

# SPECIALITY FOOD

NEWS, COMMENT AND BUYING IDEAS FOR FINE FOOD RETAILERS

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\*Food & Drink Expo/Farm Shop & Deli at NEC Birmingham 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> April 2016

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## EDITOR'S LETTER

### What's My Beef?



Since writing last month I have been in Japan. This year has seen something of an upswing of interest in the food and drink of this always fascinating country. Food shows have featured Japanese pavilions stocked with unique products and some unexpected tastes, too. Sake in all its types and vintages is starting to become better appreciated, and Japanese restaurants operating beyond the fast food, noodle and sushi level are becoming more common on the high street. Wagyu beef is growing in popularity, too. The central Japanese prefecture of Gifu produces a particularly high grade of Wagyu called Hida-gyu. While touring this interesting region – it's easily accessible by bullet train – I took the opportunity to inspect a registered farm where the distinctive black-haired Wagyu cattle are reared. Following that, I looked around the ultra-hygienic processing plant where the meat is graded and sold, and of course, managed to try this singular product in all its cooked forms. Japan has been an eye-opener on a number of levels, not least in the standards of customer service I encountered in retail outlets where attentiveness, efficiency and beautiful wrapping were offered as standard. In this extended issue we have three full show

“Thinking about widening your offer? We show you how”

previews, including an in-depth look at what you can expect from the upcoming Farm Shop & Deli Show at the NEC. If you are going, do make a point of visiting Speciality Food on stand B159, where you are assured of a warm welcome. We consider how you can make own-brand work for you and find out how to succeed with high quality meat counters. You'll also find some interesting ideas for widening your offer, whether that's by way of attending markets and festivals, or organising events and demos. We look in on Jimmy's Farm to find out how the farm shop works there, and consider the options for financing your business. I hope you find it all both informative and entertaining.

Ross Gilfillan

ross@aceville.com

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### MORRISONS SIGNS GROCERY DEAL WITH AMAZON

Morrisons has partnered with Amazon to offer fresh, frozen and ambient products to Amazon Prime Now and Amazon Pantry services.

David Potts, chief executive said, "Today's agreement is built on Morrisons' unique strengths as a food maker. The combination of our fresh food expertise with Amazon's online and logistics capabilities is compelling."

"This is a low risk and capital light wholesale supply arrangement that demonstrates the opportunity we have to become a broader business. We look forward to working with Amazon to develop and grow this partnership over the coming months."

### SME GRANT CONTEST LAUNCHED

The FedEx Small Business Grant is offering small, for-profit businesses with fewer than 100 employees which have been running for two years or more the chance to win up to £20,000 to invest in their future.

Two tiers of grants will be available: a Grant Prize of £20,000 and a First Runner-Up Prize of £5,000.

Raj Subramaniam, spokesperson said, "The competition, which provides tangible financial grants, demonstrates our commitment to helping small businesses unleash their potential and realise their dreams."

Until 3rd April businesses can enter the competition on [uk.grant.fedex.com](http://uk.grant.fedex.com), where they'll be asked to share their global ambitions.

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# What will a 'Brexit' mean for us?

In June, the British public will decide whether to stay within the European Union or go it alone. 'Brexit'-centric stories have been all over the media in recent weeks, with some MPs choosing independence from the EU while others gear up to govern an autonomous Britain, and a unanimous decision is seemingly no more present in the wider voting public.

Whether Britain stays within the UK or not will affect many things, from child benefits given to migrant workers to protection for the City of London, but what difference will either decision make to the fine food sector?

Ours is a market full of imports, exports, international relationships and workers, so it's understandable that concerns are rife – from the grass roots of the farming community where the current red tape would be far from missed, to the counters of Speciality Food readers where international foods (perhaps to become more complicated to stock) are often as popular as locally-sourced produce.

Here, we've gathered the opinions of three spokespeople for our industry: the president of the National Farmers Union to share the agricultural world's concerns; the chief executive of fine food distributor Cotswold Fayre to opine on the future of European trading; and the MD of importer and distributor RH Amar to comment on the possible results of a British exit from the EU.

## MEURIG RAYMOND, PRESIDENT OF NFU



Our EU report in 2015 was aimed at providing members with information about our existing relationship with the

EU. That report has proven very popular, and what's clear is that many farmers are seeking more information before coming to a decision on which way to vote.

If Britain is to stay in the EU then David Cameron must be clear. How will the UK's position within the EU's single market be made stronger?

Will the recent European Council meeting lead onto a commitment to create a globally competitive market with less red tape and compliance costs and better regulation for the benefit of British agriculture?

British farmers must not go into an EU referendum without all the information. If Britain stays in the EU we need to know what steps will be taken to make European agriculture more competitive. And will there be an EU commitment to regulations that are more science-based and proportionate? If we remain a member state, will we be able to remove some of the blocks to progress – such as barriers to biotechnology?

If we leave the EU, what will a British agriculture policy look like and what is the future of support payments? How will British farmers access the European market and will the UK be more open to imports from outside Europe?

These are the questions that the NFU is asking both sides of the argument. We must have clear and accurate answers which the agriculture industry can depend on to make their decision when a referendum is announced.

## ROB AMAR, MD OF RH AMAR



We will be watching developments with great interest. Our product range is sourced from 25 countries on

six continents, with the majority bought from the Eurozone, and like most businesses, we seek stability and certainty.

We have already seen how market sentiment towards a possible UK exit from the EU has caused the value of Pound Sterling to fall. If these recent falls are not

reversed, this will inevitably lead to cost price inflation for imported goods.

## PAUL HARGREAVES, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF COTSWOLD FAYRE



Whilst Cotswold Fayre predominantly buys British products and sells to British

retailers, we do have customers and suppliers in the EU, particularly in Ireland. At Christmas we import a significant volume of product from Europe and that is my short-term concern at present.

We are currently collating our Christmas catalogue, which will be printed in April. If we vote "no" in June, I suspect the £ will slide against the Euro and we will instantly lose our margin on all these products as we do not order until July, yet will have committed prices to customers by then.

Anything that makes trading with Europe easier is a good thing, and we have always employed plenty of Europeans in our warehouse. These staff members would be less available if we left the EU.

In the longer term, whether we vote "yes" or "no" I suspect business between European companies would continue much the same as before but for some short term disruption on currency rates.

“ If Britain is to stay in the EU then David Cameron must be clear. How will the UK's position within the EU's single market be made stronger? ”

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



### CRANSTONS OPENS BRAMPTON FOOD HALL

**Award-winning Cumbrian retailer Cranstons has opened a new site in the village of Brampton.**

The newly-opened Brampton Food Hall aims to offer an extensive range of Cranstons' fresh meat and deli items, while simultaneously championing the work of food and drink producers from across the region.

Cumbrian businesses supplying the retailer include Brysons Bakery, Lakes Free Range Eggs, Kin Vodka, Mr Vikkis, Claire's Handmade, Eden Brewey and Appleby Creamery.

As well as items from these producers, Cranstons' Brampton Food Hall offers the company's revered bacon, hung steaks and sausages as well as freshly baked pies, hot takeaway breakfasts and lunches and wines and local beers.

Philip Cranston, managing director said, "We have been looking to expand our retail presence in Brampton for a number of years as our old shop was very compact. The new larger Food Hall allows us to offer a much bigger range in spacious surroundings - we can

now offer four times more butchery produce and three times more delicatessen produce than the old shop, plus completely new ranges of local produce. We really hope the people of Brampton will enjoy shopping here."

Mark Mallinson, manager said, "I am thrilled that we will now be able to offer our very loyal customer base in Brampton a wider range of products and produce from other local suppliers. Our customers had a great rapport with our close-knit team in the old shop, so I am pleased that the whole existing shop team is moving with us along with four new sales assistants. I am really proud of the new shop, I just hope that our customers will love it too!"



### LIVERPOOL WELCOMES CHEESE & CO

**A new deli-café has opened in Liverpool, celebrating fine cheese and top quality artisan products.**

Inspired by London's deli and food market scene, the owners spent time researching in the capital and sourcing fine food from little-known producers.

As well as serving hot food such as toasties, Cheese & Co sells salads and cakes throughout the day, as well as



good wines and specialist beers.

Colette Poole, owner said, "The reason for opening Cheese & Co was my love for cheese, and I hoped that Liverpool would feel the same way. I realised that Liverpool city centre had nothing like this, so I decided with my brother in law Danny that we should bring an artisan cheese café to the city.

"So far our most popular cheeses have been Wijngaard Gouda, a white Dutch goats cheese; Neals Yard Fenn, a soft cows milk cheese with a strong flavour; and Trou du Cru, a mini Epoisses.

"We stock cheese from The Fine Cheese Company in Bath and stock the famous bread from Libby's, a superb baker from Marple Bridge. A local lady makes delicious cakes for us, and our salads are all our own creation."



### REAL FOOD ILKLEY LAUNCHES FINE FOOD MARKET EVENT

**A collective of West Yorkshire-based food retailers and producers has come together to launch a Fine Food and Local Produce Market, which will take place on the first Sunday of every month until December.**

Real Food Ilkley, the organisers of the event, have selected each producer and vendor to demonstrate the wealth of talent in the area and to promote traditional food production methods. Over half of the vendors are from within the Ilkley district.

As well as produce being available to purchase, the open-air market will also offer 'foodie' demonstrations and live entertainment from local performers.

In accordance with Real Food Ilkley's focus on the local community, two stalls at each



market will be allocated to local community groups and health improvement organisations.

Paula Connor from Real Food Ilkley said, "This market is for producers, residents, tourists and the whole community. We are so pleased to be finally launching

the market - it promises to be an amazing event and a great hub for Ilkley. We have had so much interest, and those who still want to get involved can apply for stalls for the next markets or volunteer to work with us at the markets on the first Sunday of each month."

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## JOHN SHEPHERD OF PARTRIDGES



### “Is price important to speciality food shops?”

**K**nown Value Items or KVIs are literally the bread and butter of supermarkets and convenience stores. Not only because bread and butter features on the list of items, but because they are the products that form the price perception of the shop in the eyes of the customers. The battle for low prices is constantly raging across the pages of newspapers, and the rise of Aldi and Lidl can testify to the importance of successful pricing strategies.

The definition of KVIs, to my mind, is that they are frequently purchased products in the high volume, low margin category with what is often described as a low emotional connection – such as household products and basic commodities.

However, for speciality food shops, competitive prices are not necessarily an option. It is more about creating compelling retail environments with exclusive products and high customer service standards. This is the pursuit of a high value and high emotional connection strategy. The price of individual products is of much less importance – subject to a cut-off point, of course.

The starting line in selecting the retail price for delis is often what constitutes a suitable margin and working from there. In our particular case at Partridges, (in the rarified atmosphere of Central London), I am afraid to say checking the prices of competitors is not something that we are accustomed to carrying out on a regular basis, so I recently set out on a personal mission to explore this topic in a totally unscientific trip around the food halls and delis of

Central London in search of Buffalo Mozzarella, a product that I thought would be easy to compare and pretty much ubiquitous in speciality food shops.

In total, I visited nine shops – four speciality cheese shops or delis, four larger food halls and one major supermarket. It is interesting to note that out of the nine shops, seven different Mozzarellas were available. Two of the shops did not actually stock it. Four of the Mozzarellas were DOP, three were not and one was unpasteurised. The actual price of the Mozzarella, excluding special offers, differed by over 60%, with the cheapest being bought unsurprisingly in the multiple at £1.59 for 100g, and the most expensive being bought at £2.65 for 100g. When our panel of experts carried out a taste test, it was the more expensive Mozzarellas that were preferred.

Different retailers clearly have different approaches to pricing but similar approaches in the area of exclusive products. Looking at our own experience at Partridges, we try to cover selling exclusive products in a number of ways.

Firstly, our own range of products is made wherever possible to exclusive recipes. This has been most successful in our own range of tea but is not always successful in other categories. We are also trying to introduce the Startisan 'stall to store' scheme whereby start up businesses who trial at our food markets successfully are allocated space on the shop floor. These products are generally unique, often exclusive to us and frequently of very high quality. Unfortunately, like many good ideas they do not often sell well.

## Awards Success at FARMA's Annual Conference



**Following its annual conference and trade show, FARMA has announced the winners of the National Farm Retail Awards.**

The Awards have run for the past 15 years, showcasing the best farm retailers – including farm shops, markets, butchers and restaurants – across the UK, and this year's categories included Large Farm Shop of the Year, Small Farm Shop of the Year, Pick Your Own of the Year, Farmers' Market of the Year,

Restaurant/Café of the Year, Farm Butcher of the Year and Newcomer of the Year, as well as the overall winner, Retail Champion of the Year.

This year's winners include Hollow Trees Farm Shop (Large Farm Shop and Retail Champion), Whitehouse Farm (Newcomer), Newlyn Farm Shop (Farm Butcher) and Hanley Farm Shop (Small Farm Shop).

As well as the award ceremony, the event also encompassed tours around the region's most successful retail businesses and a butchery competition, which was won by Cheerbrook Farm Shop.

Michael Mack, managing agent of FARMA said, "The FARMA Conference came to an end on Tuesday night leaving all the attendees buzzing with ideas and inspiration. With speakers ranging from the chair of the FSA, Tim Bennett to the CEO of the Soil Association, Helen Browning,

attendees had a lot to take in.

"Looking outside of farm retailing is always a valuable way to gather ideas, and to have not only a tour of the retail parts of Chester Zoo but also Dominic Strange from the zoo speaking made people sit up and think about how they run their business and how to differentiate different customer groups.

"I would also like to thank the supporters and sponsors of the FARMA Conference. The help of organisations like Tyrrells is invaluable to FARMA.

"The conference also included the AGM for FARMA and the election of a new Chair, Milly Stokes from Farndon Fields Farm Shop in Market Harbour. Milly's experience in the sector will ensure that FARMA has a strong future ahead. I am looking forward to working with her over the coming years."

## Young Entrepreneur Awards Open for Entries

**Fine food distributor Cotswold Fayre is launching its annual Young Food and Drink Entrepreneur of the Year award in order to help food entrepreneurs make their business a success.**

The competition is inspired by the growing number of new businesses being started by young entrepreneurs; according to the Centre for Entrepreneurs, over 26,000 UK businesses are run by professionals aged 21 and under.

The winning food and drink business will be awarded £1,500 to help grow the business as well as monthly mentoring sessions with Paul Hargreaves and support from Cotswold Fayre's in-house designer to build a strong brand identity.

Paul Hargreaves, chief executive of Cotswold Fayre said, "Despite

the UK having a healthier economy that is providing jobs at established businesses, we are still seeing more young people seeking to start their own business.

"Young people are increasingly interested in the provenance, quality and nutritional content of the products they consume. It is great to see some of this active interest being translated into new product innovation."

"Starting a business myself 17 years ago, I completely appreciate that the hurdles to starting a new business can be daunting. The unique thing about our start-up support scheme is that we are not only offering a small amount of monetary support but I am also mentoring the winner throughout the first year to help them to accelerate their business plan."

Last year's winner, Jerome Jacob, founder of PHROOTI said, "Winning the Cotswold Fayre Young Food & Drink Entrepreneur of the Year 2015 award has helped me achieve industry recognition, helped with my start-up costs and, most importantly, given me an invaluable mentor in Paul.

"In the six months since winning, Paul has acted as a calm sounding board. This has been crucial in getting my product range to market (at the moment PHROOTI is stocked in 20 outlets) and I very much look forward to the next six months of working with Paul to progress the business further."

Applications for this year's awards open on 1st April and close on 30th June.

The application form can be found on [cotswoldfayre.co.uk](http://cotswoldfayre.co.uk).



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## GILES HENSCHEL OF OLIVES ET AL



### “Fake archbishop, rape and virgins”

What a gift of a headline. It looks like the cat has been well and truly taken out of the bag and placed among a flock of very nervous looking pigeons. It sounds like the components of an exceedingly old joke: the dodgy archbishop, the virgin and shenanigans in the pews. The article in the Daily Telegraph was under the headline of, “Fake Archbishop selling Aldi Olive Oil as miracle cancer cure”. Seems like a chap called Gilbert Deya helped himself to the title of Archbishop of Peckham and, having anointed some £1.99 olive oil from Aldi, was knocking it out at a fiver a bottle to his congregation as a miracle cure.

Now, a couple of things: first up, £5 for 750ml of olive oil is not too bad a price – especially when you add in the cost of all that anointing, blessing and whatnot (not to mention the robes of an Archbishop and that pointy hat), it could be seen as a bit of a betty-bargain.

Next up, he could actually be onto something. It's not for nothing that virgin olive oil is called 'virgin'. Every major religious text written over the last six thousand years has numerous mentions of the olive and its place in sacred rites and rituals: the pharaohs of ancient Egypt were incarcerated with olive branches and olive oil; the Quran encourages the use of olive oil for medicinal purposes no less than seven times, the old and new testaments have more mentions than you can shake an olive branch at. Even Hindu scriptures talk of the olive as being significant to their religion. You can't

say that for either rapeseed or sunflower oil can you?

Let's get back to virgins. Virgin olive oil is not called virgin because of anything to do with first squeezes – it's all because the Greeks, back in the days of minotaurs and mythology, decided that the olive tree was so sacred that only the pure and chaste (virgins) could tend to them. Therefore they became known as the 'Virgin's Olives' and the oil they begat was 'The Virgin's Olive Oil'. In time it simply became Virgin olive oil (space is too short to explain 'Extra Virgin' but it has nothing to do with a double set of anti-man pants).

So is there any proof that olive oil is actually good for you? Well, hallelujah for a couple of doctors at The University of Glasgow who recently conducted a definitive study that conclusively proved that olive oil really does have a positive effect on the health of our hearts. Double Hallelujah for them then conducting the same experiment with both sunflower and rapeseed oil, which both claim similar health properties as olive oil and have even hijacked the Virgin tag, and proving once and for all that neither of them, under the same experiment, had any effect what so ever on heart health.

So I say hands off our virgins to the rapeseed and sunflower brigade and hooray for dodgy archbishops peddling anointed oil to a hopeful congregation. He got one thing wrong: miracle cure it ain't. Genuine, proven, real, tested, tried and actual it is. That's proper olive.



## Fairtrade in Numbers

**Fairtrade Fortnight took place in early March, promoting the benefits of Fairtrade across the UK through activities in local communities, shops, cafés, schools and workplaces.**

Recent research has shown that consumers continue to support the Fairtrade cause, with volumes of the most popular products – tea, coffee, cocoa and bananas – growing in the past 12 months, leading to greater financial premiums to Fairtrade farmers and workers in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Caribbean.

Of the four main Fairtrade commodities, coffee increased the most, by 12 per cent. This equates to 255 million more cups of Fairtrade coffee drunk last year than in 2014, while tea's 3 per cent growth means that 2015 saw 184 million more cups drunk than in the previous year.

Meanwhile, Fairtrade wine and flowers also saw growth in 2015, with sales rising in double digits (wine 17 per cent and flowers 14 per cent).

However, not all Fairtrade foods fared well in 2015 – sugar sales declined by 36 per cent in 2015 compared to 2014, and sales of fresh and dried fruit, nuts and cotton dropped too.

Michael Gidney, CEO of the Fairtrade Foundation said, “These figures show that British shoppers remain committed to Fairtrade, despite the turbulence in the grocery market. That's good news for those businesses offering Fairtrade products. We're delighted to see increases in most of the categories for which Fairtrade is best known – this means more producers are getting a better deal

for the food they grow for us.”

Kassu Eriba, member of Hafurissa cooperative, Yirgacheffe Farmers Cooperative Union said, “Things have improved over the last four years. Before the union formed, the price we got for our coffee was very low and we struggled to survive. We couldn't support ourselves properly before Fairtrade and life was very hard. We didn't have electricity, we couldn't send our children to school. Also the road was bad. Now that Fairtrade is supporting us, we see a very big change. Our life is getting better and better.

“But you must buy more so that we can continue to improve our lives. We are producing coffee and selling it to the world but we don't get much of the value of a cup of coffee, so please keep buying my Fairtrade beans.”

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## The Source Grows From Strength to Strength

There were more exhibitors to this year's Source Trade Show than ever before, representing speciality food and drink, food service products, furniture, kitchen design, EpoS systems and business services.

A number of familiar brands exhibited at the event, and the show was also a great route to market for 22 Newcomers.

Visitor numbers were up by 10 per cent, with visitors attending from independent food retailers, pubs and hotels, tourist attractions and holiday parks.

Mike Anderson, director of Hale Events, organiser of the event, said, "There was a real buzz on site this year throughout the two days. We were so pleased that such a lot of business was conducted; not only between buyers and exhibitors, but also amongst the companies taking part.

"Highlights for me included the new demo theatre stage and the Newcomers offering buyers something unique and different."

## Good Service Boosts Indie Sales by 84%

According to recent research carried out by truRating, customers who have received good service at independent retailers will spend up to 84 per cent more than dissatisfied customers.

The research showed that the average transaction value at an independent, £29.41, can rise to £53.98 if the customer had a positive shopping experience.

The research also looked into the correlation between spend and repeat custom, and found that customers who spent more on a visit were more likely to return.

Georgina Nelson, CEO of truRating said, "The correlation between exceptional service and spend is clearly strong, and these numbers really highlight the benefit of getting it right every time. It can be tricky to see what's working and what's not when you are busy running a business – it could be small things that are affecting customer satisfaction, but retailers might not have the time to step back and see the areas where improvements, if made, would have a really positive impact.

"If you can identify the times of the week your customers are happiest and spend more, then you can start to see why that might be. Is it because you have a better ratio of staff to customers on those days, is it because the knowledge of those staff is better, or is it because your stock is replenished on those days? Getting access to the right insight can help you uncover the blind spots in your business and then focus your attention on changes that will make a difference for you and our customers."



CHARLES CAMPION

## "Sausage Wars"

When it comes to enthusiasm for sausages and pies I bow to no man. For me the humble snorker plays a pivotal role on many menus, filling the gap between lumps of meat various and those more complicated dishes that tickle the chef's fancy. But given their often utilitarian role, sausages can be surprisingly sophisticated. Ask an East Anglian tucking into a Newmarket sausage whether they would prefer an Oxford sausage and they won't go on about technicalities, seasoning or the precise amount of sage involved; their local sausage demands blind loyalty and only the familiar will do.

The British Isles has a pretty good track record in respect of sausages, but let us not forget the "grind everything small and do not enquire too closely where the meat comes from" school of thought. Cast your mind back to the dreaded Saveloy: orange-skinned, sludgy inside and shockingly cheap. It's a sensible rule of thumb that if a sausage sells for less than the cheapest meat available on the market it is best not to enquire too closely about the precise composition of that banger.

Recent events in Kyrgyzstan have put the diplomatic spotlight on sausages. A Scottish gold miner called Mr McFeat hit Twitter with an assertion that local Kyrgyz delicacy – the 'chukuk' sausage – looked like a horse's penis. This is not far off the mark as said large sausage is made from horsemeat and is a second cousin to the spicy 'sucuk' sausage that you'll find in Turkish restaurants. Whether or not the sausage in question was made from horse doesn't really matter,

the Kyrgyz authorities rounded up Mr McFeat and charged him under the race hate laws which left the ex-pat gold digger facing a five year jail stretch. With a straight face the Kyrgyz establishment issued a statement asserting that such offences could lead to war between the UK and the former Soviet republic. After Mr McFeat had been chased up the road by a howling mob (allegedly), he was smuggled out of Kirgizstan and banned from returning for five years. In a way you have to respect the Kyrgyz for sticking up for their sausage.

For decades the Andouillette has puzzled Brits and promoted sales of hot mustard – the only condiment that will cover up its feral whiff. This is a sausage made from chitterlings and pig's pipework, and as you cut into it, the aroma of poorly maintained urinals rolls across the table. Many moons ago, on a trip to Paris with a touring rugby team, I was present at a serious brawl which kicked off when various lumpy Antipodeans refused to eat (and so to pay for) anything that smelt so bad. What the waiter had described as a "big pork sausage" when taking the order turned out to be an Andouillette. So for sausage diplomacy to work we'll need to try some dodgy stuff from the other side of the Channel and the French will have to embrace the glory that is our Cumberland sausage. I don't see how we could lose. Perhaps we could start by sending an emissary to Kyrgyzstan with some traditional British sausages for a grand fraternal tasting? Then we could move on to a sensible EEC sausage referendum when deciding whether to fry or grill.

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## Indies at Forefront of Organic Growth

The Soil Association's 2016 Organic Market Report has been released, and shows that the organic market has continued to grow steadily over the past 12 months and now has a 1.4 per cent share of the food and drink market.

In 2015 the organic market grew 4.9 per cent, making it the third year of consecutive growth for the sector, compared to the non-organic grocery market which saw a 0.9 per cent decrease in the same period.

Consumers spent an extra £1.73 million on organic products per week in 2015, while sales of organic items at organic retailers rose by

7.5 per cent across the year and box schemes and online sales rose by 9.1 per cent.

Jams and spreads saw a rise in sales of 28.1 per cent, while oils and vinegars rose 17.5 per cent and tea 12.8 per cent.

Martin Sawyer, chief executive of Soil Association Certification said, "This is a hugely exciting time for the organic sector, with the market set to break through the £2 billion mark in 2016 and reach levels seen before the recession. Thanks to the growth of online, it is now possible for retailers to connect consumers with the broadest choice of organic products."

## Rural Planning Update

The Department for Communities and Local Government together with the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is looking to simplify planning rules for farmers and growers.

The 10 week consultation will look at adapting the town planning system to benefit rural businesses and farmers who wish to develop their land, for example by building a farm shop.

Suzanne Clear, NFU senior advisor for planning and rural affairs said, "The planning system has often delayed farmers' and growers' ability to develop their farm businesses, diversify and get more homes on farm.

"Any planning issues can be raised so this review is a timely opportunity to feedback on how the system can work better. In particular the consultation asks about using permitted development rights for a farm shop, polytunnels and on-farm reservoirs. It also provides the chance to feedback on the planning rules for converting farm building to agricultural use."

The deadline for submissions to this call for evidence is 21 April 2016.



