

# The couple who quit London to set a herb farm in West Wales

When Toni and Alex Borella turned their backs on London to escape to rural Pembrokeshire they realised their dream of establishing a micro greens and herbs farming business.

Since setting up Green Up Farm in 2021, supported by a Start Up Loans programme of the British Business Bank, their Llandysul-based venture has flourished.

Ms Borella, 49, said: "I grew up in Sully, South Wales, so have spent lots of time in Pembrokeshire and know just how beautiful it is and Alex, who is a chef and originally from northern Italy, is also very aware of the beauty of the natural world. So, in 2019, we made the big move from London to North Pembrokeshire."

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She said she was unhappy working remotely in sales and tech marketing positions and she and Alex were keen to work together. When they were both furloughed, they decided to launch their venture.

She added: "We have agriculture in abundance on our doorstep here and throughout furlough, would enjoy the beautiful area we live in, which was secluded. It was really inspiring and so initially we started with growing five crops under lights in our spare, small double bedroom.

"We thought about investing in a small holding and then about farming monocultured micro greens indoors to address the biodiversity crisis."

An £8,000 Start Up Loan enabled them to invest in environmentally sound and hygienic packaging trays for their microgreens – the colourful and more flavoursome first shoots of seeds – which they grow under low-wattage LED lights at their 100 square metre commercial unit at Food Centre Wales in Horeb, Llandysul.

Today Green Up Farm grows plant varieties including sunflower, rose radish and pea shoot tendrils and micro herbs, which take an extra week or so to grow, and include rainbow swiss chard and carrot tops.

Mr Borella continues as a part time baker at Cardigan-based Crwst, which Green Up Farm supplies, alongside most other mid to high end eateries across Pembrokeshire.