



## **AIB invites business customers to hold market at Bankcentre, Ballsbridge**

**16th August 2012**

On one of the busiest days of the year in Ballsbridge - ladies day at the Discover Ireland Dublin Horse Show, AIB is today organising an outdoor customer market at its headquarters for its business customers.

In total 29 business customers are taking part in the market, showcasing a selection of some of the best of Irish food, craft and fashion from around the country.

There is a strong focus on Irish food and craft businesses at the market with a number of clothing and accessories business also participating. Not for profit organisation, 'Grow It Yourself' is also present at the event to promote and advise members of the public on growing their own food.

One of the participants at today's market, Thomas Hughes of Donegal Rapeseed Oil Company, said: "We participated in a number of AIB events in the past and have been delighted with the response. This event provides us with the opportunity to build our profile nationally and network with other businesses. We are a small locally owned business from Raphoe and our oilseed crops are grown by specially selected, individual, small farm holdings throughout Donegal, Derry and Tyrone."

John Irwin, Head of Business Strategy & Propositions at AIB said: "AIB is delighted to host this market to allow our customers exploit new business opportunities on a day that thousands of visitors from Ireland and all over the world will be in Ballsbridge. Enabling small business is vital to Ireland's economic recovery and we are determined to support viable businesses in any way we can. We strongly encourage people to come and talk to us about new lending and refinancing."

The customer market is just one initiative under AIB's 'Big Drive for Small Business' which was launched in March to increase engagement with business customers throughout Ireland. Steps have been taken to stimulate new lending with the launch of over €400m in dedicated funds through its Job Creation Loan Fund, Agri Investment Programme and AIB's Northern Ireland SME Fund. In addition, AIB assisted over 50 SME customers in creating advertising campaigns they wouldn't have been able to create alone and has organised more than 100 business management seminars with 4,400 customers participating to date. A further 2,500 SME customers have been identified for business coaching programmes.

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***Photos have been sent to picture desks by Fennell Photography.***

**For further information, please contact:**

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