## DIARY DATES

### April

#### 5th-7th

WORLD TRAVEL CATERING & ONBOARD SERVICES EXPO

Hamburg Messe, Germany  
[worldtravelcateringexpo.com](http://worldtravelcateringexpo.com)

#### 7th-10th

LONDON COFFEE FESTIVAL

Old Truman Brewery, London  
[londoncoffeefestival.com](http://londoncoffeefestival.com)

#### 8th-10th

BBC GOOD FOOD SHOW SPRING

Harrogate  
[bbcgoodfoodshowspring.com](http://bbcgoodfoodshowspring.com)

#### 17th-18th

NATURAL & ORGANIC PRODUCTS EUROPE

ExCel, London  
[naturalproducts.co.uk](http://naturalproducts.co.uk)

#### 18th-20th

FARM SHOP & DELI SHOW

NEC, Birmingham  
[farmshopanddelishow.co.uk](http://farmshopanddelishow.co.uk)

#### 18th-20th

FOOD & DRINK EXPO

NEC, Birmingham  
[foodanddrinkexpo.co.uk](http://foodanddrinkexpo.co.uk)

#### 18th-20th

NATIONAL CONVENIENCE SHOW

NEC, Birmingham  
[nationalconvenienceshow.co.uk](http://nationalconvenienceshow.co.uk)

#### 22nd-24th

EXETER FESTIVAL OF SOUTH WEST FOOD & DRINK

Exeter  
[exeterfoodanddrinkfestival.co.uk](http://exeterfoodanddrinkfestival.co.uk)

#### 25th-28th

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[alimentaria-ben.com](http://alimentaria-ben.com)

### May

#### 3rd-5th

LONDON INTERNATIONAL WINE FAIR

Olympia, London  
[londonwinefair.com](http://londonwinefair.com)

#### 10th-11th

CAFFE CULTURE SHOW

Olympia, London  
[caffecultureshow.com](http://caffecultureshow.com)

#### 20th-22nd

BBC GOOD FOOD SHOW SUMMER

ExCel, London  
[bbcgoodfoodshowsummer.com](http://bbcgoodfoodshowsummer.com)

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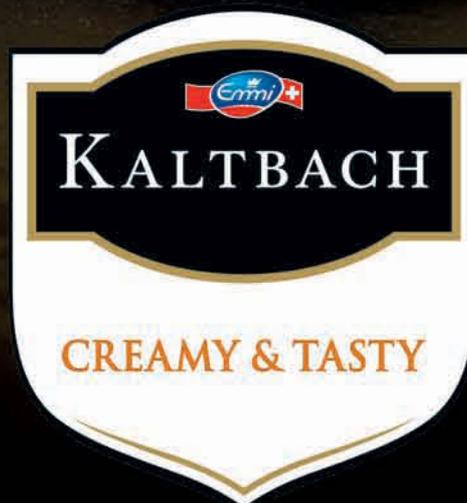
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*CAVE-AGED. IN PEACE.*

**T**oday's consumers are opting for quality over quantity. As a result of revelations regarding the sugar debate and Horsegate, customers are no longer as trusting of manufacturers and want to ensure that they know what's in their food.

In addition, consumers are more conscientious regarding world and environmental issues. This trend has been a key driver for confectionery and chocolate manufacturers around the world as they set strict sustainability goals for ingredients such as cocoa and sugar. As a result, supply chain transparency is increasingly becoming a prerequisite for consumers of fine chocolate and confectionery.

Jean-Marc Laurens, quality and R&D director for Cemoi said that the company has seen a growing interest in healthier products in the entire food industry as consumers are becoming more health conscious and want to have a short and understandable ingredient list. "In addition," he says, "the main trend we are seeing is notably a transition from what in recent years became known as 'clean label', regarding free-from products, to a 'clear label'.

### "Customers demand credibility"

"What this means is that due to numerous food scandals the industry suffers from credibility issues, and consumers demand more transparency in the labelling of products. They want to know where the product comes from, what is inside it and how it's been made," he added. And fine food shoppers are always one step ahead, making it an advantage to stock products that are clearly

## Sweet and see-through; Daisy Phillipson explores transparency in the confectionery sector



labelled and sustainably sourced.

For example, Grenada Chocolate Company produces its chocolate alongside a Grenadian organic cocoa farmers co-operative. In partnership with UK chocolate distributing company HB Ingredients, this product sees the company carry out a sustainable and ethical cocoa production.

"Most of the cocoa in Grenada is organic by default," says HB Ingredients founder and owner Tony Mycock. "The GCC Organic Co-operative farmers literally work the land and prune the trees. Because they are getting fairer rewards, the farmers are investing in their land and putting back. This fits into the transparency trend, for consumers to have a greater knowledge of the food supply chain." Stocking products that come from manufacturers like

this fits right into the profile of what consumers are looking for; not only can it provide the customer with information of where their ingredients are sourced and how the farmers are treated, but it also adds credibility with organic claims on the label. Transparency will become even more important and a driver of increased collaboration. Consumers are willing to engage and invest, but they need to know they are making a difference.

High quality chocolate manufacturers Divine are a leading company for the transparency trend, as they claim to be the only Fairtrade chocolate business which is 44% owned by its farmers. This ensures that their farmers receive a better deal for their cocoa as well as additional income, which

is something that they can promote alongside the quality of the product.

### Consumer concern

Harriet Hamilton from Apley Farm Shop is seeing an increased number of responsible shoppers who are concerned for those less fortunate. "If we don't stock products such as these it will come round to bite us," she added. "It can be seen in our own interests to support other international producers, especially those in developing countries. There are benefits to being seen to be doing the right thing."

Another key topic surrounding transparency is sugar. Customers want to know more about how the sugar in their food is supplied, and in the speciality sector,

healthier sugar alternatives and organic sweeteners are demanded. Consumers want fewer ingredients in their food, but for those ingredients to be high quality.

This has become a national requirement as large companies are signing up to become Fairtrade-certified. The Co-operative Group and Tate & Lyle Sugars have recently collaborated, and will see the convenience retailer's entire sugar range become Fairtrade-certified. The move is set to drive more than £1 million of benefits to smallholder sugar cane farmers and sugar growing communities of Belize over the next two years.

For farm shops and delicatessen, the benefits of stocking sweets and chocolate with Fairtrade sugar will ensure that customers know they are buying ethically-made products. Many manufacturers are now creating recipes using Fairtrade sugar, for example Burnt Sugar, which produces a range of fudge.

As the trend for transparency is here to stay, retailers will be required to offer confectionery products with even clearer labels as well as items that contain ingredients that are sustainably sourced. "Shops are obliged to stock trendy foods," says Ms Hamilton, "so if old-style sugar sweets are going out of fashion, and products that are not clearly sustainably sourced, then it would be mad for retailers not to stock the latest versions. It's essential to keep up with the times and ensure that your customers trust you and the range of products you choose to stock."

“ Supply chain transparency is increasingly becoming a prerequisite for consumers of fine chocolate and confectionery ”

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**Three generations of our Yorkshire family joined forces to open Brayton Farm Shop in October 2015.** With more than 60 years' combined retail and farming experience, Lillian and Graham Hirst teamed up with their sons and families to run the new shop – a contemporary new build, based in a 5,000sq ft building on a small holding in Mill Lane, Brayton.

**The emphasis is on homemade food and produce sourced from trusted local farmers and growers, and with decades of experience running successful small businesses in the area, we know what sets us apart from the chains.** Our aim is to offer a good value alternative to the usual high street shop – a place where the customer feels valued and is given the time and attention they deserve – but our main ethos is 'value for money': something that has proved so successful for us in the past.

**Farm shops are perceived to be expensive, but we don't see any reason why you have to pay a premium for farm produce.** Yorkshire people are always looking for good quality goods at affordable prices, and good food doesn't have to be just 'a treat at the weekends'. At Brayton, we want our customers to eat well all week!

**Innovative ideas that offer great value and convenience for families are what makes us stand out from the competition.** As well as recipe ideas and inspiration, hungry families

## PRIME CUTS

Tina Hirst, co-owner of Brayton Farm Shop, explains the value of keeping it in the community



can get their week's shopping ticked off in one go with one of our 'Feed a Family for a Week' parcels (for less than £35), which contain all the prime meat cuts a family of four needs for five days.

**Good planning is the key to our success, and we're always looking ahead to new trends and seasonal ideas.** For example, we currently reflect the cold weather by offering a Winter Stew Pack and use social media to promote our offers. We've recently found people struggle with assessing value for money based on kilo weights, so we have gone back to pricing chicken breasts individually.

**As a butchery business, we have four main philosophies:** good animal welfare; getting to know our local farmers/producers by visiting their farms regularly; good sourcing, not only of the meat, but of all associated products used on the butchery counter; and good staff training in traditional butchery skills.

**Our lamb is from Ocot Farm in Huddersfield – an old family business, who have been family friends for many years.** We butcher the lambs in-house and break the carcasses down into primals and then into cuts i.e. shoulder, saddle, legs etc. The cuts are then further broken down to produce individual joints, for example we offer a lamb cushion, stuffed saddle of lamb and noisettes of lamb. Lamb breast stuffed with sage and onion stuffing is very popular and good value. There's also lots of uptake from people buying for the freezer and our half lamb packs are good value. Our pork is from Woods at Ocot Farm, Huddersfield. We buy large white pigs and use the shoulder for all our sausages, with the loin for chops. Our black pudding

stuffed loin is very popular. Again, we also sell lots of half pigs for the freezer. The loins and middle cuts are cured for a week to produce our Home Cured Brayton Bacon, and we use a traditional easy cure and a smoked cure. Our beef comes direct from a farm at Barkston Ash near Tadcaster (12 miles away). The beef is hung for three to four weeks to produce a really lean and tasty product. Animal welfare is really important to the butchery team, and it's crucial that the animals have been raised to the very highest standards. We personally go and select the beef we want every Sunday morning. We hang the hinds, and the forequarters are minced or used for stewing beef and brisket. We also sell quiches, sausage rolls, cheeses and other deli goods, and offer in-house specialities. We also sell fruit and vegetables, sourced from local farms, preserves, chutneys, oils, savoury biscuits, bread, cakes and puddings, confectionery, foodie gifts, and wine, spirits and locally brewed beers from York Brewery, Rudgate and Old Mill, to name but a few.

**When it comes to setting up a butchery counter, the main priority is to hire good staff, with well-trained and experienced butchers that have**

**provenance at their heart.** They need to be able to set up good relationships with farmers, as there's a lot of money at stake when buying in cattle. You need butchers who can plan and organise, so that the meat is properly hung, while keeping the counter well-stocked and efficiently run. You need a large, good quality and clean display to show off your range and also a butcher with a bit of wit – a bubbly butcher will entice the customers!

**We opened with no expectations but have already attracted regular customers that visit us twice a week.** We have a real mix of customers, some from Brayton village and the wider community, including Selby, and some from as far as Doncaster. On weekdays we tend to attract older/retired customers, or professionals on

“ Knowing customers' names and knowing what they want when they walk through the door, talking to them and passing on our knowledge – all of this makes them feel special and valued. It's a simple philosophy but one that is lacking in many supermarkets and high street stores these days ”

their way home from work, and at the weekends our customer base is more family orientated.



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## Take stock with our new food and drink round-up



## Divine Launches Baking Bars

Fairtrade chocolate brand Divine has launched two premium bars of chocolate suitable for baking.

Targeted towards the 42 per cent of UK residents who bake at home

weekly (taken from The Grocer's Home Baking Report 2015), the bars are made with premium quality, Fairtrade-certified cocoa beans which have been produced by the farmers of the co-operative which co-owns Divine, Kuapa Kokoo.

The bars are available in dark chocolate, which contains 70 per cent cocoa solids, and milk chocolate, which offers a smooth taste with 38 per cent cocoa solids.

Both bars are 200g, contain high levels of cocoa butter to allow for easy melting and versatile usage.

Charlotte Green, marketing director said, "With nearly half of British people baking weekly, the home baking trend shows no sign of waning. Our products are already popular with keen bakers seeking premium chocolate, which is why we are launching the same great Divine taste in a new, easier to use format with the same great taste and quality credentials."

The bars are available from 1st April. [divinechocolate.com](http://divinechocolate.com)

## Marriage's Releases Golden Wholegrain Flours

Essex millers Marriage's has expanded its range of flours with two new additions: Golden Wholegrain Bread and Golden Wholegrain Plain.

The 100 per cent wholemeal flours were launched following research showing that 72 per cent of men and 87 per cent of women in the UK are not consuming enough fibre, while 95 per cent do not eat enough wholegrains.

Golden Wholegrain Bread Flour is a wholesome alternative for health-conscious consumers baking bread at home, while Golden Wholegrain can be used for biscuits, cakes, scones and pastry.

Hannah Marriage, director said, "We're excited about these new flours, which are a first for the UK and provide an easy and tasty way to boost fibre and add wholegrains into bakes. The flours have a sweeter, milder flavour and a lighter colour than traditional wholemeal flour, making Golden Wholegrain a store cupboard essential for health conscious home bakers.

"These new flours reflect shoppers' desire for easy ways to improve their diet, without compromising on taste."

[flour.co.uk](http://flour.co.uk)



## Herb-centric Dressing Brand Enters Market

A new brand of dressings has entered the market, committed to using natural ingredients and fresh British herbs in all its recipes.

The range consists of four flavours: Red Onion & Parsley: a delicious combination of cooling parsley and rich earthy onion, ideal for drizzling over couscous, rice or a crispy salad;

Balsamic & Thyme: Warming and fragrant; this sweetly aromatic dressing is a treat on salads and a marvellous marinade for meat, poultry and roasted vegetables; Raspberry & Mint: Capturing the essence of summer fruits with sweet, menthol undertones, this is a great accompaniment for prawns, burgers or a sumptuous chicken sandwich and Lemon & Tarragon: A classic refreshing pairing that cries out to be trickled over new potatoes, green beans or a lentil and feta salad.

Sophie Lane Fox, founder said, "Having grown up in a family of green-fingered, professional horticulturalists, I have always had a passion for natural, home-grown produce. Coupling my love of fresh herbs with my interest in cooking and recipe development, I created the A Little Bit range of dressings and sauces.

"For the past two years I have been working hard to develop the A Little Bit brand and it is really exciting to be launching the first products! With wholesome, British herbs used in every recipe, the 'A Little Bit On Top' collection brings something 'fresh' to the speciality dressings sector!" [alittlebit.co.uk](http://alittlebit.co.uk)

## Premium Frozen Range Hits Sector

New Brighton & Hove-based frozen meal producer, Decent Food, has entered the fine food market with a range of hand prepared ready meals.

Free from sugar and dairy and paleo diet-friendly, the range currently contains four meals: Slow Cooked Beef Brisket; Apple Barbecue Pulled Pork; Turkey Meatballs and Honey Spiced Chicken.

John Bancroft, director of Decent Food said, "The brand was born as a result of my attempt to do a month on the paleo diet. This involved buying and cooking fresh meat and vegetables everyday, whilst cutting out refined sugars, wheat, dairy and everything that is processed. Good intentions turned into chaos, when a busy work and home life led to me searching for convenience food; however there just wasn't anything out there. Even the freshest of prepared food had added sugar.



"Decent meals are carefully developed to ensure bold and balanced savoury flavours, whilst the ingredients help you take good care of your body. The meals have intentionally been developed for those that want to compliment regular, high intensity exercise and nutrition. The one serve portion sizes are between 350g-430g and their nutritional values score green on the front of pack traffic lights. Every meal is labelled as dairy free, gluten-free and paleo friendly." [decentfood.co.uk](http://decentfood.co.uk)

## Hillfarm Oils Creates New Local Honey

Hillfarm Oils, based in Suffolk, has extended its product range to include honey as well as cold-pressed rapeseed oil.

The honey is available both set and runny, and is produced by bees who feed on the farm's rapeseed crops as well as the local woodland, clover-rich fields and borage.

Lawrence Frohn, business manager said, "Over the last few months many of our customers have rung us asking about how we look after bees and other beneficial insects on our farm.

"We are proud to be able to say that we are a modern farm and farm in a way that is sensitive to the wildlife all around us. We do a lot to look after the bees on the farm, not just in the summer when they can be seen, but all year round. It is our actions that speak louder than words, and it's important for us to demonstrate our commitment to caring for the beneficial insects on our farm.

"We hope that this clearly demonstrates that although we are a commercial and modern farming business, we do work hard to look after the environment in which we live and work. Bees and other beneficial insects thrive on our farm and without them our crops would be nowhere as good as they are!"

[hillfarmoils.com](http://hillfarmoils.com)



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# Cawston Press Expands Vegetable Juice Offering



Juice brand Cawston Press has added to its range of fruit and vegetable juices with Spiced Tomato, made with pressed juice and without added sugar or artificial ingredients.

The juice contains 88 per cent pressed tomato and a unique spice mix created by Cawston Press' master blender Micah Carr-Hill to increase its savoury notes.

As well as being used as a healthy breakfast beverage, it can be used as a convenient base for a Bloody Mary cocktail.

Steve Kearns, managing director said, "We are excited to announce a brand new addition to our award-winning range of fruit and vegetable juice. Our team has created an innovative juice, using both a dash of our original apple juice and new, dynamic flavours, to champion tomato juices on the market.

"I have no doubt that the high-quality juice will please all consumers – whether they're looking for a healthy vegetable- or a first-rate Bloody Mary!"  
[cawstonpress.com](http://cawstonpress.com)



PROMOTION

## GET FRUITY

Meet the award-winning fruit and oat bars with a difference

Get Fruity is a fruit and oat bar with a difference as we produce them ourselves and use only the best quality fruit, oats and virgin coconut oil to ensure they're truly delicious," says Davina, founder. "I always loved working with food and I was fortunate to work in the industry for some of the world's leading brands. I created Get Fruity as a healthy, tasty and 100% natural 'on the go' treat for kids and adults."



"The vibrant new flavours we are introducing to the range are Marvellous Mango, Tangy Pineapple, Coconut & Lime and Radiant Raspberry. Inspired by the traditional woodland fruit, our new raspberry bar will definitely be a firm favourite for the kids, while the tropical flavours of mango and pineapple bring an exotic element to the existing flavour range. Our fabulously tasty bars will be available from April 2016 so please give them a try."

### "Moist and juicy"

"The success of Get Fruity derives from the unique taste and texture of the bars themselves. Our bars are moist and juicy, naturally bright in colour, packed with real named fruit, fruit juices, gluten-free oats and the new superfood, virgin coconut oil, with absolutely no refined sugars. Plus, they are nutritious, gluten-free, vegan and 100% natural. The excitingly vibrant natural colours of the bars make them fun and appetising with the use of only the best quality ingredients. The bars come in six delicious flavours: Scrumptious Strawberry, Moist Mixed Berry and Juicy Apricot, Orange & Ginger, plus the new flavours launching in April 2016: Radiant Raspberry, Marvellous Mango, and Tangy Pineapple, Coconut & Lime.

### "We'll be at Food & Drink Expo! Stand F98"

"We are really excited to be showcasing our new flavours as we love seeing people's reactions when they taste our bars. People are always very complimentary about how good our bars look and taste. They say consumers eat with their eyes, and our bars taste as fruity as they look. We are very excited to be meeting and doing business with new and existing customers as we have worked extremely hard on making Get Fruity a successful brand."

[getfruitybar.co.uk](http://getfruitybar.co.uk)  
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### "Vibrant new flavours"

"It is the start of a new chapter at Get Fruity, as we are welcoming three deliciously moreish new bars to our range.



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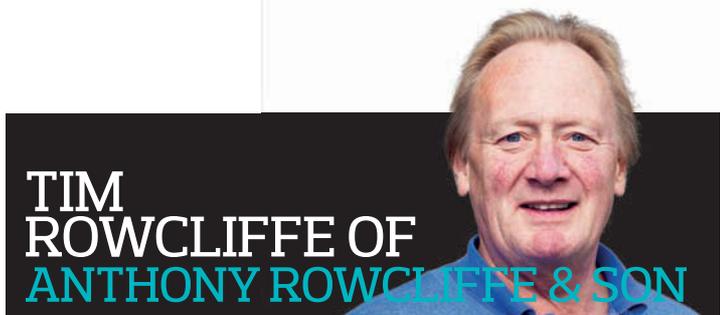
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**TIM ROWCLIFFE OF ANTHONY ROWCLIFFE & SON**

## “Round the Block”

**N**ext year we celebrate our fiftieth birthday. And while we are all that much older, it's interesting to reflect on how little the world of cheese has changed over the years.

Sure, there a thousand new cheeses about, a lot of them merely a variation on a theme, but one thing remains a constant thorn in the side of anyone who truly cares about really, really, really good cheese. Price.

With discounters working off minimal margins, the high street retailer is ever chasing those deals that make them look cheap. Although that's not the word they would use.

When I first joined my father in business, it was common knowledge that British farm-made territorial cheese was a forgotten gem lost to the mass-produced slabs of paste masquerading behind a fancy label which probably cost more than the product to produce.

The few proper farmhouse makers were all but gone or on the brink of quitting. You all know what's coming. With the formation of the Specialist Cheesemakers

Association and a band of insanely passionate farmers, the backlash began. Now there are more than 400 small artisan cheese producers in the UK making stunning versions of pre-war territorials and a myriad of other delights. It's hard to think of a single Continental cheese which does not have its equal – and in many cases superior – equivalent.

At a recent Committee meeting of the SCA I was in the company of some of the country's great makers and some new comers to the business. We discussed many different aspects of producing on farm cheese. We talked about developing interest, encouraging newcomers, protecting safe production while maintaining true artisanal methods. But not once was price discussed.

In all the years I have been attending that committee, for three of them as Chairman, I can honestly say price has never once been discussed. It just isn't an issue. Two of the participants are iconic Cheddar producers and they have never indicated in all the years I have known them that they had any issues about competing.

But in so many other areas of the business price has become the driving factor in favour of provenance.

In short the simple laws of economics will tell you that in any market every product deserves its price.

A buyer wants to pay less for his two million tins of baked beans so the maker puts fewer beans in every tin. Simple.

So when the ultimate buyer does his or her weekly shop, there is only so long some of them will put up with inferior lookalikes.

In turn, they reject and seek out the real thing. And there's plenty out there to choose from.

It's the same with beers, chocolates, olive oils, biscuits and even breakfast cereals. Not to mention mobile phones. I miss my old Nokia.

The British public is becoming incredibly discerning and as such



Please don't try to drive this magical and seductive product into the nightmare world of commodity



was frankly very average, with little to distinguish them, and in truth some absolutely terrible examples of so called mature, extra mature and vintage types.

That accountants make Cheddar mass-manufactured to a formula is alive and well, and I personally doubt whether there is a real outpouring of enthusiasm sweeping the consumer market driven on a wave of taste enthusiasm, as distinct from price offers and a diet of trendy adverts.

Sitting apart from Cheddar are Continentals and artisan speciality types that have their own challenge in brand recognition.

The main Continental types are in most cases just as mass-manufactured as any UK Cheddar type, but their lesser distribution gives the shopper a misguided belief they are somehow artisan, and it equally well gives the maker the headache of advancing its brand value via the expensive and ineffective conventional media mechanics, so there has been just a few French and Dutch moves into heavyweight brand marketing.

Only the artisan sector has to rely on its brand being extolled by word of mouth, or by its sellers, as the truest endorsement of its brand value. Hard yards at hundreds of country shows, farmers markets, deli counters and a million

your cheap jack mass-produced cheese becomes the victim of the calculator buyer.

It's a market not dissimilar to Arthur Daley's car lot... Portakabin optional. But the result is the same; a great Ford Focus at an unbelievable price. Pay your cash, get someone to jump start the flat battery and drive away. Watch the rear offside wheel overtake your car on the first roundabout and wish you'd taken a taxi!

Buy a piece of sublime Brie de Meaux or maybe a delicious slice of Westcombe Cheddar and you are home and dry. Have I skipped too far in the rant of a man demented with frustration with the deadly price word?

Let me bring it all to a close then. Pay the proper price for the proper article and as retailers who have the enormous privilege... I mean privilege... of buying one of the finest products created, please, please don't try to drive this magical and seductive product into the nightmare world of commodity. It deserves respect, love and decency. Get rid of your calculator and taste the cheese!

If ever I get down, which is rare, I take an iron into the store and try some Kirkhams, Sparkenhoe, Keens, Monty and Appleby. Then I have a go off the Le Cret Gruyère and Westcombe. Then I nick some Meaux from our packing room and probably some more Le Cret to take home. Then I put a staff purchase order into the warehouse for a whole Manchego for the weekend!

The food of heaven, and you can't put a price on it.

New retail perspectives from industry experts

# Cheese Talk



**GEORGE PAUL OF BRADBURY'S**

## “Brand Stand”

**T**he value of brand in cheese is varied from the classic pre-pack to the harder-to-project deli pack, but all compete for recognition and shopper loyalty in a competitive environment. The major cheese brands are in general having a torrid time as so many matters change in the grocery market. That eternal struggle between brand distribution and volume growth has never been more challenging than it is right now.

The changing pattern of retail distribution has driven many retailers to pursue their own brands more exclusively, and the rise of the discounters who have always had minimalist brand stocking has added to the pressure of distribution limitation and nil volume growth opportunity.

It's interesting to see how areas that the major brands ignored for so long, such as deli counter and

independents, formerly too small for consideration, are now suddenly so desirable, with offers aplenty.

The retailers have long seen brands as a potential cash cow, with budgets to invest and crazy offers to draw the shopper. But that broken model has long since faded, as a year is a lifetime in this trade and the consumer buying pattern is less volume, bought more often, as the savvy shopper avoids waste and buys to their needs.

It's surely time for a revolution here, something different from that old tired knock about – to you, to me, brands scramble as shoppers' lack of loyalty sees them simply buy the best offers. So where is the next big brand idea?

A recent tasting done with a group of knowledgeable Cheddar graders and enthusiasts on over 120 brand lines found the quality of the Cheddar on offer from brands

encounters with consumers to extend their brand awareness.

It's never easy, never certain, and many enthusiastic moments of shopper enjoyment are lost in time, as access to market distribution or later brand recall are not there to repay all that investment of time and money.

In that war for brand recognition, we in the UK are still very respectful and formal, with only a few names daring to be more than genteel examples of British heritage with local names in profusion.

In my visits to the USA I like the irreverent names adorning their cheese brands – Lamb Chopper, The Lone Grazer, Brutal Blue and others. Not sure that Arse Blaster would be on anyone's shelves any time soon, though.

In the UK there are few of these, although Lincolnshire Poacher's Knuckle Duster is always an eye catcher with the public, the makers tell me, and I would believe it.

But it doesn't need to be a jokey name, it can be a claim to being the

best, or truly different. A maker may as well grandstand – if the product is consistently good enough, of course.

