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SPECIALITY FOOD

NEWS, COMMENT AND BUYING IDEAS FOR FINE FOOD RETAILERS

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EDITORS LETTER

New Times



Welcome to your new-look Speciality Food. If the design is new, our intentions are not. Ever since the magazine's inception over a decade ago, the aim of its producers has been to provide a source of support, information and interest for Britain's burgeoning army of independent food retailers. Over the years, we have finely focused our attention on issues that affect these retailers and, in order to reassure you that you are not alone in facing various obstacles and problems, have solicited the experience and useful anecdotes of these who have been there and lived to tell the tale. Increasingly, we have sought comment from these who matter in the artisan food industry, the producers, distributors, premium food buyers, you the retailers and policy makers at government level. If there is an issue looming which threatens to affect your business, Speciality Food will be there to bring you the information you need, when you need it.

Farm shops have seen a huge renaissance in the last ten years or so. Originally a stall selling surplus produce at the farm gate, the farm shop has evolved into a very different beast. Not always directly connected with a farm, now, these specialists in fresh and local food may look more like high-end food halls than the cottage businesses they evolved from. You'll find the whole story on p24 of this issue, which also previews three important food shows on this year's calendar, IFE and The Natural Food Show at London's Excel and Farm Shop & Deli at the NEC. Also featured are tips for Easter selling, a look at the usefulness of curry kits and Asian cooking sauces and pertinent comment from our top-flight columnists.

> "Conversations with fellow owners of farm shops or delis can be invaluable opportunities to find solutions to shared problems."

Ross Gilfillan

ross@aceville.com

NEWS IN BRIEF

CHEESE CELLAR BECOMES HARVEY & BROCKLESS

Cheese Cellar, a fine food distributor since 1970, has adopted the name Harvey & Brockless in order to better represent the diversity of the business – which incorporates olives, charcuterie, chocolate, patisserie and more.

The Cheese Cellar name will still apply to the cheese and dairy brand, while Dell'ami, the distributor's Mediterranean deli products arm, and Huge Sauce, the food-manufacturing arm, will continue to run.

Nick Martin, managing director said, "As a business, our focus is on being the preferred supplier of speciality foods in the UK. We feel that the name Harvey & Brockless reflects our heritage in the speciality food market and the fact that we are more than just a cheese and dairy supplier. The category brands will reassure our customers of the depth of knowledge that we have across all of these sectors."

CRESS CO EXPANDS INTO LONDON AND SOUTH EAST

Established in Scotland a decade ago and having supplied independents in the North of England for three years, The Cress Co is now delivering in the East of England and in the East Midlands.

New customers will benefit from low minimum weekly orders delivered in dual temperature vans.

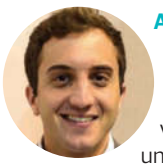
Joe Wall, managing director, said, "It's going to be a challenging year but I have full confidence that our team can deliver."





What does the future hold for our sector?

Boasting a value of £103 billion last year and employing one in eight people, Britain's food and drink sector is booming. In 2013, 30,000 new food businesses emerged, helping to bring 16,000 new food products to the market each year – in doing so raising the profile of independent producers and in turn, the retailers who sell their products. Defra has recently brought 50 'Food Stars' into the spotlight; a group of producers which offer us a taste of things to come and highlight the quality of British food, many of which are independent, artisan, and stocked by SF readers. What's the future of the industry, and what is the government doing to ensure that our sector continues to grow?



Adam Sopher, Joe & Seph's

Being named a Food Star was very flattering and unexpected. It puts us on the national stage a bit more; there were all sorts of businesses there, from start-ups to those much bigger than us, and it was great that the event promoted the producers rather than just the brands.

The big takeaway for us is that the government and consumers are now valuing independent producers quite highly – they're actively trying to support and promote successful food businesses, in order to inspire newer ones to make something of themselves.

There's a lot of government support to come in the future, and the event gave us a platform to have some very valuable conversations. Speakers like the founders of Ella's Kitchen really inspired us, and have made us reflect on our business.

The government can help by guiding businesses through the first few months. From watching *Dragon's Den* people seem to think that people need hundreds of thousands of pounds to start a business and that you have to supply supermarkets straight away – actually, you can grow at a pace you're comfortable with and slowly but surely build a sustainable business. Case studies – which don't just include the *Dragon's Den*-style companies – would be useful, so new companies can learn that you don't need a big investor or TV show to get started.



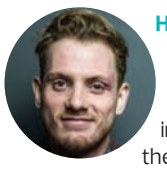
Elizabeth Truss, environment secretary

We are a nation of firsts; we invented self-raising flour and introduced the first modern chocolate bar. As a country we've always been a place where sparky entrepreneurs come up with great innovation in food and drink, people with the ambition to grow and take on the world.

Now is the time to celebrate that success which is helping grow our economy – that is why we've created Food Stars to recognise the bright innovators of today and support them to become the major players of tomorrow.

From chutney made from fruit and veg that would otherwise have been thrown away, to chorizo made from British pigs in Yorkshire, our 50 Food Stars truly represent the best of British and demonstrate the creativity and determination in which this country takes pride.

Our Food Stars show if you want to see a vision for Britain's bright economic future, look no further than the UK's food and drink industry.



Hugh Duffie, Sandows

It's really exciting for us to be included amongst the 50 Food Stars, especially after launching only 10 months ago. I think we might have been the youngest there, too – nonetheless, it helps to reinforce that our approach so far, targeting the premium end of the market, has been worthwhile. It's nice to think that we're contributing to Britain's thriving start-up food and drink sector.

Consumers and the government have never been more aware of the value of small and independent producers. As we heard at the Food Stars event, the smaller companies with plenty of potential for growth are the ones providing all the new jobs. That means they are a real priority for the Government, but also now that we've all settled into having the Internet and the world has become a smaller place, British people know about and are into more new and interesting flavours and products than ever before. That cultural shift has certainly lowered the barriers for small, independent producers, particularly of products in new, unchartered categories like ours.

Schemes like the SEIS Investment Scheme are great and really make a difference, but cash flow can kill so many great small businesses, and it's far from ideal to have to release so much equity so early on in order to be successful. Support like reliefs on tax, NI, business rates, and perhaps even subsidies on renting certain types of unused property could be some great ways to make it more appealing than ever to start a food and drink brand in the UK. Apparently there are 16,000 new FNB products launched each year in the UK, but how many of those achieve the incredible success of brands like Innocent or Ella's Kitchen? It's a great time for this industry but could be even better!

> "It's time to recognize the bright innovators of today"

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OPEN FOR BUSINESS

Deli, farm shop and food hall openings and expansions across the country

NEW DELI FOR CHIPPING CAMPDEN

A fine food retailer has opened in the Gloucestershire town of Chipping Camden, promising to sell the best local, British and international foods at ''sensible prices''.

Toke's will sell European and New World wines, British and European cheeses and meats, local pies, sausages, ready meals, bread, chutneys, jams and marmalade, Cotswold chocolates and sweets, local smoked fish, a large range of olives and olive oils, various store cupboard essentials, local ales, bitters, lagers, ciders and spirits.

The shop will also host musical events and tastings in line with its Fine & Rare collection of wines.

William Toke, owner said, ''The reason for opening Tokes was that there was a long history of my family trading from Chipping Campden High Street both in food and drink, and I wanted to combine the two and be the fifth generation to trade from the High Street. The focus is to provide a shop selling good quality food and drink, with a laid back and friendly atmosphere.''





KENT RESTAURANT OPENS DELI

A restaurant has opened a deli and café in Birchington, Kent, selling the home cured produce for which it is known.

The new site, opened by the owner and head chef of the Minnis Bar & Restaurant, will sell quality Kentish artisan foods including cheese, pasta, sauces, speciality oils, rice, vinegars, syrups and herbs as well as its own popular salted, smoked, brined and pickled meats.

The café will offer breakfasts, lunches, snacks and coffee, plus ready meals for customers to take away. The new business will also host monthly supper clubs.

Jason Freedman, owner-chef said, ''The Minnis Restaurant is known for curing, pickling, and smoking our own meat, fish and veg using techniques brought to these shores by the Romans, who settled nearby 2,000 years ago – and customers have been pressing us to make the produce available to take home – so a deli was the obvious answer and it's already has proving exceedingly popular.''

> ''The focus is to provide a shop selling good quality food and drink, with a laid back and friendly atmosphere''

COTTAGE DELIGHT OPENS COUNTRY CAFÉ

In December, gourmet food specialist Cottage Delight opened a country café in Leek, Staffordshire to showcase the company's extensive product range and to celebrate the region's finest local produce.

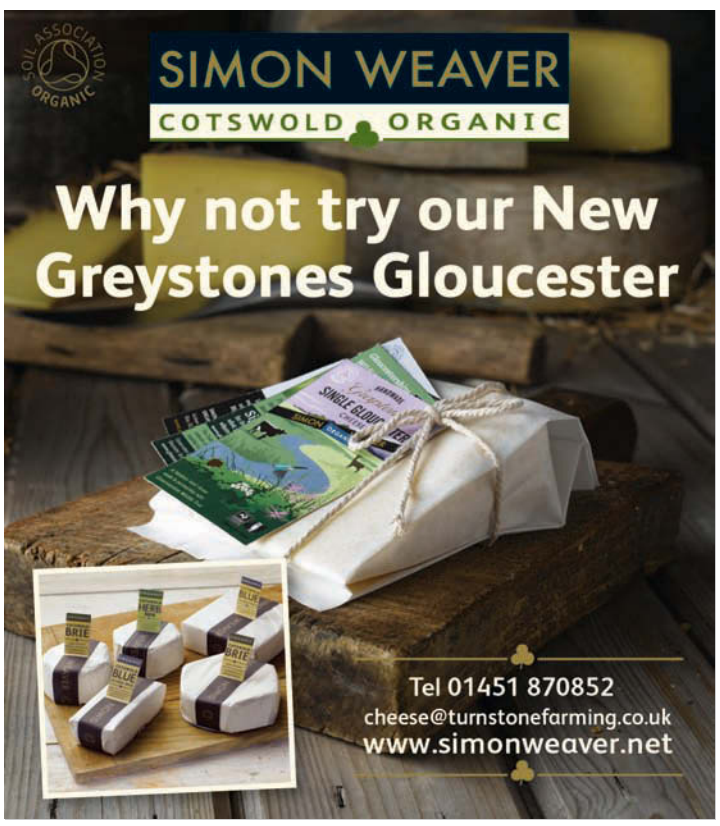
The Cottage Kitchen menu features many dishes that are created with Cottage Delight products, and the café boasts its own shop, selling more than 600 lines of produce, including preserves, pickles, chutneys, cooking sauces, cakes and biscuits, pasta, fudge, gourmet dressings and honeys.

Nigel Cope, chairman said, ''As well as offering an opportunity to work with Staffordshire's local food suppliers and artisan specialists, The Cottage Kitchen also boasts a fantastic retail space which enables us to share our products and recipes with consumers first hand, extending the brand and raising our brand profile.

''To my knowledge, no other gourmet brand or long-standing producer of quality products can offer this all-round experience of the industry and we're delighted to be able to offer a café where people can enjoy a high-quality menu in tasteful, relaxing surroundings. The Cottage Kitchen is completely unique and there's nothing like it in the area.''









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CHARLES CAMPION

"Try leads to buy"

"Would you buy a used car from this man?" is the line that the analysts reckon lost the 1960 U.S. Presidential election for Richard Nixon. To be fair, he looked like a pretty shifty character, but it was the reluctance of the American public to trust him that scuppered his chances. Then his back room staff spent some years glossing over the 'Tricky Dicky' image and re-inventing him before they were able to steer him to victory in 1968.

There is a great truth lurking in the shadows here; if you have the choice between buying something from someone you like, or purchasing the same item with someone you dislike, nearly everyone is happier shopping with friends. Which would suggest that the most important attribute of any salesman, host or shopkeeper is friendliness. One old-established way of making the customer your friend is to let them try before they buy.

There's probably a piece of earnest research somewhere which sets out what percentage of customers who are offered a taste subsequently go on to buy, but I suspect that these potential customers are converted not because they're getting something for nothing, but rather because that small cube of unfamiliar cheese marks a subtle change in the customer/shopkeeper relationship. Offering a sample to taste is a generous thing to do, it sets a tone and breaks the ice, which in turn helps start a dialogue. The retailer gets a chance to talk about his or her products, and the customer is reassured – especially when the salesperson is knowledgeable as well as friendly.

Of course, this plan doesn't always work; cast your mind back to the big food shows and the platoons of punters clutching their free bags whose mission is to get fed for the day solely on free samples. This really is nature red in tooth and claw. Some tales I could tell make all the stories of double-dipping pale into insignificance.

Like it or not, nobody knows the pedigree of every salami, every terrine, every style of bread or every cheese, but small advances in knowledge can make significant advances in sales. How would it be if food stores thought a little more like wine merchants? Customers are not expected to know every wine when they visit a wine shop, and a tasting is an accepted way to get even the stick in the muds to try something new.

Sure, sampling takes time and trouble, but it really works. Sampling helps transform the relationship across the counter from adversarial to friendly; that means repeat business, and repeat business is the very best kind of business there is. Richard Nixon changed his ways (well, he probably just changed his publicity strategy) and pretty soon he was president of the most powerful country in the world. But I still wouldn't have bought a used car off him.



Revamped Operations at Blakemore Fine Foods

The West Midlands-based distributor has announced the second stage of its relaunch, following its rebrand last July.

The update sees the business expand its customer service team and launch new warehouse and transport systems.

Caoire Blakemore, fine foods commercial director said, "We've invested heavily in our infrastructure, and now have our own warehouse with an on-site management team. As a result of this, retailers will see a change in the service they receive – for example, there'll be fewer issues when it comes to products which haven't been barcoded properly. Also, we're now able to stockhold more products that we've been able to in the past, which means that our service level will be even higher than our standard 95 per cent.

"The most exciting element of the revamp is our new online ordering portal element of our website. We'll be hosting tutorials at the Farm Shop & Deli Show in March. It's based on online ordering systems from the likes of Amazon, so there's a shopping basket and history tab, and retailers can search through products using search terms and categories. Each product has a link to the producer, so buyers can learn the story behind what they're purchasing. Also, a postcode search means that retailers can search for local producers."

"The core focus of all these changes is to improve efficiencies and better serve our customers and producers, therefore enabling us all to grow our respective businesses collaboratively. This is just the start of the new and improved Blakemore Fine Foods and reflects the company's commitment to both the sector and the Great British producers that we work with."



Eco Business Unit for Rent on Scottish Island

An eco-friendly business unit has been built on the Isle of Harris for budding food businesses.

Home to Stag Bakery biscuits and Stornoway Black Pudding, as well as lamb, game, goats cheese, fish and seafood, the island is considered a food-lover's paradise.

The 66-square metre site works on solar electricity and is available to rent for £2,200 a year.

David Wake, instrumental in the build said, "The Western Isles is home to a growing number of artisan food companies that are capitalising on the amazing landscapes and unique culture in their branding. Cold clear waters and the wide windswept moorland in Harris give rise to the freshest of local ingredients.

"You can even buy raspberries in the market in Tarbert during the season. With its community-developed business units, Harris is the ideal place to establish your business and benefit from a far superior quality of life."







Government Reveals Food Enterprise Zones Plan

The Government has announced plans for Food Enterprise Zones (FEZs), to promote and develop food producers based in rural areas.

The 'zones' involved in the campaign are Cheshire, Cornwall, Cumbria, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Somerset, South Downs, West Sussex and Worcestershire.

The move aims to make it easier for existing food and farming businesses to grow, and to attract new businesses to the area, in order to create new jobs, protect the countryside and boost local economies. Grants of up to £50,000 are being offered to set up FEZs, which are based around Local Development Orders.

It will also allow for decisions regarding development and planning issues in the food and farming sector to be made locally.

Elizabeth Truss, Environment Secretary said, "Food Enterprise Zones will help unlock the potential of local food and farming businesses, boosting local economies and attracting more investment.

"Consumers both here and abroad want to buy great British food. These zones will ensure we can grow more top quality produce and expand our food and farming industry, which is worth more than £100 billion a year to the UK economy and is our largest manufacturing sector, worth more than cars and aerospace combined.

"Food and farming is at the heart of our long-term economic plan and vital to securing Britain's economic future."

DIARY DATES

22nd–25th March

IFE
Excel, London
ife.co.uk

14th–16th April

WORLD TRAVEL CATERING & ONBOARD SERVICES EXPO
Hamburg Messe, Germany
worldtravelcateringexpo.com

19th–20th April

NATURAL & ORGANIC PRODUCTS EUROPE
Excel, London
naturalproducts.co.uk

20th–22nd April

FARM SHOP & DELI SHOW
NEC, Birmingham
farmshopanddelishow.co.uk

NATIONAL CONVENIENCE SHOW
NEC, Birmingham
nationalconvenienceshow.co.uk

24th–26th April

EXETER FESTIVAL OF SOUTH WEST FOOD & DRINK FESTIVAL
Exeter
exeterfoodanddrinkfestival.co.uk

28th April–1st May

HOTELYMPIA
Excel, London
freshmontgomery.co.uk

3rd–6th May

TUTTOFOOD
Milan, Italy
www.tuttofood.it



JOHN SHEPHERD OF PARTRIDGES

"The customer is in the detail"

In my view, the average Partridges customer would probably fall into one of three categories:

CATEGORY 1 (70% ISH) – THE REGULARS: LOCAL RESIDENTS

We are very lucky to have attracted a reasonable quantity of regular shoppers with whom we have built a relatively long-term relationship.

In some cases, they are the children of the children of our first customers in the 1970s. We try to assist our regulars with the basic services we offer, of course, such as the Pensioner Discount scheme, the delivery service and acquiring products that are difficult to get. But it is also the little things that go a long way – being friendly, helpful and honest. This is where the long-standing staff I referred to in my last article play their invaluable role, because it is they who essentially build the relationships.

CATEGORY 2 (20% ISH) – LIFESTYLE SHOPPERS: WEEKEND VISITORS

Our busiest days in Partridges are Saturdays and Sundays. This is due to the customers who come from further afield to visit the Duke of York Square, spend time in our café and visit our Saturday food market. Both these areas have been very helpful in expanding our customer base. We know that on a good day the Duke of York Square can attract up to 15,000 visitors, and it has become a great place for the wider community to socialise. Here the 60+ small producers on show have done a great job in building connections with local customers. A number of our stalls are becoming real destinations for discerning shoppers.

CATEGORY 3 (10%ISH) – VISITORS FROM ABROAD

A growing category. Some of these visitors are fascinated by the story of the Royal Warrant. Some have found out about our own-label products or have even bought them overseas. Some are fascinated by Chelsea in general, a feeling that culminates in Flower Show week at the end of May. Give us a 'Day' and we will create an event. One of our most popular ever events was in celebration of Slovenia's National Day. Tastings, samplings and promotions are very much the way to go.

Finally, a note on the W word (which is weather, by the way), which is one of the biggest influences on our customers. Our shop sits about 50 paces from the pavement on the King's Road. When it rains, even after several millennia of human existence, customers prefer not to get wet or, indeed, to shop.

To cut a long story short, and as tedious and repetitive as it may seem, the old adage for us is always worth remembering: the customer really is the king (or queen).







GILES HENSCHEL OF OLIVES ET AL

"Sleeping Beauty or Sleeping Beastie?"

I went to the panto the other night. Now, panto is serious business here in Stur. The roar of the grease paint, smell of the crowd and the faint whiff of mothballs and Rich Tea biscuits is ever-present as the Sturminster Newton Amateur Dramatic luvvies take their places on the stage for the annual pantomime. It's always an exciting time as the curtain opens, the band strikes up and the cast are revealed staring nervously into the footlights, preparing to deliver seriously awful puns, jokes, one liners and wobbly vocals to classic songs. I eagerly took my place and settled back to boo, hiss, cheer and weep at the appropriate moments as the dame cavorted with the principal boy, the fairies worked their magic, and the villain got her comeuppance. Boy, did these guys go for it. From start to finish, there wasn't a dry seat in the house with the jokes as cheesy as the dame was camp and principal boy girlish. This year's offering? Sleeping Beauty.

It's a moral tale of the wicked witch, Poison Ivy, wreaking havoc after been missed off the invite list for the christening of the king and queen's new-born daughter. It's all cracking and riveting stuff, with many a wobbly song and cheesy joke along the way.

Maybe it was the alcohol or maybe it was the embedded morals, but it got me thinking. Thinking about whether it isn't possible sometimes for businesses to fall foul of a curse from a disgruntled someone or other that puts your business to sleep for a while or diverts attention in an uncomfortable way.

That snide comment or parting gesture, that difficult, nagging complaint that somehow doesn't quite ring true, that character who is just plain bloody-minded and saps your energy – they're all a bit like Poison Ivy, behaving in a way to make your organisation sleepy, drowsy and a bit slow on the uptake. And I wondered, how can you defend against such things and make sure you don't end up with a Sleeping Beastie in your midst?

In the end, and considering the original Grimm fairy tale, it all comes down to taking care to do things as right as you can first time round and by doing so, avoid the poisonous little pricks that are always lurking somewhere behind you (in best panto tradition) just waiting to rob your vitality, divert your attention and put your business to sleep for a while.

If, by some misfortune, you're already in that curse-induced stupor, identify who or what did the damage, find a Prince Charming to kiss it better and bring your prick-induced slumber to an end. It's exactly what we've just done...

So, cheesiest joke of the night? The award must go to the dame who responded to the news that, "Eggs are going up again," with, "Well that'll surprise a few chickens."

Farm Shop & Deli Award Judges Name Regional Winners

The nine regional winners of the second annual Farm Shop & Deli Awards have been chosen, from over 500 nationwide entries.

The awards recognise the very best standards in Britain's independent, speciality retail market – celebrating initiative, product knowledge, high quality service and community involvement – and are held in partnership with Olives Et Al, and category sponsors Lakeland Computers and Pidy and Hider.

All entries were assessed by judges from the speciality retail, fine food and food media sectors.

Of the nine winning businesses, two are cheesemongers, two are butchers, and five are food/farm shops. All have demonstrated high product quality, support for their local community, and a passion for speciality food retail.

The regional winners will join the category winners named earlier this year in the final to be named Retailer of the Year. The overall winner will be appointed at the Farm Shop & Deli Show Live stage at 2:45pm on Monday 20th April 2015.

Nigel Barden, chairman of judges and food and drink journalist/broadcaster said, "There are some truly brilliant regional winners, many of whom source produce locally, and it's marvellous to see that there's a good spread of outstanding retailers in both urban and rural settings. Some of the further-flung winners offer a great service to their community but are also worthy of destination shopping, and they are savvy enough to have linked up with quality hoteliers, restaurateurs and publicans in their area to make the journey even more worthwhile. The British food and drink offer has never been better, as richly illustrated by the Farm Shop & Deli Awards Regional Winners."

Elaine Lemm, co-chair of judges and food writer said, "It was both an honour and an unenviable task to choose regional winners from the wealth of talented, passionate finalists in the Farm Shop & Deli Awards this year. Everyone who reached this stage is already a winner and for a good reason, because they are the best. They should all be proud of their achievement in getting this far."

The nine regional winners are:

East Anglia
Arthur Howell, Wells-next-the-Sea

Midlands
Ludlow Food Centre, Ludlow

North East
Fodder, Harrogate

North West
The Courtyard Dairy, Settle

Northern Ireland
M&W Farm Meats, Portadown

Scotland
George Mewes Cheese, Glasgow

South East
The Hungry Guest, Petworth

South West
Johns of Instow & Appledore, Instow

Wales
Bodnant Welsh Food, Conwy





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Cymru

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FROM CONCEPT *to consumer*

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That's why our Food and Drink sector is geared to accommodate the most demanding business requirements. Wales is the only country in the UK that can take a product from concept to consumer through our unique 'Wales Food Centres'. We have an immensely skilled workforce in place – around 170,000 people in Wales are all part of the Food and Drink supply chain. Plus we offer unrivalled access to specialist academic centres including the Centre for Food Safety and Nutrition, the Institute of Biological Environmental and Rural Sciences and the Centre for Sustainable Aquatic Research in Swansea. **It's simple to see why Wales' Food and Drink sector is expanding so rapidly.**

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TULSI INFUSION TEA
Invigorating black tea blend with a rich full-bodied spiciness. Excellent on ice.

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TEATULIA GREEN TEA
Medium-bodied with earthy and grassy notes. A light finish with a refreshing, cooling quality.



INFUSIONS



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SINGLE GARDEN DIRECT

Teatulia teas and herbal infusions come direct to you from our garden. There are no middlemen; there is no long-term warehouse storage, and no waiting around to be blended by a third party.

What does this mean to you? You get to enjoy some of the freshest tea in the world, every day.

We also don't believe in flavours or additives. With Teatulia teas and herbal infusions, you enjoy the original essence of pure nature.

The result? Unsurpassed purity, accountability and freshness.

GIVING BACK

Teatulia is no ordinary garden. Started in 2000 to give back to the community, we sought an enterprise that would give the most people a living wage while protecting and strengthening our environment.

Not content with the social programs already in place, our Teatulia Cooperative has established revolutionary education, health and cattle-lending programs for the people working in the garden and surrounding areas.

All sales of Teatulia teas and herbal infusions contribute to this mission, helping to better the lives of the Bangladeshi men, women and children while rebuilding the local ecosystem.

Teatulia Teas are available from Shire Foods.
www.shirefoodsofnorfolk.co.uk

Meat Industry Welcomes Beef Code of Conduct

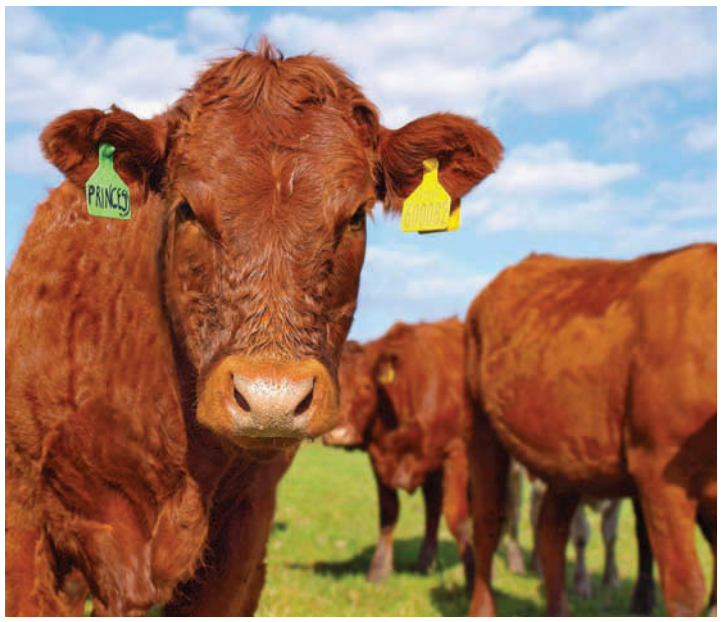
A voluntary code of conduct for the beef industry has been put into place by the National Farmers Union (NFU) and British Meat Processors Association (BMPA) to improve trust in the sector.

Designed to make the process of purchasing cattle more transparent for livestock producers and processors, retailers have also been urged to adopt the philosophy of the new code of conduct in order to minimise uncertainty with suppliers and consumers.

Charles Sercombe, livestock board chairman at NFU said, "This is a welcome step in the right direction as we continue to seek more openness and transparency in the supply chain."

George Eustice MP, Defra food and farming minister said, "I commend the positive and constructive discussions between the BMPA and the NFU that have led to the introduction of this voluntary code of practice, which aims to increase transparency and trust between processors and livestock producers in the beef supply chain.

"The code should help to improve people's confidence in the system. It is a good step forward and I encourage processors to commit to it, and retailers and renderers to get behind it and give it their support."





Support the Independent Community with Big Barn

This May, indie-supporter Big Barn is calling upon consumers to shop local, shop in season, and champion the high street in order to boost local food businesses nationwide.

Retailers can get involved in the Make One Change campaign by working alongside fellow independent shops – from delis and farm shops to butchers and cheesemongers – to offer incentives such as discounts, loyalty schemes and bonuses to boost sales and increase footfall long-term.

Anthony Davison, founder of Big Barn said, "BigBarn is committed to helping small producers and independent retailers and Make One Change is a campaign aimed at doing just that. We want consumers to think beyond the supermarket and consider ways that they can make small changes to the way they shop that will be a big difference to rural businesses and farmers.

"The more retailers who get behind and support this campaign, the better, as without your help we can't reach the number of consumers that we need to.

"Please get in touch for more information or ideas, or follow us on twitter @findlocalfood for updates on how you can get involved."

Cotswold Fayre Launches Young Entrepreneur Scheme

The fine food distributor has announced the details of its annual start-up support scheme, Young Food and Drink Entrepreneur of the Year for 2015.

Now in its third year, the scheme aims to assist entrepreneurs aged between 16-25 in building a successful business within the food industry.

The winning applicant will receive £1,000 to help develop the company, monthly mentor meetings with founder of Cotswold Fayre, Paul Hargreaves, and branding support from Cotswold Fayre's in-house designer.

Paul Hargreaves, founder of Cotswold Fayre said, "The growing number of young entrepreneurs looking to start a business is a fantastic sign for the fine food industry. However, the prospect of starting a business with little or no experience can be incredibly daunting.

"The winning entrant will receive not just monetary support but also sound business advice to help face the difficult and often unexpected challenges of setting up a new business."

Applications are open now and close on 30 June 2015. The application form can be found on cotswold-fayre.co.uk.



England Triumphs at European Competition

Team England has been named the winner of this year's European Butchery competition, beating stiff competition from France and Belgium.

The team comprised of two butchers from Warwickshire's Royal Warrant-holding Aubrey Allen, Michael Perkins and Martin Crombie, who were awarded the title for their presentation of cuts including lamb shoulder, beef rib and veal rack.

Rémi Fourrier, EBLEX's export manager for France said, "This is another success story, following the victory of English young shepherds at the World Young Shepherds competition. Now, Team England has received official recognition from the French independent butchers' organisation for their expertise in butchery.

"It is a massive boost for the butchery sector in England and shows that with hard work, skill and perseverance anything is possible."



Silver & Green Partners With Cress Co

The Cress Company, the Dunfermline-based food distributor, has announced a partnership with Silver & Green in order to offer its customers the ideal combination of antipasti, cheese and charcuterie.

Now offering the entire range of Silver & Green's range of olives and antipasti, a total of nearly 50 products, the distributor will be working closely alongside the producer to expand its customer base beyond Scotland and the north to include the south east.

Rachel Hannaford of Silver & Green said, "Silver & Green started working with The Cress Company last August. Initially they listed our new retail olive pouches and things got off to a spectacular start. Silver & Green's sales for the first month smashed the previous listing in that category 10-1. Before we had a chance to wipe the sweat from our brows, Cress were talking about the possibility of listing our whole range.

"The Cress Company has been a business that we have watched develop over the years and it's one we've watched with great admiration. A chance of a collaboration like this was one worth working that little bit harder to achieve.

"By allowing stores to purchase their more specialist deli items like olives and cheese all in one place, both companies hope that the listing makes it easier for farm shop and delis to keep their deli offer fresh and their time consuming ordering and paperwork to a minimum!"

Commercial Launch of Bone Broth

Herefordshire-based ready meal producers Lodge Farm Kitchen have added bone broth to their range of quality frozen frozen meat and fish dishes, soups and desserts.

Made entirely from British, organic and 100 per cent pasture-fed beef bones, Osius Bone Broth can be consumed either as a hot drink or as a base for soups, casseroles, rice and pasta dishes.

An ancient dish used to treat digestive issues, bone broth contains high levels of minerals and nutrients including collagen, making it a natural replacement to vitamin and mineral supplements.

Louisa Stout, co-director of Lodge Farm Kitchen said, "We started to produce bone broth because a local nutritionist recommended it to help the symptoms of a child suffering with digestive problems. Although bone broth is known to be very good for you, nobody was selling it commercially.

