favourite resources (rain and cabbages) into delicious, fermented goods. They create food, which is good for the gut, good for the brain, and good for the environment.

Sustainable
 The philosophy behind permaculture is that people adopt arrangements observed in flourishing ecosystems and use them in their own land management. It includes, regenerative agriculture, use and value of renewables, produce no waste and re-wilding. When Virginia moved to Ireland, she found it hard to deal with the weather, especially the amount of rain, so she decided to turn it into a positive. She started to see rain as a resource, arguably one of our most valuable, and turn it into something that is useful and consequently to appreciate it. That is where the idea of harvesting rainwater and fermenting it to make Kombucha and Kefir came into being. *“It’s a bit of a standing joke amongst my friends at this stage: ‘Oh, there’s Virginia, the Texan selling rainwater to the Irish!’ ‘We’re far from being perfect but keep trying our best every year to waste less. We use as much of a vegetable as we possibly can through dehydrating, preserving, fermentation, putting it back into the stock for the broth that we make. We make sauerkraut crackers from the brine from our sauerkraut and the tops and tails and skins of our vegetables and flax seeds.’”*

Ethical
 My Goodness use local produce whenever available, supporting the local, chemical-free and organic farmers. They work at four different farmers’ markets every week to get the best of Cork’s produce and they have started to work with a group called CUSP, spreading their zero waste idea to Mahon Point Farmers’ Market. We collect rainwater and ferment it to make raw, living fermented drinks, kombucha and kefir, and we sell that in reusable bottles — as a food company, they don’t produce anything that is single use, everything is reusable or compostable.

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