A wide number of the brand designs of some artisan cheese look dated and lack impact and quality, and the world has moved on in how it recognises and interprets brand and brand value. It might be comfortable to think that a dated design and layout is somehow the right connect to provenance and the past and to being artisan, but those that truly send that image have often been carefully crafted in good design and branding.

An update, a makeover, a refresh of colour will often make a brand more recognisable to many who forgot it, or better still to those who never saw it before in that maze of products.

After all, the brand is what any artisan or other maker wants the shopper to remember. In a wall of cheese, whether pre-packed or loose, it's necessary to stand out... so we all need to brand stand a bit.

“ Only the artisan sector has to rely on its brand being extolled by word of mouth as the truest endorsement of its brand value ”

News, opinion and comment from dairy insiders

## JUSTIN TUNSTALL RETAIL CONSULTANT



### “I signed up for an Origami class, but it folded...”

On my first day at a cheese counter I took ages wrapping each purchase – not that I was trying to present ornate or precise packaging, but because I was cack-handed, unfamiliar with the curious mixture of spatial awareness and dexterity that is developed by seasoned cheese wrappers.

In time, thankfully, I was able to take pride in wrapping cheese of varying sizes and shapes in a manner that was swift, secure and attractive. I always aim to wrap with sufficient (but not too much) paper, draw together the tuned-in corners and anchor them with a single seal from our labelling machine. Needing to use additional Sellotape always feels like failure.

My experience at the supermarket was an eye-opener. The store in question has three areas for cheese: standard pre-packaged cheese on the shelves, a staffed deli counter and a half-way stage – a chiller stocked with cheese pre-cut and wrapped in-store at the deli counter, but ready for shoppers to pluck as they dashed past. While the cheese I bought from it was disappointingly bland, I was quietly impressed by the presentation. Although wrapped in cling film, there was no excess lump of folded film and the labels were positioned neatly and symmetrically.

The following day I was yearning for some real flavour, so I detoured to a specialist cheese shop for some

Montgomery's unpasteurised Cheddar. After weighing, the cling film-covered cheese was popped into an opaque white flimsy plastic bag, the top of that run through an automatic sticky tape sealer and presented to me with a request for the £6 or so that it cost.

I felt let down. The cheese was great, but would have been far better served by a paper wrap, rather than the excess of plastic to which it had been consigned.

Further to that indignity, my piece of cheese also suffered from an unsightly crescent cut (which happens sometimes when cutting through an acute corner), which I would always have trimmed before offering for sale.

Finally, there was no labelling of my selection. Knowing the name and source of the cheese one has selected after a tasting spree is not only good for customer education, it also encourages repeat purchases.

At over £20 a kilo, I was spending at least double the price of the supermarket's Cheddar, but the presentation was worse.

Premium food retailing requires more than just knowledge and range – we must also look to quality of packaging, presentation and perhaps even that sense of theatre if we are to help reinforce our customers' decisions to spend more with us than they would at a multiple.

## HOW TO: DISPLAY CHEESE

**D**isplay is of key importance when setting up a cheese counter, says Stuart Grant of Cheeseworks. Try using



whole cheese as the base of your display and then offer a selection of smaller cuts of the same cheese on top. People love to see the whole cheeses but having cut pieces also is very important as a lot of cheeses don't look too inspiring from the outside, and it's only when you cut into the cheeses that the customers can see the texture, how blue, or runny the cheese is.

How you present the cheese should be your priority. Make full use of the front of the counter as that is where your customers will look first. Cheeses stored at the back of your counter can be easily overlooked, so make sure you don't have smaller cheeses displayed behind bigger cheeses at the front. This may sound silly, but routinely check your display from your customer's perspective from the front of the counter. Remember the display will look very different when you're serving behind it.

Grouping your cheeses is very important. You should keep

your blue cheese, ewes milk, goats milk, semi-soft and hard cheese together so customers can quickly identify the type of cheese they are wanting and see the variety of cheese available with each type.

It certainly helps having a theme in your counter. Viewing your cheese selection should be an enjoyable and speedy experience. Everything should be neatly arranged and labelled with easy to read description and prices. Having a clear theme will help the customers to make their choices easily and also promote new and exciting offerings they may not have originally wanted to try. Why not display your cheese on straw matting or even slate. Small things like this can make a biggest difference.

### DO

- You should always have two cutting boards to hand, one for pasteurised cheese and one for unpasteurised.

- Help your customers by offer advice from the beginning to help them choose. Keep your counter clean and organised, no one will want to buy from a dirty, cluttered counter!

- Invest in good quality wax paper to wrap your customers cheese and why not seal the paper with a sticker with your company's logo on? Before you know it people are proudly sharing their purchase and your company's logo on social media.
- Always speak to your suppliers about POS and sampling support, don't underestimate how effective it can be to offer the customer a taster of new or promotional products.

### DON'T

- We also recommend our customers display prices per 100g rather than the kilo; £3.25 per 100g is psychologically better than £32.50 per kilo.
- Avoid overloading your counter with such a vast range that it is overwhelming for the customer to choose from.
- Do not rush when writing your deli tags for each product, make sure the writing is legible, simple and easy to read.



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# British Cheese Awards Rings the Changes



For its first year under the ownership of the Royal Bath & West Show, this year's British Cheese Awards has made a number of changes to its offer.

For the past two years the Awards have been transitioning ownership from founder Juliet Harbutt to Royal Bath & West, and the new owners plan to make 2016's event the biggest yet.

This year, for the first time, the judging will take place on the first day of the three-day event and will be open to the public in order for them to appreciate the expertise and skill that goes into the judging process.

The event will also see two new awards being handed out. One, the People's Choice Award, offers visitors an opportunity to have their say and choose their own favourite cheese. The other, the British Cheese Monger Award, will see cheesemongers demonstrating their expertise in front of a live audience in the hope of being selected as the best in the business.

## Artisan Cheese Fair Launches Awards

The Artisan Cheese Fair is holding its first annual awards competition to recognise the small independent cheesemaker.

Held in Melton Mowbray from 30th April to 1st May, the fair will showcase the work of over 50 cheesemakers, and offer consumers the chance to buy over 300 cheeses as well as pies, cakes, chutneys, wines and ciders from more than 100 stands.

The awards are open to any cheesemaker in the UK which produces less than 250 tonnes of cheese annually, and the classes being judged are: Soft, Semi-soft, Hard, Blue, Best British Territorial Cheese, Best Protected Food Name Cheese, and Best Cheese Recently Launched on the Market.

Awards will also be awarded to the best goat's cheese and the best ewe's cheese, and the winner of The People's Favourite category (judged by the public during the fair) will be announced after the event.

The cheese considered to be the best in the awards will be named Supreme Champion and will win a

cheque for £1,000 as well as a trophy.

Matthew O'Callaghan, chairman of the partnership said, "The awards are a natural extension of the fair. It means that small artisan producers can compete on a level playing field without the dominance of the large commercial producers which occurs in some of the cheese awards."

Paul Carter of sponsors A la Carte Packaging Solutions said, "It gives me great pleasure as the owner of A la Carte Packaging Solutions to be involved as a sponsor of the

Supreme Champion of the very first Artisan Cheese Awards. The 'smaller in volume but producers of top quality products' are just as important to the diverse cheese market of the UK, and have not only their own cheese show, but now also their own awards to aspire to.

"As the only 'one stop shop' for cheese packers both big and small, I have found the cheese people of the UK to be an absolute pleasure to work with. I hope to make acquaintance with more of the special cheese people in the artisan sector as a result of being involved with the show. May I take this opportunity to wish all competitors the very best of luck!"

To enter, download an entry form from [artisancheesefair.co.uk](http://artisancheesefair.co.uk). Deadline for entries is 4th April.



## Fifth of Dairy Farms May Cease Operations in 2016

Around five British farms are closing each week and this rate is expected to rise, according to the Royal Association of Dairy Farmers.

As the debt of dairy farmers reaches crisis levels, many farmers are having to close their farms.

According to the National Farmers Union (NFU), some dairy farmers are working at a loss as they are being paid 19 pence per litre of milk which takes 28 pence to produce.

Today there are 10,500 dairy farms in the UK, half the number there was a decade ago.

Rob Harrison, chairman of NFU and dairy farmer told The Telegraph, "We're expecting an awful lot to exit the industry by the end of this year, when lots of farmers will have eaten up their savings."

"Last year the figure was 4 per cent, but the expectation is more will exit this year, whether it's 10 per cent or 20 per cent."



## Hamish Johnston

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PETER'S YARD

# MEET THE CHEESESELLER

Rhuaridh Buchanan's rounded experience in cheesesealing provided a sound foundation for Buchanans Cheesemonger, near Marble Arch

**A** solid grounding in the cheese business is an obvious advantage to anyone setting up as a wholesaler and retailer of cheese. By the time Rhuaridh Buchanan opened Buchanan's Cheesemonger two years ago, he had all the credentials needed. "I was a restaurant manager in Scotland and used to do a little work on and off with IJ Mellis Cheesemongers," he recalls. Then, when he started to take the next step in his career, fate appeared to step in. "I came to London en route to a new restaurant job working for Thomas Keller in New York but I had to wait for six months after I got a visa," he tells *Speciality Food*. During this interim period Rhuaridh took a job at Paxton & Whitfield as a stop-gap measure. "I loved it," he says. "Quite quickly, they offered me a job looking after their cellar and overseeing the care and ageing of their cheese. They trained me up in that role, which I did for about a year, and then they offered me

the job as their general manager. In total, I was there about eight years."

What appealed to him about the job, he says, was the chance to excel at customer service as well as "having a product you are really proud of. I think I hadn't fully appreciated how cool working with cheese could be. You get to have a real effect on the outcome of the cheese by how you care for it – or don't, in some cases! Having a fantastic product that you are proud of makes it quite easy to sell."

It was after leaving Paxton & Whitfield that Rhuaridh set up the business that now supplies London restaurants, hotels and some delis with top quality cheeses. "I knew what I wanted to do," he says, "so I wrote a business plan and went out 'Dragons Den' style to raise some cash. I knew the London market pretty well, having been part of the team which had built up Paxton's wholesale. I had been there a long time and I effectively got to oversee all aspects of the running of someone else's business." Nothing is ever sure and like all such ventures, this was a bit of a gamble, he says, "and besides, I quite liked having a constant salary at Paxton & Whitfield. But at the same time, I think I had hit a ceiling."

Following his departure from Paxton & Whitfield he remains "on very good terms with Ros (*Windsor, MD of Paxton & Whitfield*), who has been very supportive of everything I've done. It's a small industry and you don't need to burn your bridges. I'm indebted to Ros for the skills she taught me, not just as a business person but as a cheesemonger, too."

#### Traditional product

One of his first considerations when setting up Buchanan's Cheesemonger was to choose a

promising location. Getting this aspect right is "massively important and was a cornerstone of my business plan," he says. As a good cheesemonger, people may seek you out, he adds, "but not until they know you exist, and that can take some time." The present business is located on Porchester Place, a short walk from Marble Arch. The premises also appealed as he had been looking for somewhere which could offer him 1,000 sq ft of floor space. While such a central location sounds like it might be hungry in terms of rental, this "cracking location" as he calls it, turned out to be "less expensive than if I had located it in a warehouse in Vauxhall."

Having such a central location was crucial to the way that Rhuaridh intended to operate the business. "We are a retailer but, predominantly, we are a wholesaler supplying hotels, restaurants and delis with our cheese, and we do all of our deliveries on a cargo bike. Having the flexibility of being right in among the core of our customers has been crucial. It allows us to be much more reactive and responsive. We don't have to run with minimum orders or second deliveries because we are not driving a van from the suburbs. Instead, we are minutes away."

Rhuaridh considered it important to get the look of the establishment right from the start. "From a retail point of view there was a look I absolutely wanted the place to have. Although we are selling quite a traditional product, I didn't want us to look too twee or like a little old cheesemonger with wicker baskets and milk churns. I wanted us to feel more fresh and contemporary." This approach was to continue in the way the shop sold its cheese. "I wanted us to take a new approach to it all. One of the key things which we do on the cheesecounter is to carry



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a range of only about 25 cheeses at any one time. Our ageing rooms are downstairs, and there we have around 150 cheeses."

The reasoning behind this, Rhuaridh explains, is that "in some shops there can be a very large range of cheeses on display and for a lot of people, this can feel intimidating. With this in mind, we always have a nice, balanced selection of fresh and bloomy, rind-washed, hard, soft, blue and goats. These are all there within the 25 cheeses on display. We bring up a selection of what is tasting fantastic for the next few days and if customers absolutely want to have a good wedge of Montgomery's Cheddar, they can have it, it's in the building. But that carefully curated range is key to what we offer. In addition to that, everything we sell is on taste – all the cheeses, obviously, but also our range of about 30 or so wines. You can taste them all before you buy them. They are all carefully chosen so they go with cheese." A Coravin product allows wine sampling without waste.

Rhuaridh and his small team work closely with their suppliers. "We talk to them weekly and visit them regularly, both in Europe and in the UK," he says. "It's a bit easier to maintain a relationship on a day-to-day and week-to-week basis with our UK producers. Face-to-face, we can gain a better understanding of the product and what the producer is trying to do. It's also a case of two-way feedback. Cheese is a living,



AROUND 25 CHEESES ARE ON DISPLAY AT ANY TIME

breathing product and a good cheese will be a little bit different each time; producers will get to know what you like and what you don't like. You need to have that rapport with your producer. In turn, they know that when they send us a cheese that we are going to look after it and give the best representation of – it won't be left in a box, stacked on a pallet and ignored. We take each and every single piece of cheese out, look at it and assess exactly what sort of care it needs."

### Solid reputation

Over the years he has worked in cheese, the most noticeable change, Rhuaridh says, is the increase in the public's knowledge of the product. "Whereas before, someone would ask for something strong or something hard, now they will ask for a two or three year old Comté, or for a piece of Westcombe Cheddar." This change has come about, he says, because of "a whole chain of

things. Food is covered by the media much more and there has been a real growth in British cheesemaking. There is now a lot of really good quality British cheese available, a lot of which people are able to ask for by name rather than using a generic title. People using an independent cheesemaker and discussing cheese with the staff has definitely added to this growth in knowledge."

Buchanan's Cheesemonger stocks "an even split between British and Continental cheeses," Rhuaridh says. The shop offers a varied selection and encourages lesser-known cheeses by not always having Britain's top 10 most popular cheeses on display. People like to try something new," he says, "but while they may experiment with a couple, they are unlikely to buy six cheeses they have never heard of." When it comes to sourcing cheeses, his solid reputation in the cheese business means he will quickly hear of what's

new and interesting. "I keeps my ear to the ground," he says, "and a lot of cheesemakers will come directly to us when they start up. This week alone, six or seven people have come in to show me new products. But as cheesemakers, we need to go out to them too – it's a two-way street." Among specialised lines offered by the shop is its own Buchanan

Affine range, which includes "a British version of a Calvados-washed Camembert which is made using a Tunworth rolled in a crumb and washed in Somerset cider brandy. This works well. I'm not a fan of flavour-added cheeses except where the flavours enhance the overall flavours of the cheese."

The business also operates a cheese school. "This is very important to me," Rhuaridh says. "Part of the original business plan, it was about being able to empower people with a bit more knowledge, whether that's our restaurant customers, people doing corporate entertainment, or members of the general public, but without being too serious." The cheese school offers a relaxed broadening of customers' cheese knowledge

along with advice on wine and beer pairings. The seating area used for the cheese school also provides accommodation for people wishing to take advantage of the cheese-focused menu offered by the shop. "You can come in and have a plate of cheese and a glass of wine," Rhuaridh says. "There's also a charcuterie platter. We sell loads of toasties, such as our classic Quickes Cheddar with English ham and great Yorkshire pickle."

While the initial growth of Buchanan's Cheesemonger has been in the wholesale supply to hotels and restaurants, Rhuaridh now intends to increase the number of delis he supplies. The shop does not have "a big network of vans running all over the country," he says, "so we use an overnight courier." For Rhuaridh, the secret of running such an establishment successfully is "all about building long-standing relationships, whether that's with a supplier or a customer or anybody else. It's about being quite genuine and showing interest, but without coming across as all-knowing and arrogant. It's also about taste and combining flavours, and matching together interesting things."

“The secret of running such an establishment successfully is all about being quite genuine and showing interest, but without coming across as all-knowing and arrogant”

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# MEET THE BUYER

## Buying a deli in a residential street was the first step in Marc Cullender's successful move into independent food retail

The Reigate deli Cullenders is owned and run by Marc Cullender and his wife Joelle, who ditched London jobs in advertising to pursue their dream of working in independent food retail. "We opened seven years ago now," Marc says, "having started off in a small, Victorian shop that had been derelict for thirteen years. We had worked in London and having decided to give up on the rat race, my wife and I opened our first shop in November 2008 and the second in 2009. The shops, which were located in Redhill and Reigate, were both takeaway operations, deli counters with coffee. These ran for five years before we sold one of them, enabling a move to our present premises, in November, 2013. The present premises are larger, and allow for 40 cover dining." This, Marc says, was "the natural next step. We do a lot of outside catering and our lunchtimes were hectic."

The couple came to the independent food business with more passion than hands-on experience. Marc's interest in food had earned him an appearance on BBC TV's MasterChef, but most of his learning about food would be gained on the job. "It came really naturally to both of us," Marc says, adding with some modesty, "we bluffed it a little bit, which we are probably still doing today!" Reigate seemed a natural place to site a deli. Although "in the last six years it has changed beyond recognition," when Marc and Joelle first considered the town, there was a gap in the market for a good deli. Looking at available properties in the area, they soon found one with "a fairly low rent and low refurb costs." It was not in a location normally favoured by people looking to open delis.

"The first one was in a residential area, not in the high street at all, and it served the local community," Marc says. "But because the shop had been empty for so long, we got good coverage in the local media and hit the ground running. When we moved to the high street a year later, we thought we would get



exactly the same response, but it was 18 months before the new shop really began to pick up. As the only shop in the residential district, we had sparked interest. We thought that if we just plonked business on the high street we would be inundated but obviously, there are other people on the high street. That was a real surprise."

### Best products

Setting up their first shop involved "lots of research," Marc says. "We visited other delis and went to lots of trade shows. We were complete novices and sometimes ordered four different types of sun-dried tomatoes. It was really a case of learning from our mistakes." They learned quickly, though, and when it came to taking on the larger store, they had a business plan which allowed for big refurb costs. Progress, Marc says, "has always



been a matter of saying yes to things and getting on with it." The provision of ready-to-eat food has become an important part of the turnover of this high street deli. "The deli business wouldn't be afloat if it was solely that," Marc says. "We

concentrated on providing good homemade food, sourcing the best products for the deli and offering top flight customer service." Their customers include a lot of people "who have moved down from London." With this exodus in mind, the shop has what Marc calls "a kind of relaxed London feel."

The biggest-selling line for Cullenders is "the food we prepare in the kitchen." In particular, he says, "slow cooked food is very popular just now, such as pulled pork with fennel and the barbecued brisket. At the weekends, shoppers like to come in for a cheeseboard and a bottle of wine – being licensed really helps. Our customers change throughout the day; in the mornings, it is commuters until nine o'clock, after which the mums on the school run start to arrive with young children.

There are a lot of big employers



in Reigate and we service them with corporate lunches. A lot of our lunchtime customers grab one of our speciality baguettes and go. Then, in the evenings, people come in for wine and cheese."

Refining stock is a continuous process, Marc says. "I think we are always learning. There is always new stock coming to market." His choice of cheese is "global. If it is good, it goes in. We stock English, Scottish, Welsh and Spanish cheeses, Keens Farmhouse Cheddar, Peacock Blue and Blue Monday. Keens is always popular. Black Bombers is popular too, as is the St George goats cheese. We aim to get in two or three new products every week." That said, he concedes that for much of the time, "deli products are not huge sellers and much of it is shelf fodder to make the place look pretty." At Christmas time that changes: we are just about to launch a hamper business that will drive these ambient products.

We have a real love for them and think they are great products but because we are the operation we are, mainly servicing the coffee and lunchtime trade, we need to start pushing these products and making people aware of them. We now have a manager on site, so I can step back and work out the revenue streams." Food, Marc says, "has to look good and obviously, it has to taste great."

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**A**ll of this has come from being a foodie. I sometimes joke that Steven, my partner, was taken to galleries and museums when he was growing up, while my parents (who weren't such culture vultures) took me on trips to restaurants. They were both into food and drink, so I grew up with an interest in it too. I initially trained and practised as an optician for 10 years, and Stephen was in medical research. In the early nineties he was given the opportunity to do a sabbatical in the US and I came along for the ride. While we were out there we discovered an amazing food scene around San Francisco, and one of the things we noticed in particular was the incredible quality coffee compared to what we'd been drinking back in the UK. It wasn't so much a matter of a culture, more simply the coffee's quality and depth of flavour. It had been a holiday dream a year or so before to open a bakery café together, and our time in the US reminded us of that. We started digging into what would make a great bakery café; one of those things was coffee, and we soon discovered that we were more fascinated by coffee than baking.

**During our four years in the US, we decided coffee was going to be our life.** We were fans of coffee before, and I'd usually buy it from a deli or coffee shop (such as they were in those days), but making up a cafetiere at home and feeling terribly sophisticated didn't even nearly match the excitement we felt when we came across this great coffee in the Bay Area of San Francisco – it was just so different. We spent as much time learning about it as we could, before coming back to the UK to set up a small boutique roastery on the outskirts of London in 1995.

**I've learned to never throw out an idea.** Having been part of the new 'wave' (in reality it was barely a ripple) of the fine food industry in the early nineties, seeing the sudden explosion of the coffee industry and the roasting community over the past three to five years has shown that each new generation wants to reinvent the wheel; teenagers created rock 'n' roll in the Fifties and punk in the Seventies, but it's actually all just a collection of chords and notes. In coffee, we're learning a lot more about the chemistry of roasting, extracting and brewing, but there are some fundamentals which have always been true and will never change. Whether it's a way of processing coffee or an approach to roasting, don't discount it because someone is telling you how you should be doing it today. Those assertions are based on a certain amount of experience and the ability to confront that experience in an honest way. Don't get caught up in the latest dogma, but don't discount it on principle either.



## THE INTERVIEW

Meet Jeremy Torz, co-founder of Union Hand-Roasted and proud pioneer of the UK's coffee market

**Self-belief and determination are integral to success.** In the US we found that there was a go-getter mentality, a desire to share knowledge and see people become a success in something that you just don't see in the UK. It's just not the British way. I remember having meetings with my then-bank manager and people around the industry, where we were

incredibly enthusiastic but were greeted with a stereotypically British wall of underwhelmed disinterest. You need to believe in yourself, and that if you build it they will come. You can wonder sometimes if you're really doing the right thing, but without that self-confidence you won't be able to convince people of what you're doing. At the same time, you

have to be a good and honest listener – if people are good enough to give you advice or an opinion, it's very important to consider their view. Being in the luxurious position of creating one's own company, I want to work with people I want to spend time with, and want to be surrounded by people who are as interested and passionate about the subject as we are. We've always said there's one word that's banned at our company, and that is 'product'. 'Products' are soulless, like paperclips and widgets. Instead, we talk about the coffee we produce.

### QUICKFIRE QUESTIONS

#### MANTRAS

One of the mantras I like to use is, 'The customer is not always right but they are entitled to their opinion'. They've come to that point of view for a reason, so don't take what they say at face value. Most people who consume coffee have a very firm opinion on what it should be like, and they're happy to share their expertise in the subject.

#### INSPIRATION

A colleague of mine called Pascale Schuit inspires me hugely. She joined us four years ago to help add depth to our sourcing programme. She's a trained social auditor and a fluent Spanish speaker (she now lives in El Salvador, in fact) and impresses me to no end with her interaction with primary producers and ability to knit into their communities on their own terms so we can understand them and know what their challenges are. Her extending the arm of friendship has informed so much of our understanding of the green coffee side of the industry. Companies like Intellegentia and Blue Bottle are also inspirational for what they've achieved, in a market which is a bit more knowing of coffee than the one in the UK. We often look longingly at the US and Australian markets and wish that some of the consumer trends would find their way over here!

#### THE FUTURE

The coffee industry is changing at such a pace that it's difficult to say what's in the future. We're seeing baristas becoming roasters, roasters becoming importers... It's almost like the traditional role-based tiering of the industry is flattening, which poses some very interesting questions about what else is going to change in the next few years. Here at Union, we have some exciting developments coming up which I believe will put us right back at the forefront of the coffee industry in the UK. We're looking at a new roasting project which will be centred around developing knowledge and careers for people in the industry.

“ The thing that defines us is our desire for integrity and knowledge, and a passion to share that with people who want to step into our world ”

### MAKING IT WORK

**Honesty drives us as a business, and glib marketing statements, whether from big multi-nationals or smaller players, drive me crazy.** If you have an interest in a subject, it doesn't take long to recognise when people are just giving you the marketing blurb and don't have any depth of knowledge beneath that. We felt that by offering a premium quality coffee which was genuinely different from what had come before it, we really had to know our subject and also to educate our customers about what it was that got us so excited about it.

The thing that defines us is our desire for integrity and knowledge, and a passion to share that with people who want to step into our world.

**It's very easy to come up with an idea and work on it for a year, only to find that it's not doing too well and then start to erode the core philosophies that make you different.** There's a temptation to dilute your philosophies as the business grows, but hanging onto them is absolutely essential. Someone who comes across Union today doesn't know how it's evolved from when we began in 2001, but I want them to feel the same passion,

commitment and truths there today – this means that we absolutely stand by the way in which we source and buy our coffees as well as the premium prices we pay to source them. We won't dilute that model because it would destroy us. We've never said anything we can't honestly back up – we'd never claim to do something that wasn't true. We're not saying that we're changing the world, that would be ridiculous, but if we can have a beneficial impact on the communities in which we work it is amazing to see. As a business owner you want perfection and excellence, and you'll come to learn that your work

is a journey to that – it's not something that comes immediately.

**There's still a disconnect between the knowledge we consume in the industry – whether it's in a book or on a television show – and the understanding that our customers have of what we do.** The media covers some trends and developments in food as entertainment, and sometimes the consumer will choose to seek out that experience for themselves. Despite all the talk in the media about boutique or third or fourth wave coffee, there are a lot of people out there who don't know what that means and don't know

how to find a way into that world; the danger in the coffee shop movement at the moment is if we don't bring the customer along with us to learn what we know, we're going to lose them. It's a case of making sure that all this interest in quality food and drink isn't just a form of entertainment – we need people to participate. The UK business world is brilliant at spotting a trend, dressing it up and marketing the heck out of it before delivering a dumbed-down product which confuses the customer further. This is where we need to be honest as an industry, in how we talk to customers.