"We started off producing it for medical reasons, then discovered there's a big market for it when it comes to health-conscious consumers. Florence Nightingale proclaimed it to be good for the digestive systems of people who are unwell, but it's actually very good for everybody's digestion!"



Countryside Alliance Calls for Clearer Meat Labelling

The Countryside Alliance has urged the Government to push for all processed meat products to display clearer country of origin labelling, thereby supporting British farmers.

This call forms part of the CA's manifesto of rural issues for the upcoming General Election.

From April 2015, the labels of all fresh meat sold in Britain must show where the animal was reared and slaughtered, but this regulation does not extend to processed items such as sausages, bacon and ready meals.

Members of the European Parliament voted for the rules to be extended to include processed meat products, but this has yet to be adopted by the European Commission.

Sarah Lee, head of policy for the Countryside Alliance said, "Since the horsemeat scandal, consumers are taking much more notice about where the meat they eat originates. We want labelling that shows where the animal was reared and slaughtered for all meat, including that where meat is an ingredient."

Charlotte Cooper, head of media for the Countryside Alliance said, "It's currently very common for meats which have come from abroad to be labelled as British, for example Danish pork, which has been turned into sausages here. We don't think that's fair; people should be able to feel confident that when they're buying foods labelled as British in origin, they are supporting British farmers."





An up-to-date look at the confectionery and chocolate industry



Paul Weeks, founder of The Sweet Hut in Minster, tells the story of his vintage-style sweet shops on wheels



The business started with me restoring a tricycle – I've always restored motorcycles, and when a rare 1947 tricycle truck came up I had to have it. When I brought it home my wife asked what I planned to do with it, and I jokingly replied that I'd sell toffee apples from it! I taught myself how to make toffee apples using a traditional recipe, then used to travel to steam fairs and shows. That was 25 years ago, and since then I've sold from various vintage vehicles. I always wanted to trade from a van, so six years ago I bought a Citroën H van from France and set it up as a sweet shop. The next step was to open a bricks and mortar site, which we opened on Minster seafront last year.

We've been to Goodwood Revival, Ascot, Leeds Castle and various county shows, selling homemade toffee apples, homemade fudge, and a big selection of retro sweets such as sweet tobacco, dusted milk gums, and rhubarb and custards. We also sell modern sweets, such as Millions and American-style products from brands like Wonka.

We like to keep our sweet shop as you'd expect to see it – traditional and in retro style with lots of pastel colours. Everyone has fond memories of the sweet shops they visited when they were children, and we've tried to recreate that. Children miss out on that these days; most confectionery is now bought at supermarkets, which doesn't come close to the experience you get in a traditional sweet shop.

Toffee crumble is definitely one of our top five best-selling flavours, along with rhubarb and custard, dusted milk gums, Black Jacks and Fruit Salads. We also sell milkshakes which are made with just milk, ice cream and sweets of the customer's choice – the fudge one is heavenly!

An independent confectioner needs to get as far away from the image of a garage or supermarket as possible; a good sweetshop has to stimulate the customer's happy childhood memories.



Ooh! Chocolata Enters Sweet Market

The confectionery producer is launching a range of all-natural, handmade sweets to complement its current chocolate offering.

The new range, named Ooh! Sweetie, shares the playful appeal of the brand's chocolate products, and uses 100 per cent natural ingredients for an intense fruity taste.

Ruth Yard, co-founder said, "It's all part of our aim to be a one-stop confectioner that understands the need for retailers to have products that are a little bit away from the norm. Our focus has always been on making distinctive products with shelf-appeal, and this new range is no different.

"We have taken time to source everything we need to produce a tempting line of fruity sweets, all-butter handmade fudges and other delicious sweet treats. In addition, to emphasise our British manufacturing roots, we are launching out new Ooh! BRITANNIA range: tradional British all-butter fudges and other delicious sweet treats."



Confectioner Celebrates Yorkshire Heritage

Harrogate-based confectionery producer the Serious Sweet Company has added to its range of luxury sweets with three Yorkshire-inspired products.

The new Rhubarb Coconut Ice is created using rhubarb grown by a local farmer located within the Rhubarb Triangle, while the Ginger Fudge is inspired by Yorkshire Parkin and the Sea Salt Caramel Fudge taps into the growing trend for salted caramel.

Rob Whitehead, managing director of The Serious Sweet Company said, "We make it our mission to come up with new and exciting products, flavours and taste combinations so the introduction of the Rhubarb Coconut Ice is a perfect fit with the Wakefield Food, Drink and Rhubarb Festival.

"What better way to celebrate Yorkshire's heritage than to work with D Westwood & Sons on a twist using this classic Wakefield produce. As we say in Yorkshire, this product's a reet good'un and we look forward to introducing it to our fans over the coming weeks!"

Jonathan Westwood, owner of D Westwood & Sons said, "Rhubarb growing has been in our family for generations and what the annual Wakefield festival of food, drink and rhubarb is a key event in our yearly calendar. When the opportunity arose to work with Ultimate English on the new rhubarb coconut ice, we were delighted. It's brilliant to see local Yorkshire businesses taking this classic product and creating something completely new with it.



100% Cocoa Bar Launched

Madagascan chocolate company Madécasse has added a 100% cocoa bar to its range of 'Exquisitely African' handcrafted bars.

The bean-to-bar business has created the new bar using three of Madagascar's rare heirloom cocoa varieties: Pure Ancient Criollo, Amelonado and Trinitario.

The 75g bar is being aimed at discerning chocolate lovers, and combines a complex flavour with subtle fruitiness and a citrus finish. It contains no artificial additives, preservatives or ingredients.

Brett Beach, co-founder and co-CEO of Madécasse said, "Consumer demand and excitement for high cocoa content bars and unique cocoa varieties has continued to increase, with more and more approaching chocolate in a similar way to that of wine.

"Cocoa varieties, blends, quality and provenance have become integral to consumers, so we are confident this latest launch will be a big hit."





PRIME CUTS

Daniel Heanen of London's HG Walter shares the secrets of his award-winning, family-run business's success – complete with celebrity fans, chef workshops and prestigious awards

HG Walter was a pretty troubled shop forty-odd years ago. The owners asked my dad to take a look at the books to see where they were going wrong – he ended up buying it in 1972, and hasn't looked back since. When he took it on, it was a traditional butcher shop, very much spit and sawdust, with hanging carcases on show, whereas now it's a lot more polished.

When it comes to becoming award-winning, the combination of unrivalled customer service and the very best quality is key. You'll always remember where you've been looked after, and word travels fast. We're constantly getting a stream of new customers, and never go looking for new work – we don't canvas restaurants and hand out price lists; 99% of the restaurants we serve have come to us. We supply The Square, Le Trompette, Marcus Wareing at The Berkeley, Tredwell's and The River Café among many others, and we're very proud to work with them.

It's important to offer something different, and to mix things up. We try to not have the same products day in day out; there aren't many butchers which sell pata negra pork, for example. It's a specialist product so you pay a premium for it, but it's absolutely worth it. We produce a lot of our sausages on-site and are well known for them – Michael Winner



named them "the best sausages in the universe" so we must be doing something right! We're constantly changing our recipes, and a lot of customers come to us with special requirements – whether it's because they can't eat certain foods or want to try something new – and we're always happy to oblige.

We offer chefs a service whereby they can come in and work on their knife skills. We don't charge them for it – even though they may put us out of business in the future! – they're customers of ours and they appreciate the help we're offering them with their job. I firmly believe that you won't get the same service anywhere else. I've never heard any customer complain about what we do or how we do it.



> "We've just been named the Best Butchers Shop in London and the South of England, and we want to go one better than that – next stop, Best Butchers Shop in the Universe, perhaps?!"

We choose our suppliers very carefully. Percentage-wise, very little of our meat comes from Smithfield Market – we visit a lot of food shows and exhibitions, and really do our research with regards to companies and farms in order to cut out the middle man. We have very strict guidelines when it comes to our beef in particular, and are very fussy when it comes to things like marbling and fat covering. A few of our suppliers pull their hair out as a result of our fussiness!

Beef is our best-selling item, and I think you can tell a good butcher by their steaks. At the moment we're selling crazy amounts of burgers – we make them from prime meat and hand-press them, then sell them to a number of premium burger joints such as Tommi's Burger and Patty & Bun. Everything we put on display sells very well, including our cheeses and ambient items. Each item we sell complements the meat, including the herbs and vegetables, a lot of which you wouldn't be able to get in supermarkets.

Our customer base is wide-reaching. We have a lot of French and Italian customers, plus many Americans. As we serve a number of French people, we sell a lot of traditional items they struggle to find outside of France. We supply a fair number of famous faces; for example, Nigella Lawson is frequently on the phone, Terry Venables' wife is often in, and we have members of royalty on the customer list, too. We see each day as a challenge – we don't want to slip into a routine whereby every day is the same. We're very passionate about food and what we do, which really helps to keep things moving.

Sometimes you can be unlucky with staff, but we never have been. Passion is key – it's no good if people are working against you, or not inspired to give their all. It's important to find the strengths of each individual employee and make them the best they can be; that's down to us.





Take stock with our new food and drink round-up



Mokhado Oils Now Available in UK

A new range of heart-healthy oils originating from South Africa has been launched in the UK.

Comprising of Avocado Oil, Macadamia Nut Oil and Apricot Kernel Oil, the range offers a range of health benefits thanks to its mono unsaturated fat content, and is suitable for vegans.

Grown in the Levubu Valley in the north and the Cape region in the south of South Africa, the production of the oils involves zero wastage – every bit of the fruit or nut is used to make the oils, or as natural animal feed of compost.

Chrisjan Van den Berg, founder said "My family have been growing fruit trees for generations, and to finally launch our own range of pure and heart-healthy oils into the mainstream is a dream come true. We've been cooking with these oils in our family for generations because they taste so great – and now we can try and put them on every kitchen table in the land. It feels good."

mokhado.com



Cottage Delight Extends Everyday Collection

Staffordshire-based producer Cottage Delight has added to its Everyday Collection range with a selection of jams and marmalades.

The company's best-selling preserve range will include the new Passion Fruit Extra Jam and Victoria Plum Extra Jam – made with purely British Victoria plums – plus a Shredless Orange Marmalade and Orange & Mango Marmalade.

Gary Johnston, sales and marketing director said, "The new preserves are typical of Cottage Delight products in that they help to transform ordinary dishes into a really tasty treat. Our newly-launched recipe cards are full of creative ways to enjoy our preserves, from Orange and Mango Marmalade Pancakes to Passion Fruit Jam Tarts, and we hope that these will inspire consumers to create something a little bit different with our products."

cottagedelight.co.uk

Pip & Nut Revamps Nut Butter

In line with the current trend for healthy nut butters, London-based producer Pip & Nut has launched a range of palm oil-free nut butters.

The range contains Peanut Butter, Almond Butter and Coconut Almond Butter, each available in jars and convenient sachets.

Made with just-roasted nuts and sea salt, with no refined sugar, additives or palm oil, each butter in the range is high in protein and contains high levels of vitamin E and magnesium.

Pippa Murray, founder said, "Our mission is to put the nut back into nutrition. We want to be the brand that makes the UK think differently about nut butters – what they're for, how they're used and what they can deliver – through new flavours, new formats and new uses. We want to expand the role nut butters play in people's lives from occasional spread to protein source and on-the-go snack".

pipandnut.com





Three New Flavours From Manomasa

Manomasa, the producer of premium tortilla chips, has added three new flavours to its range: Green Lemon & Pink Peppercorn, Manchego & Green Olive and Tomatillo Salsa.

'Born in the backstreets of Mexico', the distinctive chips are inspired by the original tortilla chip – the totopo – and are created using traditional Mexican techniques.

Each item in the range also has a distinctive shape, designed for snacking, scooping or dipping, and texture, thanks to the inclusion of super grains such as red and white quinoa.

Calum Ryder, founder said, "The chips are all unique in flavour, texture and shape, and every ingredient is chosen with the utmost care and attention to ensure we continue to deliver innovative and adventurous flavoured varieties to meet consumer demand."

manomasa.co.uk



Innovative Mustards from Stonewall Kitchen

Stonewall Kitchen, American producer of speciality foods, gifts and kitchenware, has added Wasabi Mustard, Bourbon Molasses Mustard, Ballpark Mustard and Sweet Honey Mustard to its condiment range.

The company has introduced a culinary twist to traditional mustard by using bourbon, spicy wasabi and honey — in doing so creating mustards which make unique dipping sauces and which are versatile accompaniments to picnics and barbecues.

Janine Somers, director of marketing said, "Flavourful and versatile, our mustards are used for more than just sandwiches. They add flavour to vinaigrettes, dips and meats and are also great to use in everyday cooking. For example, we love using them for quick and easy salad dressings. Simply mix olive oil, lemon juice and a tablespoon of any of our mustards to create a light and fresh delicious dressing."

Exclusively distributed in the UK by Cotswold Fayre.
cotswold-fayre.co.uk





Chanterelles Return to the Progressive Food Company

The popular mushrooms have been reintroduced to The Progressive Food Company's selection of hand-picked forest mushrooms.

The Foresta range now contains 25g bags of porcini, shiitake, chanterelle and mixed forest mushroom varieties, all of which are 100 per cent natural and have an ambient shelf life of two years. Each carton contains a wood-effect tray for convenient merchandising.

The range has been created especially for the British fine food sector, and is available at Infinity Foods, Hider Foods, Marigold Health Foods and Shire Foods of Norfolk.

James Green of The Progressive Food Company said, "We were not able to source chanterelles at a price which we felt was reasonable for our customers for most of 2014, but we are delighted to be able to return this popular variety to the Foresta range this year. One of the most distinctively flavoured mushrooms in the world, chanterelles are noted for their soft flesh and apricot-like fragrance."
theprogressivefood company.co.uk

Tracklements Perfects Hot Lime Pickle

Tracklements has announced the newest addition to their range — a Hot Lime Pickle ideal for pairing with curries and Indian foods.

Combining Persian limes, chilli and spice, this authentic pickle is handmade using only the best ingredients to give it a deep flavour.

Guy Tullberg, MD said, "This super hot and fiery tracklement perfectly balances sharp, juicy Persian limes, with plenty of chilli and spice to make an authentic pickle perfect for curries, poppadoms and naan breads.

"Made by hand to an authentic recipe using the very best quality natural ingredients, this delightful pickle has a simple, direct heat and a great depth of flavour."
tracklements.co.uk





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The uniquely smooth, savory flavour you'll find only in Le Gruyère AOP is a product of its upbringing – where the cows that supply the milk are grazed **(only in the villages of Western Switzerland)**, the way the cheese is aged and cared for **(slow-aged in the region's cheese cellars and caves)**, and the recipe that's remained, unchanged, for centuries **(hand-made, in small batches)**. For a smooth and mild yet extremely satisfying taste, Le Gruyère Classic is aged 5 months minimum. Le Gruyère Reserve, which has been aged for 10 months or more, has a smooth but more robust flavour. Both varieties are great in recipes, or sliced as a snack. Either way, we're sure you'll enjoy the only cheese that can call itself Le Gruyère AOP.

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Cheese Talk

New retail perspectives from industry experts



JULIET HARBUTT

"Retailing American-style"

On a recent visit to Santa Barbara – a highly recommended detour if you're stuck in LA for a few days – I checked out the various shops, supermarkets and delis, and was as always amazed at how different the shopping experience is from the UK.

Firstly, service – the staff were helpful, friendly, charming (even flirtatious) and often knowledgeable. I was struck by the number of which were foodies, home chefs and older than 40. Some in uniform but others in saggy jeans and weird t-shirts with hair longer and more matted than the dreadlock on a Latxa sheep, but still. Like a good waiter they are constantly on the look out to see if you need help. You don't have to wave or cough to get their attention, and they don't care how many questions you ask. Well, the exception was a grumpy lad who told me "Poke? It's tuna, what else would it be"? It looked like mushy watermelon with sesame seeds to me rather than chunks of tuna marinated in soya, ginger and chillies, but it tasted wonderful.

Secondly, they have lots of things to pick up for free – impressive glossy magazines, local newspapers, maps of the area, info on the local farmers markets, what's in season – less about recipes and more about the food. And many seem to offer classes, courses, tutored tastings or visits to producers. Some offer free coffee and made-on-the-premises falafel, chicken dishes, pizza or burritos, so I could do my shopping, pick up the hot ready-to-go main, take it to the beach and listen to the seals bark while the pelicans gave me the evil eye.

The meat counters I found totally off-putting. There were the usual cuts and a good range of part-prepared meat dishes like kebabs for the BBQ and rolled chicken, but most was minced, mashed and mangled meat in variations of pale pink to bloody red deep. Their seafood sections, however, tend to be very simply displayed on beds of ice and quite small compared with the meat, but they include freshly made seafood salads and dressed crabs.

It's the fruit and vegetable section that I love. Lots of in-season fruits – rather than the vast range of imports we have in the UK – and the wide range of salads, leafy veg and broccoli are displayed loose in upright perspex bins which are sprayed regularly with cool water to keep them fresh and incredibly green. And so many interesting vegetables (part of the Mexican influence) including loads of tomato varieties, all sweet and ripe thanks to the warm winters, superbly ripe avocado and deep green sweet hot peppers. Plus, purple potatoes, sweet potatoes, finger-sized cucumbers and enormous spring onions. All the things I love to buy, especially when travelling, so I can enjoy local, in-season foods and avoid heavily processed dressings. Something the USA does far too well. Also, the aisles aren't all wide, straight and parallel but narrower, more cluttered and broken up with salad bars, wine rooms, fresh baked pizza ovens and very poorly-displayed cheese 'bars'!

> "Where are British cheese shops better than American? Signage, shelf height and product choice, and our shops are cleaner"

So where are we better? Well, our shops are cleaner, the signage on the shelves very clear – if clinical and regimented – the shelves are higher, a lot less cluttered and crowded, and there is less choice of the same product. I spent over five minutes trying to find a half pint of milk, full or semi-skimmed, as the dairy case was 12 feet long and four shelves high full of one litre to five litre cartons of milk, from soya and almond to added calcium, cream and heaven knows what. I eventually found normal milk, but the smallest was one litre. Plus, many of their products have significantly higher than necessary cream, sugar or salt content. Olives and anti-pasto are presented better, and pre-packed cheese in the UK is in much better condition.

Overall, the experience of shopping in the USA is generally more fun – grinding my own cashew butter and seeing its squiggle and squirm into my plastic pot was worth every cent; less stressful – their parking spaces are almost two feet wider than ours as they have bigger cars and bigger people; and the shops are designed for smaller, more regular shopping expeditions – perfect for the traveller.



GEORGE PAULOF BRADBURY'S

"Cheese a la carte"

It's true to say that few of the past 40 dairy years have been as turbulent as this past one or two, most especially in the specialist area of the cheese trade, whether as a cheese maker, or cheese seller.

We have the foodies and the faddists, the ones open to ideas, the others trying to direct it towards organic, low-fat and the like. The channels and routes to market have ruptured in the major retail areas, and the shopper now buys less but more often, as well as buying online.

If the real measure of success is pure volume growth, then the continentals are surging ahead, and factors including exchange rate, greater availability and lower cost route to markets have brought their premium prices well below many British cheeses, making it most tempting to go continental. Comté and Manchego have been particularly popular, but now Ossau Iraty and the reinvigorated Gorgonzola are moving up. Buffalo Mozzarella is commonplace and Halloumi has exploded since 2013.

Rising living standards and greater disposable income can and will fuel speciality growth. Continental is the best example of that. Has anyone seen 50% off Comté or Buffalo Mozzarella? Buy one get one free on Roquefort? Yet still the markets for these cheeses grow at huge rates.

It's true that many old favourites here are being devalued by poor quality options traded in from low-cost destinations with passable quality. Sadly, Feta is one example. The only PDO to sell less after its status creation than before. The quality makers use 90% sheep's milk which is not the cheapest, but the law permits a 70% ewe's milk option which are frequently hard and much more like Cheshire in brine.

Parmigiano Reggiano is under attack too, as a race to the bottom of the quality scale allows those who know the price of everything and the value of nothing to offer perfunctory cheese – not the greatest example of the Italian cheese makers' art. Some of the 14 month offerings on the shelves of major retailer are appalling, which is often reflected in their poor market share. This is the Rolls Royce of cheese and no one expects it at a Lada price, except perhaps those who constantly miss the point of quality The Parmigiano Reggiano Consorzio is already making major moves to distinguish better cheese by only supporting the promotion of cheese aged over 24 months.

But that is probably of limited effect, as the brand name and pre-eminence of premium Parmigiano will simply be hijacked to the confusion of customers, especially those who don't know what the benchmark should be, and food service is already awash with product of minimum quality.

Sadly, when these major continental types become successful and create volume through hard-won efforts, the carpetbaggers appear quickly and diminish it. I wonder if they are helping to develop Ossau Iraty or other small-growth categories right now?

Happily, there will remain some committed to standards and in the vanguard of assisting, educating and serving the real cheese enthusiast. Doing the right thing rather than the easy thing is the true test of integrity.

Currently trending are softer modern blues and Brie, many ripening French-style cheeses, goats cheese and authentic developments of established cheeses which have lost their quality perception and tradition. Marketing is vital from the outset and it does not have to be ridiculously expensive, but it needs a clear vision which is stuck with – most overnight successes have years of hard work and commitment behind them.

There is generally a curious disparity in the operational scale of British speciality cheeses, which are often truly artisan in scale and foundation. However, for consumers these types are often matched with Continental styles, many of which are of substantial scale. This gives the latter deeper pockets to invest in marketing and NPD – a powerful driver of growth in the next two years, as size does matter in some sectors.

As always, quality does cost, and it's important for retailers to avoid the lookey-likey fringe interlopers in key Continental categories.

> "Many old favourites here are being devalued by poor quality options from low-cost destinations, and while it's fine to be patriotic, Continental is trending fast"

News, opinion and comment from dairy insiders



JUSTIN TUNSTALL OF TOWN MILL CHEESEMONGERS

"Play to your strengths"

Small business owners need the versatility of Swiss Army knives. The variety of skills that we have to deploy during the average month is dazzling.

But, as with the multiple blades of that knife, some we like to use more than others. In my case, that's dealing with the public, developing the strategy, and refining the marketing for the operation. Unsurprising perhaps – my career was in sales and marketing for a number of years.

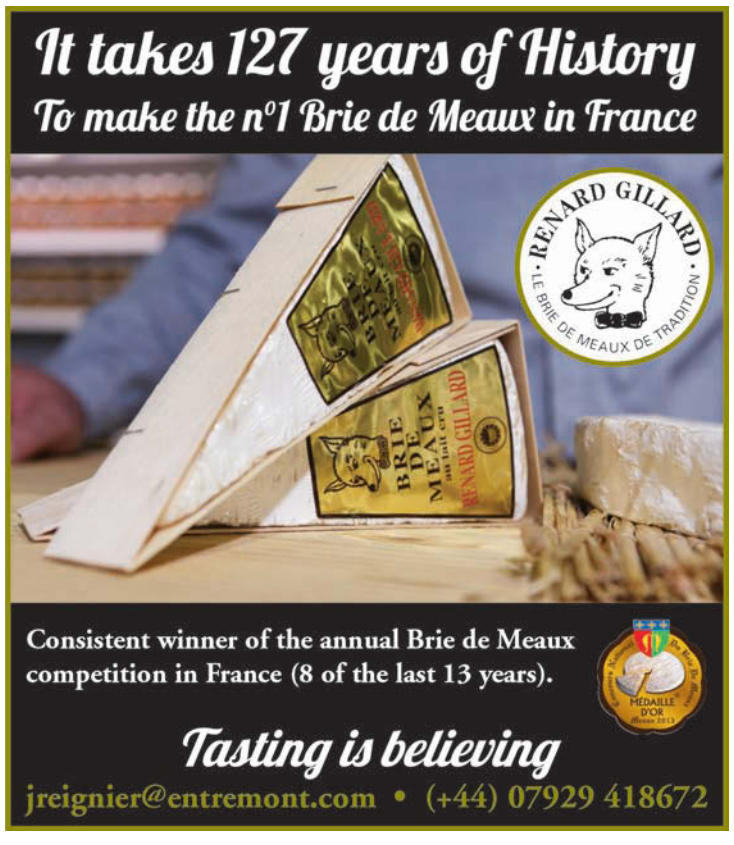
However, I was fortunate in receiving a broad business education in my degree and other vital skills are not entirely foreign to me – such as doing the accounts and HR (or personnel as it was known). As part of my studies I had training placements in a variety of disciplines. Later, corporate general management roles meant that although I was responsible for the profit and loss of large chunks of business, there were always resources available to cover those tasks on my behalf.

If I need to, I can make a reasonable fist of everything needed to run the business, save plumbing and electrical emergencies! But early on I made a decision to concentrate my efforts on areas that would be both enjoyable and that would contribute to growing the business.

I enjoy marketing and spend more time thinking about it than a consultant would be able to devote to a business of our small size. If I didn't have that background, I wouldn't hesitate to outsource that activity. If marketing is an area that gets relegated to the 'pending' rather than the 'action' pile, then alarm bells should ring. If we don't work on the elements that'll help grow the business, then the opposite will happen. The celebrated ad guru, David Ogilvy, used to send a Russian matryoshka doll set to newly appointed heads of the advertising agencies that he owned. Opening the nesting dolls, each smaller than the one before, every director found the same message typed on a piece of paper inside the tiniest doll: "If you hire people who are smaller than you are, we shall become a company of dwarfs. If you hire people who are bigger than you are, we shall become a company of giants."

I think of my regular customers like neighbourhood cats – they probably have other haunts that they frequent – and although I can't control them, I can make my place as attractive as possible so that this can feel like home for them. I do this via social media (I tweet as @millcheese), press activity – ads and PR – and the very occasional email to our database.

In what state is your own Swiss Army knife? Don't worry about the blades that get stones out of horses' hoofs or gut fish – unless you're a fishmonger. If it hasn't got the blades and tools you need to grow your business, borrow them from elsewhere!



Expansion at Cornish Cheese Company

The West Country cheesemaker, creator of Cornish Blue Cheese, has announced the opening of a new production facility.

The company's current cheesemaking capability will be doubled, thanks to new making, packing and maturing rooms partly funded by the South West Rural Development Agency grant programme.

Philip Stansfield of the Cornish Cheese Co. said, "I am delighted that we can soon open this new part of our business and increase cheese production. There have been a few delays, as with any large s"It will mean the production process runs more smoothly from cow to final cheese, with many of the improvements making life easier for our staff as well."

The news comes soon after Cornish Cheese Co. announced record sales over the 2014/15 Christmas period, which saw sales nearly double from the year before.



Philip Stansfield said, "This is a very positive start for us in 2015 and I hope to see the demand increase as we head towards the summer show season."



Dart Mountain Releases NI's First Alpine Cheese

Sperrin Mountain–based producer Dart Mountain Cheese has announced an addition to its award–winning range — Kilcreen, a semi–hard cheese with a nutty flavour.

Made using cows' milk, each fifty pound wheel has the characteristic 'eyes' of some Alpine cheeses.

The new cheese joins Dart Mountain's pickle and granolas, and Sperrin Blue and Dart Mountain Dusk cheeses.

Julie Hickey, cheesemaker said, "Our Kilcreen cheese is made to an Emmental–style recipe. It's a pasteurized cheese. We are ageing the cheeses anywhere from four to ninth months and beyond. At four months the flavour is nutty and relatively mild, growing more intense as the ageing process continues.

"Kilcreen would make a great addition to cheese boards, as a feature in sandwiches or to add richness and depth of flavour to cheese fondue."



Džiugas Breaks Ground with Grated Cheese Mixes

The award–winning Lithuanian cheese producer has launched a range of four grated cheese mixes, which make versatile additions to pasta, pizza, salads and bakes.

Each item in the range has been specially formulated to offer the ideal combination of maturity, texture and melt rate for each style of food, and is packaged in a resealable bag for freshness and convenience. Suitable for vegetarians, each 250g pack provides calcium, protein and energy.

Audrius Staponkus, export manager for Džiugas said, "This cheese develops very distinctive characteristics as it matures. While it maintains the easily recognised Džiugas character, the taste increases in depth, the texture develops a gentle crystalline crunch and the structure becomes less elastic and more craggy.

"Our innovative idea is to carefully select Džiugas of different maturities to grate and mix in different quantities to achieve the ideal combination to use as a pizza mix, pasta mix, salad mix or bake mix. In each instance the balance has been chosen which gives the best texture and melt rate to suit each style of food, based on how it is cooked and served."

The range is now available to order through Carron Lodge.



Simon Weaver Presents Greystones Single Gloucester

Simon Weaver Organic, producer of Cotswold Brie and Cotswold Blue cheeses, has announced a new addition to its range — Greystones Single Gloucester.

Simon Weaver Organic is part of an exclusive group of six producers making the cheese; due to its PDO status the new cheese can only be produced in Gloucestershire on farms which have a pedigree herd of rare breed Gloucester cows.

The cheese is being made in co-operation with the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, whose farm and reserve at Bourton on the Water now houses a robotic milking system in which cows are free to graze and be milked at will. The unit was opened by Helen Browning, CEO of the Soil Association in August 2014.

"I am very pleased that we have been able to expand our existing herd numbers to produce the extra milk required for our cheese making. In doing so, we have introduced a huge leap in cow welfare by utilising the latest technology, and helped to preserve one of England's oldest and rarest breed of cow.

"The site is very public and we have installed large windows that allow walkers to watch cows being milked. It's very rewarding to know that the cheese has had a great reception and that cheese with a real Rolls Royce provenance can catch consumers' interest."

Harrods Unveils Gruyère Window

The iconic London retailer has filled its windows with displays of the finest international foods.

On show until 27th March, the displays showcase the craftsmanship, provenance and beauty of a number of food products including Gruyère, Parmigiano Reggiano and Laurent-Perrier.

Throughout the duration of the displays, exclusive tastings will be taking place in-store.

Alex Wells Greco, head of visual merchandising at Harrods said, "As this is first time that the Food Halls have had full ownership of the Hans Crescent windows, we wanted to create something that would truly illustrate the workmanship and artistry that goes into our most celebrated food and beverage products."

Helen Daysh of Gruyère AOP said, "It's fantastic that Harrods has included Gruyère AOP in the first ever spring window display to feature the very best luxury food brands. We have supplied Harrods for many years, using the same time honoured recipe to produce a 100% natural, lactose and gluten free cheese that is guaranteed to be top quality and very versatile."

"Gruyère AOP was first recorded in the mountains of Switzerland in 1115, so with Harrods opening in 1834 we jointly celebrate over a thousand years of traditional expertise in producing and showcasing one of the worlds finest cheeses."





PGI Status in the Offing for Traditional Ayrshire Dunlop

Dunlop, the sole producer of Traditional Ayrshire Dunlop, has applied to the Scottish Government to register the cheese for PGI status.

The consultation will last for six months and has already been approved by Defra and the European Commission. It is currently in the public consultation stage.

Although Dunlop Dairy is presently the only producer of Traditional Ayrshire Dunlop, being awarded the PGI status will allow for other dairies to produce the cheese so long as they do so within a designated area and use specific techniques.

Ann Dorward of Dunlop Dairy said, "This will be a boon for the area, and it's a pleasure to produce a cheese which can boast such an impressive history and story."



MEET THE CHEESE SELLER



A cheese school is an idea which The Liverpool Cheese Co uses to boost revenue. Ross Gilfillan talks to owner Vickie Anderson.

Isn't it every retailer's dream to corner a market and be the only shop of their type in their area and beyond? For Vickie Anderson, The Liverpool Cheese Company fulfils that ideal. "We are the only speciality cheese shop in Liverpool," she tells Speciality Food. "We stock a great many cheeses and we also sell accompaniments for cheese such as biscuits, bread, wine and a lot of local beers. The two things that we are most famous for are our wedding cakes and our cheese school." The shop is located "in an urban village only a few miles out of the city centre. We have local customers but also those that come to see us from up in Lancashire. We get the odd tourist too."

