

# Natural high

The Highlands is famed for natural products and you can't get more a more natural product than pure spring water from the Highlands.

Family-run business, Fionnar Springs draws its product from a spring at Achmonie Farm which overlooks world-famous Loch Ness and picturesque Drumnadrochit.

Established in 1986, the company supplies water coolers and natural spring water to businesses throughout the Highlands.

Managing director, Alex Farquhar, told *Executive* that the idea for the business came about as a result of a family joke.

"My middle daughter, Gail, had come home from university on a bit of a health kick and we suggested she try the water from our farm spring to see if it made any difference.

"She took a bottle of water back to university with her to have it tested and it tested very pure. It was just at the time when people had started drinking bottled mineral water and we thought we might be able to make a business out of our spring!"



Twenty-three years later the enterprise – and the spring – are still going strong!

A bottling plant was installed and tanks holding 12,500 gallons of water (with the spring water continually running through the tanks) put in place.

Originally the company supplied small bottles, both plastic and glass, but against the opposition of national bottlers this did not prove to be profitable.

It was then decided to concentrate entirely on the water cooler side of the business. That way the company could compete with any other supplier and even better since all other suppliers have to truck their water from the south of Scotland.

As well as supplying local businesses, Fionnar has also provided fresh water to the construction team building the hydro electric scheme at Glendoe, near Fort Augustus which was officially opened earlier this year.

However, the core of the business is catering for organisations throughout the Highlands including Skye, Oban, Kingussie and Elgin, Wick, Thurso and a new website has recently been set up, [www.fionnar.co.uk](http://www.fionnar.co.uk)

Fionnar also sponsors many local charities and good causes including Maggie's Bike and Hike, RNLI Loch

Ness, Inverness Caledonian Thistle, Ross County, Highland Hospice, Highland Schools Gymnastics Association and the Red Cross to name just a few.

Although a small, family business with a staff of five, including sales manager Garry MacLeod (pictured), it is this niche-status that has helped make the business so successful.

"We can provide a quick service to our customers because we are right on the spot," said Alex.

"We're also a local company and we provide local employment that is all year round. Our customers know that they can phone us anytime they are stuck and there will always be one of us at the end of the phone.

"Most businesses acknowledge that putting in water coolers benefits their employees. People, especially young ones, are more health conscious today and our water is not treated with any chemicals – it is pure spring water."



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