# Retail School

Paul Clapham explains how to make grant funding work for you

**W**ould you like some free money? Yes, I thought so. That is what a grant promises: money which you don't have to repay. However, as any realistic business owner would expect, getting your share of available grants is not a gimme. Nor should it be. I'm going to start with what's available to businesses in rural areas – and it's complex in places – then next month tell you how to get it.

Two major new grant streams of support have recently been launched by Defra. They are designed to stimulate economic growth and job creation in rural England. The two separate funds come from the 2014–2020 Rural Development Programme (RDP) elements of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and are primarily targeted to providing capital support for new businesses, farm diversification and major rural business developments.

## Growth Programme

The Growth Programme will be coordinated nationally by the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) but will include input and local delivery from Local Economic Partnerships. The grant fund has a budget of £177 million to be spent over the next four years. The programme is targeted around five priorities of which the following appear most relevant to food businesses: funding and developing micro, small and medium-sized rural businesses, and supporting tourism in rural areas.

The minimum grant size has been set by the RPA at £35,000, which at a 40% grant means a project valued at over £87,500 or more. The grant is run through "calls" for projects which each set out what's being looked for and the area of the country that the funding is to be spent in. Since the funding launch in the early summer of 2015, the RPA has issued 41 calls for projects.

## LEADER

LEADER funding is designed to focus on small-scale local projects which fit with local needs. The £138 million of grant funding is coordinated through Local Action Groups (LAG). LAGs are representative non-elected groups of



local business, charity and public sector individuals who develop the strategy for their area and then work with the grant funding to deliver this strategy through projects. Projects are brought to LAGs by businesses with viable business cases.

The Local Action Plans have been developed around six core objectives provided by Defra, and adapted to fit local needs and priorities. Each project needs to demonstrate their fit with one or more of these objectives. The core objectives are as follows (check the Local Action Plan for the interpretation of the objectives in your area):

- Support to increase farm productivity
- Support for micro and small businesses (non-agricultural) and farm diversification
- Support for rural tourism
- Provision of rural services
- Support for cultural and heritage activity
- Support for increasing forestry productivity

The LAGs are supported through an accountable body which manages the

legal and contractual elements of the project and funds. A major difference between the Growth Programme and the Countryside Productivity to LEADER is that LEADER funding includes support for facilitators to help applicants through the process of developing their bids.

Each LEADER area will have its own aims, strategy and views on what they would like to fund. Each area has a budget for funding of approximately £1.6 million, however they will be allocating elements of this to facilitation costs. A minimum grant value of £2,500 has been set for LEADER areas. The lower grant minimum and available budgets mean that the LEADER funds will be targeting smaller applications.

## What can be funded?

**Location:** If your business is based in a rural part of England, a small market town or on a farm then you may be eligible for support. You will then need to check out whether you are in one of the different eligible areas. Under LEADER there are 80 supported areas while the Growth Programme is split into 39 different patches.

**Activity:** There are two elements to this question. Firstly, is the activity new and adding substantially to the business? Secondly, is the activity in itself eligible?

The grant funding will only support projects which are creating a new activity. If a farm is looking to set up a new farm shop or you are looking to create a new deli or processing business, then this is certainly a new activity. However, there are also situations when businesses will be able to gain support for an expansion of an existing business, for example if a farm shop is looking to add a café or play barn then grant support could be possible. If, however, you are looking to add a small extension, support is far less likely.

The second element is what activity can be supported. This funding has been supplied by the EU and is issued under a number of measures; each measure has very specific projects it can support. The relevant key measures include:

- Grants
- Who can apply
- Business development
- Micro and small businesses in a rural area, including social enterprises. Farmers wanting to diversify into non-agricultural activities
- Food processing
- Micro, small and medium-sized food-processing businesses processing Annex 1 products (examples include meat, milk, grain and root vegetables)
- Small-scale tourism infrastructure
- Rural businesses and rural communities, farmers and landowners
- Tourism cooperation
- Businesses in a rural area. Charities, public bodies, community groups and destination organisations operating in a rural area

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# MEET THE PRODUCER

**W**hat do you do when you are given a rare breed pig as a wedding present?

For Charlotte and Jon Clarkson, the answer was simple. You start selling rare breed pork at farmers markets and then evolve into a maker of Yorkshire chorizo and salami called Three Little Pigs. "There has been a movement towards British charcuterie in the last few years," says Charlotte. "We were in there in the early days, doing it on a very small scale in East Yorkshire. We now produce a range of six flavours of chorizo and salami, each one of which has a Great Taste Award, and we distribute these through Hider Foods and The Cress Co."

The Clarksons make their chorizo and salami on Jon's family farm near Beverley in East Yorkshire. "We don't have the benefit of the Spanish climate," Charlotte says, "so we have had to overcome a few issues along the way. Before we started out, we did a substantial amount of research and talked to a lot of people. In the early days, it was a matter of trial and error as we made chorizo just for ourselves, working out what would work and what wouldn't. Some products originated from a fresh sausage recipe we used to sell on the farmers market."

All the recipes were devised by Jon. "We didn't want to copy a Spanish chorizo or an Italian salami," Charlotte says. "The recipes are all different and we dry the meat slightly differently as well. We asked a lot of people what they liked and what didn't like. What they didn't like were the chewy, fatty bits found in Continental salamis and chorizos. To this end, we have trimmed our pork really well, so all the chewy bits are taken out before it is made. The pork is well minced, too. Consequently, our products don't contain those lumps of gristle and fat, and are tailored more to British tastes."

## Tastes fantastic

The SALSA-accredited range presently comprises of Rare Breed

Three Little Pigs is a producer of fine quality chorizo and salami made from free-range, rare breed pigs reared on the Yorkshire Wolds



Chorizo Spicy, Rare Breed Chorizo Mild; Yorkshire Salami, Hot Fennel Salami, Ancho Chilli Salami and Triple Sec Salami. Quality, Charlotte says, is assured: "We are using the absolute best pork you can buy." A similar regard for quality is paid to the other ingredients. "Good, fresh pork tastes fantastic," Charlotte

says, "so if you are starting with something this good, you don't want to add anything that's not of a similar quality. In our chorizo, we use Pimenton de La Vera, the Spanish smoked pimenton. The quality is amazing – it comes from one little valley in Spain and really is excellent. It's expensive, but it was

really important to us that we used this product. Also, we buy organic herbs wherever we can. We are constantly looking for top-quality ingredients to go with the pork."

But key to the success of this range of British charcuterie are the pigs themselves. "The pig we got for a wedding present was a Berkshire

sow, one of the traditional British breeds," Charlotte says. "These went out of fashion in the Fifties, when farming was becoming more intensified and they wanted to keep pigs indoors. The Berkshires put on too much fat for more modern tastes and because of this they have become a rare breed. We really like them because they produce a fantastic sort of pork. We also have quite a few Tamworth pigs and some of the other old-fashioned British breeds.

"This suits our system because our pigs live their entire lives outside. That in itself is quite rare because while supermarkets may list their pork as 'outside bred' or 'outside reared', quite often it is the sow which is kept outside while the little pigs are raised inside. Ours pigs are completely free-range and, being a little harder and tougher, these old-fashioned breeds are very suitable for keeping outside. It's a system which works well all-round. The pigs do well outside, the pork dries better and the meat is tastier for it. However, using these breeds means that we are dealing with a slow-growing pig. Typically, our pigs are living to eight or nine months, whereas in a commercial pig farm you are talking four and a half months. This more mature meat has a better flavour and both the meat and the fat are firmer, which means it is better for air-drying. We feel very strongly about the way we keep our pigs. We have been able to combine our ethics with producing a flavoursome product range which has full traceability."

The range can be found in Selfridges, Whole Foods Market and Partridges, but not in supermarkets. Independent food retailers are perfect outlets, Charlotte says. "There is an enormous amount of care and attention that goes into this range and that's what delis and farm shops are looking for. We are making such a good quality product that we want it to be sold in the right places."

“ if you are starting with something this good, you don't want to add anything that's not of a similar quality ”

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The farm shop at Jimmy's Farm specialises in meats which include the rare breed pork bred by owner Jimmy Doherty



CLARITY OF DISPLAY AT JIMMY'S FARM

"The farm shop has been here from the very beginning," says Tanja Sadler, general manager of Jimmy's Farm, near Ipswich in Suffolk. "Both the farm shop and Jimmy's farm opened in the spring of 2004 to serve as an outlet for the rare breeds meat which is the farm's speciality." Five years ago, she says, the farm shop was moved "from one room to another. Now the farm shop is situated in a very large, 200 year old barn that was in disrepair when Jimmy

took the farm on. Part of this building is now the restaurant and the rest is the farm shop. Visitors now enter the farm shop at one end and everything is in front of them, so they can weave their way around, whichever way they want to go. This layout draws attention to the restaurant at the end, too." A big draw at the farm shop, Tanja says, is "the meat of pigs which have been bred on the farm. As much as possible, we do our own beef and lamb too, but we can't fulfil our own needs just from our own stock, so we

buy in other meats from local farmers who operate the same ethos as we do, i.e. rare breeds which are allowed to live outside all the time and are fed in the same way that ours are." Jimmy's Farm, she says, is all about "free range and rare breed."

Not surprisingly, it is the rare breed pork which is the strongest seller. "Pork is what we are famous for and, in my opinion, it's second to none," Tanja says. "We have a sausage of the month and we are coming up with new recipes all the time. Our current one is Pork & Marmite. It's important to introduce new products in order to keep people interested. If a new sausage sells well, we will keep it on and introduce another one as well. A really good seller is our multi-pack. This is six different flavours of sausage with three sausages of each." The meat counter sells the sausages loose but the packs have proven a very useful solution for people who have difficulty making their choice.

#### Strong seller

The sausage of the month is also offered in the online shop, where "our regular customers will order their normal requirements and try this as well." A strong seller online is the range of meat boxes. "We sent out

about 400 boxes over last Christmas and a couple of hundred turkeys," Tanja says. "We have dedicated boxes for different times of the year. There is a barbecue box for summer, a Winter Warmer box with stew-type meats, steak and kidney mix, sausages and so on. These are all mainly bought online; shop visitors tend to make their selection from the counter, where every imaginable cut of pork, beef, lamb and chicken is available." On the meat side, Jimmy's has "wholesale deals with a number of companies, including Jamie's Italian, to whom we supply sausages. We've just started to supply the American company Shake Shack which is taking our sausages for one of its hot dog dishes, which is flying at the moment."

Tanja has seen the business grow almost from its birth. Prior to Jimmy's, she says, "I worked for Barclays for 10 years after college. After I gave up work to look after my young children, I started buying sausages here and got to know Michaela, Jimmy's wife. One Thursday, I offered to help with the accounts and office work and started here the following Monday. That was 12 years ago." As someone in a key position, Tanja is aware of the sort of obstacles faced by Jimmy and Michaela as they set up their business and she has been able to

chart its growth. To begin with, she says, "it was a small business with not a huge amount of collective business experience. We had to grow together to acquire that experience. I think we always believed it was going to be a success. It was just a matter of juggling the cash flow and the profit and covering the loss-making months. You need to believe in your shop, keep going and trying different things and noting where the successes occur."

Along the way, Tanja says, "we've had lots of help from other people. A reputation is built up only gradually and that's when you start to get people through." Other revenue



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streams have had their effect. "The farm has had to diversify in order to grow," she says, "so we have a farm park, an attraction which brings people through the doors, especially in the holidays." Footfall at the farm shop is not restricted to visitors to the farm park and other attractions. "We have a lot of returning customers but also a lot of people who live very locally but wouldn't normally shop in a farm shop. They come to see the baby goats, the lambs or the guinea pigs and pop in and realise that the shop is accessible to them. That's when they see nicer versions of what they get in the supermarket and that actually, the prices are competitive. Farm shops are sometimes seen as massively expensive, but I like to think that our products are priced equivalently to top-shelf supermarket brands."

Another feature of Jimmy's Farm is its hosting of educational visits, but Tanja says that casual visits can be informative, too. "For instance, it's good to get the food miles message across", she says. Visitors can also get a deeper understanding of the food chain and their own connection with what they eat. "People can see the the pigs and piglets and understand the process," she says. "I am often asked how we can breed and get to know the pigs and then send them to slaughter. The answer is that if we didn't eat them, nobody would breed them and they would not exist. Ours have a fantastic life. They are born and bred in completely natural conditions and can run free."

### Free-range

Footfall numbers are hard to compute, Tanja says, because "entry to the farm is free but if they go through the farm park we can count them." Events held on the farm can draw huge numbers. "Our sausage and beer festival in July attracted almost 20,000 people over the weekend, but I would say that on an average summer holiday we probably get 1,000 to 1,500 people per day. In January we may be lucky to have 50 people through the door, but you



A WIDE RANGE OF CHEESES INCLUDES MANY LOCAL VARIETIES

prepare for those days. The events obviously are a massive boost to the income of the farm shop and the restaurant, but the farm shop has to stand by itself anyway. When we hold an event we are then guaranteed that amount of people, but we don't do it with that in mind"

Despite the large number of visitors to Jimmy's Farm, the shop supports itself, she says. "When I do the accounts, I split that out into each department of the farm, so there is the farm, the farm shop, the restaurant and the outside kitchen too. We have always said that each part of the farm needs to support itself; there is no point in throwing the money you have made in some areas to parts which do not support themselves. We always know there will be loss-making months and money is set aside for these periods." The average basket spend at the farm shop is hard to estimate, she adds, "because although our repeat customers will spend upwards of fifty pounds, the occasional tourist may spend 10 pounds."

Stocking the shop is done on ethical lines. The emphasis here is more on local and free-range rather than organic, Tanja says. "It's also important that suppliers have a good ethos, that they are not using ingredients which no-one wants to eat." Getting the stock right took

a long time, "probably five years. It's easy to sell the things which everybody else sells, but then you notice that the same stock is sitting on the shelf at the end of the month." As well as meat, cheese and ambient lines, this shop also stocks what is known on the farm as 'Jimorabilia,' souvenirs such as "branded magnets, cup, little toys, pens and pencils." As for sourcing, she says, "people tend to come to us. They send us samples and when we see something isn't selling well, we may try one of these products. We also look at the stock in other farm shops."

The cheese counter is an important feature of the shop. "We sell all British cheeses," Tanja says. "There are so many local cheeses which are unknown to many people who shop in the supermarkets. We have a full range of cheeses, from goats and ewes milk cheeses to soft, hard and blues. Beauvaille is an amazing blue cheese, and the local Baron Bigod is one of Jamie Oliver's top six British cheeseboard cheeses. The Shipcord Cheddar is great, as is the smoked version." Shopping at the farm shop's cheese counter is "an eye-opener for people who had not realised that Britain produces so many good cheeses. Farm shops have helped to spread that message, but it's one that isn't out there as much as it should be."



“ They see nicer versions of what they get in the supermarket and that actually, the prices are competitive ”

In Tanja's opinion, to run a farm shop successfully, retailers should "look after the pennies and keep an eye on the margins. Don't keep selling something just because you think you should. If it is not selling, it has to go. Also, it's very easy to get excited about how much money you are turning over, but be mindful of the accounts from day one. You can turn over loads but if it is all going out, you will be left with nothing." Good staff training "is everything," she says. "We have a company which comes in and does a mystery shop and uses the restaurant once every

two months and we get feedback from that. Your staff are the face of the company. It's important that they smile and that customers are acknowledged, even from a distance, within 10 seconds of walking through the door."

Communication with customers is another essential, she says. "If you engage somebody in a conversation, you can sell to them. If they have bought a particular joint of meat and you know which accompaniments go with that perfectly, nine times out of 10, they will buy that accompaniment."

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# FUTURE-PROOF FOOD

Insects, seaweed and ancient grains may appear niche, but as Abby Driver explains, it's well worth stocking up on these weird but wonderful foods



**S**limy seaweed, creepy crawlies and ancient grain milk? It might not sound the stuff of a foodie's dream, but it's fast becoming so. They might intrigue customers with an impressive nutritional CV or perhaps offer them a completely new culinary experience, but either way, weird but wonderful delicacies are picking up traction in the speciality food sector. With that in mind, we've tracked down some of the sector's most weird and wonderful offerings. It's worth considering whether any of these freaky delights have a place on your shelves.

## Seaweed

The slimy stuff of beachside childhood holidays has been transformed into

a coveted cupboard ingredient in the last few years. Jamie Oliver has called it the "most nutritious vegetable in the world," and it's not hard to see why. A member of the algae family, this sea vegetable is packed full of calcium, folate and magnesium. It also contains the mineral iodine, which is hard to find elsewhere and critical to maintaining a healthy thyroid. Whilst consumers might be used to a slither of seaweed around their nori rolls, 2016 is set to be the year we see more liberal uses of seaweed go mainstream. It can be sprinkled into salads, soups and stir-fries, baked into bread or whizzed into a smoothie. As an island country, we have no shortage of seaweed and there are plenty of producers creating both raw and dried tasty seaweed snacks.

## Insects

Crickets, grasshoppers and mealworms might sound like a nightmarish *I'm A Celebrity*-worthy challenge, but these crunchy critters are surely but slowly gaining

popularity with foodies. Protein has become a particularly popular macronutrient in the last year or so, and, gram for gram, crickets provide over double the protein of beef. As demand for meat rises, cultivating insects for food makes more sense as they don't use up the same level of resources as livestock. Despite this, Little Herds, a non-profit business based in America which champions the use of insects as food, says that the taboo still needs to be broken down because whilst 80% of the world views insects as normal food, we in Europe, Canada and the USA aren't yet 100% convinced. But think about sushi – that once seemed crazy to our Western plate. Yet now it sits alongside, and competes, with ready-made cheese and pickle sandwiches as a lunch option.

## Teff

Move over quinoa, there's a new superfood in town! Teff dates back to around 4000BC and comes from the Amharic word 'teffa', meaning

lost, named due to the tiny size of the grain. And tiny they are – about the size of poppy seeds. Diminutive in size but certainly not in nutrients, they are jam-packed with nutrients and boast more calcium, copper, dietary fibre, manganese, thiamine, vitamin K and zinc than 'superfood' quinoa. Teff is also gluten-free, so can be used to make bread, pasta and even pizza bases, an attract prospect to the ever growing gluten-free market. You can buy Teff in various forms including flour and flakes as well as ready-made products such as milk and bread. With A-list fans including the likes of Victoria Beckham and health-conscious Gwyneth Paltrow, Teff is heading for the limelight.



impressive nutritional content, it can be a faff for consumers to prepare and cook (you're supposed to 'massage' it with oil, apparently). Kale crisps are a convenient way for customers to get all of the goodness without any of the time-consuming preparation. And kale crisps that have been air-

dried are all the more appealing to the health conscious, as they are still considered a raw food (which supplies the body with enzymes and nutrients that would otherwise be destroyed if cooked all the way through). There are plenty of seasonings to choose from, from BBQ to Wasabi Wheatgrass.

**Kale crisps**

Kale has been the darling of the vegetable aisle for quite a while now – not surprisingly, considering it's been called the most nutrient-dense food on earth per calorie. Yet despite its

“ Weird but wonderful delicacies are picking up traction in the speciality food sector - it's worth wondering whether any of these delights have a place on your shelves ”

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# GIFU, JAPAN: THE HOME OF WORLD-CLASS WAGYU BEEF

The finely-marbled Hida-gyu Wagyu beef is produced solely in the Gifu prefecture of Japan, a region with plenty to offer the gourmet and tourist alike

**J**apan is a land of striking contrasts. While its great and populous cities bustle with activity and noise, a short ride on the smooth and superfast Shinkansen – the bullet trains – reveals another side of this extraordinary country, what might even be called the real Japan. The large, centrally-located prefecture of Gifu bursts with its own array of startling contrasts. From tranquil plains whose cities are often steeped in history, to snow-capped peaks, Alpine scenery, and rivers of startlingly clear water, the region is also home to a menu of fabulous foods, from the Ayu river fish to the world-beating Hida-gyu Wagyu beef.

Eating Hida-gyu as the locals do is reason enough to visit the prefecture. Here in Gifu this melt-in-the-mouth treat can be enjoyed in various styles, thinly sliced as Sukiyaki, as Shabu-shabu (hot-pot style), or the lightly-grilled Yakimiku.

Hida-gyu is supremely versatile and it's as at home being prepared as sirloin, rib-eye or fillet steaks as it is served on a skewer as sushi or offered as a premium burger. The intense marbling (which is a result of the selective breeding and balanced diet of Gifu's black-haired cattle) produces an eating experience like no other. Cooking Hida-gyu can be as simple as frying it in clarified butter or olive oil for 90 seconds on each side and seasoning with salt and pepper. A popular way of eating it in Gifu, and one which adds a little theatre to the experience, is to cook the meat at table. In this way, diners can try the various cuts served with roasted vegetables and accompanied by a cup of local (often Takayama) sake.

While there are other places in the world which produce Wagyu, the marbling produced by these cattle has resulted in a meat which is deserving of much wider recognition in the world at large.

To earn the name of Hida-gyu, the cattle used must have been raised for at least 14 months by a certified and registered producer working under the farm registration system of Hida Beef Brand Promotion Conference. Qualifying cattle will have spent the majority of their lifetimes in the prefecture of Gifu. The Japan Meat Grading Association operates a system which measures the firmness and texture, colour, fat lustre and quality of a carcass, thus ensuring that meat buyers know precisely what they are getting. Hida-gyu's defining marbling is measured and one of five grades assigned to the meat, the highest grade being 5, or 'excellent'.

But Hida-gyu beef is far from being the only speciality food from Gifu which is causing waves in the world of gastronomy. As soon as Japan's new Geographical Protection scheme is up and running, the prefecture of Gifu will be applying

for GI protection for four of its most famous indigenous products: Gifu rice, chestnuts, the Ayu (or sweet fish) and, of course, for Hida-gyu beef. The Ayu deserves special mention. The subtle, sweet taste of this fresh water fish, which is found in the clear waters of the Nagara River, is one of the reasons that the Ayu has been made the prefectural fish of Gifu.

## Time Out in Gifu

If you are visiting Gifu to investigate Hida-gyu beef, be sure to take in some of the many attractions this prefecture has to offer. The environs of Gifu City – which itself offers castles, shrines and temples – may already be familiar to anyone who has seen televised coverage of the extraordinary, 1,300 year old spectacle of cormorant fishing which is practised on the Nagara River from fleets of small boats lit by flaming torches. The art of ukai involves training cormorants to dive underwater and catch fish, but without swallowing them. The prefecture is important historically.

"Control Gifu and you control Japan" it has often been said and the region has long enjoyed a reputation as Japan's centre of sword making. Japanese swords have been produced in Seki for over 700 years and the town now also applies these traditional skills to the manufacture of cutlery, scissors and razors.

Visitors with an interest in history flock to the city of Takayama, whose old quarter boasts an area of beautifully-preserved and traditionally-constructed wooden merchants' houses, which appear much as they might have done hundreds of years ago. 'Little Kyoto' as it's called, is now a centre for small shops and artisan sake makers, which are easily identified by the giant balls of cedar leaves (sugidamas) hung over doorways. A new, green-leaved sugidama announces the creation of a new brew. Spring and autumn are particularly good times to visit Takayama as this is when the twice-yearly festivals are held. Fantastically-decorated floats cross the river, passing crowds of



AYU



**MUST SEES & MUST DO'S**



**SHIRAKAWA-GO**

A World Heritage site, the houses of this extraordinary village are built to ancient designs and are best viewed in the winter, when deep snow covers their thick, thatched roofs, or in the Autumn when they are backgrounded by a blaze of brightly-coloured foliage



**TAKAYAMA**

Ten minutes from the station is the old quarter, where you can stroll through streets of old-style traditional wooden houses with latticed doors and windows and visit sake makers

**HIRAYU GREAT WATERFALL**

This 64 metre tall, six metre wide waterfall is one of Japan's best. Come in February to see it as an illuminated pillar of ice. See too the Yoro Waterfall in Yoro Park



**WINTER SPORTS**

Choose from 11 ski-resorts in Gujo's snowy mountainous region. The region has played host to the NSBA Snowboarding championship and some resorts are geared for Western visitors

**GUJO ODORI DANCE**

A four day period called tetsuya-odori, or 'all night dancing' is the climax to a 30 night dance festival where dancers wear the yukata, a light kimono, and geta, traditional Japanese clogs

**OYADA SHRINE**

The optimum time to view the ornately-carved Oyada Shrine is autumn, when the surrounding maple trees explode into fiery colour.

**THE ONSEN TOWNS OF OKUHIDA**

Open-air bathing in hot springs or 'onsen' can be experienced at the five Onsen towns of Okuhida: Hirayu, Shinhirayu, Fukuji, Tochio and Shinhotaka



**SHINHOTAKA ROPEWAY**

Travel to a height of 2,156 metres aboard Japan's only two-tiered cable car. In service year-round, the Shinhotaka Ropeway offers dramatic, unforgettable views

Gifu is full of fascinating places to visit (see panel), from the scenic town of Gujo to Gifu Castle, which sits atop Mt Kinka and commands spectacular views of the plains below. Early to mid-April is the time to come for the cherry blossoms – there's always fine display in Gifu Park, while the two celebrated Nawashiro-zakura Cherry Trees (thought to be around 400 years old) are illuminated at night, casting crystal-clear reflections in the rice paddies below.



**Accommodation and Travel**

Gifu is a big prefecture in the Chūbu region of central Japan and seeing all it has to offer will necessitate a hotel stay. Fortunately, the range of accommodation is broad, from the international-style hotels of Gifu City to the beautiful ryokans, or traditional Japanese inns, to be found in places such as Takayama. A stay in a local ryokan takes tradition to another level. It's not compulsory, but you will be offered a yukata, a casual version of the kimono, to wear during your stay and sleep on a futon in place of a bed. Also optional in some ryokans is an invigorating plunge in the indoor or outdoor onsens, or hot baths. The level of attention displayed by the staff is remarkable, without being overpowering. Gifu is easily accessible by way of Chubu Centrair International Airport or via a Shinkansen bullet train from major cities.