The right premises can do much for establishing the shop's image and ambience. It seems fitting that Vickie's cheese business operates out of "an old old grade 2 listed dairy." The farm to which the dairy belonged is long gone and the land developed for housing, but there was a time, she says, "when cows wondered around the back of our shop." After that, Vickie says, the shop was run as a little delicatessen. "When the owners retired," she says, "it was let out as a shop unit. It's very old and quite quirky, small, but with quite a big cheese room. We opened the shop on a very limited budget and laid the floor ourselves. I think our serve-over fridges had previously been used at the Great Welsh Show."



Vickie and her partner, Ian Tomlinson, opened the Liverpool Cheese Company in 2006. "The recession seemed to start when we did," Vickie says, "but the business has gradually grown and grown. We've slowly been building up the online side, too. This year has been really good for online sales." Vickie came to cheese selling after she took voluntary redundancy after working "in housing." Vickie was, she says, in need of a complete change, "and I had always thought it sad that Liverpool didn't have a dedicated cheese shop. For one thing, I had nowhere to buy my cheese." Vickie quickly brought her cheese knowledge up to scratch by training with Carol Faulkner at the Chester Cheese Shop.

The shop is supported by its staff. "Kirsty is our excellent full-time member of staff," Vickie says. "She came to us on work experience when she was fifteen. We have lots of part time and casual staff as well." Staffing is something that the Liverpool Cheese Company seems to handle well. "Touch wood, we have had very few problems with staff," Vickie says. "The team is young because a lot of them are students. They are selling a great product and the varied job keeps them interested: as part of their job, they might go to a market or attend the cheese school."

artisanal cheeses

The shop stocks "around 200 cheeses," Vickie says. "We started off with the beautiful artisanal cheeses I would love to sell, but as time has gone on, we have ended up with a few cheeses that I personally don't like. But if this is a way of getting people into the cheese shop, then that's fine by me. A big range means we have to sell a lot of cheese so we need to work very hard, but we do sell a lot and this enables a good turnover of product. We sell such a lot of cheese because we do a lot of things, such as attending farmers markets and beer festivals." When it comes to displaying and storing her product, "the hard cheeses will be out on display in the daytime and will go somewhere cooler at night," Vickie says. "The cheese out in the shop is in relatively small pieces, with the rest in the cheese room."

In addition to the shop, The Liverpool Cheese Company also operates a cheese school. "We used to hold it once a month," Vickie says, "but this year we have had to run two a month as it has grown so popular. Really, it's a dressed-up cheese tasting evening. We have about 24 places on it and hold it on the first floor of a restaurant we supply in the city centre. It's a very social evening where people can learn about cheese. We have a cheese board of about 12 cheeses, which we talk to them about, and we also discuss the various other things that we have served with the cheese. If that is wine, one of our wine merchants will be invited. It's very social, but adults love to learn, so you must have a lot of that in


THE SHOP STOCKS AROUND 200 CHEESES

> "From the moment we opened, it has been our policy to encourage young people into the shop. It's important to instil in them the idea that you can buy your food on a daily basis and that that they should be interested in provenance"





there too. I've got one tonight on the subject of fondue and Alpine cheeses. We will have a bit of fondue and then talk about Alpine cheeses. I will explain what makes Alpine cheese different and then we will talk about each individual cheese on the board. Guests will have some mulled wine when they come in and then some Riesling with the cheese."

Another policy which educates potential customers about cheese is directed towards building the next generation of cheese buyers. The company makes a special effort to attract young customers.

"From the moment we opened," Vickie says, "it has been our policy to encourage young people into the shop. Younger people are too accustomed to going into a supermarket and putting things in their basket – that way, they don't have to face any questions and there's no embarrassment, but it tastes rubbish. It's important to instil in them the idea that you can buy your food on a daily basis and that that they should be interested in provenance."

This policy has been quite successful, Vickie says. "We do lots of work with the university, holding a market there once a month. I give the students a domestic science lecture, too. Since doing that, we have taken students on placements and we have done projects with them. Using social media encourages a younger audience and a lot of people who come to the cheese school are quite young, too."

Of current cheese buying trends, Vickie says "I've got a guy who comes in everyday and probably spends £3. The average spend at the weekend is probably about £12–£18. That goes up a bit for Christmas,



THE TEAM ARE SELLING A GREAT PRODUCT AND THE VARIED JOB KEEPS THEM INTERESTED

when we see people who come in once in a blue moon. The average piece of cheese I sell is about £3. People around here buy cheese in quite small quantities. Most people buy 100–120g rather than 200g. However, people who come into the shop on a regular basis tend to become much more ambitious. When we first opened, we sold a lot of Crumbly Lancashire. Now people ask for a much broader range."

operates online

Vickie is passionate about many of her cheeses, but "one of my favourite cheeses is Gorwydd Caerphilly. Before we opened the shop, we went to visit the family that makes it." Other cheeses earning her enthusiastic recommendation are Devon Blue ("a fantastic cheese"), Barkham Blue and "all the cheeses made by Sharphams." Ticklemore Goats, she adds, "is a really good cheese." The shop stocks "a lot of local cheeses. Mrs Kirkham's Lancashire is brilliant."

The shop operates online too. "Financially, it's not the biggest part of what we do, but it has great potential, hence the new website we are having designed." Vickie admits to not yet being an expert in promoting the online side but, she says, "I do know that instead of having a Scottish cheeses selection on the website, we have a Burns Night Cheese Collection and because of that, we sold an awful lot this year. The reason for this is, perhaps, that people have searched 'cheese for Burns Night'. Calling it the Burns Night Cheese Collection, means we must appear quite high on the list."

The taster packs offered by the shop can be as useful for entertaining as they are in introducing people to cheeses they might not have tasted. The packs consist of "small portions of 10 different cheeses and come with pairing notes for wine," Vickie says. "A lot of people will buy these because they are organising an evening of wine tasting with friends.

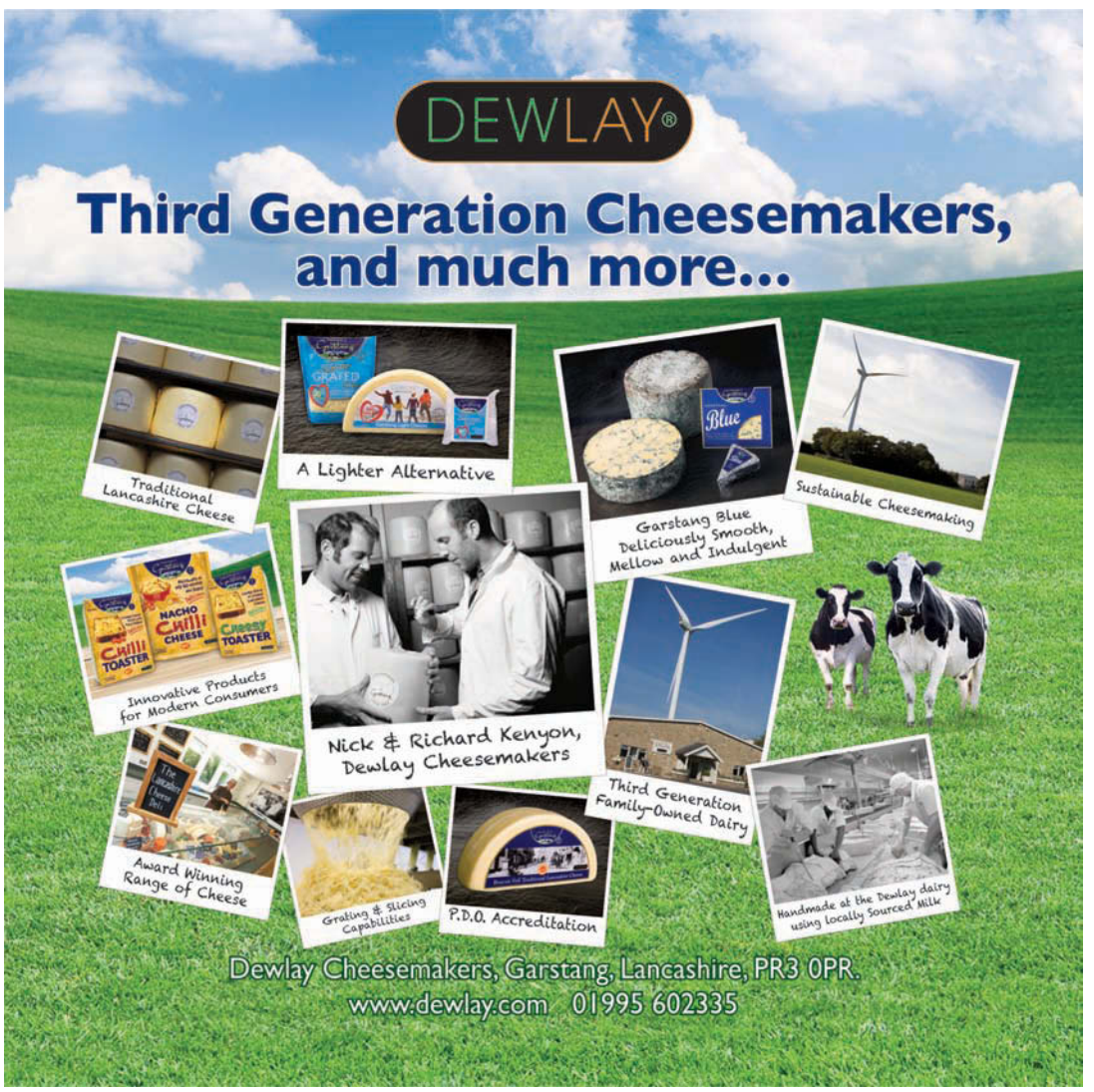

IT SEEMS FITTING THAT THE BUSINESS OPERATES OUT OF AN OLD GRADE 2 LISTED BUILDING

We sell a lot for stag and hen nights. A lot of people buy them because they want to learn something about cheeses without having to ask someone in a shop." Another sales tool working well for The Liverpool Cheese Company is the 'Year in Cheese' promotion, but "our best-selling product online is the three month cheese club. Every month, the customer receives five cheeses with tasting notes. This gives customers the chance to experience cheeses they may not normally have tried".

Publicity is key to much of the shop's activities. "Everything we do promotionally is all about free publicity," Vickie says, "and we got this from the Observer a few years ago because we were producing one of the cheapest hampers you could buy. This was a little, recycled cardboard tray with five different 100g cheeses and a packet of biscuits and it retailed at £17 or £18. It's really cheap but it's also a nice gift for someone. The shop also supplies a lot of restaurants, which is not a great money spinner, but almost every week, someone will ask for a cheese they've had in one of these restaurants."

Cheese accompaniments "increase the spend at the till," Vickie says. "We stock anything you might have at the tail-end of a dinner party. We aim to be the sort of place where you can buy a beautiful cheeseboard, some nice biscuits to go with it, some crab-apple jelly, freshly ground coffee, some chocolates and a bottle of wine."

The list of activities at this Liverpool store is quite a long one, but the one that affords its owner maximum satisfaction is the cheese school. "I like doing the cheese school because you get to go to some amazing places," Vickie says. "We did one in a Methodist church where we were required to sing a hymn before we started. Some of the people you meet are amazing. The best thing about selling cheese, really, is the interaction with people who love the product." And the secret of running a successful cheese shop, she says, is "long hours and hard work. Being passionate about what you sell helps a lot, too, but how could you not be passionate about cheese?"





BUCKLEY & BEALE

A love affair with all things American has inspired Buckley & Beale to bring the best of the US to Britain. Director Adrian Beale tells SF what makes this distributor different



Our mission is to bring the finest American speciality food to the UK and to provide top class customer service to our customers. As part of that, we would like to quash the misconception that all American food is either junk food or just plain poor quality. The US has phenomenally rich natural resources. They also have some fabulous artisan producers, making products from exceptionally high quality ingredients and supplying delis and farms shops across the US. It's exactly the same philosophy over here, and once you look beyond the big brand name cereals and candies, you realise America has a wealth of amazingly talented producers, whose passion and focus centres around making food that's a cut above what the supermarkets are offering.

We have chosen to position ourselves firmly in the speciality/gourmet food sector. We don't sell the typical American 'grocery'/confectionery products; other distributors have that market covered. We also differentiate ourselves through our approach to customer service. We are able to source and select the right products for individual customers, and deliver them efficiently to help maximise their sales and profits. We understand and take pleasure in the fact that for our business to grow, we need to help our customers' businesses to grow. We want to develop long-term relationships with our customers, and to continue to offer them great products that their customers will not usually find on the standard supermarket shelves.

The food industry is a very competitive market in the UK, and it's easy to think you're selling something different when you're not. If you're a retailer and you want to make sure you're offering something your competitor down the road doesn't sell, call us. If you want to offer products that the major supermarkets don't sell, call us. And if you want excellent customer service, and low minimum orders from a wholesaler that cares, call us. For the independent retailer it's a good business decision.



MEET ADRIAN ON THE STAND AT IFE

Our two primary considerations when choosing products are 'can you already get it in the UK?', and 'can you compare it to something you can already get in the UK?'. If the answer to these questions is no, then it makes our shortlist. Our next task is to ensure we are importing the very best example of that particular line, and McClures Pickles is an excellent example of that. You can buy pickles in the supermarket for a couple of pounds, but most are tasteless, soft, and bear no resemblance to the vinegary and crunchy pickles found in the great New York delis.

The two guys who own McClures — Bob and Joe — took their grandmother's old recipe for brine and created their own pickle brand, selling jars at their local farmers market. They now supply some of the finest delis across the US, and have put together a range of pickles and relishes that are second to none. Retailers care about our products because our suppliers care about what they make. But, there's no point importing 10 different ranges of pickles when one is clearly better than the other nine. So once we've selected a line, we find all the other producers of that product and choose the best, which in this case was McClures

There's nothing like the passion that a small producer has for their product. There's no excitement to be gained when dealing with a large multinational corporation, and no personal relationships to be developed and shared. When you deal directly with the producers you share their enthusiasm and their love for what they do, and you can see that love on the labels, in the jars, and on the plate. You just don't get that with produce churned out in large factories. Also, the customers who buy this food are genuinely interested in the story of its provenance — it's part of what they buy.



BLACKBERRY PATCH PRODUCTS NOW AVAILABLE

> "It would be telling to say what's in the future for Buckley & Beale. But call by our stand at IFE and we'll tell you!"

We source our producers by putting in the miles and visiting them in the US. There are numerous shows across the States, and we won't take on anything new until we've personally met and/or visited the supplier.

Independents should stock our products not only because they are great products, but because we've done our homework. Look closely at our range and you'll see that the vast majority are products that have a usual turnaround life of 4–8 weeks, after which a customer will go back and repeat purchase. We keep niche products such as speciality oils and vinegars to a minimum as they can take up to a year before a customer buys them again. Of course they are important, but we remember that business is business and you have to give customers a reason to come back sooner rather than later. We also know what customers want, and peanut butter is a great example. Did you know that peanut butter is now the nations' third most popular spread, bumping marmalade down to fifth? And yet there are delis offering five, ten, and sometimes fifteen different marmalades, and yet only one peanut butter.

We thoroughly enjoy what we do and want to share that with our customers. We even have suppliers coming over to us, and take opportunities like IFE to further grow our business, our customers' businesses, and strengthen relationships with both customers and suppliers.

Buckley & Beale
WORLD FOOD
01454 219 445 | sales@buckleyandbeale.com | www.buckleyandbeale.com

WHY NOT TRY…

With a finger firmly on the pulse of all things artisan and American, Buckley & Beale offers retailers unparalleled access to the best fine food the US has to offer. Here we share our picks of the distributor's spring/summer brochure – complete with iconic pickles, ambients and confectionery.



Sisters' Gourmet

There is something special about walking into a home filled with the scent of fresh baked cookies. With 20 years of experience in the gourmet specialty food industry, Sisters' Gourmet helps make baking easy and convenient, with unique, simple to prepare, one-bowl recipes, leaving you less mess in the kitchen and more time with family and friends. The small family owned business uses only the highest quality ingredients available, meaning you only have to add eggs and butter for perfect cookies or brownies every time. Some great new designs also help make Sisters' Gourmet mixes the perfect gift.



Blackberry Patch

Founded by farmers in 1988, Blackberry Patch harvested local fruits and used time-honoured Southern techniques to make jams, jellies and syrups.

The company's goal then was the same as it is now: to make handmade, small batch, high-quality, goods using real fruits and family recipes. All products are handcrafted in Thomasville, Georgia, a welcoming, small Southern town which has served as a source of inspiration for many of their recipes.

Today, Blackberry Patch products are sold across the US in speciality food stores, and their famous Blueberry and Raspberry Syrups are now available in the UK, with other flavours being launched at IFE. Both Blueberry and Raspberry Syrups are made using only three ingredients, taste great on ice cream, yoghurt, porridge etc, and come in cases of 12



McClure's



Using their Great Grandmother's recipe, Bob & Joe McClures make pickles as they should be – packed with flavour and with an incredible crunch. Not limp and watery like mass-produced pickles, these are all hand-cut and hand-packed, and sold in some of the best delis and sandwich shops around.

The pickles come in three varieties: Garlic & Dill, Spicy – intermingled with cayenne and habanero peppers for a little extra kick – and new Sweet & Spicy, which are wavy-cut.

Freshly-chopped garlic and dill also make the standard relish taste more like a great salad, and, like the pickles, the Spicy Relish adds a kick to any salad, hot dog or sandwich.

Buckley & Beale have also recently started importing the McClures Bloody Mary mix, which is like no other ready-made mix on the market.



Vermints

Born in Vermont, the Green Mountain State, in 2000, VerMints began humbly on a stovetop in a small kitchen in Bellows Falls. The goal from the start was simple: Make a simple and true mint packed with flavour, but without the artificial additives.

The first batch was VerMints Organic PepperMint, sweetened with organic maple syrup instead of corn syrup and infused with actual peppermint leaves. VerMints has a heartfelt, headstrong commitment to a 100% all-natural, organic product that wows.

They have four refreshing breath mint varieties – Peppermint, Wintergreen, Cinnamon and Ginger – and two sweet pastille flavours – Chai and Café Express. Their fun flavours are all mouth-watering, breath-freshening and taste bud-arousing. They source their ingredients from partners who share their passion for healthy living and a healthy planet.



McCanns

If you are looking for great tasting oats, then look no further than McCann's Steel Cut Irish Oatmeal.

For over 150 years they've been taking the best oats, removing the inedible outer husk and cutting them into smaller pieces. McCann's Steel Cut Irish Oats are rich and wholesome, with a unique, nutty taste, and there's no artificial additives or processing involved. They are a great source of fibre, and are non-GMO as well as being low in calories.

The range comprises their famous 28oz tin of Steel Cut Oats, some Quick & Easy mixes, and a range of Instant mixes such as Maple & Brown Sugar, Apple & Cinnamon and a Variety pack for those in a hurry.



Guittard

For 146 years and 5 generations the Guittard family has been crafting premium chocolate for the top restaurants and bakers in North America and throughout the world.

All of their chocolate comes from beans they select themselves, which is extremely important because the cocoa bean's taste and quality varies from country to country, from year to year, even from lot to lot. They cut open, roast and hand grind samples from every lot to be assured that the beans they buy have the unique taste and high level of quality their customers require.

These hand-selected cocoa beans are then crafted into the delicious, velvety morsels now available for home use. More refined in taste and texture, with a truer chocolate character and flavour, their chocolate adds an exclusive touch of elegance and finesse to confectionery, bakery and dairy products.

You'll find this extraordinary fine taste in all their premium products, chocolate and non-chocolate alike, and at just £2.75 per bag, fantastic value for such a high quality product.



Kodiak

Kodiak Cakes is an American flapjack (pancake) and waffle mix brand that was originally sold out of a red wagon when eight year old Joel Clark sold homemade pancake mixes packed in brown paper lunch bags to his neighbours.

Many years later, Kodiak Cakes has become the number one-selling wholegrain pancake mix in the US, as people continue to look for healthy products that taste great.

Recently the brand launched Power Cakes, a high protein version of the family recipe that, since it launched just 8 months ago, has already become the company's number one product. To make Power Cakes, just add water to achieve 14g of protein per serving, and up to 21 grams if you add egg and milk (instructions on the back). With all natural ingredients including 100% wholegrain wheat and oat flours, you'll be amazed at how light, fluffy and tasty these pancakes are.

Koeze Cream-Nut

Cream-Nut is the standard for exceptional, old-fashioned American peanut butter. Crafted by the Koeze family since 1925, Cream-Nut is an iconic brand that captures the true flavour and quality of traditional peanut butter.

Roasted in small batches, on our line of lovingly-maintained, vintage 1940's equipment, this peanut butter captures an era. It takes you back to a time when foods were minimally processed, a time when small manufacturers placed their passion for flavour ahead of mass production.

We still use our original recipe, using only the finest Virginia peanuts and California sea salt. Our Cream-Nut peanut butter is neither new nor improved; we think we got it right the first time. One taste will convince you that staying the steady course was well worth it.

Taste for yourself the traditional flavour of Cream-Nut that is capturing the hearts of Britain.



All these products and more are available exclusively through Buckley & Beale:
01454 219 445 | sales@buckleyandbeale.com | www.buckleyandbeale.com

FARM SHOP EVOLUTION

The farm shop has come a long way since its 1970's origins. Robin Goldsmith charts its growth and looks at current trends

Farm shops have evolved hugely from the days when produce was sold from a small stall at the farm gate. They generally started to appear in the UK from the mid-1970s, influenced by the US, (as were farmers' markets, which are now also very much part of the British food and drink scene). What these two related areas have in common is primarily the emphasis on local provenance, a factor increasingly seen as important. Indeed, British origin was listed as the most important factor when buying food and non-alcoholic drink in 2013 at 34% (Mintel). Essentially, the sector is based on two models – either the large estate able to inject significant investment, or a small family farm with a stall that grows to incorporate new features. In both, there is a direct connection with the farm and the products on sale are often unavailable elsewhere. Additionally, mutual benefits can be gained by sourcing produce from local businesses at an early stage, helping them grow in partnership. Advantages to the economy are clear, with FARMA's calculations for 2013/2014 showing an annual turnover for its 302 member farm shops at £17.7 million, with 2,300-2,400 staff employed.

One of the UK pioneers was Chatsworth House in Derbyshire, which opened its farm shop in 1977. Its core business revolves around estate-produced lamb, beef and game, but its ethos also includes promoting local products. Farm shop manager André Birkett explains, "First we concentrate on what the estate produces (50% sales) and then we promote tenant farmers, the best of local producers, quality goods from the rest of Britain and lastly, overseas products (only 3% sales)." The turning point for the business came in 1984 when, after running at a loss, they opened an in-house kitchen and bakery, a progressive concept at the time. Birkett also illustrates how their philosophy benefits the community. "When the local fishmonger closed, we wanted to keep that skill base going, so we opened a fish counter at the farm shop and aim to source fresh fish from British waters caught by small boats." For Birkett, it is essential to establish a secure business appealing to local people, rather than relying on the tourist trade. "The regulars keep us going and give us feedback. If the shop doesn't work for them, it shouldn't work for anyone else."

Other estates have adopted similarly regional-minded approaches. Despite opening Apley Farm Shop during a recession in 2011, Lord and Lady Hamilton of Dalzell saw the potential of their country estate environment. Taking account


APLEY FARM SHOP...

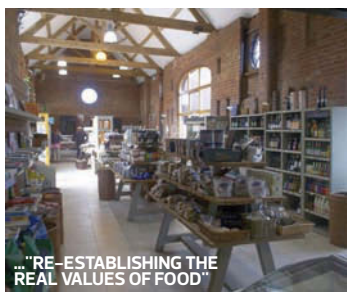
of socio-economic factors to attract people from neighbouring conurbations in the West Midlands, they started their venture with a play barn and café alongside the farm shop. They source what they can from the estate plus local suppliers, reconnecting people with the appeal of good local food, as Lady Hamilton describes. "The link is too wide between producers and consumers. In focusing on being local, farm shops like ours are trying to reduce that distance and re-establish the real values of food."

Local following

Drewton's Farm Shop is located on East Yorkshire's Drewton Estate, which also has holiday accommodation within its grounds. This is another business that attracts both a strong, local following and tourists. "We appeal to customers who want to know where their food comes from and who want to support the local community," explains Katie Taylor. "We have full traceability on our products, the quality is as good as it gets, we know how fresh it is and there are low food miles, which supports the environment too."



FRUIT AND VEG AT ARDROSS FARM SHOP


..."RE-ESTABLISHING THE REAL VALUES OF FOOD"

FARMA's Michael Mack continues this theme: "With greater consumer interest in the provenance of food and drink, farm shops can trade on point of origin, the story behind the product and the public's trust in that story, connecting with the ethos of their business in a manner that supermarkets cannot do. This is their main point of difference."

Tom Hunt of the Ludlow Food Centre, which launched in 2007, highlights advantages of in-house food production and retail. "Our centre was designed from the start to be the ultimate expression of a farm shop focusing on food produced from raw materials grown on-site or locally. Our own products are not available elsewhere, which is their USP and a similar strategy could help other farm shops survive, allowing them to compete against supermarkets. This model keeps costs down, ensuring money spent remains within the business, as each step of the process from growing or rearing produce to transporting and selling it remains in-house, as far as possible, adding value at each stage."

> "With greater consumer interest in the provenance of food and drink, farm shops can trade on point of origin, the story behind the product"

A successful farm shop can also develop from a smaller, traditional, family farm. Historically, for many of these, farming was never particularly profitable and poor prices at livestock markets or changes in legislation led some to diversify and deal directly with consumers. One example is West Craigie Farm near Edinburgh, which changed from dairy to fruit production because of pasteurisation laws, and opened an on-site shop in the 1980s. As business increased, in 2007, a new farm shop, ten times larger, was built and a café was added. Within these last eight years, turnover has risen tenfold and the farm shop has continued to expand. The owners retain a clear focus on how to grow further and one way they have identified is by developing their loyalty program, encouraging participants to visit more regularly, with incentives such as shop and café vouchers. Additionally, they benefit from seasonal factors, with their 'pick your own' facility generating more business during summer. Eighty-five percent of what they sell is Scottish (the majority produced on the farm), giving them a point of difference from the multiples. "We don't try to compete with them on



price", says John Sinclair. "We sell customers a story and the experience of being out on a farm, as much as the actual product."

Price survey

Nevertheless, a FARMA-commissioned study from last November showed that in-season products were, on average, cheaper in farm shops than in supermarkets. This will come as no surprise to Simon Hirst of Hinchliffe's, whose grandfather founded their farm shop in 1974, having sold eggs straight from the farm in the mid-1960s. "Farm shops can be perceived as elitist and expensive. However, in 2013, we did a price survey of 20 items from our butchery, compared with our town's biggest supermarket and we were cheaper on 18 items."

Many farm shops are also involved in school education and charity initiatives. For example, West Craigie Farm works with the Royal Highland Education Trust, helping children understand how food is produced and at Chatsworth, they have always been committed to this too. As André Birkett illustrates, "One day, our children will be in positions of importance, so we need to build our ethos into them early in life and warm them to our business."

On-site family attractions can be a big draw, but a farm shop's core principles remain key to its future. South Yorkshire's Cannon Hall, a struggling farm in the 1980s, was transformed into a successful, year-round tourist attraction, incorporating an adventure playground. Their award-winning farm shop has gained a reputation for selling top quality home-produced beef, pork and lamb. In their view, fewer food miles (the slaughterhouse is four miles away) and reduced stress on the animals leads to a better product. Co-director Richard Nicholson explains, "Since we opened the farm shop (1989), there has been a big growth in a now crowded market. We can stand out from the rest by, among other things, the quality of our produce". Customers would appear to agree with this, as even after the 2001 outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease, revenues were up from the previous year, and have continued to grow.



CRAIGHIE'S FARM SHOP: "SELLING A STORY"



CANNON HALL: REVENUES UP

East Sussex's Middle Farm exemplifies the value of a USP, benefiting from The National Collection of Cider & Perry. Its farm shop is one of the oldest in Britain, born of necessity due to water drainage problems on the farm. Originally, it operated from the farmhouse kitchen in the 1960s, as Rod Marsh explains. "Diversification was the only practical way forward, so the owners taught themselves how to cut up carcasses, made what they could in the kitchen and sold eggs from their chickens. This sort of expedition into trade was very much looked down upon by the local farming community then, so they had to produce as much as possible themselves. Spreading the net further afield to give customers the very best of UK produce, they began to source cheese made in the West Country direct from the farms there. This interface with producers was to be the defining feature of Middle Farm." Marsh highlights another crucial aspect for survival, that of listening to their clientele. "By the late 1980s, we were being asked by customers who wanted to do their weekly shop with us, (rather than use a supermarket), for all manner of things that we could not grow on the farm, so we did our research and sought to supply their needs."

Sample products

Just as Middle Farm's cider and perry collection attracts customers to its farm shop, several drinks businesses have moved into the sector too. For example, Healey's Cornish Cyder Farm stocks its own and other local

> "A FARMA commissioned study showed that in-season products were, on average, cheaper in farm shops than in supermarkets."



produce and also has a jam kitchen, encouraging customers to sample products across the range within a visually attractive setting, incorporating both traditional and modern features. "We've kept a rustic feel to the environment", explains Anna Pascoe", so that customers can easily find what they want, but also feel relaxed and not subject to too much of a hard sell". Drewton's Katie Taylor also describes the importance of considering the aesthetic of a farm shop building. "We converted our farm buildings to create a fabulous quality farm shop with big open windows, lots of light, high ceilings with original beams and stonework. The standard of conversion probably appeals to our main customer base, as they feel comfortable and welcome within our walls."

However, the USP of some farm shops remains their traditional nature, as long as they still offer a real alternative to the multiples. Ardross is a traditional Scottish farm shop, without a café or other attractions, winning the 'Retailer of the Year' award at the 2014 Farm Shop & Deli Show. Claire Pollock explains: "We originally set up the shop in response to the pressures of farming, so we began selling our beef direct to the public with the aim of providing a fantastic, high quality product. We now showcase a huge selection of quality foods made in Britain by farming families and small artisan companies and we price mark vegetables daily against supermarkets. With fantastic service too, we can sell through our shop, local home delivery and mail order." Pollock also believes that farm shops can benefit from adverse situations affecting supermarkets, such as the horsemeat scandal. "Consumers are desperately trying to do the right thing, which is where our honest and transparent shop appeals to them. They can ask about any part of our business and we can be 100% honest and happy with our answer."

In contrast to the traditional farm shop, there are several independent enterprises without a farm that share a similar ethos, promoting local, artisan food. For example, Holwood Farm Shop in Kent was created from a renovated, derelict dairy farm building. It has an on-site coffee shop and hosts two food festivals and two craft markets per year. Owner Gary Mercer has a clear vision for the future with plans that include adding a butchery and partnering with a local beekeeper. "Our ethos is to source as locally as possible if the quality and price are right".

new venture

An increasing number of supermarkets are now entering this market too. Last April, the East of England Co-operative Society opened The Darsham Hamper and Café. Designed on a farm shop style, 80% of its products are supplied direct from East Anglian farmers, growers and producers. Retail Executive Officer, Roger Grosvenor, says: "This is a bold new venture for us, which clearly demonstrates our commitment to supporting local growers and producers."

In the face of such initiatives, Ludlow's Tom Hunt believes that the farm shops that succeed will be those that broaden their operation into categories that allow them to compete more effectively in the market, providing new reasons for people to visit them and building on customer loyalty. With this in mind, the new generation of farm shop entrepreneurs may be particularly willing to embrace modern technology. In 2013, the Gurneys assumed control of one of Norfolk's long-established PYO sites at White House Farm. Adding a café and a butcher, they are transforming what was their vegetable shed into a small farm shop. Looking to the future, they have also invested in specialist software that helps farms develop their infrastructure along the lines of supermarkets and other large organisations, supporting their ambitious plans. Similarly, many farm shops are considering online retailing, as Claire Pollock of Ardross explains. "Customers appreciate the personal family feel, the helpful cooking advice and information from our staff. However, I believe that internet shopping is only going to get bigger and therefore may be an area we look more closely at in the future."

