

TIP TOP FISH

A fishmonger has received national recognition for the impeccable condition of his shop. Tim Wooldridge from Llangollen, of 'Tim's for Fish' has been given the Welsh Food Hygiene Gold Award following a surprise inspection by Wrexham Council. The accolade is the highest seal of approval by the Food Standards Agency and Tim's Eagles Meadow shop in Wrexham passed with "flying colours".

"We only moved to Eagles Meadow in January so it's great to have the gold award already," said a delighted Tim.

"Our customers know how careful and serious we are about hygiene and it's wonderful to get some official recognition for it."

He moved to his new shop on St George's Crescent in Eagles Meadow after running a stall in Wrexham's Butcher's Market for nearly two decades. Alongside the renowned displays of fresh fish the shop now also sells game and a growing number of local products from the Dee Valley.

"It's great to have brought such a traditional business as fishmongering to Eagles Meadow," he said.

"Along with many of my regular customers, who have been coming to me for years, I'm getting plenty of new, younger shoppers through the doors."

Tim puts this increase in business down to the shop's new location and people's growing concern for the quality of their food.

"I've found my customers are taking a real interest in the origin of our products, how fresh it is and how it is prepared – which is why awards for our professionalism and hygiene are so important," he explained.

"I also know where all my fish and game are from, as I've bought or sourced them myself, which people find very reassuring.

"For instance, the majority of our fish come

from responsible fishing projects and a lot of our game is shot just a few miles away. "However, my new customers are also getting pretty adventurous in what they eat and so I've had requests for some very unusual meats," he said.

"Traditional game, such as rabbits and pheasants, are still popular but we now stock zebra, kudu, springbok, ostrich and all sorts.

"The South African kudu burgers were especially popular around the World Cup," laughed Tim.

The father-of-three suspects the popularity of television cooking programmes has led to the interest in more exotic foods.

"People want to try out the recipes they see on the TV and celebrity chefs are always encouraging families to eat different things," he explained.

"Our customers then come to us and ask for advice on preparing and cooking their fish or meat and we always help them out.

"If there's something that they particularly need we'll always try and find it if we can.

"At the moment I'm trying to get hold of some goat, after one of our customers saw a recipe using it for Jamaican curry - I wouldn't mind trying that myself actually."



Tim and Julie Wooldridge at their award-winning state of the art fishmongers.

For more information on Tim's for Fish visit their website at www.timsforfish.co.uk.

Alistair Syme