**ALL ABOUT HIDA-GYU BEEF:**

**TOP QUALITY**

Hida-gyu's intense marbling ensures that the cooked meat delivers a melt-in-the-mouth experience, an appetising aroma and a deep flavour

**PREMIUM PRODUCT**

As a luxury item, Hida-gyu is a little more expensive than other beef, but buyers of premium foods expect to pay a little more for world-class foods

**TRACEABILITY**

Gifu's Hida cattle are registered and individual cattle can be traced to the

farms where they have been raised as well as to the feeds that they have eaten.

**HYGIENE**

The highest standards of hygiene are applied both at the farms and at the meat processing plant

**HEALTHY MEAT**

Hida-gyu's high oleic acid content intensifies flavour but also promotes the production of good intestinal bacteria

**CONVENIENCE**

Hida-gyu cooks quickly and offers a premium dining experience without the need for complicated cooking

To taste Hida-gyu, visit London's Tokimeite (tokimeite.com), the only UK restaurant currently serving Hida-gyu beef. Tokimeite is promoting Hida-gyu from 22nd March while stocks last.

To stock Hida-gyu, please contact Jean-Yves Teo, Business Development Manager of Zen-Noh International Europe Ltd. Tel: 020 3826 4415 / Mobile: 073 4156 0254

people dressed in Edo-period attire. Counted as one of Japan's three most beautiful festivals. Takayama's autumn festival features a breath-taking spectacle of beautiful floats carrying marionettes and lanterns. Takayama's river is typical of many others in this prefecture, boasting pristine water in which can be seen foot-long koi carp.

A notable draw for tourists to Gifu is the World Heritage site of Shirakawa-go, which I visited in February while the snow was still thick on the ground. Nestled in the mountains a 50 minute drive from Takayama, this unique village of ancient, thatched houses is best seen from the observation point

above the village. The houses are built in the distinctive gassho-zukuri style. Translated, this 'gassho' means 'hands joined together in prayer', which perfectly describes the appearance of these traditionally-built houses, which are regularly lit up at night to provide a memorable sight for visitors. When roofs have to be renewed, they are rebuilt, villagers come together to help each other with the rethatching, a tradition which has been operating for hundreds of years. Some houses are accessible to visitors, and a look inside these solidly-built homes offers a chance to see and admire the craftsmanship which built these extraordinary dwellings.

**CORMORANT FISHING ON THE NAGARA RIVER**



**Y**our live event could be anything from a school visit to a talk by Michel Roux Senior. Think carefully what you want to achieve – it should do some or all of the following:

- increase awareness of your products
- increase footfall and sales
- gather feedback on what you offer
- test new products and services
- increase the size of your mailing list
- expose regular customers to sides of your operation they may not know about or use, such as your cookery school, weddings service, wine bar or café
- convert first-time or occasional visitors into loyal, regular customers

How will you achieve your objectives? If your aim, say, is to increase the size of your mailing list, you'll need a means of capturing email addresses. If you want to expose prospects to other parts of your operation, build this exposure into the activity, for example, clients on Northumberland Cheese Company's dairy tours and cheese-making days are given lunch in their Cheese Loft café.

What's the theme? It will add interest if your event is linked to Valentine's Day, Burns Night, the cheeses of Sicily or a food festival happening in your area.

### How to publicise your event

While Twitter and Facebook allow us to post announcements in real time, don't get complacent. Build in copywriting and design time for the event description and printing time for vouchers, posters, tasting tickets and flyers.

La Fromagerie in London's Marylebone and Islington runs regular book launch dinners as well as tutored tastings and kitchen demos. Patricia Michelson, owner advised, "The challenge is to get the event to read well and be exciting,

# HOW TO: HOST EVENTS

Hosting a live event is a great way to get the attention of clients and prospects, says Sally-Jayne Wright. It gives you 'face time' with potential customers and allows them to experience the look, feel and personality of your brand



Your poster and newsletter must sound enticing and interesting."

Ideally, you will send monthly newsletters to your database and track the response. Follow this with updates and reminders, plus shout-outs on social media. If well-known names are teaching at your cookery school or giving talks, they should publicise their events on their own sites and Twitter feeds and bring loyal fans with them.

Think outside the box. Newlyn Farm Shop's lambing weekends are aimed at families so they put flyers

into children's book bags at the surrounding primary schools.

Take a look at what else is happening in your area and see how you can 'piggyback' so someone else will help pay for the promotion. Newlyn Farm Shop links with

Hampshire Fare who publicise their annual July food festival for free in their literature. For the past few years, Partridges, in London's Chelsea, has held a St David's Day promotion in partnership with Food and Drink Wales and last year

worked with Bord Bia (Irish Food Board) on an Irish food promotion. It takes time to develop relationships like these, so think ahead.

### What kind of event?

This will largely be determined by budget, resources and where in the country you are. It's easier to attract celebrity chefs to events in the capital, but there's also much more competition for your customers' time. How many people can you spare? Children's events will need more staff supervision.

### Markets

Partridges has been running a Saturday Food Market on Duke of York Square outside their store since 2005. The aim, according to their website, is 'to offer small producers, start-up businesses and farmers the chance to share their passion and expertise with the public'. It started with 15 stalls and today has 60. Stallholders pay a small fee and, to avoid the potential problem of competition, their products are not available in the Partridges store.

Spokeswoman, Sophie Willard says, "It's really about building up a community, awareness and extra footfall for our wine bar, café and store.

"There is lots of behind-the-scenes work required before the day such as insurance, food safety certificates, gas and electricity documents for hot food. If you serve alcohol, you need the appropriate licences. If you are planning to charge producers to take part in festivals and markets, make sure they pay upfront and find producers and suppliers who are willing to put in the time and effort to promote their product as you should not be doing it all for them."

According to FARMA, getting permission for a weekly market involves more red tape than for a monthly market which is why most farmers' markets in Britain remain monthly. However, weekly markets

“ Offer the best food and best service as it's a showcase for the business ”

IAN STOKES, ARCHERFIELD WALLED GARDEN

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tend to be more successful because they allow customers to make the market a shopping habit.

### Festivals

In Hampshire, the owners of Newlyn's Farm Shop have been running an annual food festival for 11 years – usually in July. Last year, the lambing and food two-day event took place over a May weekend and 2,000 people came each day. Children made their own pasta, iced cupcakes in the shapes of sheep and pigs and there was a butchery demo. There's also an indoor Christmas Fair every November where customers can order their turkey or goose.

Co-owner, Abby Janaway said, "Some farm shops do a huge number of events but it can be a logistical problem. You will alienate your regular customers if they arrive to shop and the car park is full. You need more staff, too."

### Talks and supper clubs

18 miles outside Edinburgh, at the Archerfield Walled Garden retail complex in East Lothian, they've been running supper clubs since October 2013 to build awareness of the restaurant and their suitability as a venue. The evening consists of a three-course meal for about £30 and sometimes an author talk. While young people in cities love to meet strangers at supper clubs, manager Ian Stokes advised, "Social tables don't work particularly when



you have guests on their own. And people don't like to be rushed to finish their main course because the speaker is coming on. Offer the best food and best service as it's a showcase for the business. And unless you're serving food in the evening, don't expect it to be particularly profitable."

### Samplings and tutorials

In the January issue of *Speciality Food*, Adrian Beale of Buckley & Beale wrote that sampling can be the most important part of your retail operation provided you use the right person to give out the samples and use it for market research. Free, drop-in tastings can be more popular than you bargained for, warn Booths, who

on occasion have had to introduce tickets. Have you considered turning your free sampling into chargeable entertainment? One of La Fromagerie's most successful events was a butter tutorial where many different styles and recipes were tasted, from smoked, spiced and seaweed butters to butter recipes like *beurre blanc*. If you plan tasting tutorials, use a grower or producer with in-depth knowledge and let attendees taste as the expert talks so they can appreciate what is being said and ask questions.

### Cookery classes and kitchen demos

If yours is a larger food retail complex where restaurant, café, farm and gift shop are all on one

site, a cookery school can be a great awareness raiser for the other areas of your business. For example, students can source their ingredients from your farm shop. Skilled staff from your butchery, bakery and commercial kitchens can give masterclasses, reminding consumers these facilities are on-site. The cookery school at Suffolk Food Hall, Ipswich, has a glass surround so passing shoppers see classes in action and are prompted into booking.

### Set-up costs

The downside to a purpose-built cookery school is that it will involve a large initial outlay. Suffolk Food Hall's cookery school has 12 workspaces for students and can accommodate up to 50 for kitchen demos. Opened in June 2012, it cost £150,000 to build and equip. You may, as the owners of Suffolk Food Hall have done, be able to get a reputable kitchen appliance-maker like Neff to provide the equipment at a subsidised rate in exchange for displaying their artwork on your walls. Other costs to consider are buildings insurance – the cookery school tutors need their own public liability insurance –

and the need to fill the space during the working week when cookery classes are less popular. Corporate team-building workshops may be the answer. Today's cookery school students have high expectations so budget for aprons (branded, of course) and refreshments.

### Measuring your success

Use a combination of sales, footfall and feedback. Are the people who visited already on your database or did you attract new faces? Did the event sell out quickly? There may be visitors who attended a particular event but didn't return as regular customers so your job is to convert them without alienating your loyal customers. Analyse what worked and what could have gone better.

### TOP TIPS

- Consider raising funds for charity at your event – it's the perfect way to give back as you get
- Keep the event centred on a theme
- This is Britain. Have a wet weather plan

“ Have you considered turning your free sampling into chargeable entertainment? ”

  
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THE MEAT COUNTER AT CRANSTONS OF PENRITH

as Australia, the USA and right here in the UK. It's known for its high fat level, marbled effect and also its high price. However, from the shops and delicatessens that I spoke to, Wagyu beef is still not a common presence – and a reason for this is its cost. "Whilst we don't stock Wagyu, we do occasionally get asked for it and are happy to order it for customers on special order," says Lawrence Arnolda of The Food Company. "Requests like these are quite rare though, as it's very pricey, and in reality our own 28 day matured beef represents much better value for money."

Leftover meat can be used for all sorts of products such as rolls, pasties and pies, and these can be big hits with customers. "We're fortunate to have various different channels to utilise meat cuts," says Lawrence Arnolda. "We prepare a variety of different flavoured sausages here on the premises and other off-cuts are used for producing home-made terrines, pâtés and such-like on our delicatessen counter. All our steak offcuts go into making the stir fries which are popular on our butchers counter." Steak pies and steak and kidney pies are made on The Food Company's premises, and are perennial favourites. "Additionally, our chefs produce daily specials of pâté, terrine and other delicious dishes

utilising leftover meat just as cooks in large kitchens would have done in days gone by. They are popular with customers looking for the convenience of prepared food without the hassle."

**Utilise offcuts**

"Offcuts are inevitable but we try to minimise wastage as much as possible," says Oliver Anstee, Gog Magog Hills Farm Shop. "Our Steak Stir Fry and Fajita Mix are perfect examples of products that are very popular with customers but allow us to utilise offcuts of beef steak in a value-added product." Ludlow Food Centre has also developed a product range that minimises wastage from its butchery department. "Having an on-site production kitchen is a wonderful advantage, as we can discuss with Damien, our chef, how to utilise certain cuts," says John Brereton. The deli sells everything from scotch eggs, fidget pie, pasties and sausage rolls to a selection of freshly prepared ready meals. "One area that I've been developing is our charcuterie range. It's still in its infancy but has had a wonderful reception as consumers become more accustomed to the idea of British charcuterie. I personally



am very excited by this and hope to continue growing our selection of cured meats."

So how do you keep the customers coming back for more meat? One effective method is to make the cooking experience as convenient and simple as possible. Cue Gog Magog Hills farm shop: "We have found that with increasingly busy lifestyles, our customers are looking for weekday meal solutions that are quick, easy, and require a minimum amount of preparation," says Oliver Anstee. "So, with this in mind, we have developed a range of products that come ready-prepared or marinated. If you can take some of the hassle out of preparing and cooking a meal for someone, they are definitely more inclined to buy a product. Another method we use is more traditional. We encourage our customers to buy large joints of meat for a Sunday roast and suggest they use the leftovers throughout the following week."

Promotion continues to be a key method of selling meat products, as Hopetoun's Michael Craig explains: "One of the best ways to promote meat and meat-based dishes is through advertising and social media. If people can see what they buy and get ideas on what they can make with it, then they will be far more tempted to go in-store and buy the produce." Events and tastings are also excellent promotional tools. The Food Company's Lawrence Arnolda comments: "We have tastings every weekend where customers can sample meat such as sausages and stir fries. At our Spirit of Christmas event we have cooked turkey from Kelly Bronze for sampling, and at other events throughout the year we'll supply meat to our sauce suppliers who cook and sample their wares in-store."

So why do butchers' meats continue to endure and how can they retain their popularity? "People see chefs in the media," says Hopetoun's Michael Craig. "When they see the chefs and their meat-based recipes, people become more confident and say: 'I can do that'." Ludlow Farm Centre's John Brereton sums up: "You need to be aware of what your customers like and also keep an eye on emerging trends – which chefs are cooking with what. However, an absolutely impeccable counter that's well stocked, beautifully presented and staffed by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic team is by far your biggest asset."

If people are looking for a really strong meat, then this is a good choice, and our venison burgers are also good sellers." The Food Company has had its own butchery counter since its doors first opened 16 years ago. "Over that time we have built up a loyal customer base," says Lawrence Arnolda. "We use the best garnish and melamine display products from Dalebrook to enhance our butchery counter, and like to keep everything whole and cut to order."

"Our customers come to us for quality meat: animals which are fed, bred and reared ethically simply taste better, and all our meat is sampled

regularly by our in-house team for quality purposes. We use these USPs in our marketing and never shy away from the fact that good meat is worth paying for." The Food Company is renowned for its steak, with fillet and sirloin being particularly strong sellers. Meanwhile, family favourites for Sunday lunch include forequarter of beef, lamb rump (chosen for its simplicity and versatility) and its competitively-priced butchers deal packs.

One notable type of meat to make an emergence in recent years is Wagyu beef. Originally from Japan, Wagyu beef has made a mark in the last 10 years in countries such

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# HOW TO: OWN-BRAND

Unsure whether to buy-in or produce on-site?  
Daisy Phillipson weighs up the options

**N**ow is a good time to be selling own-brand products, whether you supply to food shops or keep your stock on the farm or deli site. When we talk about this category, we're talking about indulgent and high-end goods, and now that the UK has leaped out of the recession, customers are increasingly interested in re-stocking their shelves full of culinary delights.

## Producing in-house

Apley Farm Shop in Shropshire is an independent farm store, butcher and delicatessen, which has its own range of Apley products including soups, quiches, honey, pork pies, coffee, tea, ale and cheese. When discussing own-brand products as a whole, Harriet Hamilton from Apley Farm Shop says that it is an almost essential criteria for most independent retailers if they want to build up a brand. "Fine food shoppers are expecting something that is unique, high quality and exclusive. That's why I think it's important to have this in order to build up a loyal customer following."

For start-up businesses looking to break into the sector, there are two options. An independent shop can either source the products itself and label in-house or everything can be made on-site. The question is, which is the best option? And what are the processes for each?

While some of Apley's products are outsourced, most of its products are made on-site and so

the company is able to look at the advantages and disadvantages from both ends of the spectrum. With regards to making your range on your premises, using your own ingredients and staff, Ms Hamilton notes the benefit of control on supply. "If you control your production you can respond much faster," she says. "If you suddenly have a very good year, for example a bumper crop of tomatoes, you can make your own tomato chutney on-site. If you outsource certain items, you can't expect a third party to quickly turn around; they're working for other people so they can't just drop everything and respond to your request so quickly. And making products out of a sudden successful growth is a great tool to draw in customers as it allows them to know the provenance of their food."

Cottage Delight is a manufacturer that would agree with this advantage. The company offers a range of trademark pastes, pasta, pesto and soups, as well as a selection of breadsticks, dipping crackers and salsa accompaniments, while its bakery selection includes treats such as biscuits, fruit and sponge cakes. The company also offers a range of traditional beers, ales and ciders.



"We have always manufactured our own products," said Nigel Cope, founder of Cottage Delight, "right from the very beginning

when I started out by making original recipe fudge in the family kitchen. Producing our own range gives a provenance to each and every product and consumers gain confidence by knowing exactly where it has come from."

Yet while it is a huge value to have all of the kit on your premises, there are some hindrances that come with the process. Ms Hamilton mentions that it may work out more expensive initially, due to the costs involved with investing in equipment and expert advice on regulations. The Environmental Health Department has a set of stringent criteria that must be followed by all food producers, including stainless steel kitchen appliances and specific, non-bleach cleaning products. A company must be able to invest in such equipment. In addition, sourcing or growing your own ingredients is another cost that cannot be overlooked. All of these factors together mean it can be very costly to begin your own production, so a fledgling business must consider this when thinking about making the leap.

In addition, being able to keep up with the law changes can be difficult. "A food producer must be sure that it is 100% up-to-date with changes in the law at all times. Sometimes this can be hard; you have to have a failsafe way of knowing that, because whether you employ a consultant or you're just trawling the internet and checking websites, you need to be aware at all times otherwise your range may not be in line with certain regulations," said Ms Hamilton.

For example, as of December 2014, changes to food labelling were put in place to provide allergen ingredients information in a clearer way. Any of the 14 allergens are to be highlighted and emphasised on packaged food. While a manufacturer might be very aware of this, the 14 ingredients could change slightly. It's down to the manufacturer to know if and when these changes take place and how to implement them to the production.

## Outsourcing

Looking at the second option, sourcing products from other companies and labelling them with own-brand marks in-house,



a key advantage is consistency of supply. If you have a popular product and there is a surge in sale, then you know you have access to more in order to meet that demand.

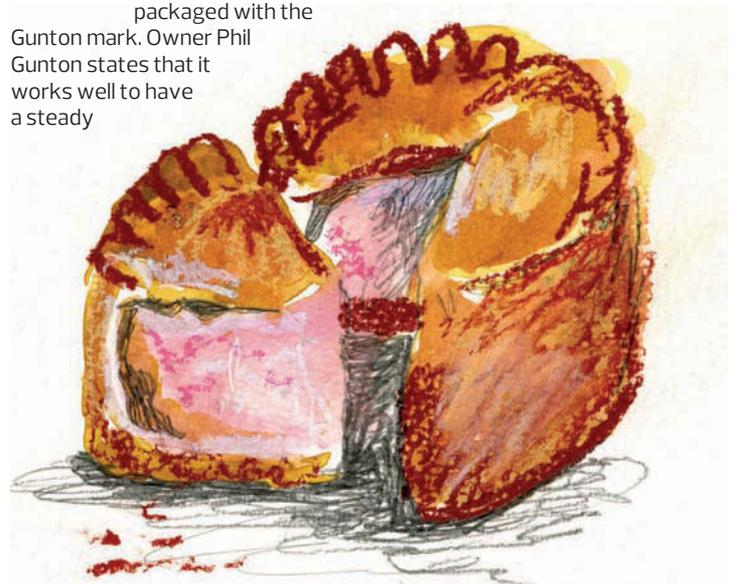


Gunton in Colchester offers a wide range of goods. Its own selection is out-sourced and then

packaged with the Gunton mark. Owner Phil Gunton states that it works well to have a steady

supply of high quality produce from manufacturers they trust. "We only brand things with our own label that we think are of very high quality. Because we pick out the finest items, customers trust our brand."

Of course, there are challenges that come with out-sourcing produce. Mr Gunton mentioned that one company even changed its recipe without telling them,



“ It is important to consider your budget, your location and your ingredients supply. Based upon your business plan, decide what would be best for you to ensure that you create a successful and trusted range of products for your shop ”

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OWN BRAND



which can pose a risk to customer trust. "However, we just found someone else to supply us, which wasn't too much bother. Things like this are not on – it's got our name on it so we have to know what is going on with the product," he added.

What about the logistical side of each option? Bashall Barn in Lancashire is a farm-based complex serving its own produce in an ice cream parlour, café, restaurant and shop. "We make all our own chutneys, relishes, jams and marmalades," said Mr van Heumen, general manager at Bashall Barn. "We make sauces, dressings and then we have freezer meals – anything from meat to chicken to fish pies. And we have a good vegetarian section. We also do ice cream and home made cakes, scones and bread."

Focusing on safety regulations, Mr van Heumen said that the rules are not as strict as if you were to send it all out. "But obviously what is still really important is a hygienic environment. To make sure it is all properly recorded, when it was made and by whom are essential points. We have recipes and systems to ensure that all of our products are made to a high standard," he added.

Labelling is a feature that should not be overlooked. Mr van Heumen mentioned that Bashall Barn, as well as suppliers across the nation, has to be careful with allergens in the food and that these are highlighted on the ingredients list.

If you are considering starting your own production site, you will need to register with the Environmental Health Department, who will provide the information



on equipment required and what you need to ensure your kitchen is safe and clean. Environmental Health officers have a wealth of knowledge and are able to help food businesses ensure they meet all legal requirements. From there, a detailed HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) plan must be put in place to ensure food is manufactured in a safe and legal manner. Food labelling is paramount and the legislation that goes with it can be complex as there are different rules and regulations depending on the type of food that you're producing.

Mr Cope at Cottage Delight says, "Needless to say, at Cottage Delight we work very hard to ensure our products are of the highest quality and we are accredited to the BRC Global Standard for Food. Our QA team work tirelessly to monitor and check our products and we also visit suppliers on a regular basis to ensure their standards and procedures meet our stringent requirements."

Any new food producer would also need a professional expert who can advise and

ensure that the products are in-line with laws and regulations, says Ms Hamilton. "Environmental health officers will tell you what equipment is required and what conditions your kitchen needs to be in, but you also need to hire a consultant or expert who is very well trained in board regulations. That way you can stay on top and not make any mistakes along the production line," she added.

If this is not the ideal model and you are instead considering outsourcing your products, there are also certain regulations that you need to be aware of. Mr Gunton noted that an essential requirement for potential suppliers is that they have an ISO 9001. This is a certified quality management system for organisations who want to prove their ability to consistently provide products and services that meet the needs of their customers.

But what about finding the right product for your brand? "It's as simple as going around and sampling them," said Mr Gunton. "Go to trade shows such as IFE in London and Speciality & Fine Food Fair, and you will find the best suppliers there. It's just a case of finding the top end of the market and something that fits in with your brand."



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# PREVIEW: NATURAL FOOD SHOW 2016

Discover some of the most innovative products shaping the future of food, health and nutrition



**N**atural Food Show – the UK's only dedicated trade event for natural and organic food and drink – returns to London ExCeL on 17th–18th April with an unprecedented number of exhibiting companies. Here's a taste of what's on offer for 2016.

Whether it's down to lifestyle choice, personal ethics or special allergy requirements, more consumers than ever are now questioning the provenance, ingredients and naturalness of their food and drink choices. Natural and organic food products fit comfortably into deli surroundings and currently organic is outgrowing conventional food and performing well for the independents. Speciality food buyers looking to cater for this increasing demand will find more natural, organic, artisan, Fairtrade, vegan, vegetarian, free-from and special diet food and drink products at the Natural Food Show than at any other UK event this year.

"I think more and more the consumer is looking at ethics to make their own choices. The consumer is critical and more demanding, wanting to know what is in his food and where it comes from. This show responds to these demands" says celebrated chef (and past speaker) Raymond Blanc.

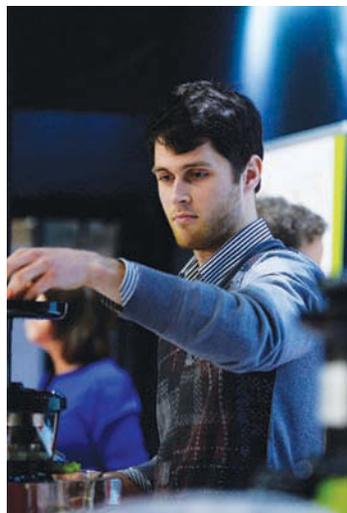
"Today's consumers are better informed than ever, and they expect to see more choice available in their local delis, stores, restaurants and cafés," agrees the show's event director Carol Dunning.

## International flavour

"For 2016," Carol says, "the show will host new national pavilions with food and drink specialities from Peru, Bulgaria, Turkey, Thailand, The Philippines, Armenia and Moldova. They'll be joining returning contingents from France, Italy, Poland, Greece, and the USA. Many other countries are participating at an individual level – including

the Republic of Ireland, Germany, Australia, Canada, China, Russia, New Zealand, Denmark, Sweden, Cyprus, The Netherlands, Austria, Spain, Belgium, Bolivia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, Hong Kong, Iceland, India, South Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Malaysia, Palestine, Portugal, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, and Vietnam. So, whether buyers are coming from just a few miles away or flying in from across the globe, they'll find plenty of choice here that they simply won't find all together like this at any other show."

Countries increasing their presence for 2016 include Greece (hosted by Economotekniki) and Italy. The latter will now occupy two new pavilions in The Natural Food Show, including Demeter Italy (a new biodynamic association pavilion) and the Italian Pavilion,



which will focus on speciality food and drink from the country's distinctive southern regions (including Campania, Calabria, Puglia and Sicily). Thailand is also hoping to make a big impression at the show this year, debuting not one but two pavilions – which will be promoting their famous cuisine, and health and wellbeing products respectively.

## Organic associations unite

The UK's certified organic food and drink offering has also been expanded, with the Soil Association and Organic Trade Board joining forces for the first time at the show under the slogan 'Growing Organic Together'. The pavilion, which includes the popular Soil Association Organic Chiller area, will feature well-known brands like Nairn's, Mr. Organic, Alara, Yeo Valley and Infinity Foods, plus debut appearances, including those by Greens Organic, Ibiza Superfoods, and Organic Delight.

## Free-from focus

With the free-from food market forecast to grow 13 per cent to £531 million in 2016 (and reach £673 million by 2020, according to Mintel), natural alternatives to meat, poultry and fish products, allergen-free products, as well as eggs, dairy, cheese, chocolate and honey for vegans – remain a priority for many buyers who visit the show annually.

Bravura Foods, Viotross S.A, The Raw Chocolate Company, Veganz GmbH, Coconom, Conscious Chocolate, Think Products Europe,



“ Whether it's down to lifestyle choice, personal ethics or special allergy requirements, more consumers than ever are now questioning the provenance, ingredients and naturalness of their food and drink choices and natural and organic food products fit comfortably into deli surroundings ”



Superfoods, The Tofurky Company, Follow Your Heart UK, Topas GmbH, Raw Gorilla, and Bute Island Foods – all exhibiting in the The World of Vegan pavilion – are just a selection of 2016 exhibitors who tick many (although not necessarily all) of the important free-from boxes.