There are clearly numerous challenges facing farm shops, but there are also many strategies that could help them succeed. The key component will always be good quality home-grown produce and Mintel's 2013 findings that foods of British, local and regional origin are seen as more important in the wake of the horsemeat scandal should be encouraging news for the sector. Therefore, there is no reason to suggest that farm shops won't continue to be part of the food and drink landscape, despite the retail power of supermarkets. As long as they retain their USP, have a clear business plan and always look to provide new, innovative products, they can connect with the public in ways that the multiples cannot do. As Michael Mack says, "The key for growth is to focus on detail, transmitting a positive message based on quality, provenance and benefits to the rural economy. Farm shops should make best use of their environment and keep that connection between the shop and the farm for long-term viability."



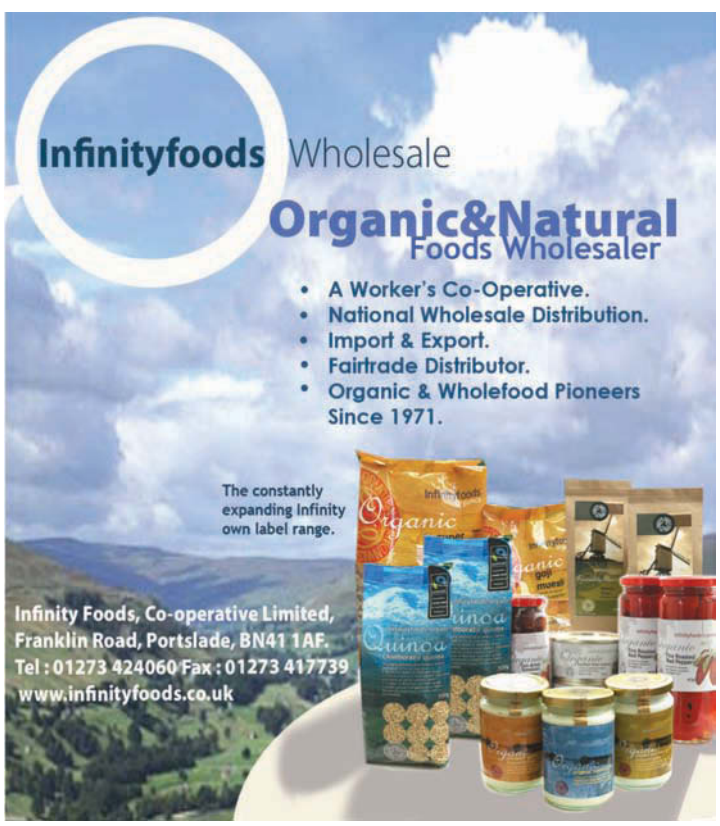
MIDDLE FARM: "SUPPLYING NEEDS"



DARSHAM HAMPER: "BOLD NEW VENTURE"

KEY COMPONENTS FOR SUCCESS

1. Quality and provenance
2. Exploit your unique selling point
3. Diversification with a broad commercial outlook
4. Promoting seasonal produce
5. Responding to customer demand.
6. Strategies to build customer loyalty
7. Tapping into agritourism and "day-out" culture
8. Promoting rural economy through education







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SELLING EASTER

Easter is an often-overlooked chance to promote all sorts of stock and a time when farm shops can expect an influx of customers

With retail opportunities being fully exploited for such marginal event days as Valentines and Halloween, it's surprising that more isn't made of Easter. The sale of Easter eggs aside, the food retailing community tends to see Easter very much as Christmas's poor relation. This seems like a wasted opportunity. Easter is an annual, four day holiday when the nation is in a collective mood to have fun. Spring brings with it a mood of optimism and the spring sales encourage people to spend, now that their finances have recovered from December's mauling. Resolutions made in the New Year have long been given up in favour of allowing a little indulgence.

The Easter period is also one in which people have time on their hands and when a drive out to the local farm shop can seem a good idea for a family excursion. All these factors make this a good holiday to sell on. Like Christmas, Easter is a time when friends and relatives come together, lavish meals are planned for at least one of its days and there are all sorts of foods and drinks which retailers should be able to move, if they are promoted as ideal fare for this holiday period.

Easter Sunday lunch

Although the prevailing trend is against regular Sunday lunch, Easter Sunday is still a time when many people want to enjoy a meal with all the trimmings. Your butchery, should you have one, will experience a spike in demand for meats such as spring lamb, chicken, pork with crackling and hams. It's likely, too, that you'll see a sudden increase in demand for asparagus, new potatoes and other spring vegetables. Having an Easter-flagged table, or otherwise promoting ambient products that go well with meats, can increase interest in chutneys, pickles and mustards, especially if they are flagged as essential accompaniments to meats such as ham and pork. Cranberry and mint sauces, relishes, jellies and hot chilli sauces, anything which will add a zing to traditional fare can be sold



Easter accompaniments, and buying premium, artisan-made products unavailable in the supermarket allows customers to add a special element to their Easter meals without going to too much trouble or incurring great expense.

Many of these chutneys and relishes can be sold with cheese, either by suggesting accompaniments for cheese by word of mouth, offering cheese and chutney tasters, or through good signage. Ideal cheeses to push at this time of year are fresh crumblies such as Cheshire, Caerphilly, sheep's milk cheeses and Bries. Locally-grown rhubarb will be in season, which can be sold fresh, used in seasonal, ready-made desserts or served in your restaurant. Other products forever associated with Easter are Simnel cake, Easter biscuits, eggs and, of course, hot cross buns. Home-made versions of these will sell well, especially if served warm.

Drinks

Many small breweries tailor their beers to the seasons and produce light, refreshing ales for this time of year. Cold cider is a good choice to serve with chicken, ham and turkey, as is a good crisp, white wine. A pleasant English wine, locally made, will bring something a little more unusual to the dinner table. A boozy lunch rules out post-prandial jaunts, so pushing your range of



sophisticated cordials and ginger beers can pay dividends.

Promoting Easter

If you have received this magazine hot off our press, then you should have two weeks to prepare for Easter itself. It's fair to say that Easter isn't an event for which customers will be buying in food weeks ahead of the event, and much of your Easter trading is more than likely to occur on the holiday weekend itself.

Farm shops with additional attractions such as farm trails with new-born lambs and spring chickens will now be e-shotting their mailing lists with details of Easter events and planting the idea that a visit to their farm shops makes a great Easter weekend excursion for the whole family. Even if you have no such extra facilities, a little smart copy-writing which extols what you do – wonderful, artisanal products which are unavailable in mainstream stores, handmade jams, homemade cooking, hot and tasty snacks – and promoting yourself as a hub of locally-made foods can be worth



PAUL DENHAM, WALSINGHAM FARM SHOPS

Paul Denham at the Walsingham Farm Shops says this Easter, his shops "will, as ever, be concentrating on what we do well, providing delicious local food and everything customers could want for great eating over Easter. We will be focusing on making the most of the increased footfall that we know we will experience during the Easter break and ensuring that our service and availability is top class." The Norfolk farm shops will be offering " lots of tasters over the busy period" and will "be promoting classic Easter products – everything from local spring lamb to hot cross buns, Simnel cake and locally-produced chocolates." Paul promotes his Easter trading mainly "using in-store promotions, social media and some local advertising. In addition, he says, "we are building relationships with local accommodation providers and supplying their Easter guests with food hampers featuring the best of Norfolk produce." Rather than discounting over the period, Walsingham "will be focusing on increasing average transaction values." To further this aim, the stores will be initiating incentives such as "loyalty cards and bounce-back vouchers to reward higher spending."



HARRY DAVIES, THE DE BEAUVOIR DELI

At Easter, says, Harry Davies of The De Beauvoir Deli, "We sell Easter eggs that you're not able to buy at the supermarket sourced from smaller suppliers, who produce a better quality product. This makes them popular gifts for adults." Although Harry changes his display for Easter and the deli's social media "always reflects the season", really, he says, "Easter sells itself."

> "If you have received this magazine hot off the press, then you should have two weeks to prepare for Easter"



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prestat.co.uk



the effort, whether by social media, flyer or small ad. It goes without saying that any opportunities to spread news of your Easter promotions by word of mouth should always be made the most of.

Easter gifting

A display of gifts suitable for sale at any time of year can be given an Easter twist with the addition of a few suitable decorations. Giving at Easter should be encouraged and chocolate products are the traditional choice. Artisanal chocolatiers have a range of items designed for Easter, all of which will be a world apart in terms of taste and raise your game if you had previously been offering the standard Easter egg. Baskets of fresh eggs, novelty chocolate items and Easter cheese selections are all possible ways in which you might increase your turnover at this time of year.

Chocolate

With line upon line of tasteless, over-packaged Easter eggs made of chocolate being of, (in the case of at least one major manufacturer) declining quality, Easter is an ideal time to raise awareness of the virtues of artisanal and fresh chocolate. Many makers will produce novelty items which are far superior to those found in mainstream retail outlets and all will make superb Easter gifts. Remind customers that this is fresh chocolate and make a virtue of its shorter sell-by date. Customers need to appreciate, long before Easter itself, that yours is the place to shop for the best in Easter chocolate.

THE EASTER HARE

It's easier to sell Easter if you have a little back story. This can be used in informational signage, a little something which can add to the holiday spirit. Like so may celebrations on the calendar. Easter seems to predate its Christian incarnation. The name itself may derive from the Anglo Saxon Eostra or Ostara, an ancient Germanic divinity. Both Christian and secular celebrations see Easter as a celebration of spring and rebirth, the Easter Bunny (or hare, originally) being symbolic of fertility. The tradition of the Easter egg hunt has its origins in a children's belief that hares laid eggs in the grass.





CLAIRE POLLOCK, **ARDROSS FARM SHOP**

Claire Pollock of the award-winning Ardross Farm Shop says that Easter offers "lots of opportunities." Firstly," she says, "as a large proportion of the country is on holiday at this time, we see a trend of people spending more time in the kitchen cooking home-made meals. This means we need to be on hand at any point with cooking tips and recipes to help our customers do this. It also means we need to ensure that all necessary products are available for the customer." At this time of year, the farm shop also benefits from seasonal holiday makers. "The East Neuk is a very popular tourist destination," Claire says, "We work very closely with lots of self-catering accommodations, providing them with luxury hampers for the guests on arrivals. This not only gives the accommodation the 'wow' factor for a guest coming in but also gives us an opportunity to showcase a variety of our produce."

Sales of meat are particularly important at the Ardross Farm Shop, which was originally opened as an outlet for the farm's beef, but at Easter, Claire says, "lamb is very popular. We are extremely lucky to get our lamb and mutton from a local farmer just 20 minutes away from the shop. The Evans family at Raemore Farm take great care to produce lamb and mutton to the best of their ability all year round. As lamb is popular, we need to ensure that we have all the trimmings as well. This includes fresh rosemary cut from the walled garden every morning, mint sauce and lots of fresh vegetables."

Rather than discounting their product ranges at Easter, Ardross tries to "give our customers the best produce and the best price all year round," Claire says. "However, what we do encourage, is having experienced and competent staff on hand with all the cooking advice a customer may need to help them create the perfect Easter lunch."



BUYER

A Norwich deli with an Italian makeover does a brisk trade, thanks to the Italian-American owners Fabrizio Fiaschi and Henry Schalk. Fabrizio tells Speciality Food what makes this deli work

Norfolk's county town is a bustling student and commercial hub with plenty of potential for outlets which can feed a hungry workforce. Just off the city centre is a lively deli which does just that. Amaretto is "a typical Italian delicatessen specializing in Italian food, such as cheeses, salamis, pasta and olives," says Fabrizio Fiaschi, who shares its ownership with New York-born Henry Schalk. "I sell Spanish food, too, because I like Spain as a country and its food as well. We also sell a lot of local products, such as our range of honey."

The deli is run by its owners, with Fabrizio front of house and Henry as the deli's head chef. Augmenting the line, up, Fabrizio says, "is a person who does cakes, a pizza maker and two girls who work in the shop. We don't have a café, because our food is take-away."

Before coming to England, Florentine Fabrizio "was selling Tuscan products into this area." The deli, he says, "was one of my customers. I worked for them and then they asked me to take over the shop." There was, he saw, "a gap in the market for high quality food." The shop does a brisk trade in hot food. "Henry is a very good chef and he makes three or four ready meals every day," Fabrizio says. "We have daily deliveries of fresh vegetables, meat and other foods and we prepare and make everything here. We are always busy, especially at lunchtimes, so it works!"



The deli originally was an English one, with a coffee shop. Fabrizio says. The owner sold this first, and then the delicatessen. After we took over the deli, we started to change it and now, after six years, the deli has a new personality. We have a coffee machine, serve a lot of fresh hot food and stock a great many Italian products alongside our English ones. The hot food service is very important to the deli. "Henry cooks everything," Fabrizio says, "English, Italian, and Greek food such as vegetable moussaka. Every day, we do three or four hot meals so customers can have the same meal no more than once a week. We have the same customers every day, more or less, so we need to change our offering every single day."

Amaretto's best-selling hot food options, he says, are "our beef lasagne and the vegetable moussaka. We also do spinach and ricotta ravioli, linguine carbonara and beef lasagne. Today, we had two large trays of fish pie, which went very quickly. Also selling well is our authentic Florentine pizza. All the ingredients are Italian and the guy who makes pizza is from Naples. It's a very nice pizza."

Italian cheeses

The deli stocks a good range of Italian foods, as Fabrizio explains. "We sell Italian extra virgin olive oil, about eighteen different kinds of Italian pasta, in various shapes, pasta sauces, Italian arborio risotto, polenta, Italian biscuits and Italian cakes. We also sell Parma ham, Milano and Tuscan salami, olives and 20-25 Italian cheeses, including Gorgonzola, Parmesan, Taleggio, Pecorino, Provolone and Mozarella." This was another local gap in the market plugged, because, he says, "it had been hard to find a good Gorgonzola or a Buffalo Mozzarella in Norwich." The shop also does "a limited amount of bespoke buffet service; we serve coffee, make celebration cakes and, in summer, we sell ice cream."

The deli enjoys a prime location "just outside the city centre in Norwich. It's a very cool area; we have the school of art next door, Cinema City is in front of us, and a lot of events are held nearby. It's a very good position, strategically." As for customers, the shop serves a lot of students when they are here, but mostly, we serve workers in the many offices around here, and teachers from the schools." Busiest times of day for Amaretto are "early mornings before people go to work, and lunchtimes from 12 to 1.30 or 2pm."

Although business was "a little quiet" when Speciality Food spoke to Fabrizio, it would pick up the following week, when the university reopened, after which "we will be increasingly busy." Generally speaking, he adds, business is returning to normal after the recent recession. Illustrating this, Fabrizio says, "there was a time when customers were coming in with coins, perhaps three pound coins and spending £2.95. Now we are seeing £20 notes in the till again."

Fabrizio's daily routine begins "at 6:30am, when I check the float. Then I do the cakes and put the sausage rolls and samosas in the oven. Henry makes the breakfast muffins, and then he has to start cooking, because the food must be ready around 12:00. I open the shop at eight o'clock and at 11, one of the two girls starts work, along with the pizza maker. In mid-afternoon we start to clean up and do a few things in preparation for next day."

Since opening his Italian deli some seven years ago, what has Fabrizio learned? "I've learned," he says, "that this job is a lot of fun; it's great. I've also learned that people prefer shopping in independent shops to supermarkets."

> "There was a time when customers were coming in with coins, perhaps three pound coins and spending £2.95. Now we are seeing £20 notes in the till again"





FARM SHOP FOCUS

Abbe Janaway, co-owner of Newlyns Farm Shop in Hampshire, explains how her flagship farm shop has developed.

Newlyns Farm Shops in Hampshire is a business based on its production of premium meat. Here, customers are offered a full 'field to fork' experience. "We are able to take our product from the farm," says co-owner Abbe Janaway, "right the way through to selling it in the shop and, if you want to go to the next step, we have a cookery school which can teach you how to cook that meat." In this way, provenance is assured.

"We have two farm shops," Abbe says, "the main one in North Warnborough, near Hook, and a smaller shop at Weyhill, near Andover. Both shops, she tells Speciality Food, are outlets for "fourth generation farmers who produce all our own beef, pork and lamb." The main farm, she says, "is about three miles from the shop and it's here that we produce high quality meat." Of her location, Abbe says, "we are a quarter of a mile off the M3 at junction 5. The farm is quite industrial, with units let to other businesses. Access is fantastic, but it's not a small quaint farmyard environment. We have large conurbations around and that's what you need – lots of chimney pots."

> We purpose-built, which in some ways is easier than trying to work with something you have already got. Our business decisions have been based on the fact that we are passionate about creating great food.

The farm shops came about because, Abbe says, "as farmers, we were producing really good beef, and this was being sold to the local abattoir. We felt this was a waste of the product and wanted to be able to sell this direct to the customer. We wanted to be able to tell them the story of our beef and about the provenance that we have here." Newlyn also wanted to improve the quality of its beef and to this end, a number of changes were made to farming practices. "We moved away from the Continental breeds in favour of very traditional breeds such as Herefords and Shorthorn bulls," Abbe says. "These produce a carcass which is much improved in flavour and texture by hanging." The farm includes "purpose-built hanging rooms" which, she tells Speciality Food, ensure that "the meat is always at its optimum."

New build

Once the meat has been hung, eight full-time butchers "with a wealth of knowledge" prepare the meat for sale. "We bring in a whole body of beef and from that body, we take cuts of steak, fillet, rump, sirloin, and roasting joints," Abbe says. "It also produces a huge amount of braising steak and mince. We sell a certain amount through the counter and the rest is utilised in our pies and ready meals, of which we produce 26 varieties. You can get an incredible amount off one body."

The ready meals create a cornerstone of turnover. "15– 20 per cent of our business is ready meals," Abe says. "Our luxury lasagne sells well. Lasagne isn't hard to make, but it takes time, and that's what we can save for our customers. It's the same with our boeuf bourgignon. These days, people don't have the time they need to cook."

The flagship farm shop opened 11 years ago, Abbe says, "and our ethos hasn't changed, despite our growth. It's still all about producing food on the farm." The farm shop was a new build.

"We didn't have an old barn to convert, so we purpose-built, which in some ways is easier than trying to work with something you have already got," Abbe says. "We had a blank piece of paper and were going into retail with very little experience.

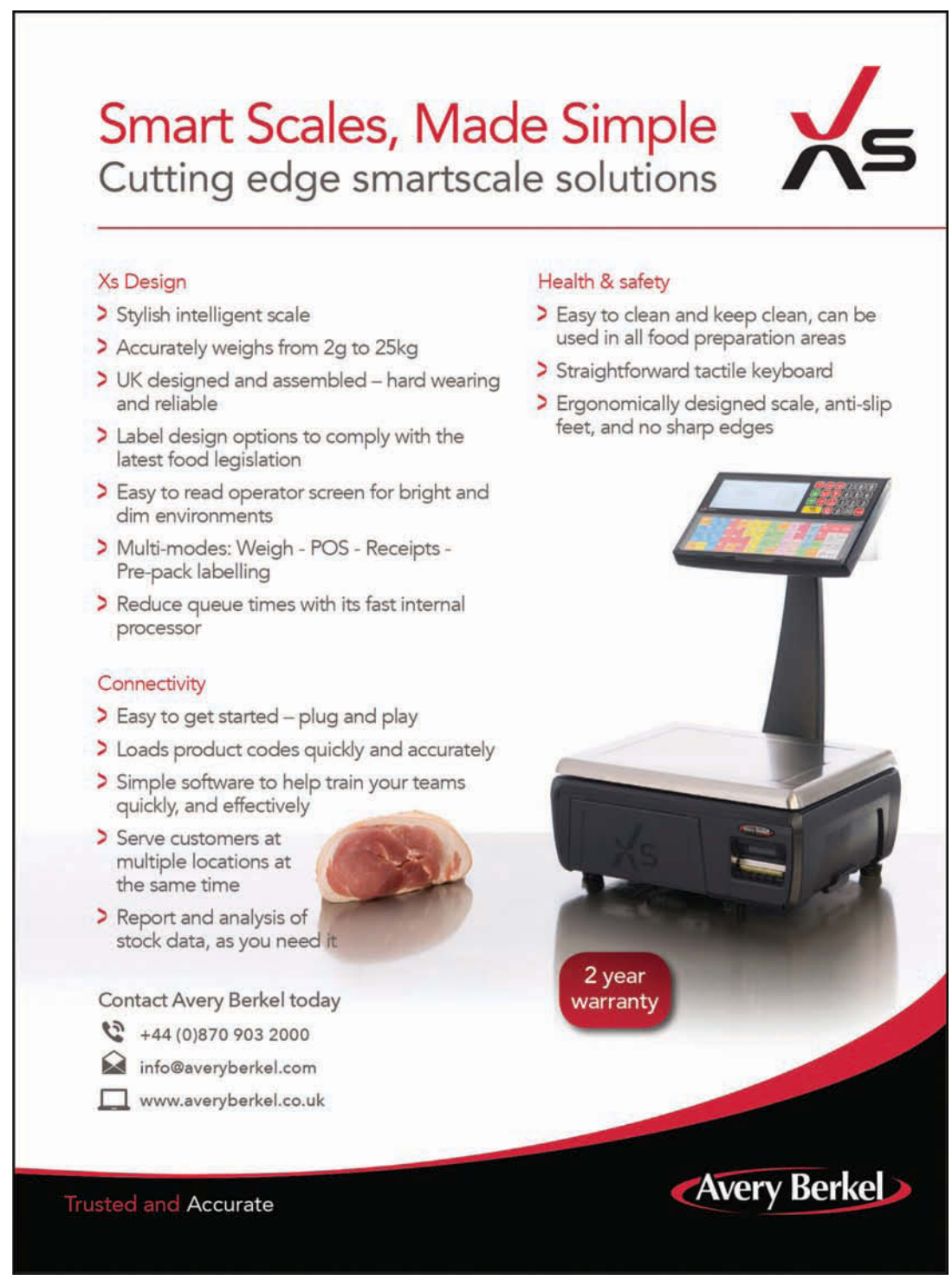


BECAUSE IT IS A NEW BUILD, THE SHOP HAS A MODERN LOOK

Our business decisions have been based on the fact that we are passionate about creating great food. Because it is a new build, the shop has a modern look, but this is softened by the use of a Yorkstone equivalent flooring which looks very traditional – but is hard on the feet!"

At the beginning, Abbe says," there were only four of us in the shop and we had one butcher. I made all the ready meals, puddings and pies in the kitchen." Since then, though, the business grew very quickly. One of the problems was trying to keep control of it, to keep up with that growth, without changing the basic ethos of the business. Within a year, we had extended the main shop to incorporate more freezers, because our ready meals were doing such a good trade. Within four years, we had doubled our size and put in a small coffee shop. We then started up the cookery school. We opened a second shop five years ago and recently, we did a large





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extension, which put the café up to 85 seats. We also put in a big deli counter. The extension to the shop meant we were able to change the flow and get rid of bottlenecks. In this way, we were able to give customers space to browse and talk to staff."

These days, the shop processes "about 1,500 transactions through the shop every week," and Abbe estimates that each transaction represents two and half people. "There are about 1,500 covers in the café. This means we are probably looking at around 4,000 – 4,500 people through the shop in a week." The average basket spend varies throughout week. " Over the whole week," she says, "it's about £23, but on a Saturday, this goes up to between £29 and £31. We have a high average basket spend because so much of the business is about the meat. Meat sales make up about 50% of the turnover."

Provenance and locality strongly influence the shop's stocking policy. "Firstly," Abbe says, "we like products to be from Hampshire and seasonal. Our fruit and veg is collected from just across the border in Wiltshire. We like local and seasonal and as much English as we can. We do a few Continental cheeses but wherever possible, these are cheeses which do not have an English equivalent. There are fantastic English cheeses out there."



In fact, the shop is well located to sell some very good local cheeses. "Tunworth is made three miles down the road. They started at the same time as we did and we were their first shop," Abbe says. "We also stock Barkham Blue, Waterloo and Lyburn cheeses." The area boasts "very good" local producers of dry and ambient goods too. "We stock the local Outrageous Fudge, Belinda Clark's marshmallows, New Forest Chocolates and Fruity Foods chutneys," says Abbe. "We have a local baker who delivers fresh bread every day at seven in the morning. It's all about freshness and quality and supporting small producers by offering them a marketplace to sell their products."



Taste test

Getting stock right can take time, while the retailer understands what is available locally, how good it is and starts to get an idea off local taste and demand. The Newlyn team found the right mix after some experimentation. "With wholesalers offering a wide range," Abbe says, "it's easy to end up with the same products which every other farm shop has on its shelves and I think that to a certain extent, we slightly fell into that trap for a while. Now I taste test everything in the shop and have made everything work for its position on the shelf." The shop has many products which sell well, Abbe says, but gives a particular mention to Summerdown Mint, "who make fantastic products such as mints, chocolates and tea. "

Customers have been encourages to stay longer in the shop and spend more by the extensions made to the premises, Abbe explains. "A larger café meant a larger menu, and this attracts a broader range of people. We have a fantastic breakfast trade, too. People have breakfast and then browse the shop. Outside, we have installed play equipment and there are paddocks of animals. We are hoping to develop the children and animals side. This all gives people another reason to come and shop and makes us more of a destination."





The shop's website offers a price comparison service, which Abbe says, is an effective tool when it comes to convincing people about the good value food which can be fund in farm shops. "There is a perception," she says, "that farm shops are more expensive and that is always a challenge. We do price comparisons to prove that our meat is of a comparable price. We try to be as competitive as we possibly can be. It is very important that our customers don't see us as a luxury shop that they only use for special occasions. We want to be part people's weekly routine. That's really important for us."

An important part of the Newlyn operation is the cookery school. "It's all about getting your name out and strengthening the brand. We offer a service high-quality private chef service for dinner parties. People at that dinner party might well think about attending the cookery course or visiting us for lunch." For Abbe, the most important things to get right when running a farm shop, are "he right products and the right staff. These go hand in hand. As a family, we have a vision of where it wants to be, we are very much involved day to day running, working with the staff, empowering them to an extent." And the best aspect? "It's running your own business," she says. "You are in control of your own destiny. It's up to you to make it work."

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MARKET FORCE

The previously humble food market now boasts a powerful presence in our sector. John and Kitty Shepherd, co-founders of Shepherds Markets, explore its heritage and value for the speciality food industry

Food markets in London have enjoyed a long and rich history. Since London's establishment in Roman times, food markets have played an important part in stimulating the local economy and strengthening local communities. The earliest evidence of food markets in London dates to around the first century AD, when trading principally took place in the Roman-built Forum which stood in the current location of Leadenhall Market. By the twelfth century, food markets were well established in London, with the principal markets located around Cheapside in the City of London. 'Chepe', in fact, is the Saxon term for market. These early markets were essentially wholesale in nature, trading in staple foods – as indicated by the capital's street names of Bread Street and Milk Street. The recent emergence of FARMA-certified farmers markets and the growing consumer interest in artisan products and street food has lead to the development of the highly diverse food market scene we enjoy today.

Evolution

A large number of the early markets, including the historic landmark of Borough Market, were until recently essentially wholesale in nature. With the growth of supermarkets and their supply chains, many such markets have struggled to maintain their wholesale status and have incorporated artisan and gourmet producers into their offering. The UK's first 'true' farmers markets, in essence allowing only local producers to sell their own products, started in the 1990s and quickly grew in popularity.

Recently, the reinvention of historic markets such as Borough and the emergence of farmers markets have led to a revival of artisan food markets. In 2005, we realised the great potential of running an artisan food market on the Duke of York Square, comprising not only of farmers but also producers and street food chefs – then a relatively novel concept. Following on from the success of this, we were asked to run similar versions around London and so Shepherds Markets was born. Currently we run over 20 regular markets across the capital and each one is tailored to the needs and preferences of the specific locations.

In the course of running markets, we have noted among the public an increasing appreciation of good food and openness to trying new and exotic foods from around the world. Many Londoners and local authorities are reappraising the benefits of food markets, which can include regenerating communities and driving footfall to new locations.

Consumer habits

In our experience of running markets, we have observed that customer demographics depend on the identity of the market, which itself is influenced by diverse factors including location, trading hours and trading day. For example, our Saturday markets, which operate during the day, tend to attract families and individuals joining us for a day out as well those looking to stock up on staples for the week ahead. To cater to these demographics, we have curated the markets to include staple foods including fresh fish, meat, fruit and veg as well as exciting street food dishes including pizza, Peruvian and Thai.

During the weekdays, the customers at our markets in city locations tend to be office workers who are predominantly looking for exciting lunchtime options and novel artisan products.

Consumer buying habits vary from market to market. At weekends there is more of a lifestyle feel to our markets and we aim to offer an array of different foods to cater to families and individuals who join us for a day out. We have found the average customer spend is higher and indeed people, particularly with families, regard it as an outing and come with shopping lists.

During the weekdays the focus is more on lunchtime. Office colleagues have an exciting alternative to the existing sandwich chains, and the combination of good food, pleasant surroundings and conviviality also provide a healthy break from the normal lunchtime routine. On weekdays the length of the market is defined by the lunch break and usually lasts just 2–3 hours – unless it's a Friday!

Business to business

Markets offer a relatively low cost solution for start up businesses to launch themselves and grow. Generally the locations are prominent, the rents are relatively

> "The first 'true' UK farmers markets, in essence allowing only local producers to sell their own products, started in the 1990s and quickly grew in popularity"





low and the lengths of agreements are variable. For example, when a business opens a bricks and mortar shop, the period of the lease is likely to be five or 10 years. Even operating a licence can be a year or more. This means serious implications if the business does not trade well. Often the agreement at markets is flexible and indeed if the weather is particularly inclement, the trader can avoid likely losses by choosing not to trade. This will never be the case with bricks and mortar. The upside is that customers can benefit from the local competition that markets can bring in terms of pricing between traders and also the wider environment. Traders are also free to introduce greater flexibility to their prices.



Independent shops can learn from the new energy that markets have brought to the scene. The traders we work with, many of who are small family businesses, bring a passion and energy to their craft. They build up relationships with customers, offering them the chance to directly engage about the product.



> "All in all, markets have brought in a breath of fresh air and are helping to enrich locations, but they should complement the local bricks and mortar independents rather than compete with them"

Traditional bricks and mortar shops often regard themselves as marathon runners, with initial endurance targets of five to 10 years. Markets have introduced the techniques of the sprinter– speed, improvisation and the ability to race in different locations. However, markets can learn a lot from bricks and mortar premises and try to create sustainable markets that are not just about quick profit. All in all, markets have brought in a breath of fresh air and are helping to enrich locations, but they should complement the local bricks and mortar independents rather than compete with them.

The traders who we work with generally do not have big budgets to market themselves, and rely on building their reputation through word of mouth rather than building a brand through costly promotional tools. This can be considered a unique appeal of markets. Customers enjoy discovering and exploring these 'hidden gems'. However, social media, in particular Twitter, is becoming an increasingly popular promotional tool among traders.



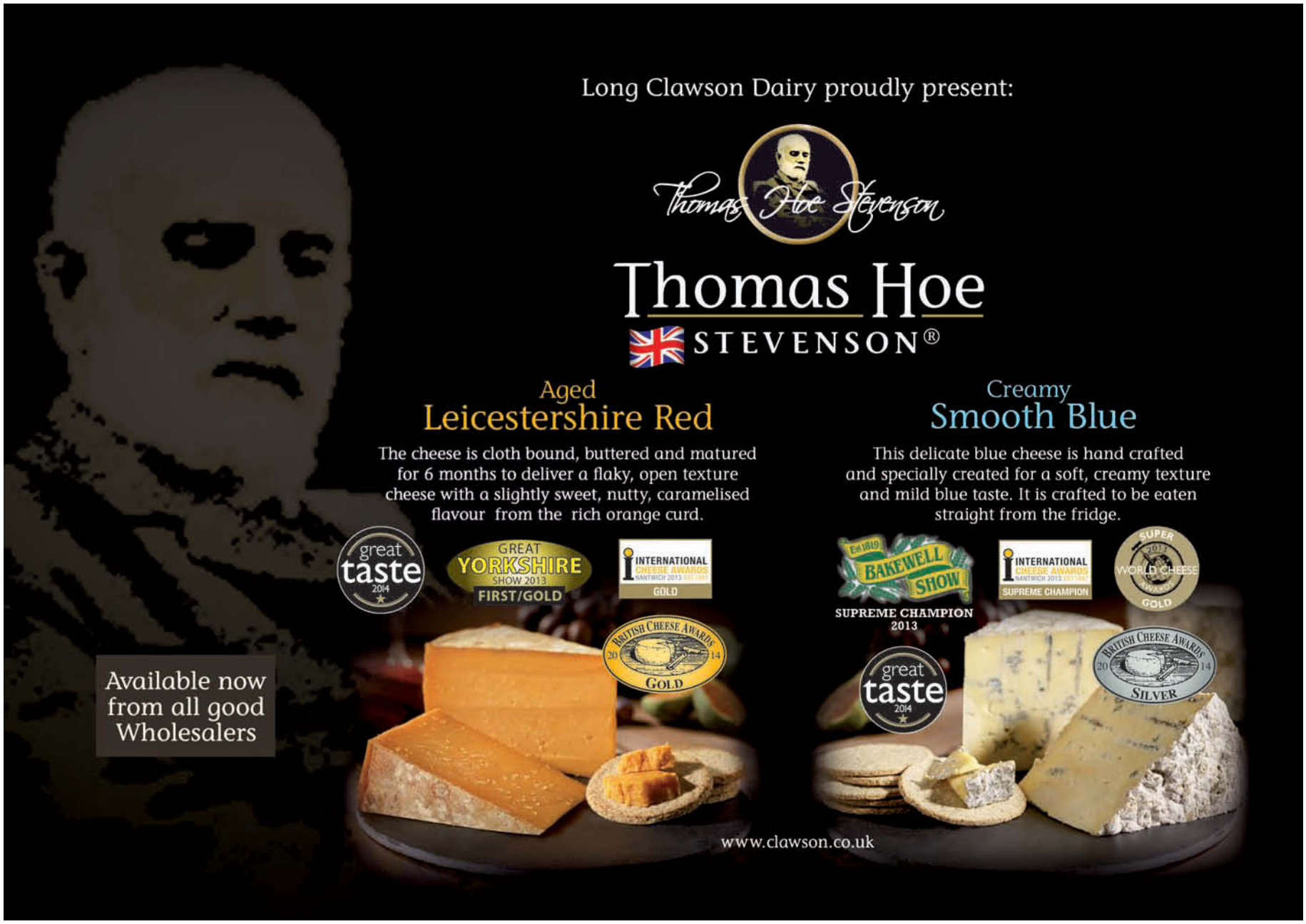
What's next?

There is a danger that markets could become a victim of their own success. It is likely that increasingly larger companies or restaurants will want to harness the success of food markets by running their own or sponsoring markets or traders – this would pose a threat to the authenticity of markets aiming to offer their customers the unique experience of directly engaging with and supporting small independent businesses.

FACT FILE

Current data on the numbers, types and size of food markets appears to be limited. A report by the NMTF published in 2012 ('Retail Markets in the UK: Review of the Recent Research'), cited findings from their 2009 survey which estimated the numbers of retail markets in the UK to be 2079 in 2009

We feel markets will increasingly be recognized as a great launch pad for start-up businesses, and a unique opportunity for customers to explore emerging food trends. We also think that an increasing number of market traders will feel confident enough to create a more permanent legacy for their businesses by taking the next step into bricks and mortar premises. For this reason, we launched our Startisans shop in Covent Garden. Startisans acts as a halfway house between markets and bricks and mortar locations to help traders further develop their businesses.



In The Know



Chief executive of the Soil Association and Chair of the Food Ethics Council, Helen Browning shares her vision of the future



WHAT DO YOU DO?
My role as chief executive of the Soil Association is a bit of everything: helping trustees set the strategy for the organisation, finding and motivating the best people, managing relationships, being a key advocate externally, trouble-shooting, establishing the organisation's culture and behaviours, helping people work together well, ensuring that we have the finances and financial disciplines in place to do our job as well as we can.

The chair role at FEC has to fit in around my SA responsibilities, though the organisation is very dear to me too; as chair, I feel the best I can do is find and support a great director, because it's the executives that really carry the can, even if the ultimate responsibility lies with trustees and the chair.

WHAT SHOULD THE FOOD INDUSTRY BE FOCUSING ON?
We will never compete on global markets on price alone; our land and labour is too expensive, and we, quite rightly, have got tougher regulations than much of the rest of the world. So we should concentrate on being the best, producing fantastic quality foods, with provenance, care, health, fairness and welfare as key values.

WHAT CHANGES ARE YOU AIMING TO PUT INTO PLACE?
We champion organic principles, such as caring for soil (sounds mundane, but human survival depends on it), reducing the use of non-renewable resources, avoiding potential nasties, whether pesticides or food additives, giving animals a good life, and putting people and their wellbeing centre-stage. We aim to help all farming, food and forestry work to these principles, and to support businesses who are aiming for this too.

> "We should concentrate on being the best, producing fantastic quality foods, with provenance, care, health, fairness and welfare as key values"

HOW DOES YOUR WORK AFFECT SPECIALITY FOOD READERS?
We are doing an increasing amount to support independent retailers who are stocking great organic products, by providing marketing materials and promoting them and their stories, and we hope, once we have sorted our rather archaic website, to be able to do this even better through helping customers find their nearest source of good food. We have recently finished Organic September which gives fantastic opportunity for independent outlets to shine.

We are also developing a targeted strategy to help independent shops with in-store promotions, training and marketing of organic, and we are working with the wholesalers to implement this. We recently held a workshop with some independents (large and small) to understand what it is they need to support them.

We run an annual organic awards, where the best tasting, most authentic foods have every advantage. This year we had consumer voting for the first time, which went down very well.

HOW CAN INDEPENDENT RETAILERS HELP?
We would love them to get involved in helping customers understand more about organic food, and why it's the best choice if you care about people, animals and nature. And we would be even more delighted if they would help promote membership of the Soil Association; the more members we have, the more opportunity we have to promote better food and farming.

HOW CAN THE FOOD INDUSTRY BE IMPROVED?
Where to start?! There's lots of wise words about what needs to change, but I am not sure that the key problem, which is the huge price pressure that the food industry is under, is fully acknowledged. You can test everything, set up food police, regulate like mad, but if you don't change our food culture, the fraudsters will still find a way. We need to shorten supply chains, so that people know where their food is coming from. Global chains are ripe pickings for fraud.

HAVE ANY INNOVATIVE IDEAS CAUGHT YOUR EYE RECENTLY?
We held our Duchy Originals Future Farming Innovation awards recently at our conference, where contenders have to pitch, Dragon Den style, to the delegates. A couple of them stand out, in particular, a fantastic business growing and selling wonderful edible flowers, and a service delivering organic produce by bike in city centres; great to get away from all those white vans while still getting all the benefits of home delivery. Could work really well for independent stores. There are always opportunities for new ideas, or often, just recycling old ones!

WHERE DO YOU SHOP?
The shops I like to go to have a comprehensive selection of real foods, not just a few jars and olives. My favourite place to shop is Abbey Home Farm near Cirencester; in a smallish store, they have everything I need, so much of it made from farm produce, on the premises, as well as all the mundane stuff like eco laundry liquids too. Their organic, made-on-site dairy and meat, great herbs and veg, all the staples I need, and a great café too. It makes it worth going all the way there, as I don't need to go anywhere else. As you can tell, I'm a lazy shopper!

WHAT'S THE FUTURE FOR THE UK'S FINE FOOD SECTOR?
In an affluent society, lovely food will always be sought after. Everyone wants to eat delicious food.



MEET THE PRODUCER

Pasta Garofalo offers a wide range of smartly-packaged, traditional Italian pasta aimed at the independent sector



Garofalo is an Italian pasta company run by Massimo Menna and a team of highly skilled workers. The company supplies quality pasta ranges to the Italian and overseas markets, including the UK. Garofalo has been making pasta since 1789 in Gragnano, which is the birthplace of pasta in Italy. Gragnano lies in the foothills of Monti Lattari, very close to Naples, in the Campania region. Warm, but not too humid, this region enjoys a climate which is perfect for making pasta. Garofalo makes around 530 tons per day across all its ranges, and to avoid cross-contamination issues, all ranges, except the gluten-free pasta, are made in the company's factory in Gragnano.

Garofalo has an expertise in pasta making grounded in years of experience and "thanks to history and tradition," says Mal Pullan, commercial director of Garofalo in the UK, "we know exactly how to make pasta, down to the very last detail. We use the very best durum wheat and the most advanced technologies and equipment to achieve the best possible results." Garofalo lives and breathes pasta, Mal says. "We have an owner whose family has been in pasta for generations and who is personally involved in the selection of the durum wheat, a culinary gourmet technical director who fully understands what makes great pasta, and a team of workers who are both passionate and knowledgeable about the product. The choice of individual ranges and shapes offered by Garofalo allows independent food retailers the opportunity to meet their customers' requirements. And Garofalo pasta is not stocked in the major multiples."



There are five ranges under the Garofalo Signature brand. "We are best known for our traditional pasta, but we also offer organic whole wheat pasta, organic traditional pasta, and La Giostra dei Bambini, which are fun, small shapes perfect for babies and toddlers. Our latest range is our gluten- free pasta, which we launched only when we had developed a product that didn't compromise on taste and texture."

Traditional range

Garofalo's Signature range includes more than 76 different shapes, all formed in the factory using a bronze die, which ensures a rough surface that sauce can cling to. "Some shapes, such as Lasagne Riccia and Fusilli Lunghi," says Mal, "are hard to find in British shops. The traditional range includes parchment-wrapped long spaghetti. Traditionally, most spaghetti was longer – about 50cm – but shorter lengths gained popularity during the latter half of the 20th century, and now spaghetti is most commonly available in 25–30 cm lengths. Finding long spaghetti in a traditional parchment wrap is not common in British shops these days."

According to Garofalo, the most popular pasta shapes in the UK are fusilli, spaghetti and penne. "We have seen amazing sales growth in fusilli in the last two years but can't pinpoint exactly why, as spaghetti bolognaise, carbonara and lasagne remain firm favourite pasta dishes in the UK. In Italy, spaghetti is the best-seller, followed by penne and farfalle. With the popularity of fusilli, we are launching fusillone in the UK, a large fusilli popular in Italy, which will offer a point of difference for independent retailers."

Pasta is simply made with water and durum wheat semolina, but, Mal says, "you can't produce an excellent pasta if the best wheat is not used. It is primarily the quality and quantity of gluten present that determines the quality of the wheat. Once the paste or dough is formed, it is extruded through the bronze die. The pasta then has to be dried. The temperature of the drying process and the time it takes, is critical for the quality of the final product."

A lot of thought has gone into the smart packaging. "Because we have nothing to hide," Mal says, "the Signature pack design uses transparent packaging. There are no broken bits of pasta at the bottom of the pack, and we want to share this. We also believe the pasta is beautiful to look at. Our pack is instantly recognisable on the shelf and fits well with the shops it is sold in."

Worth paying

British consumers have responded well to the range. "Pasta has always been popular," Mal says, "and we are seeing good sales of Garofalo pasta in the UK of some of the more unusual shapes, as well as the more popular ones. People are realising that not all pasta is the same, and that it's worth paying a little more for a quality pasta."

The company promotes in "the normal way," says Mal, "through money-off and multi-buy promotions, where we see good uplifts, but we aim to keep the promotions to a level in order to encourage trial, without devaluing the brand. We also have a Facebook page for the UK where we promote the values of the brand and engage with customers. We plan to have a stand at the Speciality and Fine Food Fair, which will promote to a key market sector for Garofalo."

Key to increasing sales, Mal says, is "stocking the right range. Having a good knowledge of the product and its provenance is also important. We will shortly be offering a POS pack to stockists of Garofalo pasta. Varying the type of pasta in their range offering will help boost sales; if customers want whole wheat or gluten-free, these can easily be offered to customers alongside our traditional pasta all under the Garofalo Signature brand."



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WEBSITES THAT MEAN BUSINESS

Sally-Jayne Wright shares her top ten tips for producing websites that work



THE STYLISH HOMEPAGE OF GLOUCESTER SERVICES' WEBSITE

1 Be clear about your proposition

Before you look around for a website developer, go back to basics and remind yourself of your proposition. What do we offer? Who is our target customer? What makes us different and better than the competition? These are the points you need to communicate on your site. Its purpose and your competitive advantage should be instantly clear, and a good way to do this is with a simple headline or strapline.

2 List all the things you want the website to do

It's easy to mistake the mechanics for the objectives – 'We need a blog, Facebook page, Twitter button and Google maps' – but these are merely tools to help you achieve your aims. Goals can include: 'to stress the quality of our cheeses by giving information about our suppliers'; 'capture email addresses of visitors'; 'tell visitors about our sister shop'; or 'explain our refunds policy'. Now's the time to consult every member of the team who will use the site. A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section can save shop floor staff hours answering emails and calls. Discuss their business challenges and how the website will solve them. It is expensive to keep adding requirements later.

3 Study your competitors' sites

Visit those sites as if you are a customer; how easy is it to find your way around? List what you do and don't like. If you think a site works well, could you copy any tricks? Note every menu option your competitors use if it also applies to you e.g. how to get to us, opening hours, latest news. This will provide a shopping list of your requirements and help you brief your developer. Were the photos taken with a mobile or do they look professional? Can you zoom in? Do food items for sale look appetising? If you're planning to sell directly from the site, check out a successful player like Amazon and see how they do it. Don't forget to seek advice about codes of practice.

4 Now find a professional

You may be tempted to ask 'Steve down the road' to 'do you a website,' or you may consider appointing the young IT Studies graduate who is helping out this summer. But she's not a marketing expert with years of experience. Look for a developer prepared to challenge you on how you're going to use the site as part of a co-ordinated marketing strategy and turn visitors into customers. A site not marketed properly is merely an online brochure.

5 Get the content professionally written

You may decide that to save money, you'll pay for the technical stuff but write the content yourselves in-house. The danger is that you'll write from an internal perspective. For example, the owner of a deli might name an option on the navigation bar Christmas Sales Department when Fab Christmas Hampers would have much more sales appeal. Professional content writers emphasise the benefits your product or service can offer the customer. Consider not just words, but also a professionally-made video. Search engines prefer sites which have interesting, original content. It could even be a short slide show with voice over. But make it engaging. Visitors to websites have short attention spans.

6 Think on-line and off

Your web address should appear on every piece of communication. Don't forget obvious ways of getting more customers. In his enthusiasm to embrace new technology, a farm shop manager spent hours labouring over his monthly blog. The farm shop was just off a major road yet he hadn't even bothered to put up a hoarding to attract passing motorists.


THE TEAM AT GLOUCESTER SERVICES, SISTER BUSINESS TO THE AWARD-WINNING TEBAY SERVICES



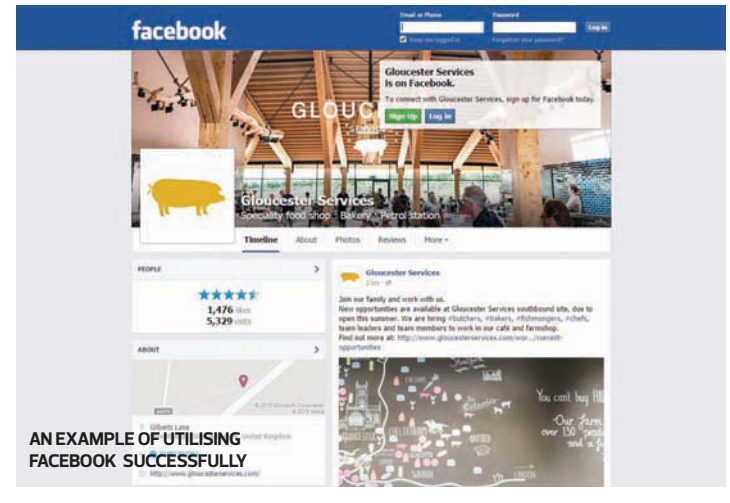
TWITTER WAS A VALUABLE PROMOTIONAL TOOL DURING BRITISH PIE WEEK

7 Think long term

There's no such thing as a 'finished' site, because you'll be constantly improving and updating. Allow for this in your budget, because most people need outside help with anything beyond very basic text and picture updates. Developers charge an hourly rate for revisions, with complicated changes taking longer. Ask what deal your developer can offer you. It's easier to add new 'buttons' than it used to be. One designer I know charges £100 a month for which he'll phone customers up monthly and ask if they'd like anything new putting up on the site. If you're busy, an arrangement like this could suit you very well; it reminds you to keep your information up-to-the-minute. New content also makes you more interesting to the search engines. (By the way, Twitter is less time-consuming than a blog, and it adds new content on a regular basis.)

8 Don't get obsessed with Google ratings, Facebook likes and traffic

The bottom line is not how popular you are; it's increased sales. Ask your developer about how you can integrate email marketing and social



AN EXAMPLE OF UTILISING FACEBOOK SUCCESSFULLY



> "Many websites I see are too inward-looking. It's all about us, what nice guys we are and how Emma in cookware loves eating chocolate cupcakes in her lunch break. But visitors to a site – your potential customers – ask themselves 'What's in it for me?' Your website should answer that question"

@specialityfood



media onto the site. Consider how you're going to use all the elements to run marketing campaigns and what you'll do with the addresses you've captured. To get people to sign up – i.e. register their details – you'll have to give them something they want. It could be recipes, in-store tastings, vouchers, a newsletter for locals with relevant offers, the possibility of winning a competition. Think of what would motivate you.

9 Work as a team

Do you write the monthly blog while your son does social media and various other departments update their bits separately? It will be much more effective if you work together. Think about integrated marketing campaigns where you'll all reinforce the key message about a promotion. If you're not good at thinking up campaigns, call in a professional.

> "Your website will be much more effective if you work together. Think about integrated marketing campaigns where you'll all reinforce the key message about a promotion. If you're not good at thinking up campaigns, call in a professional"

10 Site ready to go? Now test it

Two out of three visitors to your site will view it on an iPhone or other mobile device. How does it look? Do pages load quickly? The technical term for this is scalability. Don't panic if your site was designed before most people viewed sites on mobiles because this can easily be rectified. How many clicks does it take to get where you need to be? Too many? Finally, it's pointless having an enquiry form if no one responds. Test it and see how long it takes to get a reply. I'm still waiting to hear back from businesses contacted via their enquiry forms for this feature. If staff are overwhelmed, you need a bounce-back mechanism which tells enquirers when staff will get back to them. Consult your team about this at the planning stage.

Key lessons learnt?

Put time into the planning, speak to your wider staff and understand the shop floor challenges. It could be as simple as having an FAQ section on your site, which could mean the difference between a seamless customer experience and a less satisfactory one If you'd like to discuss any aspect of launching a new site or improving what you've got, call Sally-Jayne Wright on 020 8675 3522 or email her on sally@sally-jaynewright.co.uk.

YOUR CHECKLIST

- **Is the purpose of the site instantly clear?**
- **Is important information quick and easy to find?**
- **How search engine-friendly are the pages?**
- **Phone number on every page?**
- **Contact enquiry form?**
- **How does it perform on local internet searches?**
- **Are there analytics to measure performance?**
- **Have we included any customer testimonials?**
- **Have we put our web address on everything from business cards to posters?**



SAM'S STORY

Marketing consultant, Sam Bunting, recently launched three websites within three months. He works for the Westmorland family of companies which includes gloucesterservices.com on the M5 and tebayservices.com on the M6. Both are filling stations with a difference – they also offer a farm shop, butcher's counter, deli, café and food-to-go sections.

"We launched the websites in relatively quick succession and completed design, development, build plus brand film, bespoke photography and a total overhaul of the copy in three months. We undertook quite an extensive planning exercise prior to any formal design or development.

"In hindsight, we could have involved a couple more key departments earlier in the process to make sure their needs were catered for from the start. For example, Human Resources relies heavily on online applications and you need to understand how they best like to receive, download, contact and process applications and how to adapt the application process itself for online.

"I'd advise anyone setting up online shopping (which we don't have) to involve their procurement team from the off so that the front end is user-friendly and the back end works in a way that is intuitive from an operational and stock control perspective."



THE POPULAR GLOUCESTER SERVICES BLOG





THE SPECIALITY FOOD GUIDE TO FOOD ALLERGENS

Sue Cheung, director of Food Solutions Ltd, explains how to comply with the new food allergen regulations



Since 13th December 2014, any business which sells unpackaged foods including farm shop cafés, restaurants and delis has needed to comply with the new allergen regulation (EU FIC 1169/2011) or face fines and possibly criminal prosecution.

Why not turn this into a business opportunity? The big restaurant chains already have full allergy information for their menu and have actively advertised this to appeal to the growing number of allergy sufferers who are looking for businesses that cater to their dietary needs. The latest survey from the Food Standards Agency found that more than 1 in 10 households have someone who has a food allergy. If you don't cater for this growing group of people, your competitors will and you risk losing the custom of not just these people but their families and friends.

Here are the key points you need to know about the new allergen regulation:

Know which of the 14 allergens are in all your products

You need to be able to accurately tell customers which of the 14 allergens are in all your products.

The 14 allergens are: peanuts, nuts, gluten, milk, soy, mustard, egg, fish, crustacean, molluscs, sesame, celery, sulphites (sulphur dioxide) >10mg/kg and lupin.

In addition, for products that contain tree nuts or gluten, you'll need to know the type of tree nuts and which cereal the gluten comes from. The nine types of tree nuts are: almond, hazelnut, walnut, cashew, pecan nut, brazil nut, pistachio nut, macadamia or queensland nut, and the six sources of gluten are: wheat, barley, oat, rye, spelt and kamut.

Provide allergy information

AT THE POINT OF SALE

You will need signage indicating where the customer can obtain allergy information. For cafés and restaurants, a notice on the front of the menu would be acceptable (e.g. 'If you require allergy information, please ask a member of staff'). For delis, the notice could be placed by the deli counter.

IN WRITING

The regulation says that you can provide allergy information orally, but it also says you need to have a documented system showing how you got the information.

From a due diligence angle, it's advisable to provide the information in writing. Not only is it difficult to remember accurately all the allergens in more than a few products, it's difficult to argue in a court of law that you provided the customer with the correct allergy information if challenged.

IN A CHART FORMAT

Allergy information can be on menu or menu boards. If you have more than a few dishes, it's better to have the information on a separate document to avoid cluttering the menu and the need to re-print the menu if the allergy information changes because of a recipe change. A chart is a customer-friendly format for restaurants to present their allergy information.

TRAIN STAFF

Train staff so they know what they need to do to comply with the regulation. A well-known chef's restaurant chain was hit with fines and legal costs of £17,000 after serving wheat pasta to a coeliac, even though the customer had told the serving staff that she is a coeliac. This shows the importance of good communication and training.



Some foods contain unexpected allergens. Always check the allergy information before answering the customer. Never guess. How many people would guess that sulphite is common in cold water prawns or a burger bun can contain milk (from skimmed milk powder, often found in commercial burger buns)?

With well-trained staff and a good allergen system, independent restaurants and cafés can have an edge over the large chains in capturing the customs of people with food allergies as they have more flexibility to customise dishes to meet the customer's needs. For staff training material, the Food Standards Agency website is a good source.

AVOID CROSS-CONTAMINATION

Put into practice processes to avoid cross-contamination during storage, preparation and service so foods don't contain unintentional allergens.

A 'VERIFIABLE' ALLERGEN SYSTEM

You need to have a documented system for your allergy information. When challenged, you must to be able to show where the allergy information for your products came from and that the information is correct.

ACCURATE ALLERGY INFORMATION

It's a daunting task to be able to tell customers accurately which of the 14 main allergens, as well as the nine nuts and six cereals (sources of gluten), are in every dish. For a dish made up of eight ingredients, it means checking 112 pieces of information (eight ingredients x 14 main allergens), not to mention the type of tree nuts and cereals if any of the ingredients contain tree nuts and gluten.

A business that has a small menu may be able to manage this information manually; however, for other businesses more menu items mean more data to handle and more chance of human error. Getting the allergen information wrong can have serious consequences. From experience of compiling allergen information for the menu of leading restaurant brands, I know using the right software can help to avoid many of the problems that come with compiling allergen information manually. Most independents don't have the luxury of an IT team but they still have to give customers correct allergy information, and for this reason I developed a software that is low cost and easy to use to help small independent caterers and food producers avoid potential problems and comply with the regulation.

For more information visit www.foodfs.co.uk



COLD WATER PRAWNS COMMONLY CONTAIN SULPHITES

> "Always check the allergy information before answering the customer. Never guess. How many people would guess that sulphite is common in cold water prawns or a burger bun can contain milk (from skimmed milk powder, often found in commercial burger buns)?"

THE NATURAL FOOD SHOW 2015

Discover the latest from the natural, organic, Fairtrade and free-from sector

Visitor registration for The Natural Food Show at Natural & Organic Products Europe, taking place at the new venue of ExCeL London, on 19–20 April 2015, is now open.

The move to ExCeL marks an exciting new development for the show. Thanks to a significant 30% increase in attendees in the last two years (it welcomed 9,503 industry professionals from 77 countries through its doors in 2014), the 2015 edition will boast an unprecedented 600 exhibiting companies showcasing it biggest ever choice of the best natural, organic, Fairtrade, free-from and special diet products from around the world.

Innovative exhibitors

New companies for 2015 include The Tofurky Company (a leading supplier of vegan, chilled meat alternatives from the USA), Soupologie, Uncle Reg (cold pressed fruit and vegetable juices), Sunfood Superfoods, 100% natural mineral water Donat Mg, Lemonaid & ChariTea (100% organic Fairtrade lemonades and iced teas), emerging nut butter brand Pip & Nut, Kai's Spices & Sauces, Spoon Cereals (handmade granola and muesli), The A2 Milk Company, ZooT natural snack bars, Cyclades Culture of Olive Oil Company, Atlantic Kitchen, and Laurie's 'Tummy Loving' Foods (launching its new range of raw and organic sauerkrauts.

Orgran gluten free, George Skoulikas, James White Drinks, Hale & Hearty Foods, Chia Bia, Gusto Organic, and Windmill Organics are just some of the returning exhibitors confirmed for this year's show.

Organic sales on the increase

According to the latest Soil Association Organic Market Report shoppers spent an extra £1.4 million a week on organic products last year. That's a 4% increase, against a falling overall food market. Retailers and foodservice operators looking to expand their offerings – and take a bigger bite out of this lucrative (and growing) market – will find a host of new ideas at The Natural Food Show. This year's Soil Association's Organic Chilled Food Pavilion will be displaying the meat and dairy products of Riverford Dairy, Acorn Dairy, Natural Vitality, Truvibe Organic, Plenish Cleanse, Zumi Natural, and Brown Cow Organics among many others.

Meanwhile, Clearspring, Rockwells, Queenswood Natural Foods, Marley Coffee, The Booja Booja Company, BB Chocolate, Hampstead Teas, and Alara Wholefoods will be exhibiting on the Organic Trade Board's Pavilion.

Diversify your offering

As in previous years, there will be international pavilions across the show floor showcasing the best natural and organic brands from across the world. Pavilions dedicated to Raw Food and The Vegan Society are also back on the menu – featuring a host of innovative new artisan suppliers that buyers won't find at any other UK trade show in 2015.

As well as an impressive range of exhibitors, The Natural Food Show plays host to the Natural Food Kitchen – featuring a raft of nutritional experts and celebrity chefs preparing quick and nutritious meals. The 2015 line-up includes Arthur Potts Dawson, Jay Morjaria, and Michelin-starred slow food chef Xavier Boyer, plus nutritionist Christine Bailey and medicinal chef Dale Pinnock.

The show's new Juicing Championship is also set to take place in the Kitchen on the opening day. This live, fast-paced competition promises to keep the audience firmly on the edge of their seats, as finalists from across the UK whip up their best juicing creations.



THE NATURAL FOOD SHOW 2015

WHERE: ExCeL, London, W14 8UX
WHEN: 19th–20th April 2015
CONTACT: naturalproducts.co.uk

By car – When driving to ExCeL, London, follow signs for Royal Docks, City Airport and ExCeL. There is easy access from the M25, M11, A406 and the A13.
By train – The Jubilee line is recommended as the quickest route to ExCeL. Change at Canning Town and change to a Beckton-bound DLR train and alight at Custom House.
By air – London City Airport is located five minutes from ExCeL, London, by car and in addition the DLR links the airport to ExCeL via Canning Town.

For more information and to register for a free trade only pass, please visit naturalproducts.co.uk and use priority code NPF97.



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IFE 2015 is an unrivalled opportunity to see the best new food & drink coming from the UK and overseas, keep up to date with the latest technology and trends, and be part of the global conversation.

VISIT WWW.IFE.CO.UK/SFM

HEALTH & WELLBEING | SPECIALITY & REGIONAL FOOD | CHEESE & DAIRY | DRINKS | INGREDIENTS | BAKERY & CONFECTIONERY | WALK THE WORLD | GENERAL FOOD | MEAT & SEAFOOD

The International Food & Drink Event returns to Excel 22–25th March. Here's your guide to who will be there and what's happening

PREVIEW: IFE 2015

Expert industry advice and delicious innovation in food and drink are just two items on the menu when the biennial International Food and Drink Event (IFE) returns this spring. Back bigger, better and more innovative than ever, IFE will be staged at London's ExCeL Centre between 22–25 March and is co-located with Waste-Works and Pro2Pac.

IFE is split into nine sections including, Speciality and Regional Food from Britain and Ireland, Cheese & Dairy, Meat & Seafood, Bakery & Confectionery, Ingredients, Health & Wellbeing, Drinks and General Food; the event covers every aspect of food and drink in this growing market.

This year's exhibition will draw an estimated 27,000 professionals from across the food and beverage industry, spanning the retail, food service, wholesale and distribution and manufacturing markets. For four days, the exhibition will host live chef demonstrations, thought-provoking presentations and innovative seminars, as well as menu and product development workshops

IFE offers a wealth of opportunities across every area of the food service industry for visitors and exhibitors alike.

IFE also has the world's largest collection of UK products, as well as an abundance of International exhibitors from more than 50 different countries, showcasing a melting pot of global flavours and trends. Exhibitors can be assured they are profiling themselves at the industry's most influential and professional food and drink event, attracting many purchasing decision makers. Visitors can be certain they will leave with greater industry insight and with a healthy stash of new contacts. IFE 2015 promises to connect exhibitors and visitors from around the world – it's where business is done!



Laura Audsley, commercial manager for Kent Crisps, exhibited at IFE 2013 enjoying unique opportunities that were a catalyst for forging a successful partnership with British Airways. Of Kent Crisps' relationship with IFE, Laura comments, ''exhibiting at IFE 2013 was, as a business, one of the best decisions we made. As a result, we have secured lasting business partnerships and we are really excited to be back this year. For exhibitors new to IFE, I would definitely recommend taking advantage of every single opportunity IFE has to offer''.

Making a particular culinary mark this year is a diverse range of exhibitors from across Central and South America. With exhibitors arriving from Brazil, Argentina, Peru, Mexico and Ecuador, visitors will be treated to a wide variety of bold and authentic and often unique flavours from across the Atlantic.

Show Director Chris McCuin comments, ''with increasing excitement around the tastes and flavours coming from countries in Central and South America, we are extremely pleased that we have so many exhibitors from this region at IFE this year. The exhibition will offer both exhibitors and visitors the perfect vantage point for understanding and following 2015 food trends. Previous international exhibitions by Fresh Montgomery have proved extremely successful for international exhibitors, with many averaging 60 serious export contacts.''

IFE really is the place to be for exploring the culinary world, networking, and discussing new and future food trends. Whether thinking about exhibiting or visiting, register now at www.ife.co.uk.

Meet the buyer

Exclusive to IFE, the 'Meet the Buyer' programme offers exhibitors the chance to secure face-to-face meetings with some of the country's biggest retailers and food service buyers, including Compass Group, Heron Foods, Brakes and Bidvest 3663. This unique opportunity is only available to IFE exhibitors and offers


UNCLE ROY RESTOCKS





them the chance to market their products to the industry's leading buyers on a one-to-one basis.