Sugar-free products are available from Clearspring, Suma Wholefoods, Of The Earth Superfoods, Bounce Foods, Booja-Booja, Essential Trading, Creative Nature Superfood, Zootfoods, Organico Realfoods, Pip & Nut, Iswari Ireland, granoVita UK, Biona-Amisa-Raw Health, Erbology, cereal lovers, Rebel Kitchen and many more.

Another market gaining increased momentum over the last few years is the alternative tea market. According to Mintel, although traditional black tea sales have dipped, fruit and herbal tea sales grew by 31%, speciality teabags by 15%, and green tea

steamed ahead with a 50% rise. Exhibitors showcasing this buoyant and popular category include Sonnentor, Neuner's, Koyu Matcha Tea, Pukka Herbs, Salus UK, Solaris Tea, Metropolitan Tea Co, Bekley-Organics, Wisdom Natural Brands, YOGI TEA and Zealong Tea Estate.

Show exclusive: 1pm on Monday 18th April see exclusive trade launch of the Soil Association Organic Market Report 2016.

## New for 2016

So what can visitors expect from the biggest edition in the event's 19 year history? Well, more new companies for a start – including Upton's Naturals (vegan/vegetarian meat alternatives, using seitan and jackfruit); Belucci Premium (Italian extra virgin olive oil); Bio Spirits (organic gin); From Across the Ocean (specialty organic wines and extra virgin olive oils); Mrs O's Fuss Free Mixes (egg, dairy and nut-free organic baking mixes), Upton Naturals (vegan and vegetarian).

Other returning exhibitors enjoying a repeat performance of last year's packed aisles include Oryx Dessert Salt; Sunita Foods (Mediterranean fine foods); Atlantic Kitchen (seaweed soups and superfoods); Mondial Umberti (cider vinegars, superfruits and seeds); Andean Valley (organic quinoa specialist, including flours, flakes, burger, pizza and pudding); Langridge Organic (organic wholesale), Fentimans (original, natural botanical drinks); Oriental FNB (fresh udon, noodles, juices, teas and confectionery) and Oryx Dessert Salt.



One of the show's biggest selling points is its comprehensive array of new products across all natural and organic categories. From new start-ups with compelling origin stories to established brand pioneers championing new innovations – hundreds of new



launches are timed specifically to coincide with this important event.

Follow Your Heart UK, Pulsin', Paleo Treats™ Europe, Nuto Nuts, Zootfoods and SAF Raw are just some of the names busy preparing their latest launches for April.

### Natural Food Kitchen

It's not just the exhibitors at The Natural Food Show that promise to draw in the crowds for 2016. Once again, the Natural Food Kitchen sessions will see a host of celebrity chefs and nutritional experts offering their exciting new menu ideas for everyday dishes. The line-up to date includes Martin Morales, head chef and owner of Ceviche Peruvian Kitchen Soho, Robert Ortiz, head chef at Michelin-starred Peruvian restaurant Lima,

two Masterchef finalists – Angela Langford and Andrew Kojima, Jorge Urena and Markus Pandur from UHTCO, Medicinal Chef Dale Pinnock, nutritionist Christine Bailey, and demo host Jay Morjaria, founder and executive chef of Sutra Kitchen.

### Free trade registration

Fantastic, impressive, amazing, exceptional, and wonderful is representative the feedback received from last year's attendees, with 95% of surveyed visitors planning to return in 2016.

Whole Foods Market UK, Infinity Foods, Holland & Barrett International, Netto, Waitrose, Tesco, Ocado, Sainsbury's, John Lewis, Aldi, Hilton, Costco, TK Maxx, Marks & Spencer, Sodexo, and EAT

are just some of the big names set to visit.

"With a wide category portfolio to buy for, I have found the show to provide the variety and diversity that I am looking for all in one place," says Tracy Hunt, e-commerce buyer of gourmet food and wine at Costco Online. "I'm looking forward to this year's Natural & Organic Products Europe – it's a great way to discover innovative new suppliers and catch up with existing ones all in one place. I'd recommend it to anyone in the sector – it's not to be missed," says Dominic Jeffery, buyer at Infinity Foods Wholesale.

To register for free trade entry to Natural Food Show at Natural & Organic Products Europe, please visit [naturalproducts.co.uk](http://naturalproducts.co.uk).



### GETTING THE MOST FROM YOUR VISIT

- Register for your pass in advance (online at [naturalproducts.co.uk](http://naturalproducts.co.uk)) This will mean you can walk straight into the show with your badge and get a first look at the showguide (emailed to you in advance of the event) so you can plan your day
- Visit the show website. All you could want to know about what's going on at the show is online, so take a look!
- Familiarise yourself with the Exhibitor List and products available, plan who you might want to see in advance and note where they are on the floorplan (available online)
- With over 650 companies, thousands of brands and a whole host of educational sessions to help your business thrive, there's a lot to see across the two days so it's advisable to plan your trip. Book your accommodation in advance for the best prices

### IN DETAIL

**WHAT:** Natural Food Show  
**WHERE:** Excel, London  
**WHEN:** 17th – 18th April 2016  
**CONTACT:** 01273 645110  
[cdunning@divcom.co.uk](mailto:cdunning@divcom.co.uk)  
**WEB:** [naturalproducts.co.uk](http://naturalproducts.co.uk)  
**GETTING THERE:** DLR: Custom House for ExCeL (for the west entrance) or Prince Regent for ExCeL  
**AIR:** London City Airport



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# PREVIEW: FOOD & DRINK EXPO 2016

One of the UK's best food shows returns to NEC Birmingham 18th–20th April, with top brands and an action-packed speaker programme

**F**ood & Drink Expo 2016 is now just weeks away with exhibitors, speakers and show themes all confirmed. Based at the NEC, Birmingham from 18th–20th April, Food & Drink Expo will give buyers from the grocery, wholesale and foodservice sectors the opportunity to source the latest products and identify trends before they become mainstream. This year's event will have a focus on the future of the food and drink industry over the coming years, allowing visitors to prepare for the next big thing.

More than 1,200 exhibitors will showcase their latest innovations to thousands of expected visitors across four co-located events. Food & Drink Expo will run alongside three complementary shows – Foodex, Farm Shop & Deli Show and the National Convenience Show. The events will offer visitors the perfect opportunity to gain insights into the latest issues affecting all food sectors. With more than 1,200 suppliers, 100 sessions and 250 speakers across all shows, it has never been so imperative that food-related business owners or buyers plan their visit to the NEC this April.

As well as finding new products, buyers and representatives from the foodservice and grocery industries will have the chance to meet the people behind the companies. International companies are a particular focus at this year's show, with businesses and organisations from a number of countries using the event to highlight produce from their nations and breakthrough to the UK market.

Culinary expert Taste of Nova Scotia will take a stand alongside a Chinese Pavilion and Moroccan Pavilion. The international focus will also be felt at Foodex, which will feature a Danish pavilion featuring eight companies looking to use increasing demand for Scandinavian products to secure more listings in the UK.

Meanwhile, the wider UK will be showcased at Food & Drink Expo with Wales represented by the Welsh Assembly Government; and Ireland with Invest Northern Ireland and Cork County Council.

To register for free, receiving entry to all co-located shows, visit [foodanddrinkexpo.co.uk](http://foodanddrinkexpo.co.uk).

## LIVE SESSIONS

The last Food & Drink Expo show in 2014 featured the hugely popular and informative Brainfood Factory, which has been rebranded as The Grocer Talking Shop Live for the 2016 event. This platform will be packed full of expert speakers with sessions designed to cover all aspects of the

industry on which visitors may seek guidance.

On Monday 18 April, the popular Great British Bake Off 2016 winner Nadiya Hussain, who has experienced great success since the show, will show off her skills and the unique baking techniques that wowed the TV judges in a live on-stage demonstration. Another highlight from the show's first day alone includes How To Build a Successful Brand, with top experts sharing their experiences of launching successful food and drink brands in the marketplace live on stage with advice and tips for budding entrepreneurs.

In another session entitled Millennials and An Ageing Society, speakers will discuss highlights from the latest management consultancy studies and vox pop insights on how brands and businesses can get it right with both millennials and older audiences.

Also on the first day, a panel of experts will take part in The Great Health Debate in one of the most topical sessions of the show. With obesity on the rise, panellists will raise

the challenges and opportunities for selling food in the era of healthy eating.

On the second day, The Grocer Talking Shop Live will see British business journalist Steph McGovern host a panel on What Is the Answer to the Sugar Debate?. Sugar has been a major issue within the industry for several years, but has come to the fore with a number of high profile individuals calling for a sugar tax. Panellists will include Ian Wright, chief executive of the Food and Drink Federation alongside other major figures in the industry.

In another highly topical debate on Tuesday, the stage will host The Great Waste Debate, featuring Love Food Hate Waste ambassador Richard Fox. Arthur Potts Dawson from The People's Supermarket, celebrity chef Simon Rimmer and Head of Sustainability for Sainsbury's, Paul Crewe will also join the panel to weigh in on the debate.

On Wednesday, visitors will be able to attend sessions on The Future of Foodservice and Future Foods and Ingredients of the Future. This is just a taste of what will be on offer at The Grocer Talking Shop Live with further debates, interviews, demonstrations and presentations planned, which will cover the most cutting-edge business and ethical issues in the food and drink industry today.

## Great New Idea

In addition to a wide range of demonstrations, interactive debates and seminars that are free to attend, the show will play host to the Great New Idea competition. Exhibiting companies will be asked to submit a new product/idea that has been launched within the sector for the opportunity to win the Great New



“ This year's event will have a focus on the future of the food and drink industry over the coming years, allowing visitors to prepare for the next big thing ”

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Idea Award, which will be presented in the show theatre. The award will be voted for by visitors leading up to the show, online. The finalists will then take to the stage to present their innovations to a panel of judges who will select an overall winner.

Aside from exploring the show floor and frequenting the lively debates, plenary sessions and interactive master classes, visitors can head to the Engage Lounge. This is an area highlighting all sectors of the industry and offering visitors and exhibitors the chance to meet, interact and relax whilst sourcing industry information.



**EXHIBITOR INFO**

Hundreds of exhibitors will showcase their latest innovations to thousands of buyers and decision makers, all looking to place orders on the industry's newest products.

**BEER, CIDER, WINE AND SPIRITS**

With the alcohol sector still booming, British consumers are looking for a variety of wine, spirits and ciders. Tapping into the growing popularity of homemade cider, returning exhibitor Apple Country Cider [stand P160B] will be showcasing its multi-award winning 100% juice cider made from a single bittersweet apple variety through a slow, cold fermentation. A particular product highlight will be the Great

Taste Award-winning Vilberie Medium Dry cider, full of the robust fruity Vilberie bittersweet apples with a refreshing, crisp, dry finish.

For those looking for something more original, Kin Vodka [stand D155] will be exhibiting its toffee-flavoured vodka, hand-blended in the English Lake District. Available to buy in 200ml, 500ml and 700ml bottles, the recipe has been developed over seven years.

Craft beer options will also be on display. Bluestone Brewing Co [stand P160K] will be showcasing its high quality, bold and big flavoured beer. Created on a farm set in the heart of Pembrokeshire Coastal National Park, the beer uses the purest water supply that is unique to the brewery. The ethically responsible brand will be showing

a range of products for visitors looking to taste premium craft beers.

**CONFECTIONERY AND CHOCOLATE**

Despite the growth of the health sector, British consumers' love for sweet treats is still high. Returning exhibitor, Milsean Chocolate [stand L120] will showcase its artfully crafted, artisanal collection created by a multi-award winning chocolatier in west Cork, Ireland. A particular highlight of its range is a gluten-free 44% Venezuela single origin chocolate bar, blended with milk and cream.

In the biscuit category, Cradocs Savoury Biscuits [stand N150K] will display popular products such as Vegetable Crackers with Chilli, Garlic

& Ginger from its unique range of savoury biscuits. Metcalfe's Skinny [stand J119] will also showcase its range of top-quality popcorn, which is a delicious, natural and healthy snack on the go.

**OILS, PRESERVES AND CONDIMENTS**

A plethora of condiments will be on show this year as sauces with a twist remain popular with consumers. Award winning Rebel Chilli [stand L120] will display its Red Chilli & Lemongrass Sauce, while Down Sauce Co [stand C110] will launch its new range of glazes perfect for fresh, frozen and precooked meats and fish.

Delicioso [stand J171], one of the UK's leading importers and distributors of high-quality Spanish food, wine and gifts, will present a range of tasty and authentic products including award-winning meats, pâtés, seafood, salsa and condiments.

Dressings and oils take a more classic approach this year with Pathos [stand J148], which will exhibit its competitively priced classic olive oil and wide range of artisan vinegars. Those looking for healthy oil options should look to Borderfields [stand E158], which will showcase its healthy Cold Pressed Rapeseed Oil, which boasts a near-perfect balance of Omegas 3, 6 and 9 and has less than half the saturated fat of olive oil.

**IN DETAIL**

**WHAT:** Food & Drink Expo 2016  
**WHERE:** NEC, Birmingham  
**WHEN:** 18th-20th April 2016  
**WEB:** foodanddrinkexpo.co.uk

**ORGANIC & FAIRTRADE**

Representing the growing appeal for international organic and Fairtrade products, Dina Foods Limited [stand L98], a privately-owned artisan bakery, will showcase traditional and authentic Mediterranean food, such as its Mediterranean Kobhez.

Growing demand for gluten free and natural ingredients will also be demonstrated at the show. Aznar [stand CJSC] will provide visitors with the unique taste and vitamins of Azerbaijani fruits, including its popular 100% Pomegranate, Grape & Apple Juice Grante. Jollyum [stand C109] will also showcase its dairy, gluten and refined sugar-free ice cream from its vegan factory.

**BUSINESS SERVICE AND TECHNOLOGY**

Eat Marketing's [stand D99] creative team will offer innovative design and marketing support for every kind of business in the food and drink sector. With experience in both print and digital, the brand aims to help the growth of any business. Campden BRI [stand F108] will also be offering information of regulatory affairs and international specification services.

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# PREVIEW: FARM SHOP & DELI SHOW 2016

Farm Shop & Deli is back for 2016 with the best regional produce, inspirational speakers and industry experts

The Farm Shop & Deli Show returns to the NEC from 18th–20th April to once again provide farm shops, delicatessen, garden centres, food halls, cafés, butcheries, bakeries and coffee shops from across the country with an opportunity to discover the latest developments in artisan produce.

The UK's focus on provenance continues to flourish. Fuelled by TV shows such as *The Great British Menu*, as well as celebrity chefs championing regional provenance, the nation's passion for the richness and diversity of regional foods shows no sign of abating, and this will be reflected by the products showcased at the 2016 edition of the show.

As always, the Farm Shop & Deli Show will be packed full of interesting and informative features, from live cooking and informative masterclasses to invaluable expert advice and product presentations. What's more, the winners of the Farm Shop & Deli Awards 2016 will be revealed and celebrated at the event.

Now in its sixth year, the Farm Shop & Deli Show provides a platform for visitors to source some of the nation's best-loved products, as well as enabling leading figures in the sector to come together to debate and discuss the future of speciality food.

Co-located with Food & Drink Expo 2016, there will be thousands of brands and products on display,

all under one roof. Brindisa, Cook, Hider Foods, Olives Et Al, Blakemore Fine Foods and Crème D'Or are just some of the exciting names confirmed.

If you've been to the event in the past and believe you've seen it all before, think again. This year's Farm Shop & Deli Show programme will equip visitors with all the inspiration, knowledge and industry insights they require to help set their businesses apart from the competition. Not only that, but visitors to the Farm Shop & Deli Show will benefit from the unrivalled networking opportunities that arise due to the event's co-location with Food & Drink Expo, National Convenience Show and Foodex.



## SHOW HIGHLIGHTS: LEARN FROM THE BEST

Over the course of three days, visitors will be able to attend a variety of sessions, designed to offer valuable information and new techniques to businesses.

### EXPLORE THE WORLD OF BREAD



Despite remaining a staple of the nation's diets, the bread category continues to evolve with consumers demanding new products that boast qualities such as being organic, gluten-free and artisanal. Bakers are being challenged to reinvent their breads

to meet these changing trends. During Farm Shop & Deli Live, long-time baker, Colin Lomax of Rank Hovis will provide insights into the latest trends, including super-healthy options, which will help attendees identify the best offer for their business.

### DISCOVER GLUTEN-FREE DISHES



Popular chef and food writer Phil Vickery will return to the event this year, hosting a masterclass on making speciality food dishes for people of all diets. Having



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been appointed as an ambassador for Coeliac UK several years ago, he is passionate about improving knowledge in the food industry and highlighting the necessity for more gluten-free cooking. As an increasing number of people are diagnosed with the disease, at Farm Shop & Deli Live, he will share tips from his signature 'free-from' dishes, enabling cooks to create their own fully inclusive menus.

**CASHING IN ON CRAFT BEER**

Moving onto the drinks sector, the growth of the craft beer market means that Britain now has more than 1,300 breweries – more per head than any other country – and that figure is expected to increase by 10 percent over the next year. The importance of speciality beer can be seen in the fact that it was recently added to the basket of goods used to calculate the country's inflation rate. Richard Fox, writer and broadcaster, and Iain Hemming, owner of Thyme and Tides deli, will run a live tasting session at the event, providing details on how to make the most of the phenomenon.

**HOW TO SELL OLIVE OIL**

Having weathered the financial crisis of the late-noughties, consumers now have more cash in their pockets and are once more

beginning to shop for higher-end products. Olive oil is one category that is expected to benefit, with the latest trends predicting that shoppers are increasingly looking for premium options. Giles Henschel, CEO and co-founder of Olives Et Al, will provide attendees with advice on how to maximise sales in this valuable area.

**HOW TO MINIMISE FOOD WASTE**

One of the main attractions will be Sunday Brunch host Simon Rimmer's session on food waste. A hot topic in the food and drink industry, he will run a live demonstration where dishes will be created using techniques that reduce the amount of product discarded during cooking.

**MAKE YOUR CHARCUTERIE STAND OUT**

For visitors looking to create a stand-out charcuterie counter, Turnbulls Deli owner, Charlie Turnbull, will show how to bring an offering to life. He will also host a session that will provide valuable insights on the digital options available to grow retail businesses. This will be complemented by a session on social media's role in driving sales, presented by Karen Fewell of The Food Marketing School.



**HOW TO CREATE SUCCESSFUL DISPLAYS**

Visual merchandising is an important aspect of any retail business – not only the larger stores. Customers want to find items quickly in a well-presented and planned out shop. To help attendees understand how to maximise sales, Eve Reid from Metamorphosis Group & Retail School will deliver expert advice that can be implemented in almost any retail environment.

**IN THE KITCHEN...**

Charlotte White, the author of the popular Burllesque Baking book, will host a masterclass in how to turn everyday cakes into impressive and glamorous designs. TV chef Rachel Green will present ideas on how to make the most of game produce, while master chocolatier Will Torrent – who has worked with Heston Blumenthal and Jamie Oliver – will explain practical ways to meet the growing demand for speciality chocolate.

**DRAGON'S PANTRY: CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE**

Also taking place in the Farm Shop & Deli Live theatre, the Dragons Pantry will see some of the most daring entrepreneurs present their newest product launches to a panel of industry experts. With dragons including the likes of Jon Gill (head of buying at Booths Supermarket), Dan Shaw (managing director at Cognosco), Duncan Hider (MD at Hider Foods), Neil Nugent (Pizza Express' development director), Andrew Holden (head of food at the Eden Project) and Rachel Cook (category manager Fine Food Bidvest 3663), the stakes have never been so high for producers who could walk away with new listings and business opportunities.

Also recognising creative thinking, the Great New Ideas Award will make it easier for visitors to spot innovative thinking that will boost their in-store offerings. Exhibitors can enter their products, with the finalists selected by visitors and the winner crowned at the show. Meanwhile, the Farm Shop & Deli Awards 2016, in

association with Olives Et Al, will recognise the best-in-class when it comes to the UK's independent, specialist retail market. A dozen category winners, together with nine regional victors and the overall Retailer of the Year will be announced at the end of the show's first day.

Johns of Instow & Appledore was crowned Retailer of the Year in 2015. A spokesperson for the company said, "We were absolutely delighted to win the award last year. It is a recognition of the hard work of everyone within our team. Local produce is at the heart of the Farm Shop & Deli Show and with the entire speciality community coming together, there is no better place to source the produce that helps your store stand out from the competition."

During Farm Shop & Deli Live 2016, the retailer will share the secrets of its success during a live interview, hosted by Nigel Barden, the chairman of the Farm Shop & Deli Awards.



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5 MINUTES WITH... THE ORGANISER



**Speciality Food catches up with Jack Halliday, event director of Farm Shop & Deli Show, to find out why this event is worth a visit**

**HOW DOES THE SHOW BENEFIT VISITORS?**

Our aim has always been to give visitors a chance to source local, regional and international artisan food and drink products in an easy and accessible way. There is nowhere else where you can find so much speciality produce under one roof – it really is the one-stop-shop for farm shop, delicatessen, garden centre, food hall, café, butcher, baker and coffee shop buyers in the UK. In addition to the exhibition, the topics covered in the live events allow businesses to identify trends, improve their knowledge and come away from the show with a clear idea of how they can improve their business. Not only that, the networking opportunities are second to none.

**WHY WOULD YOU ENCOURAGE PREVIOUS VISITORS TO COME BACK TO FARM SHOP & DELI SHOW AGAIN THIS YEAR?**

I would always encourage visitors to come back to the event because every year is different. Many of our exhibitors launch new products at the show, so it's a fantastic opportunity to get an exclusive first look at what's on offer in terms of artisanal food and drink. In addition to this, we always make sure our programme of events is refreshed year upon year so it continues to be both informative, engaging and current.

**HOW DOES FARM SHOP & DELI SHOW STAND OUT FROM OTHER FOOD SHOWS?**

Farm Shop & Deli Show is co-located with three other major UK trade events – Food & Drink Expo, Foodex and the National Convenience Show. It gives visitors the chance to not only source the best artisan produce, but also investigate trends in other areas. A visit to the event is worth the time and travel as you will undoubtedly come away with inspiration that will bring new life to your business and your bottom line.

“Visitors will come away with inspiration that will bring new life to your business”



**EXHIBITOR INFORMATION**

**As well as an action-packed programme of events with plenty of new additions for 2016, Farm Shop & Deli Show will be bursting with new and exciting products for retailers to taste as they have the opportunity to meet with hundreds of suppliers. Visitors will be treated to a myriad of products that tap into demand for locally-sourced and authentically-produced food and drink.**

**BAKERY AND CONFECTIONERY**

While the health sector is growing, British consumers' love for sweet treats and breads shows no sign of slowing down. At Farm Shop & Deli Show, visitors have the chance to discover the latest bakery, cake and confectionery on-trend products that will appeal to shoppers.

Tapping into the growth of

popularity for artisan goods, returning exhibitor Bread Du Jour [stand E198] will showcase its multi-award winning hand-crafted breads that specialist retailers can bake-off easily within minutes from any oven. A particular highlight will be the Sourdough Country Loaf, an artisan round loaf made with wheat flour, sour dough and rye flour. This loaf is baked on the sole of the oven for a crusty finish.

For those looking to offer consumers a solution for a sweet-tooth, Taste of Country [stand B175] will be exhibiting its handmade traybakes, crafted with high quality ingredients such as locally sourced flour, free range eggs, British butter and real Belgian Chocolate. Available as 21 piece pre-marked slabs or individual pre-packed pieces, the

shelf life is two months ambient, reducing potential waste for independent retailers.

Healthier options will also be on display. Oast to Host [stand C180] will be showcasing its award-winning gluten and wheat-free sweet and savoury tarts. From quiches in different flavours and sizes to its pastry mix – a blend of flours ready to make up into either a sweet shortcrust pastry or plain or dairy-free pastry, there are plenty of offerings for visitors looking to tap into the burgeoning free-from sector.

**DAIRY**

Representing the growing appeal of international flavours incorporated into traditional British products, Brindisa [stand H188] will showcase its new Saffron Mayonnaise. Made with Brindisa extra virgin olive oil and free range eggs, this product has a delicate, aromatic quality with the nature of saffron also tapping into the demand for premium goods, which is important in the speciality sector.

It seems that the trend of home-baking has now extended to 'home-making' with a range of cheese-making kits on show. The Cheese Makers' Choice will have its Goat's Cheese Making Kit on stand E231 while The Big Cheese Making Kit Ltd will showcase The Ultimate Cheese Making Kit and the Mozzarella & Ricotta Kit at stand E201.

FARM SHOP & Deli SHOW  
18-20 April 2016 NEC Birmingham

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**PIES AND SNACKS**

The crisps category will be adding some crunch to the Farm Shop & Deli Show this year with offerings from leading brands such as Pipers Crisps [stand G181] and Riverside Lifestyle [stand C210]. Ten Acre's [stand F109] award-winning products will also be on show. The hand-cooked crisps will be on stand alongside its popcorn range. Not only are the products gluten, dairy, and MSG-free, they are also vegan, halal and kosher-approved, giving consumers healthier options that don't compromise on taste.

Bagged snacks in alternative formats are becoming increasingly popular, which is reflected by the show's exhibitors. Munchy Seeds [stand E206] will display products such as Chilli Bites and Omega Sprinkles from its range of toasted seeds that are naturally full of minerals, vitamins, protein and fibre for an on-the-go snack or to add nutrition to a meal. Award-winning bakery Peter's Yard Wholesale Ltd [stand E184] will bring visitors its range of sourdough crispbread made to an authentic Swedish recipe, which are perfect for snacking and dipping.

In the pies category, Findlater's Fine Foods of Linlithgow [stand H211] will showcase its range of handmade, individual pies that come

beautifully presented ready for display in a chill cabinet or in a café or restaurant.

**OILS, SAUCES, PRESERVES AND JAMS**

A plethora of condiments will be on show this year. Sauces that offer a twist on traditional options look to be the flavour of the Farm Shop & Deli Show. The Foraging Fox [stand E199A] will launch its new Hot Beetroot Ketchup, while the South Devon Chilli Farm [stand G178] will display its Cherry Bomb Chilli Sauce.

Jams also are competing to include the most original flavours, looking to stand out on crowded shelves and appeal to the more adventurous consumers. Piddington Jam's [stand E127A] range includes Strawberry & Pepper Jam and Strawberry & Vanilla Jam, while The Red Chilli Kitchen Ltd [H201] will showcase its Tomato Chilli Jam alongside its wider range.

Dressings and oils take a more classic approach this year with A Little Bit Food Company [stand C215] exhibiting its Balsamic & Thyme and Lemon & Tarragon dressings. Farrington's Mellow Yellow [stand B164] will have its award-winning Cold Pressed Rapeseed Oil that has strong product origin, having been made on the company's family farm in Northamptonshire since 2005.

**MEAT, POULTRY AND SEAFOOD**

That Hungry Chef [stand D201] is an interesting addition to this category at the Farm Shop & Deli Show. Offering a range of savoury spreads that work as dairy-free alternatives to pâté. The Goan Spiced Pulled Pork is a particular highlight, made with prime British pork shoulder and traditional Goan spices.

Bringing flavours of the Mediterranean into British produce will be Lane Farm, Suffolk Salami [stand B206] which will showcase its Whole or Sliced Salami and Sliced Chorizo. The award-winning salami uses the finest cuts of Suffolk pork, which have been outdoor bred and finished in open straw barns. Love Food Trading [stand H204] will also be exhibiting its range of baked goods including its Lasagne Al Forno, a slow cooked British beef ragu layered between pasta and topped with a rich béchamel and grated Mature Cheddar cheese.

Also on show will be equipment to aid the storage and cooking of meat, poultry and seafood. Angel Refrigeration Ltd [stand J218] will showcase its Everlasting Meat Store which is designed for meat ageing and maturing. Operating at a low temperature with high/low humidity management and fan assisted air circulation, this product is just one in

a range of commercial refrigeration from the specialist supplier.

**BEVERAGES**

In the alcoholic beverage category, there will be plenty of exciting products for visitors to see and sample. Another category that has seen an influx of unusual flavour combinations will see representation from Thunder Toffee Vodka [stand E191] as well as Victoria's Rhubarb Gin from Warner Edwards Distillery [stand F175] and Frozen Lychee Martini and Cosmopolitan cocktails from Köld Cocktails [stand G174].

The hot beverage offerings range from the growing trend of speciality teas to indulgent options of premium hot chocolate. Buckley and Beale [stand J180] will bring its Suki Tea range that specialises in artisan loose leaf teas. The pyramid range includes Breakfast Tea, Belfast Brew, Fairtrade Earl Grey Blue Flower, Red Berry, Green Tea and more. Millsean Chocolate [stand L120] will be showcasing its sumptuous

**IN DETAIL**

**WHAT:** Farm Shop & Deli Show 2016  
**WHERE:** NEC, Birmingham  
**WHEN:** 18th-20th April 2016  
**WEB:** farmshopanddelishow.co.uk  
 To register for free, receiving entry to all co-located shows, visit: farmshopanddelishow.co.uk

handmade one shot hot chocolate made with its multi-award winning 44 percent Venezuela single origin chocolate.

The soft drinks and water category will see a huge range of exhibitors showcase the latest in their ranges. With the growing market for more adventurous children's drinks offerings, visitors will be greeted with a myriad of kids-focused products including JOUSED! Junior from Bensons Totally Fruity [stand B150] and Cawston Press' [stand E188] range extension that targets younger consumers.

“ There really is no better place to visit for the decision makers responsible for sourcing artisan products. Farm Shop & Deli Show provides a unique opportunity to source regional produce, while learning about the trends shaping the future of the industry ”

JACK HALLIDAY, EVENT DIRECTOR OF FARM SHOP & DELI SHOW

**FARM SHOP & Deli SHOW**  
 18-20 April 2016  
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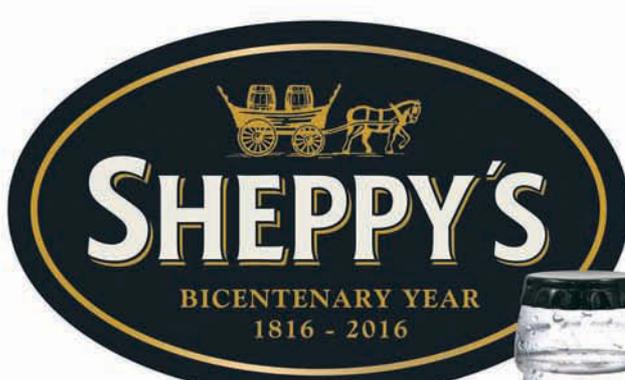


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### FINDLATERS MUSHROOM PÂTÉ WITH MADEIRA WINE & TRUFFLE OIL

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**H211**



### GRAN STEAD'S SPICED GINGER PUNCH

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**E219**



### WOODALL'S CUMBERLAND SALAMI

This sausage has been air dried for 6 weeks to create a ready-to-eat product with a unique, deep, rich flavour.

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### SOUTH DEVON CHILLI FARM CHERRY BOMB SAUCE

A colourful explosion of fruity flavour with a tingle of heat.

**G178**



### KARKLI CORIANDER KARKLI

Packed with the aromatic flavours of coriander and caraway seeds and little bit of chilli.

**B153**



### MACONDO CHOCOLATE

A range of single origin, handcrafted chocolate bars.

**B218**



### BREAD DU JOUR BREADS

Multi award-winning hand crafted individual-looking breads made using traditional slow processes with an original aged sourdough.

**E198**



### NOTHING BUT BEETROOT & PARSNIP

Healthy freeze-dried vegetable slices for snacking.

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### HAWKSHEAD RELISH COUTURE RANGE

Beautifully hand-crafted award-winning preserves in both sweet and savoury varieties.

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**F174**



**COOKIE CRUMBLES GRANOLA BAR MIX**  
A wholesome baking mix made from 100% natural ingredients.  
**A171**



**GAROFALO GLUTEN-FREE PASTA**  
Pasta made using corn flour, rice flour and quinoa and shaped through a traditional bronze die for texture.  
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**WARNER EDWARDS RHUBARB GIN**  
A captivating spirit that showcases a genuine character of rhubarb whilst allowing the gin to shine through.  
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**THAT HUNGRY CHEF AFGHAN POTTED BEEF**  
An ambient potted beef made using warming Afghan spices such as black cardamom, pepper and cloves.  
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**KÖLD**  
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**“WHEN LUDLOW FOOD CENTRE WAS CONCEIVED AS AN IDEA, A BAKERY WAS ALWAYS PART OF THE GRAND PLAN”**

It was the intention to have as much of the food that we eat regularly produced here on-site, so the bakery is an integral aspect of the building's design. The Food Hall is located in the middle and there are eight production units around the outside which can all be viewed by shoppers through large glass windows.

**“THE BAKERY IS ALWAYS BUSY!”**

Over time we have developed a sizeable range of speciality breads, sourdough, cakes, enriched dough products, biscuits, macarons and granola. My team scratch baked 1,900 individual loaves each week during February, and we bake seven days a week which means the bread is always as fresh possible. The bakery accounts for around 9% of the Food Centre's turnover and we also supply Ludlow Kitchen and The Clive – our on-site café and hotel.

**“OUR MUST-STOCK LOAVES ARE: WHITE, WHOLEMEAL AND MALTED TINS, SUPPORTED BY A SELECTION OF BREAD ROLLS AND BAGUETTES”**

In addition to this basic range, you'll also want to stock classic enriched dough products such as butter buns, iced buns, Chelsea buns and brioche. Traditional cakes are immensely popular; Victoria sponge, lemon drizzle, chocolate cake and fruit cake are core to the range. Seasonal products are also vitally important. We produce around 10,000 hot cross buns in the run up to Easter and 20,000 mince pies at Christmas. From these foundations you can start to introduce more speciality products and experiment. When I started in 2008, our range was fairly limited in comparison to what we offer our customers today. Sourdough was introduced fairly early on and then

# HOW TO: BOOST YOUR BAKERY

Hazel Webb, bakery manager at Ludlow Food Centre, explains how she made it a success



rye and spelt breads. To an extent these changes are customer-driven. I'm also incredibly fortunate to have a very creative team that thrive on trying out new recipes. As an example we've just introduced a new honey and sunflower malted loaf this week, so the range is constantly evolving. There is quite a science behind baking on a commercial level and it can be a challenge to translate new ideas into full scale production and ensure that the product is still profitable – luckily we all love this aspect!

**“THERE ARE DISTINCT TRENDS THAT YOU SEE COMING THROUGH”**

When I joined Ludlow Food Centre I'd never have imagined people asking for macarons. TV shows such as *Bake Off* have a big impact – when they produced a Madeira cake we were inundated with requests! Gluten-free is another area that we are increasingly asked about. The bakery counter is affected by trends so we'd be foolish not to adapt. Fortunately, part of the experience at Ludlow Food Centre is that staff are encouraged to engage with our customers. We constantly trial new lines by sampling new bakes in order to obtain feedback. The

bakery is restricted by its size so it is not possible to produce a gluten-free range in-house. However, spelt and rye are really old grains and are lower in gluten than more modern flours, so we do whatever we can to help. Seasonality is also a key factor that we have to respond to.

**“CUSTOMER SERVICE IS ABSOLUTELY KEY TO REPEAT BUSINESS, THIS AND OBVIOUSLY THE QUALITY OF THE ITEMS THAT WE PRODUCE”**

I think we go the extra mile and this is reflected by the level of customer loyalty that we have. We have one guy in Wales who orders eight loaves at a time! It's important to be aware of the demographic of your core customers. Many of our regular shoppers like traditional products, but once you've established a rapport with them you can help introduce them to new ideas. Quite often they'll buy their usual but also add something a bit different to try as well. We recently introduced



Bara Brith for St David's Day as we're located in the Welsh Marches. It even out-sold our Victoria sponge so will definitely be staying in the range!

**“WE RECENTLY OPENED AN ENTRANCE FROM THE KITCHEN ONTO THE SHOP FLOOR – WE WANTED CUSTOMERS TO BE AS CLOSE TO THE ACTION AS POSSIBLE AND ENJOY ALL THE AMAZING SMELLS WE CREATE”**

The air in the whole shop is filled with freshly baked bread when the Food Centre's doors open. It helps customers to connect with what we're doing and shows that we really do make everything here! If any independents out there are thinking of opening a bakery department, I'd urge them to remember the hours that are involved! I start at 3:30am but I love it. The early morning suits

me as I can spend the afternoon with my children, but it's not for everyone. Staffing is a key issue to be aware of.

**“WHATEVER YOU DO, HIGH STANDARDS ARE VITAL – YOU CAN'T BE HALF HEARTED”**

Other than this it's a case of applying common sense. I tend to group large and small loaves of the same variety close together. We frequently move the display around so customers have to find what they're looking for – that way another product may attract their attention, too. Produce displayed on the counter always sells well, as do those positioned at eye level. Cakes tend not to move quite so much because customers like to try a variety of cakes. The breads and cakes look incredible so you always want to show them off to their best advantage.



“ Baking is a real labour of love and quite a skill ”

# TASTES OF ASIA

Whether it's sauces, curry kits or on-trend Japanese essentials, Eastern foods can offer your customers flavour and convenience and respond to our ongoing love affair with Asian cuisine

**N**o retailer ever got poor by catering to the tastes of his customers. Very likely, you operate an ethos which dictates that you source from high quality, artisan and possibly local suppliers and – with obvious exceptions such as olive oil and lemons – the preponderance of your stock is solidly British. However, it's worth remembering that Asian and Oriental flavours play a large part on the culinary life of this country. You ignore such ranges at your peril; it's no good sending a customer who is craving a curry to the takeaway down the road. You can cater for such tastes in a number of ways, from offering easy-to-use jarred curry sauces, time-saving curry kits, and high quality accompaniments such as pickles and chutneys to noodles and miso paste. It's not hard to find examples which have a point of difference from varieties sold in supermarkets, too. These ranges

needn't be the first things customer see on entering the shop but should perhaps have their own assigned space, where buyers know they can go when the call of the curry can no longer be ignored.

Asian foods have long had a solid popularity base in the UK. While a taste for curry, for instance, can trace its roots back as far as the days of the East India Company, and the first Indian restaurant, the Hindoostanee Curry House, opened in London in 1809 (but closed three years later), the years following the Second World War saw an explosion of interest and an appreciation of spicy or Eastern foods that shows no signs of abating. A taste for foods from the sub-Continent and China has been joined by Nepalese, Indonesian and other eastern cuisines. This year, Japanese food and drink has been much in evidence. Catering for these tastes is clearly a good

idea. Curry sauces and kits offer a very convenient way for your week-night shopper to sate those cravings and encourage purchases of meat and vegetables along with those accompaniments, too.



One sauce company offering both convenience and quality is Anila's, which produces a range of jarred curry sauces in various flavours and strengths and also the necessary chutneys, pickles and dips to accompany them. Anila's is owned by Anila Vaghela, who runs the company with her husband and two staff. "We have eight curry sauces labelled from mild to hot with chilli symbols," Anila says. "We keep it simple by calling the sauces spicy mild, spicy korma, spicy hot, and spicy medium. This last one would be like a Madras, the Spicy Mild is like a rogan josh and Spicy Hot is like

a vindaloo. People want the names of what they are used to in the restaurant, although these terms do not necessarily mean anything to us.

"We also do a range of 16 chutneys and pickles. Each one is different from just one fruit or vegetable and because of this, you can taste that fruit or vegetable. If it's lemon, it will taste of lemon, aubergine will be just aubergine plus spices. It's not mixed with other bits and bobs. People love the taste and the purity. My sauces are based on recipes handed down from my mother and grandmother. I come from Zimbabwe where we had gardens full of mangoes, lemons, you name it. Nearly all the fruits I see in the supermarket were in my backyard at different times of the year. We always used to pickle and make chutneys, poppadums and all sorts. There were no curry houses

in Zimbabwe then, so everything was made by our family, everyone got together, made food and shared recipes." The idea behind Anila's sauces, she says, has always been "to make curries like I cook in my kitchen at home."

SOME OF ANILA'S FODMAP-FRIENDLY CHUTNEYS AND SAUCES



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Unusually, as well as offering taste and convenience, these award-winning sauces follow the FODMAP diet. "All my products are free not only from sugar, dairy and gluten, but onion and garlic, too" Anila says. "Our sauces have everything that anybody on a FODMAP diet would want, and I believe we are the only ones producing FODMAP curry sauces." This means that the sauces are suitable for people with many sorts of food intolerances.

Keeping pace with the current interest in Japanese foods is Empire Bespoke Foods, which distributes a strong line of Japanese products to independents and other stores. "Empire Bespoke Foods is proud to have a wide selection of Japanese ingredients and easy kits, giving consumers a true taste of Japan," says brand manager Zareen Deboo. "We import and distribute a range of Japanese products including wasabi paste, wasabi sauce and wasabi powder.

Japanese curry sauce (perfect for Katsu and Ramen curries) is also popular. These products are supplied by S&B, the number one wasabi producer in Japan and worldwide. Our S&B range focuses on quality and authenticity, which gives our products a competitive edge over other brands. The wasabi is selected from the best and most fragrant roots to create products that taste as close to freshly grated Japanese wasabi as possible. We also distribute products from Sushi Chef to independent retailers and department stores like Selfridges. Sushi Chef has a wide range of products which includes a sushi making kit, nori toasted seaweed sheets, and dressings to make authentic sushi."

It's now increasingly important

that retailers consider carrying a range of Japanese products, because, she says, "there has been an increase in Japanese restaurants opening up in the UK, introducing the cuisine to Britons. Home cooking is becoming more popular in the UK. Therefore there is demand for authentic Japanese cooking ingredients like wasabi, soy sauce and rice vinegar. We ensure that we cater for novice cooks with our World Foods range, so our S&B Golden Curry Sauce and Sushi Chef Sushi Making Kit are perfect for introducing consumers to Japanese cuisine. Nowadays, convenience and increased health awareness is becoming more important to consumers. Sushi Chef's product range plays this role perfectly as they make Japanese food more accessible and is gluten-free."

### Exotic blends



Other customers prefer to make their Asian foods from scratch and that means that your selection of spices must be wide enough to cover most eventualities. "The British public has ever-changing tastes and preferences," says Tasneem Backhouse, sales director at EHL Ingredients, a leading importer, blender and packer of natural food ingredients, "but by stocking a selection of quality herbs, spices and blends in organic, free-from and conventional

formats, speciality food retailers can advise shoppers on which Asian ingredients they should purchase. Store owners would be wise to offer a selection of familiar herbs, spices and blends that shoppers know and love, as well as more unusual and exotic blends to keep customers returning to your store, leading to incremental sales."

The taste for Eastern flavours remains strong, Tasneem says. "From spice mixes to marinades, sauces and pastes, the market for Asian foods has grown significantly in recent years. Nowadays consumers of all ages enjoy world foods and offering milder, as well as extra hot, spices and blends means stores can cater for all taste preferences. Stock up on organic and free-from ingredients too, as these are areas of growth and can boost your bottom line."

To cope with a widening taste for Eastern flavours, EHL Ingredients has launched four new Asian spice blends, hailing from China and Thailand – Chinese five spice, Aromatic Oriental, Thai seven spice and Spicy Thai fish seasoning. "Versatile spice blends such as these give shoppers meal ideas as they can be rubbed onto meat or fish, sprinkled onto vegetables and added to recipes to recreate authentic Asian dishes in the home," Tasneem says.

"EHL's Chinese five spice is a subtle combination of fennel, cassia, star anise, clove and black pepper. The spice traditionally encompasses different tastes – sweet, sour, bitter and spicy – which provides an essential seasoning base in Chinese cooking for dishes such as stir fries and chow mein.

The Aromatic Oriental dry marinade is a multipurpose, authentic mix of star anise, ginger, fennel and cinnamon, ideal for use on a range of proteins or meats. This versatile marinade is quick and easy to use but its simplicity does not

compromise on taste. The new Thai seven spice blend is a unique combination of crushed chillies with paprika, cumin, ground coriander, turmeric, fenugreek, ginger and celery, perfect for shoppers to include on chicken or pork dishes, as well as in stir-fried vegetables. It can be sprinkled onto foods, used as a rub or marinade or scooped into creamy curries. For Asian seafood dishes, EHL's new spicy Thai fish seasoning brings an authentic flavour to baked, grilled and fried fish dishes as well as fishcakes and soups.

EHL's top six Asian spice blends just now, Tasneem says, are Chinese five spice, Aromatic Oriental, Thai seven spice, Thai fish seasoning, Tandoori Masala and allergen-free curry powder. Demand for this last product is up, having "increased by 35% within the last year, due to the rise in the number of food allergy sufferers in the UK and more stringent regulations within the food industry. The blend does not contain mustard – the fourth most common food allergen in the UK – or celery, which can also cause an allergic reaction. It is composed of a unique blend of spices and seasoning and comes in medium and hot varieties, depending on customer requirements. Plus, the blend does not contain salt, making it ideal for low-salt foods too. With up to 25 million people (40% of the UK population) estimated to be suffering from food intolerances and allergies, there is a clear need in the market for allergen-free food products that are safe for sufferers to eat, as well as appealing, tasty and filling and our allergen-free curry powder meets this demand."

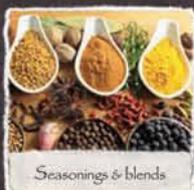
The trend for cooking our own Asian dishes looks set to continue, Tasneem says. "As well as the demand from UK consumers for more exotic flavour combinations, the increased publicity about the health benefits of certain spices, plus the demand for quality, convenience and value for money means that more and more people are keen to recreate popular Asian-style restaurant dishes in their own kitchen. Our sales show that UK speciality food stores are keen to keep up with this



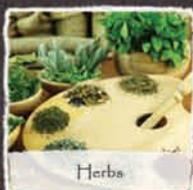
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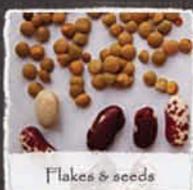
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trend by ensuring that consumer needs are met, and that new and exciting flavours and dishes are available on shelf. Provenance is also key, and at EHL we ensure that our ingredients are sourced from quality suppliers with full traceability to the country of origin – so customers can be assured that the product they are getting is 100% authentic."

**Chilled sauces**

Sameena Thompson owns The Art of Curry, which makes "gourmet, premium curry sauces that are based on the royal style of cooking." This, Sameena says, "involves slow cooking, which gives the sauce a very layered, sophisticated taste." Sameena's sauces "take curry back to its traditional roots. Our cooking is very different. It's not going for fusion or novelty, it's giving people a home-cooked taste based on royal heritage." Sameena explains that in Indian royal palaces such as those at Delhi, Hyderabad and Jaipur, "an army of cooks cooked very slowly and made sure every stage was very integrated. The slow cooking gives the sauce a depth of flavour quite unlike the tastes obtained in Indian restaurants." The Art of Curry has "a real passion for using kitchen cupboard ingredients," Sameena says. "This means that we manage to have a product that is very authentic but tastes as if it has been made in your own kitchen. Our flavours are sophisticated and subtle rather than obvious, in-your-face fire."

"People like the convenience of a sauce," Sameena says. "They buy my sauces because they want to cook at home. People enjoy understanding the correct use of spices and want to do more themselves. Indian and Pakistani food is really going back to its roots and people have got a real desire to move away from whatever they see as Indian food in the high street. It has become cobbled together from a whole load of influences. People are really enjoying finding the actual heritage of Indian cooking. This is that

“ Store owners would be wise to offer a selection of familiar herbs, spices and blends that shoppers know and love, as well as more unusual and exotic blends to keep customers returning to your store, leading to incremental sales ”

heritage in a convenient form. They can have it quickly, but my mantra is convenience without compromise." The sauces are ideal for the independents, she says, because "I think farm shops and delis are very interested in stocking very high quality curry sauces. They want to offer something which is very authentic and which tastes fantastic. It all boils down to the taste. A good sauce with a deep and intense taste speaks for itself. People are becoming far more keen on fresh and chilled sauces and that's what I'm doing."

An innovative alternative to ground and whole spice was launched quite recently by Holy Lama Naturals under the name of Spice Drops. These, says managing director by Gouri Kubair, "are a

range of concentrated extracts of herbs and spices, made using fresh produce from local farms in Kerala India, (except for the saffron which is sourced from Iran). They can be used in drinks to add flavour to teas, coffees, smoothies or cocktails, and are ideal for use in cooking, be it in curries, gravies or sauces and even in baking. Simply add a drop of the relevant Spice Drops rather than dried herbs or spices and the recipe is transformed with an authentic, fresher, more intense flavour."

One of the advantages of this product, she says, is that "whereas powdered herbs are likely to lose their flavour in a short time, Spice Drops have a three-year shelf life, and are guaranteed to retain their intensity."

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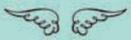


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**W**ith summer almost in sight, it's time to think about getting the most out of those warmer days and longer evenings. Think too about the possibilities this season provides for impulse buying and drawing in customers who might not otherwise visit your shop. Using signage to shout about your chilled artisanal drinks is a must on a hot day, but think too about how artisanal ice cream can have the same magnetic effect on passers-by. The Picnic Fayre deli in Cley, North Norfolk has a window opening onto the street, through which good, local ice cream not only satisfies the demands of warm walkers and holidaymakers, but also encourages the curious to take a peek in the shop and spend money. Ice cream works for them and it can work for you, too.

Ice cream has come a long way in recent years, with artisanal makers springing up wherever milk is available. The range of flavours has blossomed and it's now very easy indeed to offer your customers first class ice creams with original flavours which can't be found in the supermarket down the road. Ice cream tubs very often sport bright, modern designs which are in keeping with the rest of your stock and branded freezers can add a smart touch, too. Ice cream is a proven success, but there's more than ice cream available to offer customers in search of summer-friendly snacks and desserts.

You can provide customers more intense flavours by stocking a range of sorbets. Unlike ice cream, which uses dairy products with air whipped in, sorbets don't, and this results in a much denser and usually more flavourful product. Sorbets can be sold as a low-fat alternative to ice cream, or aimed at people with lactose intolerances. They can also be sold both as cooling desserts and as between dinner course palate



cleansers. As well as its famous gelato, Italy offers a healthy frozen refreshment in the form of Granita, a sorbet with a crunchier texture.

Many customers will want to offer something other than ice cream or sorbets for their dessert courses, but may still be looking for the convenience offered by a food which can be served straight from the freezer or pre-defrosted. This is where stocking a variety of frozen desserts makes sense. There are artisanal companies who can provide handmade desserts made with fresh or local fruit, eggs and milk which are not available in the supermarkets. Stocking any or all of these product lines ensures that you can offer your customers the complete meal package.



### High quality

"The number of manufactures of ice cream has increased dramatically over recent years," says

Sally Newall, managing director of Simply Ice Cream. "Artisan producers now number over 1,200, producing high quality ice

creams and sorbets in every flavour imaginable. Premium sales of ice cream continue to grow, and although the bigger brands still dominate the category, consumers continue to want choice across the range with an emphasis on choosing quality over price. The range of flavours has also expanded from the traditional vanilla, chocolate and strawberry. Although these continue to be popular, consumers are showing a willingness to try other flavours."

Simply Ice Cream offers "a wide range of flavours that covers all tastes," Sally says. "We find that the demographic of an area affects the flavours that our retailers order. We are unique in that we pack to order, so a farm shop or deli can have a wide range of our flavours within their minimum order. We currently have 32 flavours in the range which includes ice cream and sorbets, and offer these in 120ml and 500ml for retail and 2 litre and 4.75 litre for food service. We use very simple ingredients: milk, cream and sugar and then whole fruits for all our fruit based flavours. We either make our additions (honeycomb, brown bread, crumbles etc) or we partner



and flyers. We also have branded freezers and can supply other POS on request."



Also strong on flavours is Jude's ice cream. "We have at least 40 flavours which we offer our trade customers, from vanilla to malted banana, crème fraiche or brown butter," says managing director, Alex Mezger. "We also create bespoke flavours for our chefs, so we're constantly trying, testing and creating." Jude's is a good source for sorbets, too. Flavours offered are Coconut, Blood Orange, Mango, Raspberry, Lemon, Cox and Bramley Apple, and Peach & Champagne.

Jude's ice cream is made with very locally-produced milk, which it uses "to make up our traditional crème anglaise base, flavoured with the best natural ingredients, many of which are local. We use Hampshire apples and mint." In a bid to stay abreast of current tastes, the company works closely with top chefs. "Malt is a popular flavour," Alex says, "and we think our brand new brown butter is going to go down a storm." One reason why the range is suitable for sale in delis and farm shops, Alex says, is that "we're a delicious British product that champions local suppliers and producers wherever possible."