Head of Food for DHL Supply Chain, Lynne Waite provides the food for British Airways short and mid-haul flights, as well as Virgin Trains. Lynne, who has previously been involved in the 'Meet the Buyer' programme, comments, "from an exhibitor's perspective, Meet the Buyer is a fantastic opportunity. To have a private meeting with the buyers from some of the UK's largest industry brands and showcase their products with the passion and enthusiasm that only they can do, these chances don't come around often. For me it's a great way of sourcing new and innovative products."

During the event, the buyers will be networking with exhibitors as they take to the show floor in search of the latest innovations.

Innovation awards

New for 2015 is the launch of the first IFE World Food Innovation Awards. Like IFE itself, the awards will be a celebration of everything new and exciting in the world of food. The expert judging panel will recognise sixteen areas across seven categories, including Finished Products, Ingredients, Packaging, Brands, Manufacturing and Processing, Sustainability and Marketing.

Mina Booth, Head of Marketing at Fresh Montgomery, commented: "the IFE World Innovation Awards really demonstrate what IFE is about and will celebrate the very best in food and drink innovation. The awards will reward and recognise new products and brands that drive for innovation, as well as looking at the delivery of a framework that makes strong business sense. The awards will bring extra benefits to any of our exhibitors who enter, ensuring they gain lots of brilliant media coverage in the run up to, and after the show."

All entrants will automatically be entered into a special category for a chance to win the Fresh Ideas award. Judges will be looking for the most innovative idea within the food industry this year.

Entries for the IFE World Innovation Awards close on the 25 February 2015, with the finalists and winners to be announced at IFE 2015 at London's ExCeL Centre on 23rd March 2015.

What's new

To ensure that IFE remains fresh and innovative, the Fresh Montgomery team works hard to introduce new on-topic elements alongside many well-loved returning features.

This year's exhibition will introduce new features including The Gourmet Drinker, The Artisan Food Market and Small Producer Village. The three new features sit within the larger sections of Drinks, Speciality and Regional Food from Britain and Ireland and Health and Wellbeing. These marketplaces offer smaller stand space and give new and smaller producers a chance to showcase their often bespoke products at a lower cost, ensuring great exposure at the UK's leading food and drink event. So popular are these new areas that the Gourmet Drinker and the Small Producers market areas have now sold out.

Associations

IFE 2015 has partnered with some of the industry's most influential associations including the Federation of Wholesale Distributors (FWD), The Food and Drink Federation, Green Seed Group, as well as BFFF (British Frozen Food Federation). This will bring a great diversity of insight from all areas of the food and beverage industry.

Show Director Chris McCuin comments "we are privileged this year to have on board as partners some of the most trusted and renowned associations and industry experts. We are working to provide both exhibitors and visitors a wealth of industry knowledge, as well as making sure that everyone gets the most out of this year's event. We hope that this year's seminars, demonstrations and stands will leave visitors and exhibitors well and truly inspired".

BFFF Chief Executive, Brian Young comments: "BFFF sees IFE as a really important opportunity for the food industry and in particular, frozen food, to come together and share information about current activities and future trends".

Not only will the BFFF be on hand to offer their invaluable insight, but exhibitors and visitors to IFE will be excited to hear that the BFFF's signature Ice Wall will also be returning. The Ice Wall has been created to demonstrate what frozen food is really about, highlighting the quality, convenience and cost-effectiveness of the frozen industry.

Networking

IFE is well regarded for the fantastic network opportunities that come with bringing together retailers, suppliers, buyers and exhibitors all in one place. Over the course of the four-day event, visitors will get the chance to visit more than 1,200 stands to source their own networking opportunities.

Monday 23rd March will see the Food and Drink Exporters Association (FEDA) host the IFE Gala Dinner in the Painted Hall at the Old Royal Navel College in Greenwich. The Best of British Gala Dinner promises to be a dining spectacular for IFE 2015 exhibitor and UK producers and offers an unrivaled chance to network with UK and international visitors.

The event will give guests a taste of the excellent food and drink displayed at the event. With guest of honour and keynote speaker Dominic Jermey, chief executive for UK Trade and Investment, the night is sure to provide the most up-to-date industry insight.

The Export Advice Centre will be the go-to place for one-to-one sessions for exhibitors and visitors with questions about the export potential of their products, or advice on the pitfalls to avoid when exporting goods. The Export Advice Centre has been set up with the Green Seed Group, who will have their international team of food and drink specialists on hand to offer advice and answer questions on the key global export markets. The free service is available to both IFE exhibitors and visitors.

Additionally, the UKTI (UK Trade & Investment) Buyers Lounge will be a hive of activity, with overseas buyers looking to meet and network with potential UK suppliers. Hosted by UK Trade and Investment, the team will be on hand to help with sourcing enquiries and offer advice to British companies aiming to expand their international sales. Like The Export Advice Centre, the UKTI Buyers Lounge is a free facility, specifically set up for overseas retail and food service buyers attending IFE, looking to do business with UK companies.


GLEAN INFORMATION AT THE HUB



NATIONAL STANDS GROUP REPRESENTATIVE SELECTIONS OF ARTISAN FOODS

> "This year's exhibition will introduce new features including The Gourmet Drinker, The Artisan Food Market and Small Producer Village"

The Hub

Exciting, fresh, innovative and engaging are all terms that can be expected when describing this year's IFE Hub, which features more than 30 of the biggest names in the food and drink industry sharing expert knowledge of an impressive agenda






DEMONSTRATOR IN ACTION



of key food service topics. The Hub will leave you with plenty of thought-provoking insight and offers discussions that will both excite and engage.

The Hub will stage debates, host panel discussions and insightful presentations, and feature a stellar line-up of industry experts who will come together to share expertise and thoughts on current industry trends.

Chris McCuin, show director, said, ''we have worked hard to ensure that this year's IFE is one long to be remembered. The Hub plays a huge part in making that happen. Over the years, we have worked with some of the biggest names in the industry and this year we are bringing them all together, so visitors and exhibitors can collectively benefit from their wealth of experience''

The Hub's agenda will be packed to the rafters with industry experts sharing insight about some of the hottest topics in the food and beverage sectors. It will stage 17 individual sessions, covering topics ranging from independent retailing and innovation in convenience, to how better stores can improve life for customers and how the UK supports the food and drink industry.

Steve Murrells, chief executive of retail for The Co-operative Food comments, ''it's really exciting to be part of this year's Hub agenda. We're addressing some of the hottest topics in today's food and beverage industry and The Hub is a great forum to discuss future trends and share best practices. We have worked hard over the last few years to create stores that cater to the changes in consumer's shopping habits, and I'm looking forward to sharing what we've learned from creating our flagship store in Shoreditch.''

Steve Murrells will be hosting his session on Tuesday, 24 March at 11:30 am and will offer his thoughts on creating a c-store of the future and the Co-op's strategy on how it plans to double the brand's convenience store base. On Sunday, John Whitehead OBE, director of Food and Drink Exporters Association (FEDA), will discuss what the British government is doing to support producers and retailers of food and drink, as well as highlighting the services, advice and resources available.

Wednesday 25 will see speakers look ahead to the future with a question and answer session with a panel of experts including James Brundle, owner of Eat 17, Neil Mercer, sales director for Blakemore Trade Partners, Nathan Watts, design director at FITCH and Natalie Berge, global research director for Planet Retail. The panel will discuss how they foresee tomorrow's stores operating and how stores are responding to an ever-evolving industry.

The Hub's agenda will see a range of topics discussed, but visitors and exhibitors looking for information on drinks will find plenty of information on the latest innovations in the drinks market at the Drinks Theatre. The theatre will feature a mix of demonstrations and presentations and will cover are variety topics from cocktail mixology, to innovative health drinks and bubble tea. The Drinks Theatre provides the perfect platform to offer detailed industry insight and to gain a further understanding of new and important emerging trends.

Health and Wellbeing Live will stage presentations and discussions on the issues surrounding this on-trend industry sector. The theatre schedule will include insight into media headlines surrounding obesity and diabetes, as well as lifestyle choices including gluten, sugar and diary free and how outlets can support consumer demands for more control over the ingredients in their food choices.

The Skillery

Chefs and consumers alike have been teased and tempted by the dishes served on shows such as Saturday Kitchen and Sunday Brunch, and now visitors and exhibitors at IFE can indulge all of their senses, as culinary demonstrations bring the sights,





sounds and smells of a busy professional kitchen to London's ExCeL Centre.

The Skillery will be staffed by more than 20 of the most respected chefs in the profession, including, Steve Warpole, Christopher Basten and Damien Wawrzyniak.

Damien Wawrzyniak, Chef Director of the Restaurant and Food Consultancy and Art of Fine Dining comments: "The IFE Skillery is a great place to be to witness some of the industry's most talented chefs in action. This year has a fantastic line up of chefs from a variety of backgrounds, meaning that each demonstration will offer something unique to the audience. The industry has witnessed a distinct move away from fine dining in favour of simple, tasty and honest food. I will be demonstrating bistro style cooking and I hope that my demonstration will inspire the audience and give them recipes that can be easily recreated in their own kitchens. I want people to cook with a smile, enjoy eating and celebrate amazing British flavours."

During the four-day exhibition, The Skillery will feature 22 separate demonstrations, each focusing on a different area of culinary expertise, including seasonal produce, fish, traditional dishes and food fusions.

Sunday's Skillery agenda will include Damien Wawrzyniak helping the audience appreciate everyday favourite dishes, such as a traditional stew. Having spent years perfecting the simple dishes that customers have come to love, Damien will share his tips on how to turn a traditional staple into something a little more special, like serving that stew with mouth-watering truffle mash potatoes and wine reduction – perfect for an indulgent, hearty Sunday meal.

Monday will see Adam Smith, head chef at The Devonshire Arms in North Yorkshire, dishing up a tasty meal that encompasses the best that the British shore and countryside has to offer; East Coast turbot, oysters, clams, seaweed and broccoli – the perfect way to add a local twist to traditional menus.

Tuesday's line-up will bring bold flavours as Alyn Williams, chef patron of The Westbury, will be cooking up a culinary storm with a fusion-inspired dish of roast chicken rested in fennel and star anise beurre fondue, fennel braised in fennel juice and carrots and puree, served with chicken fat croutons and potatoes.

Wednesday will whisk the audience's taste buds to the Continent as Hayden Groves, executive chef at BaxterStorey, brings a modern slant to classic French dishes from a range of the country's most popular regions.

While The Skillery offers globally-inspired dishes, IFE's Great British Kitchen focuses on produce sourced from the British Isles. The dishes created in The Great British Kitchen will use only locally- sourced ingredients in true farm-to-fork style. The theatre's agenda will include demonstrations by Douglas McMaster from Silo, Brighton (the first zero waste restaurant) and Oliver Gladwin, head chef and owner of The Shed and Rabbit restaurants, whose menus focus on using every part of the animal, to minimise waste. Also appearing will be Adam Gray, Executive Head Chef at Skylon, whose dishes are renowned for using the best seasonal ingredients and creating a memorable experience by augmenting classic dishes with unusual elements, such as mackerel served with a rhubarb chutney.

IFE's Tastes of the World Live will feature live demonstrations from a selection of IFE's 101 international exhibitors, as well as an impressive line-up of renowned international chefs, including Aldo Zilli, Antonio Carluccio, Giorgio Locatelli and Marco Cuervo. They will showcase the very best international ingredients and flavours, stimulating audiences to create world-inspired dishes for their menus. The culinary demonstrations and thought-provoking presentations will offer an insightful look into the latest trends in the international food and drink market.

> "Tastes of the World Live will feature an impressive line-up of chefs, including Aldo Zilli, Antonio Carlucci, Giorgio Locatelli and Marco Cuervo"

Other big names demonstrating their talent include Enzo Olivieri, Francesco Mazzei, Valentina Harris and Carmelo Carnevale

Great location

IFE is an ideal place for effectively communicating with the food business as a whole. Piers Adamson is keen to get the message across "that Empire Bespoke is now one company." The company will be unveiling new products too, Piers says. "We are launching a well-known American barbecue brand called Stubb's and will be building this brand in the UK, adding to our portfolio of authentic American products. We will also be launching the original Clamato Juice from the US, in the original bottle. Of course, we will also be showing some of our old favourites, Thai Taste, Mrs Elswood and a number of other classic American, European and Asian brands. The business is all about being able to source foods from all over the world from one importer distributor. IFE is a great location, whose communications make it so much easier." This year's show, Piers says, marks "the first time we have sat down together as one business. At IFE 2015, we will be making a very clear statement that we are Empire Bespoke."

Getting around

As you can see, IFE 2015 brings together the latest products in the food and drink industry and includes everything from niche products that cater for the growing 'free-from' trend, to innovative drinks including bubble tea, and the newest products to inspire the ever-blossoming children's market. With so much to do and see, IFE has divided the UK's biggest food and drink exhibition into nine sections, making it easy for visitors to pinpoint the exhibitor stands they would like to visit. The nine sections are; Speciality and Regional Food from Britain and Ireland, Cheese & Dairy, Meat & Seafood, Bakery & Confectionery, Ingredients, Health & Wellbeing, Drinks and General Food.

IFE 2015

WHERE: ExCeL Centre, London Docklands, E16 1XL
WHEN: 22 – 25 March
CONTACT: ife.co.uk

By car – there are 3,700 on-site pay and display parking spaces at the centre, which has direct access to the A2, linking it to the M25, M11, A406. ExCeL is a 25 minute drive from junction 27 of the M25

By train – the main station near ExCeL is Custom House, while Royal Victoria and Prince Regent provide access to other areas of the site. These can all be easily reached by London Underground and the Docklands Light Railway (DLR).

By air – the centre is a five-minute drive away from London City Airport, 35 minutes away from London Stanstead, 75 minutes from London Gatwick and 80 minutes from London Heathrow.

For more information about the show, exhibitors and events, visit **ife.co.uk**





ITALIAN SHOWCASE AT IFE LONDON

Discover the best food and drink Italy has to offer at IFE 2015's official Italian Pavilion

It comes as no surprise that the UK is one of Italy's biggest export markets – Italian cheese, charcuterie and wines have long been mainstays on British shelves – so independent retailers will be delighted to learn that the Italian Trade Commission has organised an official Italian Pavilion at this year's IFE event.

At the pavilion, the Italian Trade Commission will be promoting the enterprising food producers of Southern Italy. Producers from the regions of Campania, Calabria, Apulia and Sicily will be in attendance in order to showcase their quality, innovation and entirely unique food products.

'Piano sud'

Home to a kaleidoscope of delicate raw materials including extra-virgin olive oil and the finest vegetables the country has to offer, the Southern Italian regions of Campania, Calabria, Apulia and Sicily are known for the strong flavours and aromas which typify its food. More than 27 producers from these 'convergence regions' will be presenting their food products in the Italian pavilion – from meat to vegetables and bakery products. The Italian makers of olive oils, cheeses, jams, preserved vegetables, charcuterie, fruit preserves, pasta, sauces and wines will be available at the show to teach retailers more about their products and the value of stocking foods from 'Piano Sud'.



Culinary demonstrations

The Italian pavilion will play host to a number of much-loved Italian chefs throughout the event, who will be demonstrating their skills and sharing their expertise with attendees. Each will be presenting regional demonstrations and masterclasses – the perfect opportunity to learn how to cook recipes from Campania, Calabria, Apulia and Sicily with food products available within the pavilion.

ANTONIO CARLUCCIO

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ANTONIO CARLUCCIO: cookery writer, restaurateur, cook and television personality
CARMELO CARNEVALE: Personal chef for international royalty
VALENTINA HARRIS: food producer and author of over 40 books on Italian food
GIORGIO LOCATELLI: Michelin-starred chef of Locanda Locatelli – a much sought-after restaurant in London
FRANCESCO MAZZEI: TV star on shows such as Celebrity MasterChef and recipe creator
ENZO OLIVIERI: The Sicilian Chef, who has cooked internationally for celebrities and royalty
ALDO ZILLI: award-winning celebrity chef, TV presenter and restaurateur


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WHERE?

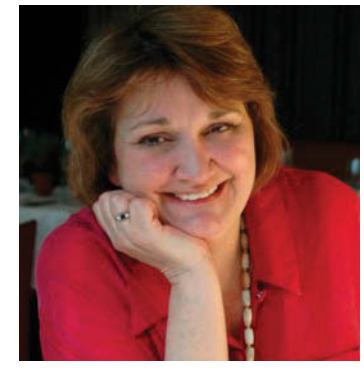
STANDS N5106, N5120, N5239, WALK OF THE WORLD, NORTH HALL

For further information please contact Italian Trade Commission email: londra@ice.it

You can find full details of exhibiting companies at italian-food.org.uk.


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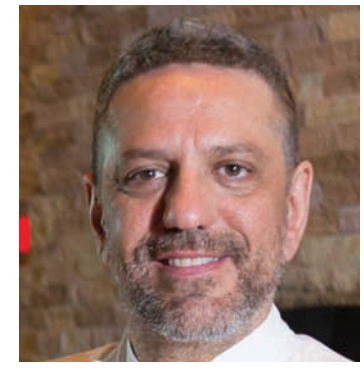
> The foods of Southern Italy are the result of foreign invasions which have taken place over the centuries, which have made their mark not only on the area's architecture but also on its cuisine











ITALIAN PAVILION EXHIBITORS

A.C Srl
cuochidoro.it

Agemed

Azienda Agricola Mulinello
aziendamulinello.it

Aziende Agricole Associate
agricoleassociate.it

Biellebi Srl
biellebi.net

Campania Alimentare
campaniaalimentare.it

Campo D'Oro di Licata
campodoro.eu

Consorzio Euroagrumi
euroagrumi.com

Delizie di Calabria
deliziedicalabria.it

Di Molfetta Pantaleo & C SNC
oliodipuglia.it

Dolciaria Acquaviva
dolciariaacquaviva.it

Food Commerce Srl
foodcommerce.it

GAL (Gruppo Azione Locale) Daunia Rurale
galdauniarurale.it

Agricola Piano
agricolapiano.com

Antico Frantoio Ametta
anticofrantoioametta.it

Az. Agr. Olearia Palmieri
frantoiopalmieri.com

Az. Agr. Pannarale Mario
agricolapannarale.it

Consorzio Parco della Peranzana
parcodellaperanzana.it

D'Alfonso del Sordo
dalfonsodelsordo.it

Domini Dauni
dominidauni.it

L'Antica Cantina di San Severo
anticacantina.it

La Marianna
lamarianna.net

Nonna Maria
nonnamariasnc.it

Parente Srl
parente.biz

Pastificio D'Amicis
pastificiodamicis.com

Salumi Salcuno
salumisalcuno.com

Sirio Agrindustria Srl
orodoliva.it

Macchie Santa Maria Cantine
macchiesantamaria.it

Masiello Food
masiellofood.it

Mealitaly Srl
mealitaly.it
tesoritalia.it

Olearia Clemente
olearialclemente.it

Pastificio Gallo Natale
www.pastificiogallo.it

Puglia Conserve
pugliaconserve.it

Rispo Srl
risposurgelati.it

Rucolino – Ischia Sapori
ischiasapori.eu

Sciara-La Terra del Pistacchio
sciarapistacchio.it

Soleitalia
soleitalia.net

Sudalimenta
tiberino.com

Tenuta Foggiali
tenutafoggiali.it

Terraliva
terraliva.com

Valle Fiorita
vallefiorita.it

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AWARD WINNING MARKET LEADING SPECIALITY RETAIL EVENT

Due to exceptional demand, the Farm Shop & Deli Show 2015 is expanding and is now set to be the biggest show yet with a 100% increase in exhibitors compared to 2014. The exhibition will now bring together over 400 speciality food and drink exhibitors, as well as safety & hygiene, packaging & technology suppliers.

FARM SHOP & DELI AWARDS

The Farm Shop & Deli Awards 2015 will be held at the show, on Monday 20th April.

CHEESE & CHARCUTERIE

New for 2015, this area is a must-attend destination to anyone seeking innovation and inspiration.

GREAT NEW IDEAS

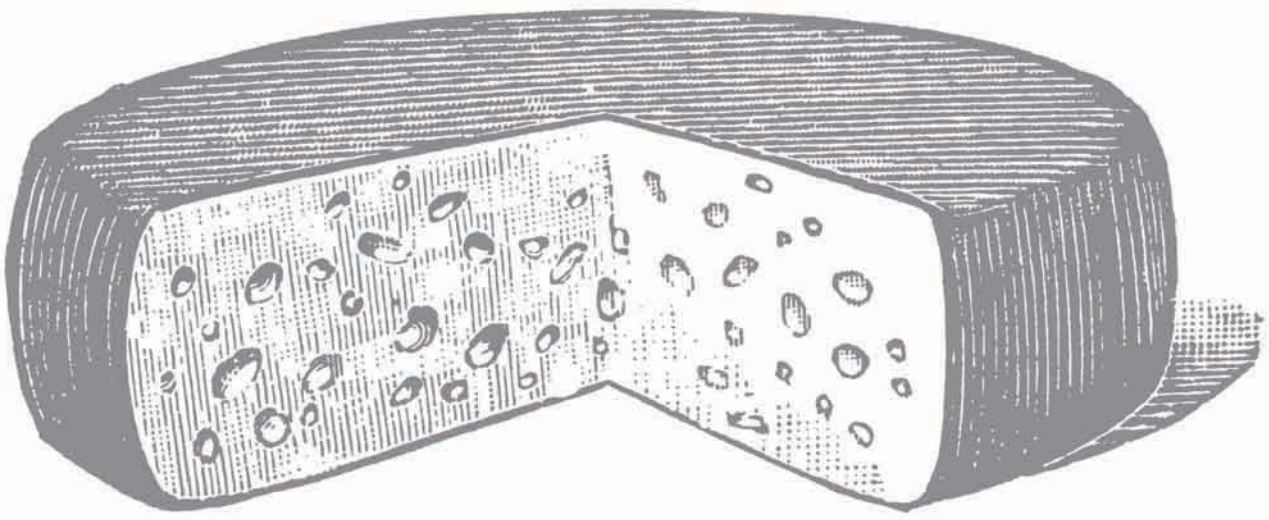
The show will play host to Great New Ideas launched within the speciality retail market.

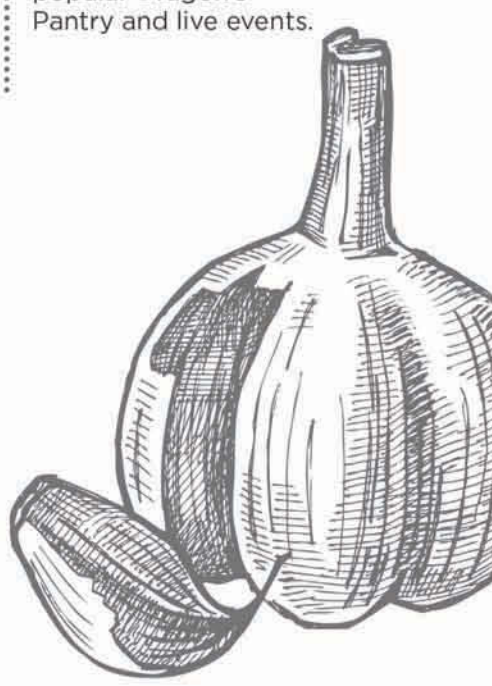
EQUIPMENT & SERVICES

The show will be growing its machinery, packaging, epos, refrigeration and equipment offering.

FARM SHOP & DELI LIVE

The show will see the return of the hugely popular Dragon's Pantry and live events.





TO FIND OUT MORE AND REGISTER TO VISIT FOR FREE

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THE FORECOURT SHOW

This is a trade event. No under 16s will be admitted.

FARM SHOP & DELI SHOW 2015 – THE BIGGEST YET!

Discover the latest new products, meet industry experts and learn how to boost your business at this must-visit trade event



Now in its fifth year, the Farm Shop & Deli Show 2015 is the biggest yet. With numbers of exhibitors up over 100% on 2014, it's the must-visit show for anyone working within the speciality food and drink industry.

Taking place at the NEC Birmingham from 20th to 22nd April 2015, the show will include a great range of fine food and drink brands, both new and established, looking to launch and promote new and existing products. New for this year, the show will be growing its machinery, packaging and equipment offering along with services through to knives, furniture and flooring.

The show will also host the Farm Shop & Deli Live theatre, where an exciting and comprehensive programme of demonstrations, live debates and tastings will be hosted.

Producers and products

BAKERY,CAKES,SNACKS, CONFECTIONERY:
Island Bakery Organics [Stand P97] will be showcasing its newly branded range of biscuits made on the Isle of Mull. Bake at Home Ltd [Stand N108] has fun baking sets on show including its Princess Cookie Baking Set – everything for the budding junior baker to make delicious cookies at home. The Naked Marshmallow Co [Stand K101] only uses 100% natural ingredients, and will be showcasing its delicious handmade marshmallows. Popcorn Kitchen [Stand R81] whose handmade popcorn is hand-sifted to eliminate any unpopped kernels, will have its variety of flavours on offer.

FROZEN:
Oliphant & Pomeroy [Stand S110] will be showing their handmade ice creams and hand-dipped ice cream in Belgian chocolate. Good Life Foods [Stand J79], who make vegetarian sausages, will showcase its flavours which include French Bean & Spinach. The Topping Pie Company [Stand P61] has a variety of tasty pies on display, including its new Dinky Topped Pork Pies.

FISH, MEAT & SEAFOOD:
Big Fish Brand [Stand S60] has an award-winning range of fish products that includes marinated Salmon Filets. Ross And Ross Food Ltd [Stand T87] from the Cotswolds will have its Homemade Curing Kit and Man Boxes on stand. Small World Foods [Stand V86] will be showing its tempting Maryland Crabcakes as well as its other fish products.

OILS, PRESERVES & CONDIMENTS:
From North Yorkshire, Rosebud Preserves [Stand K98] will be attending the show for the first time to promote its range of award-winning products. The Foraging Fox [Stand R110] will be showcasing its new Beetroot Ketchup. Visit That Hungry Chef [Stand N63] to sample its pickles and relishes including the Mojo Risin' relish. Seggiano [Stand K90] will showcase its entire range of foods from all over Italy .

BEVERAGES, BEERS, CIDERS, WINES & SPIRITS:
Sipsmith Distillery [Stand V108] from London will have its London Dry Gin and Summer Cup to sample. Breckland Orchard Ltd [Stand R79] showcases its award winning range of soft drinks, including its Ginger Beer with Chilli Posh Pop. Pilton Cider [Stand T89] based in Somerset, has its award-winning, keeved cider on stand. Mr Fitzpatrick's Ltd [Stand M90] from Lancashire will be displaying its range of classic and new flavoured cordials which includes Blackcurrant & Liquorice.

Cheese & Charcuterie Counters, Great New Idea and the Farm Shop & Deli Live Theatre

For the first time the show will host a product sourcing area specially dedicated towards cheese and charcuterie, the Cheese & Charcuterie Counters. They will give speciality food retailers from farm shops, delicatessen and cheesemongers the ability to discover new and exciting products from these sectors.

From the show's independent research, 92% of all visitors to the show are buyers/owners with purchasing authority, and 57% of visitors have purchasing authority specifically for cheese and charcuterie. So, this unique area has been created to give visitors and exhibitors a special sourcing and sales destination.

As well as all of the above, the show will play host to Great New Ideas. Exhibitors will be asked to submit a new product/idea that has been launched within the speciality food and drink sector for the opportunity to win the Best New Idea Award. The award will be voted for by visitors and exhibitors, and will



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FARM SHOP & Deli SHOW
R90 #CFPAVILION
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be presented on the final day of the show. Last year's winner was Yorkshire-based Fine Cheeses Ltd. with its highly innovative Charcoal Cheese.

Finally, the show will also host the Farm Shop & Deli Live theatre. Here an exciting and comprehensive programme of demonstrations, live debates and tastings will be held. One exciting element will be the Dragons' Pantry, where daring food and drink entrepreneurs can pitch their new products to a panel of industry experts for feedback.

> "This show offers a great opportunity to see what new food and drink producers are out there"

Industry experts taking part on the panel for Dragons' Pantry will include John Farrand – managing director of the Guild of Fine Food; Jeremy Bowen – head of sales for artisan cheesemonger Paxton & Whitfield; Duncan Hider – managing director of Hider Foods; Simon Hurrell – buyer at 3663; and Paul Hargreaves, owner of Cotswold Fayre.

The theatre will also host the Farm Shop & Deli Awards 2015. Founding Partner, Olives Et Al, the award-winning olive company from Dorset, is exhibiting at this year's show with its great range of olives, oils, sauces and other fine foods on display [Stand N89].

On Monday 20th April, the winner of the hotly contended 'Retailer of the Year' of the Farm Shop & Deli Awards 2015 will be announced by Nigel Barden, chairman of the judges and renowned broadcast journalist.

Category sponsors of the awards, and also exhibitors, include Lakeland Computers and Pidy and Hider. Lakeland Computers [Stand N91] provides a complete suite of EPOS, stock control, labelling, loyalty and financial reporting products to suit every need in the specialist food arena, and is celebrated for its attention to detail and attitude to customer care. Its systems offerings encompass both retail and wholesale, including full service.

Pidy and Hider [Stands Q98 and Q90] the food import experts to the specialist food retail sector, will promote its full range of products and services. Launching its six best-selling lines alongside bespoke British recipes, they entice and encourage consumers to create delicious patisserie. The company sees this launch as a major contribution to the bakery and home creation sector.



Farm Shop & Deli Live Theatre

Here's just a taste of the sessions on offer at the show...

A hotbed for discussion and debate, Farm Shop & Deli Live brings you face-to-face with those at the heart of the industry. With three days packed full of sessions, live panel debates and masterclasses, you will be able to hone your skills and learn new ones in a bid to help improve your business.

On Monday 20th April the live theatre will host a range of masterclasses from Juliet Harbutt, chair of the British Cheese Awards:

THE BIG CHEESE (12:00)
The growing appeal of local cheese, both modern and traditional, how to source and market them to customers

BOOST YOUR BOTTOM LINE (12:30)
How to give your deli/farm shop a great point of difference to your competitors, includes an overview of new products on the market

MAKE CHARCUTERIE COUNT (15:50)
Looking at this fast growing sector, you'll be guided through traditional and more contemporary styles to help you increase your bottom line

UK VS EUROPE (16:20)
Showcasing the best in British and European artisan cheeses to give your cheese counter a great offer and appeal to your customers

Tuesday 21st April

COFFEE CULTURE WITH COLONNA AND SMALL'S (11:30)
Coffee specialists Colonna and Small's present a masterclass on how quality coffee can boost footfall and create repeat business.

THE FUTURE OF FOOD (13:00)
Dr Morgaine Gaye, a leading food futurologist, outlines the global forces that shape food fashions and trends

TURNING CUSTOMER 'WRONGS' INTO 'RIGHTS' (14:45)
Giles Henshel, co-founder and CEO of Olives Et Al, gives his unique insight into how to turn customers round and help drive footfall

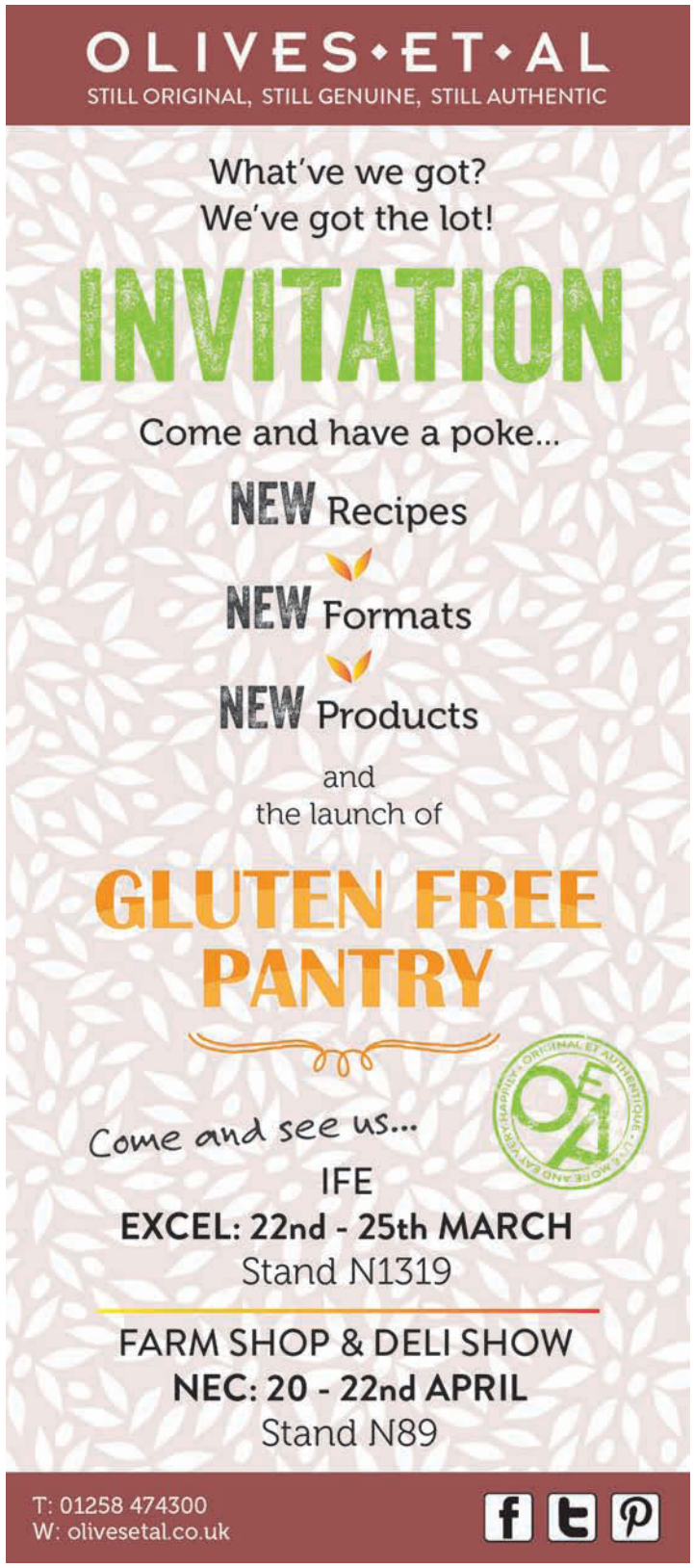
GOING FOR GROWTH (15:45)
Learn how to think big and turn a profit with Paul Hargreaves, founder and managing director at Cotswold Fayre

Wednesday 22nd April:

SOCIAL MEDIA AND STORYTELLING (12:15)
Learn how to drive business via social media.

BEST NEW IDEA AWARD (14:30)
Richard Fox and Jack Halliday, from the exhibition's organisers, will introduce the most innovative ideas from the show.

For the full timetable visit farmshopanddelishow.co.uk/fsd-live









Jack Halliday, event director



"This is a great opportunity for food retailers in this sector to see what new food products and companies are out there, all under one roof. Combined with the theatre of Farm Shop & Deli Live and the Farm Shop & Deli Awards, it gives ideas and inspiration to retailers, and celebrates the success of local, independent specialist retailers.

"The estimated sales of food in this sector in the UK are £5.7 billion, with local food retailing supporting around 103,000 full and part-time jobs. Combine these statistics with the fact that consumers are increasingly trusting locally grown and sourced foods more, post the food issues of the past couple of years (MINTEL 2013), and you see that the independent sector is important to the local and national economy. We're proud to support this sector in developing independent food retail for the future.

"Since starting the Farm Shop & Deli Show we've increased the number of exhibitors year on year, but the overwhelming appetite and increase in numbers for 2015 has been unprecedented. Having to increase our floorplan by over 100% for this year's show is a hugely positive reflection on the strength not only of the show but of the sector.

"With the wide range of producers who will be showing, Farm Shop & Deli Show is now seen as the go-to show for this sector of traditional and speciality retail products. It's set to be our most successful show to date.

"Exhibitors and visitors to the show can be kept up-to-date on developments and new activities by following it on Twitter; we have over 5,200 followers, via Facebook and the website. From now until the show there'll be regular updates on activities so that visitors can make the most of their visit."

> "With the wide range of producers who will be showing, Farm Shop & Deli Show is now seen as the go-to show for this sector of traditional and speciality retail products. It's set to be our most successful show to date"

FARM SHOP & DELI SHOW 2015

WHERE: NEC Birmingham

WHEN: 20th–22nd April

CONTACT: farmshopand delishow.co.uk

By car – The NEC is situated at the hub of the UK motorway network allowing visitors travelling from any direction to access the site directly via the M1, M5, M6, M6 Toll, M40 and M42.

By train – Depending on your start location, you can travel directly by train to The NEC by alighting at Birmingham International. Alternatively there is a connecting service to Birmingham International from Birmingham New Street.

By air – Birmingham International Airport (BHX) is conveniently located close to the NEC and is served by over 20 international airlines providing scheduled flights from 34 destinations in the UK, Europe and America.

Just seconds from the NEC, the new Air-Rail Link provides a free and convenient way to travel between the Airport Passenger Terminals and Birmingham International Station and The NEC.

If you are planning on travelling using Virgin trains you can take advantage of our 25% discount available to visitors and exhibitors.

For more information visit **farmshopanddelishow.co.uk**

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PRODUCTS ON SHOW



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[T109]



FORAGING FOX BEETROOT KETCHUP
A delicious alternative to the classic tomato ketchup, this is both innovative and versatile.
[R110]



THE BAY TREE KATSU CURRY SAUCE
Bringing a taste of Japan to the UK, The Bay Tree's Katsu Curry Sauce is smooth, velvety and convenient.
[M98]



WOODALLS ROYALE HAM
Pickled in a rich blend before being lightly smoked for a complex, rich, sweet flavour and melt-in-the mouth texture.
[R50H]



LOVE KOMBUCHA
An organic, raw drink loaded with probiotics, enzymes and beneficial acids, which is very low in sugar.
[L98]



TEA PEOPLE
Ranging from premium single estate tea to unique blends, flavours and herbal infusions.
[V67]



LUPETTA ALMOND CANTUCCINI
Baked by the same producer for over 60 years in the heart of the Chianti region, using fresh local ingredients.
[R901]



PIMENTO CHILLI GINGER BEER
A chilli infused ginger beer made with ginger, tonic and hot pepper. Great on its own or as a mixer with spirits.
[U81]



OPIES AMBIENTS
A unique range which includes Cocktail Cherries, Sliced Lemons, Cocktail Gherkins, Cocktail Onions and Pickled Walnuts.
[P99]



FUNKY NUT COMPANY
Vegetarian and gluten-free nut butters, available in Plain, Sea Salt, Sea Salt & Black Pepper, Honey & Sea Salt and Milk Chocolate.
[S67]





THAT HUNGRY CHEF
Made by hand in the UK in small batches using the finest spices and British produce, That Hungry Chef's versatile products will add extra zing to everything you eat.
[N63]



JAZ & JUL'S HOT CHOCOLATE
Made using organic single-origin chocolate, and available in a wide range of flavours including Cinnamon Rose and Mintchievous.
[V53]



JCS FISH
Versatile vacuum-packed salmon which can be poached in the pack, grilled, baked or cooked in the microwave.
[S60]



ENGLISH TEA SHOP
A selection of gourmet and high quality Fairtrade teas, certified organic by the Soil Association.
[U101]



ISABEL'S BAKING MADE EASY
Gluten-free mixes for pizza bases, pancakes, baked donuts and Yorkshire puddings – naturally free from gluten, wheat and dairy and without additives or added sugars.
[P93]



SOURCING STOCK ASIAN STYLE

Asian sauces, spice blends and cooking sauces are ideal for customers in a hurry, says Rachel Stafler

Healthy eating and Asian food are not usually thought to go hand and hand. However, a host of new brands on the market are trying to change this perception. They are developing ranges of Asian spice blends, pastes and sauces that focus on fresh ingredients with few additives and little fat, salt or sugar. Dedicated to producing products based on family recipes, these companies offer time-pressed and health-conscious cooks a handy shortcut in their daily routine by cutting out tedious prep time. Ethnic food in the UK has become so mainstream that consumers are regularly including it in their diet. Well over 70% of British consumers have eaten Chinese or Indian food in the past three months, according to Mintel. Thai food is also well established as an ethnic food of choice, while Vietnamese and Korean have recently become more popular.

People are also becoming more adventurous in their eating habits: 35% say that merely seeing new products available in a local market is enough to convince them to try a new type of ethnic food.

"British consumers want to create their own food at home and are buying the types of pastes and herbs that are often found in farmer's markets and food hubs," says Douglas Faughnan, Senior UK Food and Drink analyst at Mintel. "Part of the reason they want to prepare their own meals is so they can know exactly what ingredients are going into them."

Home cooks

Spice brand Dhaniya was created with that in mind. Roy and Usha Vernon launched Dhaniya spice rubs and pastes in September 2014. Before formally establishing the company, Roy, who had previously worked as a project manager in the banking sector, first conducted months of research into trading standards, market trends, manufacturing and microbiology.

Conscious of the demand for healthier food products, the couple developed their recipes with no added sugar and a minimal amount of salt to comply with the government's upcoming salt reduction targets. The pastes contain as little oil as possible to keep fat content low, and are also vegetarian and gluten free. Vernon and Usha both come from Indian families and they incorporate flavours from around the subcontinent into their products. Rub flavours include spiced pomegranate, Bombay potato, fish rub and tikka rub. Flavours of the pastes include spiced korma, jalfrezi, tandoori, curry paste and fish paste.

"We wanted to put the tastes that we were brought up on into a jar," said Usha. "People can use our products and quickly put together a meal using a few fresh ingredients. Hopefully, when they use our rubs and pastes, it will feel like we are going into their kitchens and making their meal for them." The Vernons launched the brand at the Speciality and Fine Food Fair in London in September 2014, where they received excellent reviews from people who tested the products. They then went on to exhibit at the BBC Good Food Show at the NEC in Birmingham. Sales at both exhibitions exceeded expectations and orders are now coming in from



DHANIYA PRODUCTS ON SALE AT THE SNAPE MALTINGS FOOD HALL IN SUFFOLK

LIQUID ACCOMPANIMENT

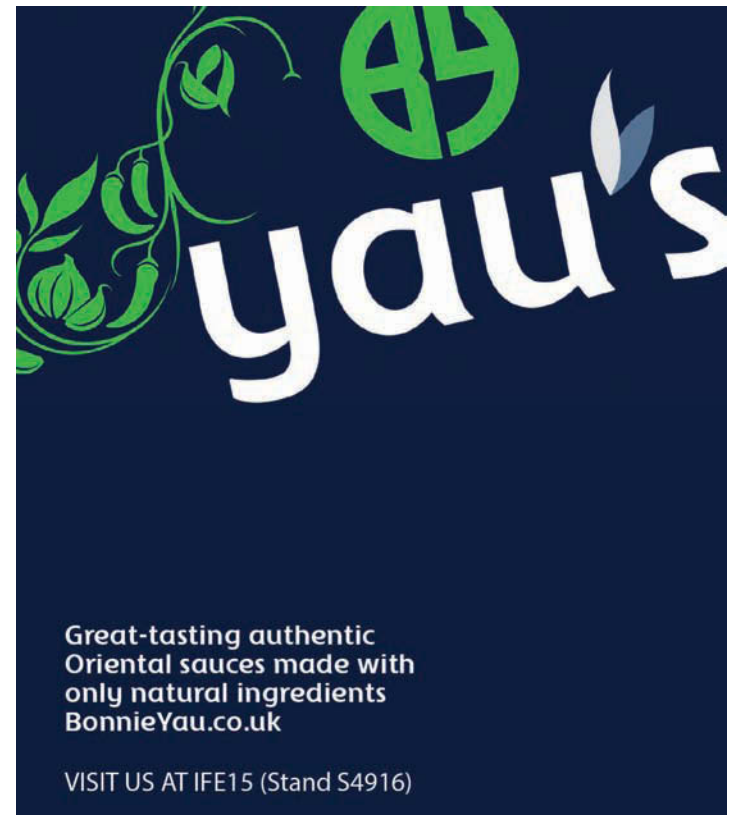


No good Asian meal is complete without a tasty drink to wash it down. Modha Ales' cardamom beer is a spiced craft beer that complements the flavours of Asian cuisine. The beer is UK-brewed with real cardamom pods, along with Maris Otter Malt and quality crafted hops. "Cardamom in beer affects particular parts of the palette which complements rather than confuses," says Bhavesh Modha, company director of Modha Ales. "It gives a short explosion of lemon and ginger which provides a refreshing moment with a curry, and makes every mouthful of excellent food more easily appreciated."

For those looking for a non-alcoholic option to accompany Asian food, there is Jax Coco's coconut water, which also comes in chocolate and banana flavours. Coconut milk, a creamier relative of coconut water, is an ingredient in Indian and Thai dishes.







HEALTH BENEFITS OF SPICES



In addition to giving taste buds a work out, some spices also contain health benefits. Arun Kapil is the founder of Ireland-based spice company Green Saffron, and the author of *Fresh Spice: Vibrant Recipes for Bringing Flavour, Depth and Colour to Home Cooking*. He walks us through some of the health properties associated with common spices found in Asian dishes.

Turmeric: This yellow coloured root is known in Eastern spirituality as the purifier of the body and soul. Nowadays, it is said to have anti-inflammatory, antiseptic and antacid properties. Indian kitchens will often have turmeric close at hand, ready to dab onto burns to calm redness and ease pain.

Ginger: This spice is known in Hindi as adrak, which translates to "fire in the belly." It is said to help calm nausea, travel and morning sickness.

Cinnamon and cassia: These spices are often used as antiseptics and applied topically or digested.

Asafoetida: This lesser known spice is now gaining in popularity and has excellent anti-flatulence properties. Indeed, many Punjabi lentil dishes incorporate this not only for the wonderful garlic, onion flavours but also for its ability to help in the digestion of starchy, fibrous lentils.



BONNIE YAU

small grocers and markets. In the coming months, Roy and Usha plan to develop further flavours and products as they grow their customer base.

Authentic recipes

Two years ago, Bonnie Yau launched a range of sauces aimed at the independent sector. "There are currently six varieties in the range," says director Phil Yau, "but we hope to have further sauces available for tasting at this year's IFE show. The sauces are special, Phil says, because "these are gluten-free, low-salt sauces that are made to authentic recipes which have been tailored to Western tastes. We offer an authentic taste made appropriate for the local market."

Current best-sellers in the Bonnie Yau range, he says, are "the Sweet and Sour sauce and a Vietnamese dipping sauce, which we call Zum. This is made to a family recipe and is a dipping sauce for all sorts of things, from spring rolls and beans, or you can mix it with noodle dishes and many other preparations. The other sauces in the range are mainly Chinese-based cooking sauces which can be used for stir-frying or marinading. We have a great recipe that uses the Szechuan sauce for an aubergine bake. They are versatile sauces which can be used in many different ways.

> "Ethnic foods provide retailers with an area for growth, but they need to stock the products that appeal to their customers"



The range fits well with the demands of independent retailers, Phil says. "Ethnic foods provide retailers with an area for growth, but they need to stock the products that appeal to their customers. With the Bonnie Yau range, we are talking about something that looks nice on the shelf, is authentic, USP gluten free and gives them a little bit of exclusivity as well." Bonnie Yau offers POS support and has demonstrated the product across the UK and in London, where it's stocked by Whole Foods. "This is only the start for us," Phil says. "It's a great range and our aim is to cover more than just the Chinese style of cooking. We also want to do more Malaysian, Korean and Japanese styles, and we see those markets growing.

Healthy option

Bibijis is another Asian sauce brand established to provide consumers with a healthier option to the high-fat sauces widely available. Its chilled sauces have less than 2% fat and include fresh ingredients such as fresh lime juice, ginger, garlic and roasted coconut. To ensure the quality of the spices it uses, Bibijis carefully selects its suppliers and roasts and grinds the spices at its commercial kitchen in Coventry.

The company's founders, Ian and Baljit Bell, founded the brand five years ago with a range of chilled Indian sauces including jalfrezi, tikka masala and kashmiri. After tasting a Thai red curry dish, they developed an ambient Thai red curry sauce, as well as a Malaysian rendang sauce with toasted coconut, which has



> We wanted to inspire foodies who like to try new flavours and ways of cooking and also to give confidence to novice cooks who would like to cook an authentic dish from scratch

become one of the brand's most popular products. Uniquely, consumers are able to control the heat of their food, as each chilled pouch includes whole chillies that can either be taken out prior to cooking or left in for those who like more heat. Bibijis is now stocked by 200 farm shops and delis around the UK. While Indian flavours are most popular with consumers, there is a growing demand for Vietnamese, Malaysian, Thai and Korean cuisine.

Popular flavours

"Consumers today are willing to experiment and try new flavours. They are so much more educated and excited about food and what goes into their shopping baskets," says Emma Forbes, owner of Kent's Kitchen, which has created a three pot meal kit that includes flavoured oil, dry spices and paste pot in one package. "We wanted to inspire foodies who would like to try new flavours, and also give confidence to occasional or novice cooks who would like to cook an authentic dish from scratch. We knew there were some really popular flavours that people would recognise and feel comfortable with, Tikka Masala for example. We wanted to offer not just Indian, but some Chinese, Thai and other curries such as the Indonesian rendang." The brand's Thai red and green curry flavours are especially popular. Coconut milk added during the cooking process makes the dishes sweeter and creamier, and increases the appeal to children and young adults, according to Emma. The products are presently sold by over 350 stockists around the United Kingdom.

World cuisine

Food company The Bay Tree was founded in 1994 and based its first products on family relish recipes. Sales quickly grew and the company added new products to satisfy demand for new flavours and ways of cooking. It now has a World Cuisine range, which includes Katsu Curry Sauce, Thai Green and Red Curries, Chinese Sticky Barbecue and a host of Indian-inspired sauces.

HOW DID YOU GET INTO CREATING ASIAN INSPIRED SAUCES?

It has been a natural progression for us, developing new lines that are a bit different from our more traditional range of cooking sauces, and this reflects peoples' changing tastes for new flavours. We've travelled to India and around Asia to gather recipes, and are supported by knowledgeable staff that have visited and tasted foods from many different countries and who give us a lot of inspiration.

HOW DO YOU CHOOSE WHICH FLAVOURS TO CREATE?

We like to keep an eye on new trends, as well as what's appearing on restaurant menus and noting what customers are enjoying. We want to produce products that the whole family can enjoy, that are easy to use and something a little different from the norm.

In terms of ethnic foods, the casual dining trend has introduced a wave of global street-food-themed restaurants. There is a trickle-down effect but it takes time to filter down to products on the shelves. We've recently launched our new Japanese Katsu Curry Sauce which we are sure will prove to be popular.

WHY DO YOU THINK SPICE SAUCES ARE INCREASING IN POPULARITY?

People have generally travelled more extensively than they would have done a couple of generations ago, so have been exposed to other cultures and cuisines. We also live in a diverse multicultural society, so we are all exposed to a broader variety of foods and flavours. Our tolerance for spice has grown, which is why we continue to see so many new hot sauces coming onto the market. Spices can stimulate your metabolic rate and lower blood pressure, so there are great health benefits as well!

WHAT IS YOUR MOST POPULAR SAUCE?

Perhaps understandably, our best-selling Asian cooking pouch is the Tikka Masala Curry Sauce, which is one of the nation's favourite dishes!



STOCK CHECK



ATKINS AND POTTS KASHMIRI KORMA SAUCE

Its unique flavours owe much to careful preparation and the use of traditional ingredients. Good with prawns, chicken, meat or vegetables.
atkinsandpotts.co.uk



THE BAY TREE KATSU CURRY

A popular Japanese curry sauce which can be used to make Katsu chicken or pork for all the family. Equally good with chips!
thebaytree.co.uk



LINGHAM'S CHILLI SAUCE

This Malaysian sauce contains just four ingredients: fresh chillies, sugar, vinegar and salt. It is versatile and can be used as a condiment, ingredient and table sauce.
lingham.com



GREEN SAFFRON JAUNTY JALFREZI

This is a beautifully balanced and zingy sauce, and is a delicious blend of fresh North Indian spices and tangy ginger.
greensaffron.com



DHANIYA JALFREZI PASTE

A medium curry paste for use with meat, onions and peppers or as a stir fry. An array of different spices teamed with ginger, garlic, chillies and tomato puree.
dhaniya.co.uk



KENT'S KITCHEN – SPICY KORMA MEAL KIT

This award-winning meal kit features three pots, Korma curry paste, curry spices and infused garlic oil, which will create an authentic Spicy Korma.
kentskitchen.co.uk





MARKET REPORT: ORGANICS

Green shoots of economic recovery may be emerging, but is spending on organics growing with it or have the good times gone for this volatile sector? Anna Blewett investigates

Whether you're a dyed-in-the-wool supporter of the organics movement or a market-savvy entrepreneur whose interest began in the boom times of the noughties, the recession of 2008 would have been a rough year. But just as organic food slumped at a time of recession, so its recovery has mirrored that of the nation's fortunes. When 2014's Organic Market Report from the Soil Association (built on 2013 figures) announced 2.8% growth in total organics, with 84% of indie retailers anticipating increased sales in the year ahead, the market looked to be on the up. The SA reported 6.9% growth organic sales in independent retail (putting their rate of recovery behind box schemes but ahead of multiples) so with revenues up across all food and drink segments, the future looked rosy. But was this truly a new era for organics, or a false dawn?

On the up

According to the Soil Association, it's good news; the certification body's newly-released statistics for last year's trading suggests organics are going places again (see panel below). "The 2014 figures better than 2013's so we're confident we're through the bad patch," says the organisation's trade development manager, Finn Cottle. "We've seen growth across the board with some categories pulling away. Vegetarian foods in particular have seen growth and we believe that's set to continue. In dairy, which accounts for ten per cent of total organic sales, the growth figures are improving all the time. It's a barometer of how the sector is doing and has outshone all other categories over the last five years."

In fact, most recent figures from Organic Milk Suppliers Cooperative (OMSCO) suggest almost a quarter of UK households have brought organic milk in the past year. "It's definitely one of the 'gateway' products for the sector," says Roger Kerr, chief executive of certification body Organic Farmers and Growers. "When families have young children they want to give their child the best start. There may be some confusion as to why organic is better than conventionally-farmed produce, but shoppers have a sense it is and the story in milk sales reflects that."

According to OMSCO the value of organic milk sales increased 6.4% in the last 12 months, bucking a trend in the wider market which saw revenue from standard milk fall 1.6%. The increase is largely due to price rises, with volume sold up by a marginal 0.3%, but the outlook is good and confirms the UK organic dairy market as the second largest in the world. Not everyone watching the market has seen growth. "Retail data from Kantar Worldpanel places organic red meat sales in 2014 at £31.7 million, 3.4% behind the previous year," says Steven Evans, consumer insight analyst for Eblex. "There was some growth in organic beef sales which rose by 3.4% in 2014, however the current levels remain behind those seen in 2011. When you're looking at total red meat, organic sales account for a very small share, less than one per cent of the market."

Market forces

Despite these figures, most reporting good trading, 2014 was a good year for organics. On the economic front, 2014 saw average pay overtake inflation for the first time in five years, a good omen for a sector which bears the brunt when shoppers put price at the top of their buying motivations. But is the future of the organics sector shackled to the nation's economic outlook? Roger Kerr believes consumer economic confidence is just part of the complex picture. "In a recession, people are concerned about their jobs and paying their mortgage," he admits. "They clamp their wallets shut and make sure they can pay their overheads. As we've seen job security return and wages beat inflation, everyone's become more comfortable with spending. Despite

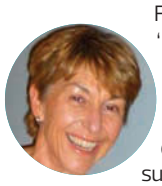
> "The range of organics stocked by indies is going to become much more important. Most are short on space so have to think hard about what to stock"







this, I think shopping habits moved in a new direction. Go to your local supermarket and look in any trolley: you'll some basics-range items, a few premium-range products and a few organics. This is how people shop now – it's the biggest shake-up in retail for 30 years – and I think that's here to stay."



Finn Cottle agrees. "The big change that bodes well for independents is the step away from doing a big shop in a supermarket. More people are shopping on the high street and just topping up with the multiples rather than getting a £200 or £250 trolley. The range of organics stocked by indies is going to become much more important. Most are short on space so have to think hard about what to stock.

"Organic milk and yoghurt are big sellers and they should be there. Within grocery the brands speak for themselves; in areas like tea, cereals and home baking, which are all growing, brands are doing a good job of selling themselves. When it comes to fresh produce and meat, where you don't have the brands involved, it's important for the shop to show the differential and teach their customers the benefits of buying organic."

With many citing health concerns as crucial to potential growth in



organics, there was good news in July, when research from Newcastle University suggested organically-grown fruit, veg and cereals contained "substantially higher" levels of antioxidants than conventionally-farmed equivalents. The findings may have been contested by other academics in the field (Dr Tom Sanders, professor of nutrition at Kings College London, described the claims as "worryingly overstated"), but they nonetheless generated welcome good-news stories for the sector.

The path ahead

So where next for organic food and drink? The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) has predicted a rosy three per cent growth for the UK economy this year, despite gloomy forecasts over the spending cuts still to come. Crucially the spending power of shoppers is expected to rise, with one senior economist at Oxford Economics foreseeing "a big turnaround in household finances."

Finn Cottle believes there's a big opportunity for small retail operators to pick up the 'floating voters' that have emerged as shoppers abandon old loyalties to the big four supermarkets. "I predict independent retailers who get their organic offer right will pick up some of those customers. If the product is available and communication with the customer is right, i.e. why organics are better, it sells. I don't think we can say there's a 'typical organic customer'; our research shows it's not about affluence because organics are bought by a cross-section of As, Bs and Cs, plus retired people and students. But there are boxes people tick in terms of motivation. There are those who choose organic for health reasons; global citizens who shop in a sociably-responsible manner; and then there's an emerging group of real food fans who see organic as a stamp of quality. That's the group the indies can win over."

The outlook is good. "Waitrose has been in talks with our members to procure more milk," says Roger Kerr. "Certainly it's anticipating sales will grow. Last week another large retailer was discussing adding organic lines; all the signs show organic is in growth. Yes consumers are still price aware, but more than ever they're aware of value and quality, and that's where organic is starting to gain traction."



BEHIND THE STATS

Jane Somper of Goldhill Organics – farm shop and veg box scheme

HAVE THE ILL EFFECTS OF 'AUSTERITY BRITAIN' HIT YOU?

No; we've always had a strong following and customers still came, people still wanted to buy the veg. We launched the box scheme to meet demand from people living too far away to shop regularly, and each week it seems to be gathering pace. Is that because our produce is organic or because it's local and fresh? I don't know.

ARE THERE ANY 'BREAKAWAY' PRODUCTS THAT OUTSELL OTHER ORGANICS?

We've seen an interesting demand for coconut products – oil, water, flour – and in the boxes the big seller seems to be tins of beans: kidney or mixed. The thing that's been really popular in the shop is cleaning products; we do Ecover refills. It wasn't on our radar until the customers started asking.

HOW DO YOU SEE DEMAND EVOLVING?

Our customers have always cared about what they put in their bodies but more and more I think they care about what goes on their bodies. Wash your clothes in chemicals and that's what's going to be worn against the skin. Clean a plate with strong detergent and soon you'll be eating off it. People are looking at the bigger picture.

STOCK CHECK

2015 SPECIALITY FOOD MAGAZINE



GODMINSTER BRIE

Made using the organic milk from Godminster Farm, available in traditional, rolled in cracked black pepper and garlic & chives.

godminster.com



MR ORGANIC KETCHUP

600g of tomatoes packed into every 100g of ketchup, and half the sugar. Also available in curry, chilli and smoky varieties.

mr-organic.com



PUKKA LOVE TEA

A heart-warming blend of organic rose, chamomile and lavender – an embodiment of nature's gift of FairWild flowers.

pukka-herbs.com



LEMON SHERBETS

Deliciously zingy with zesty organic lemon oil, made using the finest organic ingredients.

rootsandwingsorganic.com



GOODNESS GRACIOUS FOODS PUREE

100% organic and glutenfree puree pouches contain no added sugar, wholesome grains and spices.

goodnessgraciousfoods.com



BOOJA BOOJA

Delightfully creamy dark chocolate truffles made with a generous helping of sweet roasted Italian hazelnuts.

boojabooja.com



HAFOD WELSH ORGANIC CHEDDAR

A buttery, rich and nutty cheese made using organic Ayrshire milk and traditional techniques.

hafodcheese.co.uk



ISLAND BAKERY LEMON MELTS

This zesty lemon biscuit is the perfect foil for the rich, sweet blanket of white chocolate.

islandbakery.co.uk



EARN YOUR CAKE

Considered to be both indulgent treats and everyday essentials, cakes and puddings are well worth the shelf space

A stalwart of the British menu for centuries, cakes and puddings have carved a niche in the heart of UK consumers for generations. The love of traditional-style bakes shows no sign of waning, yet the desire for the new and innovative is ever-growing – meaning that consumers are frequently choosing to bake at home rather than buy.

Jane Stammers, founder of Tipple Tails, Wadsley Hall Farm Kitchen Ltd, has seen first-hand the popularity of cakes and puddings, and says "Research shows that nine out of ten British adults (89%) eat cake and almost as many (86%) buy them. The value of the overall cake market in 2014 is estimated at £1.1 billion. To put it simply: UK consumers eat a lot of cake."

Despite this booming industry, total sales of cakes and puddings has fallen, which Jane puts down to a lack of innovation in the sector. "There has been a 3.3% decrease in the size of the sector since 2009, which has been attributed to a rise in home baking (credited to the popularity of The Great British Bake Off), but, more importantly, to a lack of new product development, with uninspiring products on offer, which are therefore less of a treat."

That's not to say that the love the buying public has for cakes and puddings is lessening however, it's just becoming more discerning. "We're having a more open-minded attitude to health as we focus more on the long-term, enabling us to enjoy the occasional indulgence. Witness the rise of the discerning shopper seeking modernised and reinterpreted classics, and regional heritage. In the wake of revelations regarding the complexity of food supply chains, today's consumers are looking for 'honest' food with great taste, genuine craftsmanship and genuine provenance; we want to know much more about the ingredients and much more about the companies behind the products. The impact of the recession has made us redefine our definition of 'value'. We either want a complete bargain or we're splashing out on luxury; anything in-between just won't work for us any more."


BAKING BY HAND AT FARNLEY MARKET



Jessica Abela, Product Developer and Laura Suantah, Pantry Buyer at Harrods share the secrets of a successful cake and pudding offering

We have brands such as Cartwright & Butler offering beautiful artisan loaf cakes such as Date & Walnut and Cherry & Almond, as well as traditional fruit cakes in tins. For Easter, C&B have brought out their special Simnel cake with marzipan decoration. We are also stocking the amazing range of Filipi Italian colombas in flavours such as Morello Cherry and Chocolate. We don't have any pre-made puddings, but we do have bake-your-own mixes for cakes, brownies and cookies.

As we have limited puddings available in branded – given the popularity of the puddings in our traiteur counter! – our customers in ambient tend to focus on cakes. Cakes are traditionally more popular as they can be given as gifts, served for teatime and brought out again on numerous occasions.

Provenance of the product is increasingly important – from the ingredients used to the name of the baker. Incorporating new flavour trends, luxe decoration and cake formats are also on the horizon, such as caramel cake with salted icing, liquid centres, metallics, sugar flowers and filigree. I also see personalisation becoming a trend.

For the consumer, the importance of good quality ingredients, artisan production and, of course, good flavour are high priorities. We try to ensure that all cakes and puddings from our brands have traceability of production, good taste and texture, as well as presenting a beautiful finished product.


A TASTE OF FARNLEY MARKET'S FRESHLY-BAKED SELECTION

How do we boost cake and pudding sales? By using rare, exotic fruits and fine quality ingredients, brand name alcohol in rich fruit cakes and puddings, plus personalisation and bespoke finishes.

Using tiered display stands is always a great way to show off cakes and puddings. Accessories such as paper bunting, cupcake cases and sugar diamonds can help to make even the plainest cake look spectacular.



MIKE JARMAN, BOTHAM'S OF WHITBY

"Tradition is of the upmost importance to Botham's. We are 150 years old this year, and proud to say that all of our products are based on traditional recipes – with some tailored to cater for today's palate. The packaging of our items retains a feel for our history and is mostly understated; a style which has been well-received by consumers. Recently, we've seen a trend for the recipes and products people remember from times past, as well as nursery favourites and comfort food. You can see this in many places now – just look at the amount of restaurants and pubs selling bangers and mash and steamed sponges!"











Elaine Marshall, home economist at Devilishly Delicious on the future of the cake and pudding market

With the Devilishly Delicious brand now firmly established in the speciality food sector with our desserts, sweet sauces and fruit coulis, 2014 was an opportune time for us to be thinking about range extension and brand evolution.

With the growth in the home bake category showing no signs of slowing and supported with extensive market research and benchmarking, we identified a gap in the market for a premium range of mixes which are consistent, versatile, easy to make, and offer something completely different to the consumer, whilst not compromising on quality.

Devilishly Delicious Cake Mixes are packed with pockets of juicy pieces, offering something truly delicious and different to the home bake category. With the simple additions of only water and oil, each 350g pack will produce an impressive 12 cupcakes, eight muffins, one loaf cake or one generous sponge cake.

The cake mixes are available in four different variants, ranging from the more traditional but ever-popular Lemon, to warming and familiar Stem Ginger, to totally indulgent Chocolate Orange, to bang on-trend Strawberries & Cream. There is something to appeal to all tastes and to suit every occasion.

Presented in a premium satchel pack carton and carrying impactful imagery, these products are real eye-catchers and will give great shelf stand-out in store.

> “Food is emerging as a new frontier for luxury goods, and consumers are willing to pay high prices in the cake category to satisfy the desire for small-scale treats”

Rachel Harrison, patissier of the Bakehouse at Farnley Market, advises why customers are enjoying a range of homemade artisan cakes and tarts.

Demand for the Bakehouse's artisan cakes has rapidly increased since we opened our doors four months ago, which has led to us investing in a larger oven worth £10,000.



LYNNE MALLINSON, COUNTRY PUDDINGS

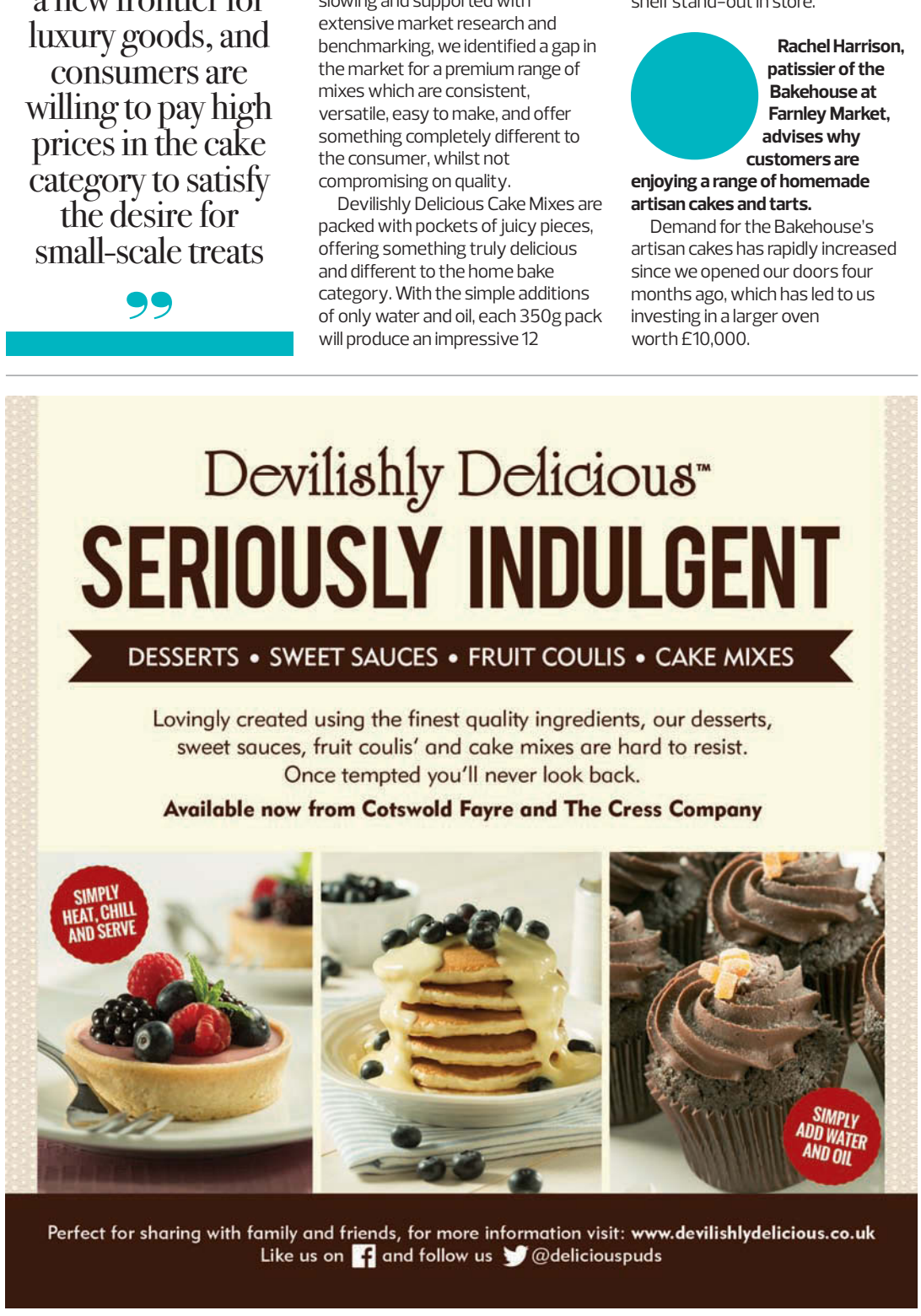
“We produce favourite traditional British puddings and make no apology for using the very best ingredients possible. You'll not find any margarine or flavourings in our products – instead, we source local milk and cream which we use in abundance, and use a local mill for our flour. People can enjoy our products safe in the knowledge that we've created them to the best of our ability using the best products for a top-end result.”

With our artisan bread generally being the biggest seller, our cakes are the next highest in demand and have, on occasion, overtaken bread sales. Particularly popular choices include the millionaire's shortbread, carrot cake, chocolate torte, bakewell tart and New York cheesecake.

A premium French Valrhona chocolate is the secret ingredient which gives my chocolate brownie the wow factor. Since we launched it has received lots of positive customer feedback and has led to people seeking us out just to try it. Demand is so high that I'm baking it practically every day!

Due to an increasing number of customers claiming they can't stomach industrial baked goods, a variety of gluten-free cakes is available throughout the week. These include a millionaire shortbread, pear and ginger cake, chocolate torte and, of course, the gluten-free staple, the Farnley flapjack.

On top of the regular offering, the Bakehouse has also tapped into seasonal themed food, producing vampire bread and skeleton gingerbread men at Halloween, and Panettone at Christmas – this demonstrates a commitment to providing customers with an expanding range of products, and also gives customers the confidence that we're passionate about the service we provide.



STOCK CHECK



DEVILISHLY DELICIOUS CAKE MIXES

Create easy cakes at home with these cake mixes. Available in Lemon, Stem Ginger, Strawberries & Cream and Chocolate Orange.
devilishlydelicious.co.uk



TIPPLE TAILS

A rich, moist fruit cake, packed with stem ginger, walnuts and plump juicy vine fruit, and steeped in mouth-tingling Jamaican ginger cake liqueur.
reallygreatfruitcake.co.uk



FIELD FARE APPLE PIE

field fare have an extensive range of ready-to-cook puddings including apple pie, plus frozen fruits and berries which are the perfect ingredient.
field-fare.com



COUNTRY PUDDINGS LUXURY CHRISTMAS PUDDING

Packed full of fruit with spices and just the right amount of alcohol to complement the other ingredients.
countrypuddings.co.uk



TAN Y CASTELL WELSHCAKES

Baked to a traditional farmhouse recipe with no additives, preservatives or added salt, much of the baking is still done by hand.
welshcakes.com



RENDLES CRUMBLE SNACK

Made with local Tiptree jam, there are four flavours available: Strawberry, Blackcurrant, Lemon Curd and Orange Marmalade.
aspirebrandsltd.co.uk



DELI-CIOUS ICE CREAM

Artisanal ice cream makers are providing the perfect product to attract footfall during the summer and beyond



Ice cream has come a long way in recent years and there is clear blue water ice between the mass-produced product filled with air and emulsifiers which was the product's usual incarnation not so very long ago. Small ice cream makers, doing much of their production by hand, are offering a product with bone-fide artisanal credentials, the top quality ingredients having often been sourced from local suppliers of milk, fruit and other flavourings. The taste of these ice creams is as easy to distinguish from mass-made ice cream as is a good, artisanal cheese from the supermarket varieties. Good, handmade ice cream is a perfect fit for delis and farm shops and can be just the feature you need to attract wavering customers in the summer months.

National scale

Perhaps typical of the new wave of artisan ice cream makers is Sally Newall, managing director and owner of Simply Ice Creams Ltd. Previous to starting up the award-winning concern, Sally had "run a catering business for 28 years," she tells Speciality Food. "About 10 years ago, I started thinking about trying to get some time back, especially on weekends, to spend with my husband and four children. The idea was to create a product that could be sold into retail that was produced and distributed throughout a normal working week. This was so naïve! Having set it up, I then realised that all the promotion and marketing that comes with building a business needs to be done through market stalls/events/trade shows/sampling in-store, etc which, of course, predominantly takes place on the weekends." It didn't help that in the early stage, Sally was continuing to run her catering business. "I ended up working harder than ever," she says, "12 -15 hour days and every weekend!"

Sally's original idea had been to "build a successful business, initially as a south east supply." However, the business grew, obliging her to think on a national scale and consider export, too. Despite such growth, the ethos she started out with remains intact, she says. "It has always been, and continues to be, a priority that we continue sourcing the best ingredients as locally as possible, to support the local economy. This ensures an indulgent, luxury product that has a unique point of difference. Our artisan qualities are something we never want to lose sight of, and it's really important to us that as we grow, we maintain this ethos."

The Simply range of ice creams and sorbets "is made with the best ingredients and everything is natural," Sally says. "So we don't use any mixes or prepared syrups, or gums, additives, preservatives or stabilisers. We do use 45%-50% double cream, so our ice cream is a very indulgent ice cream. We don't use any skimmed milk powders or water so that the texture is very smooth and creamy."

When it comes to sourcing her ingredients, Sally says that "as much as possible, we try and source our ingredients from Kent, which is full of wonderful fruit growers and artisan producers, but some of it does have to come in from other counties. We have fantastic support: Produced in Kent have a massive membership and help promote all the amazing resources we have in the county. There are also some ingredients, such as our passion fruit and mango purées that we obviously can't source locally but we still try and use importers based in Kent as much as we can."

Handmade method

The product is whisked by hand, Sally says, "so it is both artisanal and handmade. Most ice cream is made in batch processors, but we have managed to stay with our handmade method. We also make most of our inclusions ourselves: large batches of honeycomb are made every day, as are the mixes for our crumble flavours and brown bread ice cream. All the fruit we use is fresh and prepared, and it is washed and pulped in-house."

The ice cream is an ideal stocking option for farm shops and delis, Sally says, because "our ice cream is made with 45%-50% cream, making it one of the most indulgent ice cream brands on the market. It's a fantastic ice cream to serve alone or as an accompaniment to a dessert, whether in the depths of winter (our cinnamon is amazing with any hot dessert), through to the summer months, where zesty lemon curd ice cream, our best selling honeycomb or any of our sorbet ranges are very popular. We started off with three flavours but now have 31 and many more in the bespoke category."

Simply has enjoyed "a really good start to the year", Sally says."and have doubled our monthly turnover to date. We have had a number of new customers come on board in the last couple of months, which is unusual for this time of year but is obviously very exciting for us. Our existing customers, we find, are also ordering more.

"The range of flavours is much greater than it used to be. Vanilla, strawberry and chocolate are still the staple flavours that everyone goes for, although Honeycomb is our best seller and Salted Caramel is up there



SIMPLY ICE CREAM




FRUCTUS BRASIL'S MANGO ICE CREAM

too. People are much keener to try new flavour combinations and stock their freezers with a standard flavour but also a more unusual one. Outlets as well as consumers are much more adventurous than they used to be and stocking the more unusual flavours gives them an edge over competitors. Health conscious alternatives are a growing trend at the moment, so it'll be interesting to see how the landscape changes over the next few years.

New directions

Farm shop and deli owners can offer something original this year in the form of Brazilian ice cream. Atlantico UK imports foods from Portugal and Brazil, and their new line, promises retailers something very different, says management and marketing executive Ivo Afonso. Featuring mainly tropical flavours, the range is "100% natural, high quality ice cream," Ivo says. What makes this range unique is the use of tropical fruits such as mango, coconut and more exotic fruits such as cupuaçu and graviola. The premium product in the range is made from berries sourced from the açai tree, which grows in the Amazon rain forest. The berry is high in energy and anti-oxidants and very healthy, Ivo says.

Açai is a great product and is already popular in Brazilian restaurants all over the UK, where it can be served as an ice cream or, at room temperature, as a drink. The Fructus Brazil range of ice creams is available in 150g regular consumer size and 500g packs and is also produced a 3.6k catering size.

Italian influence

Angela Peel of Jella's Artisan Gelato & Sorbet makes Italian gelato and sorbets that she says, are a perfect fit for independent food stores. Angel came into ice cream and sorbet making through "a combination of a love of tasting gelato when travelling in Italy and giving myself permission to do something completely different after many years in corporate life."

The company she says, "is all about staying true to the gelato traditions and using fresh seasonal ingredients. For example, strawberry gelato or sorbet is not something I have available all year round, as I make it only when English strawberries are available to be picked." To learn the secrets of good Italian gelato and sorbet making, Angela travelled to Italy. "It's all around balancing ingredients to ensure a good consistency, flavour and mouth-feel," she says.

> "Gelato has less cream, less air and a greater intensity of flavour than traditional ice cream.

Gelato is "different from ice cream," Angela says. "Typically, gelato has less cream, less air and a greater intensity of flavour than traditional ice cream. It should also be served at a temperature a few degrees warmer than ice cream so that the flavours really come through." To make her range, Angel uses "very few ingredients – the star of the show is always the fresh fruit. I am often asked by customers whether they include gelatine as a setting agent, and the answer is always 'no'. I don't need to use any additional ingredients to set the sorbet as there is so much fruit in there."

Sorbets have an appeal of their own and can be sold people who "are lactose-intolerant or who, for other reasons, are looking for dairy-free products. Also, they provide a refreshing summer dessert, full of fruit flavour and are great additions for dinner parties."

One reason that Angela's range is well fitted for sale in independent outlets such as farm shops and delicatessen, she says, is because of the methods used in their production. "I consider my products to be artisanal as they are made in small batches and I have full view over the production of the products from start to finish," she says. "I pick the fruit, wash it, prepare it, then add it to the other ingredients to produce sorbets and gelato. I then mix them and when they are ready, transfer them to their packaging. The fact that I make small batches means I can be adaptable in terms of the number and quantity of product lines supplied."

STOCK CHECK

2015 SPECIALITY FOOD MAGAZINE



LICK FROZEN YOGURT
Blueberry and raspberry frozen yogurt from Lick
lickyogurt.com



LOSELEY ETON MESS
Traditional dairy ice cream given a very British twist
loseleybakery.co.uk



JUDE'S DARK CHOCOLATE SORBET
A dark chocolate water ice
judes.co.uk



TRELEAVENS
Luxury hand-made Cornish ice cream
treleavens.co.uk



SIMPLY ICE CREAM HONEYCOMB CRUNCH
Popular honeycomb crunch
simplyicecream.co.uk



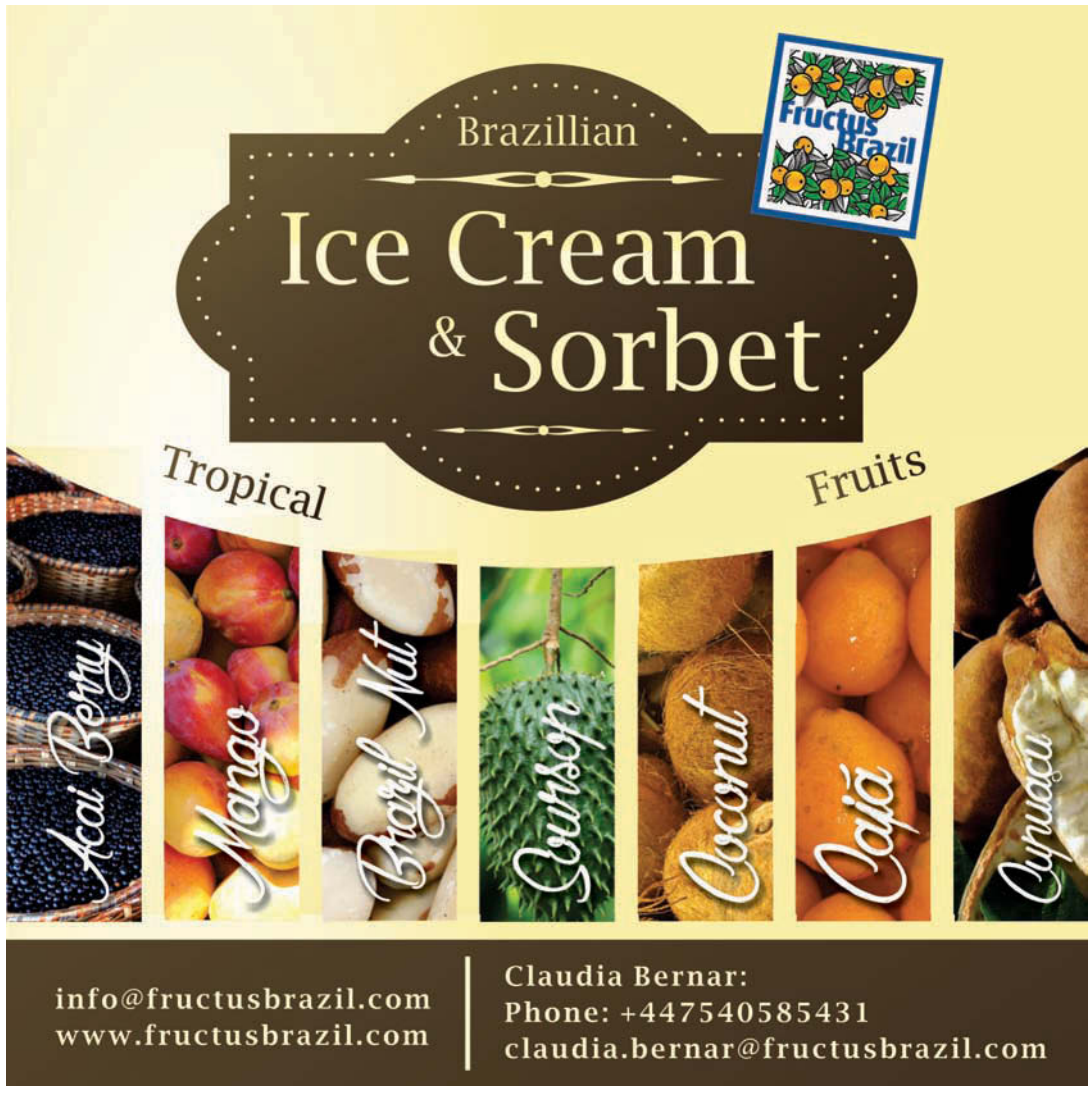
MON AR LWY BLUEBERRY
Taste of Anglesey blueberry ice cream
monarlwy.co.uk



MARSHFIELD FARM RUM & RAISIN ICE CREAM
Rich rum and raisin ice cream
marshfield-icecream.co.uk



CALLESTICK CLOTTED CREAM & RASPBERRIES
A classic summer pairing
callestickfarm.co.uk





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www.cotsworldfayre.co.uk

Last Words

the final word of fine food

The last Food Chain recommended Craigie's Farm Deli and Cafe, South Queensferry. Ross Gilfillan talks to John Sinclair



TELL ME ABOUT CRAIGIE'S FARM
JS: Craigie's Farm Deli and Cafe is a family-owned partnership of myself and Kirsteen. Mum, Anne, still works in the business and keeps us right! I have been been on the farm all my days. My father got the tenancy in 1966. The first shop opened in 1988, although it was very small and informal. The new shop and café opened in 2007.

HOW MANY CUSTOMERS DO YOU HAVE ANNUALLY?
JS: Annual footfall is just over 200k.

HOW GOOD IS YOUR LOCATION?
JS: We have the best of both worlds, being just six miles from the centre of Edinburgh but out in the countryside!

WHAT'S SPECIAL OR UNUSUAL ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS?
JS: If Craigie's is about anything, it's about the pleasure of enjoying good food. We are passionate about the taste of produce that's really fresh because it's as local and seasonal as possible. That's as true for what's served in our café as what you'll find on our shelves. Some comes direct from our farm, some from small suppliers and farmers a little further afield. Wherever it hails from, we think it's important to know its origins. The way we see it, the simple pleasures in life are always the best.

TELL ME ABOUT THE ITEMS YOU STOCK.
JS: We stock products that are as fresh and as local as possible. 70% of what we sell is either grown or made on the farm. We don't believe in putting our brand on a product we have not grown or made ourselves. Some of the great local products we sell are Supernature and Summer Harvest oils. Alcohol – Stewart Brewing, Alchemy, Top Out, Edinburgh Gin, Arran Gold, Arbikie Vodka, Cairn O'Mhor, Bolney Wines and Thistly Cross Cider. Oatcakes: Stag, Your Piece, Adamsons, Wooleys of Arran, Macleans. Confectionery: All That's Delicious, Ally Bally Candy's, The Chocolate Tree, Cocoa Bean and Ochil Fudge. Bakery: Angelic, Ashers, Dough Re Mi and Oliphant's. The list goes on! Some of our top 'foreign' suppliers are Country Puddings from Cumbria, Silver and Green from Cumbria, Cookielicious from Yorkshire, Pipers Crisps.

BEST-SELLING ITEMS?
JS: Our homemade pies, sausage rolls, salads, cooked beef. Also Ramsey's of Carluke ham and Great Glen Game's venison salamis fly off the counter.

WHAT CHEESE DO YOU STOCK?
JS: We only stock Scottish cheese and have a range of over 25! Anster Cheese, Arran Cheese, Cairnsmore, Inverloch Cheesery, Gigha, Humphry Errington, Anne Dunlop, Highland Fine Cheese, Connage Dairy, Devenick Dairy, Mull cheese.

WHAT SORT OF PEOPLE HAVE YOU BEEN ATTRACTING?
JS: Our customer base is 50% Young families and 50% retired couples

HOW IMPORTANT IS PRICING?
JS: Very, we want to give our suppliers a fair return, give ourselves a realistic margin but give our customer great value. We try and promote the fact that although we may be a little more expensive than the multiples, the customer gets just what they pay for. And we don't use things like turnips to bulk out our strawberry jam!

ANY OTHER FACILITIES?
JS: Farm tours, animal area, nature trail, PYO fruit (summer), regular events, jam making classes.

HOT SELLING MENU ITEMS?
JS: Traditional comfort foods – soup, stovies and steak pie.

ANY SET-UP DIFFICULTIES?
JS: Getting brown signage! Still battling – Edinburgh Council has told us that we are a retail outlet no different to Tesco, so we do not get brown signs!



HOW DO YOU PLAN TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS?
JS: We have a planning application in to double our café covers to 200 and increase the shop floor area by 30%.

LONG TERM PLANS?
JS: Our five year plan is to bring a large educational play facility, accommodation and function facilities to the farm.

HOW IMPORTANT IS HAVING OTHER REVENUE STREAMS?
JS: Very, farming is very unpredictable, so spreading the risk is very important.

For next issue's Food Chain, John Sinclair recommends The Store Company in Aberdeenshire.



SPICE OF LIFE

Extras



I think it was on Boxing Day last year that my son (24) jammed something in a port of our television and with a loud 'phut' it gave up the ghost. Worried about what the visiting relatives might do to each other if not sedated by television, there was no choice but to buy another. At the well-known electricals store, I surprised lolling assistants by passing up the offers on more expensive, over-specced televisions and demanding to buy the model in question.

"What sound set-up do you have?" the assistant said, caressing a gleaming and expensive soundbar.

"Little speakers," I said.

"Cool," he said. "But you'll need new connector thingies. These offer superb blah-di-blah and are on unrepeatable offer at only £700."

"No, thank you."

"You must have one of these, then."

"What's that?"

"This magic DVD guarantees that the picture you get at home exactly matches the dodgy one you see here in the shop. Only £4,500."

"No, thank you."

"Special insurance, then. I wouldn't trust the cheap set you've chosen as far as I could chuck it. I can do this today at only gadzillion pounds"

"No, thank you."

"Oh. Would you like a hand to your car with your television?"

"How much will that be?"

Now, at no point had I given the least indication that I wanted to add what would really have been about a quarter of the cost again to my bill. Good retailers allow customers to approach them for what they need, and don't inflate the advertised price with unnecessary extras.

Treating customers as you would like to be treated is so important. You're going to need all the customers you can pull in if and when you relocate to vast premises vacated by those retailers who thought that looking after the bottom line wasn't entwined with how they looked after their customers.

The Summer Special May issue of Speciality Food will include:

- Summer Drinks
- Top Tips on Summer Sales
- Oils, Vinegars & Dressings
- BBQ's & Accompaniments
- British Cheese Awards Preview
- Picnic Ideas (inc. Olives, Meats, Pies, etc)



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SPECIALITY BITES

Paul Hargreaves of Cotswold Fayre offers his slant on issues affecting independent retail today

Can a speciality food supplier still claim to be so if they supply the supermarkets? This is a subject often talked about face to face in the sector, but not enough in the public arena. I am starting that debate again this month.

There have been several brands over the years that have been slated for placing some lines into supermarkets, whilst other brands that have a far higher presence within the multiples are happily ordered every week by some farm shops and delicatessen. Take a brand like Tyrrells, for example, which most independent retailers do not now stock, but for several years seemed to have a happy co-existence supplying all the main supermarkets and many of the good speciality food retailers. It seems that it was a brand that the consumers in the independent shops wanted to buy,

Tyrrells offered (and still offer) good service and, if pushed, would offer a price for volume that enabled independent retailers to offer a competitive retail price. What seems to have upset the independents in more recent years is the constant drive of the Big Four to have products on promotion, which makes the retail price in independents unrealistic for consumers most of the year.

The challenge for producers is that to grow to a size when maybe a sale and exit for the owner is possible can be very difficult without having a foot in the door of the major retailers. It is not impossible, but it is difficult, as the share of the market of independent food retail, despite growing fantastically over the last 10 years is still very small indeed. One company that has been proud to say from the beginning "We will never supply supermarkets" is another crisp company, Pipers Crisps. However, despite this, several independents have moved to other crisp brands in the last year or so, because "Pipers are everywhere".



> "There are various ways out of the multiple vs independent dilemma"

On reflection, the times that speciality food retailers have become annoyed about this is when a brand openly says that they are never going to supply supermarkets, but then do – for example Duchy Originals (to go back a long time) and more recently, Tracklements.

There are various obvious ways out of this dilemma. One is to have two brands, one for the independents and one for the mults; to produce own-label for the mults; or to have an extensive range of products and only supply a few lines to the supermarkets. This is an approach adopted by Belvoir Fruit Farms who have from the early days supplied the multiples, but always kept a high degree of loyalty from retailers like farm shops. Although new brands coming into the market will always challenge this position by saying "We don't supply supermarkets!"

In summary, probably, and slightly boringly, the answer for the independent retailer is one of balance. Have some decent brands in store that will drive some volume, but also champion new brands and small artisan producers wherever the product is good enough to take business from the more well-known brands.

Best Practice

Bodnant Welsh Food Centre's butchery manager Jason Fraser tells his story



I've been involved in the meat trade since I was a schoolboy – my first taste of life in a butcher's shop was as a Saturday assistant. I was offered a full-time job and I went on to win Young Butcher of the Year awards while training.

I heard about a vacancy for a butcher at Bodnant Welsh Food and applied but was then offered the position as Butchery Manager – thankfully, I'd always kept my hand in as a butcher. I used take holidays at Christmas to work at a friend's butcher's shop to help out with preparing the meat, plus I'd cover Saturdays and holidays for them.

About three years ago, I started to get more interested in the farming side and began with rare breed pigs. I now raise about three pigs a year for my table, family and friends. I usually go for Oxford Sandy Black or the Lop crossed with Gloucester Old Spot, as these are a rare breed and the flavour and quality of meat is far better than commercial pork. I also raise rare breed chickens, plus some turkeys each Christmas.

I meet the suppliers and see the animals on farms and local livestock markets before they are selected, to make sure that they are suitable for my needs, and the quality and weight I require. By doing this I can ensure that the livestock is raised ethically and to the highest standard. I feel that it's important to have reputable, local suppliers – there's no need to go outside the area when such quality is on our doorstep. For example I buy Welsh Black Cattle from Tecwyn Jones, whose farm is just a few miles away, in Nebo, and has won a lots of awards at the Royal Welsh Show, while my rare breed pork is from Mary Benfield, in nearby Llanelian. Having a good relationship with local suppliers ensures they understand exactly just what I want when it comes to size and quality.

I have a team of four and I work with them to make sure that the display and quality of the products is how I want it, and that they deliver the right level of customer service. In addition to traditional cuts of meat, we prepare specialist cuts and ready-to-cook items such as Lamb Henry, chicken parcels, and our own sausages and burgers. Product development is a major part of my role, and keeping in touch with customer trends.

Plus, there's always paperwork – there's plenty of administration, much of it to do with traceability. So when a carcass comes in, I need to have the paperwork from the farmer and slaughterhouse, so I know what animal it was and I can keep track of it through the shop. My background as a meat hygiene technician with the FSA, and the administration that involved comes in useful.

I also liaise daily with our Hayloft restaurant, discussing dishes with Bodnant's executive chef, Dai Davies, who is an ambassador for Welsh food, to ensure we can deliver what he wants, and when he wants it. It's not just about diners for lunch or evening meals – Dai Chef does demonstrations of his cooking for large groups and tours, or we may have a special event or a wedding. That means a large order of a certain cut and they all have to be the same quality. Plus there's meat for the kitchen staff preparing pies and pastries for the deli counter, we're starting meat hampers and the tea room and B&B farmhouse accommodation come to put their orders in for the following day.

To date I've not made any big mistakes, thankfully, but I would say that the main thing is to keep your eye on pricing, how much stock is costing in a fluctuating market. Retailers should be aware that if the cost price of a product goes down then that needs to be passed on to the customer – and vice versa.

Also, it's important to tell a supplier when you are unhappy about something, so you can work together to put it right – they may have no idea.

On the customer front, it's important to listen to what people are asking for, and what they want. Plus, if you say you can deliver something, make sure you do – don't make promises you can't keep.

DO

- Listen to the ideas of staff and customers, they are usually very good, provided you can deliver what they're suggesting
- Keep up with training so you're on top of changes in legislation
- Have a good relationship with your local authority's Environmental Health Practitioners, because they are there for advice as well as regulating

DON'T

- Forget to plan your day because planning ahead will make the job easier
- Get stuck in a rut – challenge yourself and look at new products to bring in more customers
- Lose sight of your goals

> "Bodnant's approach to food is very similar to mine – we want to be able to trace a product from the farm to the table, and to ensure it travels the fewest amount of miles possible. I'm not just a butcher – as a food supplier myself, I understand the industry"



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