**Fruit flavours**

Specialising in British fruit flavours is the Suffolk-based Alder Tree ice cream, a family firm now owned and run by Stephany Hardingham. "We are fruit farmers," Stephany says, "and the business began with a crop of raspberries we didn't know what to do with. Dad started making ice cream with them in 1987. It was partly a matter of finding a use for the product and partly of diversifying the farm, as every farmer was then trying to do. Most of our ice creams just use fruit, cream and sugar and a really high fruit content, so they are very simple, very natural, and have really strong flavours."

Alder Tree's core market is the independents, Stephany says, "the farm shops and delis. Our heartland is East Anglia but we sell

nationwide and we have a little bit of export as well. We do about 17 flavours altogether. This varies a bit over the course of the year; there are about 12 core flavours and then we like to mix things up a little. Our best-sellers are Gooseberry & Elderflower, Stem Ginger and Rhubarb, and Summer Berries and Cream. There are products that we run all year round, and then we have seasonal specials such as a Christmas Pudding flavour and a Gooseberry & Limoncello with Adnams Limoncello in the summertime. We also do autumnal flavours such as Apple & Cinnamon.

"We are providing people with a premium ice cream that's a little different. We grow the gooseberries, raspberries, strawberries, blackberries, tayberries and rhubarb ourselves. What we don't grow very much of is top fruit like apples, pears, plums and damsons, but we have a good network of local growers whom we buy from, so its all very local."

Stephany returned to the family's ice cream business in 2004. "My parents are still doing it part-time on the side while they run the farm, the farm shop, tea room and craft units we have here. I had been working as an environmental consultant, advising businesses on how to be more sustainable. "Since then, Stephany says, "we've grown significantly as a business. The recession was quite difficult, as it was for many businesses. We did a lot of work on flavours and packaging, during which we found that we are selling a lot more of our little individual pots with the spoon in the lid, in relation to our 500ml tub. I think this has been a definite change in consumer buying habits." This year, she adds, "we are launching a couple of our flavours in these small, individual pots, one of which is our damson flavour."

Alder Tree is strong on retailer support. "We are more than happy to go and speak to retailers," Stephany says. "We have posters and leaflets and freezer vinyls, and we do quite nice blackboards with just our logo on them. Retailers can use these to list flavours and prices, or use them to grab the customer's attention. We can also help with branded freezers."

“ Selling ice cream can attract customers who may not normally visit your store. A scooping freezer will always attract children as well as adults ”



with other local artisan producers who support our policy on natural additions." The company uses no additives or flavourings. "Our ethos has always been to supply an all-natural, quality product which is handmade without the need for machinery. Although we have grown year on year, we continue to make our ice creams and sorbets we did on day one."

Selling ice cream can attract customers who may not normally visit your store, particularly on warmer days, Sally says. "A scooping freezer will always attract children, as well as adults. During the summer, this is a great way to introduce your customers to your ice cream offering. Having take-home tubs in your frozen section will see a year-round take up. From spring through to autumn, having a freezer close to your pay point is a really good way to help sales. Ice cream is an impulse buy, not necessarily a staple on the weekly shopping list. Choosing flavours to suit the seasons is a great way to gain interest in your ice cream offering. We have flavours such as mango, lime and passionfruit, raspberry and blackcurrant that utilise fruits as they come into season. To keep sales up as we approach winter, we promote flavours such as Christmas Pudding and Cinnamon, which go really well with all sorts of hot, wintry desserts."

Sales of ice cream and sorbets can be increased by offering pairing suggestions, Sally says. "If you have a local cake or dessert maker, it is an ideal opportunity to promote suppliers alongside each other. We regularly post recipe ideas on our social media platforms. Promoting seasonal flavours across all ranges ensures customers are aware they are buying local and British." For in-store promotion, Simply Ice Cream can supply retailers with "freezer, till or door stickers, posters, banners



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# MEET THE PRODUCER

A passion for Italian gelato kick-started pioneering business, Il Gelato di Ariela



OWNER, ARIELA CESANA

**"T**his is a passion which turned into a business." That's how the owner of Il Gelato di Ariela describes her London-based gelato company. From humble beginnings when she was making the Italian version of ice cream for her gelato-loving partner to the 70-odd flavours she makes and wholesales today, Ariela Cesana has come a long way since she opened her first retail outlet in 2006.

Ariela is originally from Veneto, Italy, the birthplace of gelato, she says. "Obviously, gelato is all over Italy now. Anyone who has been there will know that you cannot turn a corner without finding a gelato shop. As with anything else, there is good and bad quality gelato, of course. Italians will travel for good gelato. They may go 20km just to find a certain little village up in the mountains where they know of a guy who makes a gelato using the fruit from his tree."

Ariela says that most of the Italians who took their gelato-making skills to Germany, where the gelato business "exploded" were from the Veneto region. These emigrés included her father, who had been making gelato in Germany for the past 45 years, she says. Ariela made the decision to create gelato herself after she "got together with someone from Italy who really loved gelato." However, she says, "10 years ago, there wasn't any gelato here."

Making gelato at home for her partner, she says, "someone tasted it and asked where they might find something like it in London." This, Ariela says, was her lightbulb moment. "I did some research and the thing started. It was a passion that turned into a business, it was never a business to start with. It was just something I was making which people loved and there was a gap in the market. It was a stroke of luck that I knew how to do something which was missing here in London."

Ariela started the business without financial backing. "It was a spur of the moment thing," she says. "It was a matter of hard work. The only thing I borrowed were machines from my dad. I didn't have anything from the banks. I grew the business organically by first opening a concession within a restaurant. We didn't need a site of our own because I just stuck a freezer inside this restaurant, opened up the window and turned a little corner into a kiosk ice cream parlour."

### Family recipe

Ariela's flavour range "started with a family recipe which my dad gave me, but as the years went by and I learned and learned, we went from 18 flavours to over 70. That's because we get so excited about what we are doing. We are always creating new flavours and wondering what we can do next. Ideas come from



anywhere and everywhere; what I do is recreate flavours. We have a flavour called Ambassador Praline, which may remind people of Ferrero Rocher, although the product itself is not used in the gelato's production. Instead, we pick up chocolate and hazelnut paste in Sicily and then we whiz it up."

English ice cream is not the same thing as gelato, Ariela says. "The main difference is in fat content. It's at least a third of the fat in English ice cream. That's simply because in Italy, being a warmer country, we need less fat in our diet – that's why the Mediterranean diet is so healthy. In Sicily for example, where it is even hotter, they have Granita, which is even lower in fat. There, they need ice with flavour." Gelato should be considered an Italian version of ice cream, Ariela says, not as the same thing. "It is a healthier, lighter product because of the way it is made."

The Il Gelato di Ariela range is free from additives and preservatives. "Italians are very fussy about food,"

Ariela says. "We are not very keen on flavourings; our cooking is very simple and we use the ingredients that nature gives us. I sometimes wonder when I see displays with pinks, blues, greens and purple ice cream, that can't be natural, can it?"

The business is flexible enough to meet customers' various requirements, Ariela says. "Some people have space for a full freezer cabinet where we can put in our domed tubs of decorated gelato, while others like cafés and delis have less space and they can have a small chest freezer for our 120ml tubs with their fresh, bright designs." Ariela offers ongoing support to her customers. "We look after everything for our retailers," she says. "I fill their freezers and offer the cones the cups,



BUSINESS PARTNER  
FRANCESCA CAGETTI

the spoons the sauces, the freezers if they need them, and point of sale. We do the training too. I teach them how to scoop and present it and we get everyone excited about the product so the staff become knowledgeable about the product and are better able to sell it."

Il Gelato di Ariela supplies ice cream parlours, cafés, restaurants, hotels, farm shops and delis. "We are really targeting the people who look for gelato," Ariela says. Of the future, Ariela says, "I have a good quality of life and I'm making a fabulous product. Wherever I get to will be a bonus because I am a very happy person as it is."



Lime and mint sorbet

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# HAVING YOUR CAKE

Here's why cakes and puddings are must-stock items for your farm shop or deli

One of the most dependable lines for the shelves of farm shops and delis is cakes and puddings. This is true for a number of reasons. Firstly, there is the seasonal demand, Yuletide demanding sizeable stocks of Christmas cakes, puddings, various kinds of fruit cakes and Italian panettones, among others, Easter being the time to order in simnel cakes and late October the time to put out the parkin in time for Bonfire Night in November. Birthdays, weddings, anniversaries and every kind of office-based festivity demand to be celebrated with cake, and there

appears to be a growing interest in all things baked stimulated by TV's Bake Off and other culinary programming, which needs to be satisfied.

There are now plenty of small, artisanal bakers ready to supply whatever demand you anticipate, and many of the products they make are either original and attractively packaged or made using traditional recipes to standards not applied by industrial-sized bakers. Most will not be found in the supermarkets, which means it is not hard to offer a shelf of moreish delicacies which have the capability of turning casual shoppers with a sweet tooth into regulars.

London appears to like its cakes, if the experience of the two North London delis which operate under the name of Melrose and Morgan is typical. Their best-selling cakes, says director, Nick Selby are "our lemon drizzle loaf cake and cherry madeira loaf cake, which are year-round favourites. Another perennial favourite is our battenberg cube which is a great example of our take on classic British, but with a twist. We also do seasonal variations, with a chocolate and orange battenberg for Halloween. At Christmas, it's our Marzipan-topped Christmas cake and at Easter it's our simnel cake – this year we added a new loaf and box of six mini simnels to our traditionally decorated, large round version of the simnel.

## General demand

Melrose and Morgan sells an extensive line of puddings. "Chocolate mousse sells well all year round and our apple and blackberry crumble is reliable during the cooler months," Nick says. "At Christmas, our traditional steamed plum puddings are hugely popular. We've recently revamped our spiced ginger loaf cake and given it a twist with a fresh lime juice syrup drench post-bake, and this has taken the

flavour to a new level. For Christmas 2015, we developed a new jewel-topped cake using gluten-free flour, which proved hugely popular. We have noted a general demand for healthier and free-from options." Cake at Melrose and Morgan, he adds, is "very much an afternoon treat for our customers, who come in for a speciality tea or coffee and a slice of cake in our café spaces. For home purchasing, we tend to sell cakes alongside our biscuit ranges, as well as speciality tea and handmade jams – also for an afternoon treat."

The company pays great attention to seasonality, Nick says. "The seasons matter hugely to us and our menu constantly nods to seasonal ingredients – including our cakes and puddings. So, we make apple and marmalade cake during January orange season, rhubarb crumble cakes when the forced rhubarb arrives in spring, and a gluten-free summer berry slicing loaf for lighter summer eating. Cake sales can tend to drop in January and in the warmer summer months, so it's even more important to nod to the seasons and stay relevant. Beyond that, we of course capitalise on the big calendar events with seasonal ranges."

Various special occasions suggest themselves for selling more cakes, Nick says, offering as examples, "chocolate and cherry friends for Valentines Day, simnels for Mothers Day and Easter, battenberg for summer tea parties, baked and raw bars and individual potted puddings and desserts for picnics, battenberg for Halloween, a unique honey cake for Jewish New Year and various traditional cakes and puddings over Christmas."

At The Pallant Deli in Arundel, co-owner Mark Robinson says that while they "don't have too much in the way of

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puddings," the deli has considerable success selling "a lot of fresh patisserie products including "classic French tarts such as tarte au citron, apple tarts, other fruit tarts and so on. These all go down very well, particularly at the weekend." In terms of cakes, Mark says, "we stock the Farmhouse Cookery range. They make Victoria sponge and other traditional items, with which we do fairly well. They make the best mince pies at Christmas, too. We also see a demand for meringues, especially in the summer months. Fruit cakes from The Simply Delicious Fruit Cake Company do well here, especially their Tea Time, and Rich Fruit cakes." In line with current trends, the deli sells a lot of gluten-free cakes. Also moving briskly, Mark adds, is "a very nice local gingerbread from Horsham's Gingerbread Company."

Some cakes and puddings lend themselves to being cross-sold with other products, such as speciality teas. Pallant sells jams and creams with its meringues and offers "a small range of candles for birthday cakes." Ensuring that these often-fresh delicacies move quickly, Mark's cakes and puddings are placed in a prime position at the front of the shop and the lines were sold with the emphasis very much on the local and fresh angle. Deliveries of his cakes are bi-weekly, Mark says, in order "to keep the freshness." There is a seasonal element to selling both lines of course. Christmas panettones and puddings aside, meringues are pushed in the warmer months, while fruit tarts

using apricots and raspberries are avoided in winter "because people see them as summer fruit." Mark is presently stocked up with Colomba cakes from Seggiano for Easter.



At Johns of Instow in North Devon, Sue Johns reports that "the majority of cake sales come from products made at Johns in our deli kitchen, including brownies, loaf cakes and tray bakes. Other sales are made up of items from artisan producers locally and nationally, including Merangz and Cartmel sticky toffee puddings." Best sellers, Sue says, are "any puds topped with local cream. Our homemade brownies and treacle tarts are really incredibly popular."

The next step for Sue will be "developing a wider range of homemade cakes and puddings to satisfy the demand for quality puds like you would make at home, including seasonal fruit pies, indulgent rice puddings and a bread and butter pudding. Taste is the most important aspect and we can easily beat the supermarkets with this in mind. We're looking at local and artisan producers that offer accompaniments to these products such as chocolate, caramel, toffee and fruit sauces which fit with puddings at all times of year, plus fresh custard for the cooler months of the year. It all helps to make a great offering and pudding solution for our customers."



Cakes and puddings is a growing sector, she says. "This is a huge growth area for the independent artisan sector. Repeat business happens naturally. It's also important to remember dietary requirements when introducing new lines, and consumers will demand this offering more and more over the years to come. Remember, if one of their guests or family have a dietary requirement this can have a knock-on effect for their whole party when selecting their produce – make it suitable for everyone and the choice is easy."

**Coffee accessories**

"Cakes are a must –stock item, a great impulse buy", says Marc Cullender, owner of the Reigate deli Cullenders. "We don't stock any pre-packed ambient lines. Instead, we do a lot of homemade cakes which we sell on the counter. These are a must for us." Puddings are not presently stocked by Cullenders, but Marc's best-selling items in the cake department are "home-made brownies, flapjacks, apple and almond cakes." These items he terms 'coffee accessories.' Cullenders too is experiencing a rise in demand for gluten-free

cakes. "We have just started doing macarons in a gluten-free option and our flapjacks are gluten-free," Marc says. In recent times, Cullenders has found itself becoming much more conscious of the importance of dairy and gluten-free options, Marc says. "Before, we always seemed to be throwing a lot away, but now demand is definitely on the up." In fact, Marc estimates that demand has about doubled in the past year. Seasonality does not really affect the sales of his cakes, he says.

Sam Bagge, general manager at Walsingham Farm Shop in Norfolk



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desserts such as treacle tart, treacle pudding (which always sells well) and flapjacks." A lot of flapjacks are sold, he says, for the simple reason that "people know what they are, and what they are getting." One line which sells in "vast amounts," Sam says, is apple tarte tartin, the classic French confection. Selling on its regional nature is the shop's Nelson Pudding, which "is basically a bread pudding which uses old, stale bread cooked with dried fruit and to make it a Nelson's Pudding it must have rum. It's a traditional Norfolk pudding which is known in this region. "We can cross-sell certain cakes with custards and creams and link them in with our dairy products. We promote cakes at Easter and Christmas time, of course, and have promotions on mince pies."

Asked to mention any changes in demand for cakes and pudding, Sam cites gluten-free. "People are much more aware of allergens now and so we have to have these kind of options available. It's a little bit hard for us as we have quite a small kitchen and to segregate everything is difficult. This means that we do tend to buy in the gluten-free options. Dairy-free and egg-free are also quite quite trendy these days."

Also seeing a demand for gluten-free is Ludlow Food Centre. "We sell a great many cakes and puddings and offer quite a large range," says Hazel Webb, bakery

manager at Ludlow Food Centre. "We do Christmas puddings in three different sizes and sell hundreds of these. That's the only pudding we sell. We have a huge range of cakes: seed fruit cakes, Christmas cakes, simnel cakes for Easter, then we go down to our seven inch, three tier cakes, chocolate, red velvet carrot, then Victoria sponge and coffee. We also do an even smaller range of orange and ginger cakes and bara briths."

All the cakes and cookies at Ludlow are made from scratch at the centre, Hazel says. "There are no pre-mixes used. We do Eccles cakes and mince pies all year round. The only ranges we buy in are a small amount of gluten-free. We get asked a lot for these, but because we are such a small bakery, we cannot produce it ourselves."

A notable affector of demand for cakes, Hazel says, is TV's Bake Off. "When Bake Off is on," Hazel says, "you've got certain people talking about certain things and trends, and we sometimes see some of that filtering through. People will ask about items they have seen on the programme. We have had people asking about Madeira cake and cream horns because they have been made on Bake Off. Macarons are quite a trend at the moment. Bake Off gets the nation talking." On the whole, Hazel says, "the cakes sell themselves although we do promotions if we are putting out a new product, as we did when we brought out a new flavour for Mother's Day."

we're continuing to see growth within these categories. However, this could change and we should be ready to adjust with the times.

**DO YOU THINK TRADITIONAL-STYLE CAKES AND PUDDINGS TEND TO WIN OUT, OR ARE CONSUMERS LOOKING FOR MORE MODERN TASTES THESE DAYS?**

I think that whilst consumers are still looking for that traditional cake we must have a mix. We must cater for the needs of the emerging younger generation, too.

**CAN YOU SEE ANY TRENDS ON THE HORIZON?**

Absolutely, the demand from our retailers for free-from products is an everyday occurrence. People with a first-degree relative with coeliac disease (parent, child, sibling) have a one in ten risk of developing coeliac disease. At Springvale Foods, we have now over 250 dietary specialities and we're dedicated to increasing this range.

long as it aligns itself with our mission of "sourcing products that bring you added value and a definite point of difference".

**DO YOU SELL ACCOMPANIMENTS ALONGSIDE YOUR PUDDINGS?**

We have many accompaniments to go alongside your puddings and an old favourite is pure maple syrup. You may think it's good with pancakes but have you tried it on French toast? Don't forget to add the essential half-melted butter to your French toast before drowning everything in maple syrup. We also stock the Jacquet French Toasts.

**DO YOU RECOMMEND RETAILERS PROMOTE ACCOMPANIMENTS ALONGSIDE THE PUDDINGS THEY SELL?**

I strongly believe in putting your accompaniments next to appropriate products as an up-sell, which in turn can then increase your sales.

**HAVE YOU NOTICED ANY CHANGE IN CONSUMER TASTE IN CAKES AND PUDDINGS OVER THE PAST YEAR OR SO?**

Everyone loves a treat. Whatever hype is in the media about sugar and those healthy alternatives,

says that cakes and puddings are one of this Norfolk shop's "most vital lines." A lot of the products are made in-house through the deli department, he says, but some ambient lines, such as Shire Foods, are bought in. Best-sellers are "Bakewell tarts and classic English

**Springvale Foods source cakes and puddings "that bring you added value and a point of difference", says operations and sales director Darran Goody**

**WHAT CAKES AND PUDDING PRODUCTS DO YOU SELL?**

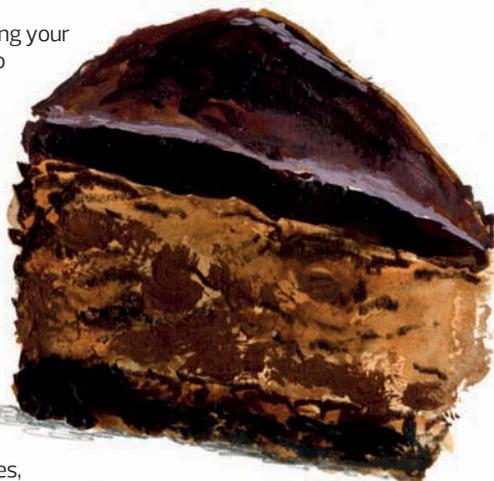
At Springvale foods we're known historically for our extensive ranges of both premium and lower end cake assortments. Within our cake and pudding category, we have over 160 cake ranges from single-serves right across to our luxury loaf and fruit cakes. Included in our cake and pudding ranges we have some of the most sought-after brands such as Riverbank, Burts, Coolmore, Paterson's, Denise's Delicious and many more.

**WHICH ARE THE MOST POPULAR?**

As to looking at our most popular cake range, for the start of 2016 is has to be the Denise's Delicious range. They're simply fantastic and, even better, they sit within our gluten-free range. Denise's Bakery specialises in baking gluten, wheat and dairy-free cakes and congratulations to our buying team once again, as they're really proving a top sellers for customers.

**ARE YOU LAUNCHING ANY NEW CAKES AND PUDDINGS?**

Our buying team is constantly looking for that niche product that differentiates us from the supermarkets; they work hard sourcing innovative products that inspire consumers. When asked to stock a particular product range, we're always happy to stock it as



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**LOTTIE SHAW'S RICH FRUIT CAKE**

Packed with fruit which has been soaked in stout from Little Valley Brewery in Cragg Vale for depth and flavour. [lottieshaws.co.uk](http://lottieshaws.co.uk)



**THE SIMPLY DELICIOUS CAKE COMPANY LEMON & LIME MARMALADE FRUIT CAKE**

Made with marmalade produced by the awarding winning Ludlow Food Centre and utterly delicious. [simplydeliciouscakes.co.uk](http://simplydeliciouscakes.co.uk)



**MERANGZ PASSION FRUIT GIANT**

Bringing a touch of the exotic to any dessert or pudding, the Merangz Passion Fruit Giant is made with only the finest ingredients and natural flavours. [flowerandwhite.co.uk](http://flowerandwhite.co.uk)



**COTTAGE DELIGHT RASPBERRY & WHITE CHOCOLATE CAKE**

A moist chocolate sponge cake flavoured with raspberry and Belgian white chocolate chips. [cottage delight.co.uk](http://cottage delight.co.uk)



**POTS & CO VANILLA & WHITE CHOCOLATE POT**

A twist on the classic French crème brûlée, combining chocolate ganache sat atop a generous base of Madagascan vanilla cream. [potsandco.com](http://potsandco.com)



**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](http://welshcakes.com)



**COUNTRY PUDDINGS RHUBARB CRUMBLE**

The perfect mix of soft succulent rhubarb bathed in a glorious sweet juice and topped with a delicious light oatmeal crumble. [countrypuddings.co.uk](http://countrypuddings.co.uk)



**RENDES BLUEBERRY & APPLE CAKE**

A succulent Luxury Blueberry and Apple loaf cake bursting with juicy blueberries and apples. RRP £2.35-£2.65 with 4 months shelf life. [rendlesuk.com](http://rendlesuk.com)



# SPECIALITY BITES

Paul Hargreaves of Cotswold Fayre



“ Millennials are the future of our businesses ”

**D**on't just think it's because I am getting older (I will have celebrated a very large birthday by the time you read this!), but I am sure there is a much higher number of younger people in the speciality food sector these days. It could well be a case of "don't the policeman look young these days?" but I don't think so.

For many years the mainstay of the industry has been, for example, bankers coming out of the city to open a delicatessen or indeed policemen taking early retirement to start producing adult soft drinks. Amusingly, they have sometimes found gambling on the stock market considerably less taxing than running their own business. However, I digress! My main encouragement recently was looking around the stands at the Cotswold Fayre 2016 Launch Trade Shows, and realising there were a number of young entrepreneurs in the building.

One reason we started our Food & Drink Young Entrepreneur of the Year competition a few years ago was precisely because we couldn't see them. Now it appears we can start to see young talent within our sector. Hoorah!

We always need fresh impetus and these millennials can bring it. After all, their generation are now a percentage of our customers and this will increasingly be the case over the next years. Their energy is contagious and, with some honing, that generation is the future of our businesses.

That sounds trite as this is obviously true across the business world, but in our sector there has

been an over-dominance of the older age group, so we are more in need of the younger generation than others.

Why is it, do you think, that large corporations, such as Google and Microsoft, and even large food companies buy small innovative enterprises, often for huge amounts of money? Simply because large corporations sometimes find it very hard to innovate. It's the oil tanker analogy. Small enterprises find it much easier to adapt and create and innovate than larger companies which often stifle creativity by too many rules and bureaucracy. The culture has often

one of maintenance rather than development. Large businesses are often great at making good ideas work and bringing them to market, but often not good at having the ideas in the first place. Actually, the technology sector is very good at creativity even within the large companies, but this isn't always the case across other industries.

The world of food is full of new ideas at present. Maybe some of those who own larger companies should consider buying a share in some of the smaller innovators' businesses in order to help them bring their products to a wider market. At the very least we should be available for advice and direction. You never know, some of the energy and life within the millennials may be contagious and help you in your own company's future.

## Best Practice

Stevie Robson, head chef at Suffolk Food Hall, talks us through life in the kitchen

**My role as head chef at The Cookhouse is very varied and gives me an opportunity to be involved in many different areas and aspects of the business, rather than just the kitchen.**

Obviously, there is the day to day running where I work alongside the chefs, prepping, cooking, teaching, placing orders and basically covering all of the routine tasks etc, but I also play a part in helping to develop the business as well as being one of the senior managers of the business.

**The Cookhouse and the food hall have a very strong connection and we work really hard to maintain and also expand this.** All of the meat we use comes through the butchery, the bread is fresh from the bakery every day, the greengrocer provides us with as much local fruit and vegetables as and when possible, and we are growing links with fish suppliers that will hopefully benefit ourselves and the fishmongers within the shop. Even the garden centre plays a part by maintaining our herb garden so that we have fresh herbs readily available. It really is quite unique and something that we are extremely lucky to have.

**The whole team has worked and is working really hard to make the restaurant a success.** We know that we can't rest on our laurels and are always striving to improve and offer a better experience to our customers. Hard work, dedication and commitment are key factors but also listening and taking on board criticism and feedback play a huge part. We have to listen to what our customers want and then work to deliver that.

**We run a wide variety of special events across the site, and Gemma in our**



**marketing department works tirelessly to promote this.** Everything from social media, posters, banners, leaflets etc are used to get these events out there. It still amazes me how many people visit us who have lived in the area for many years who still don't know that we exist and what we offer.

**Dos for me include training and developing all your staff. After all, you can't do everything on your own, and if they are good at their jobs then yours will become easier.** Always try to be better, whether that's practically or from a management point of view; there is always something to learn and for me that is one of the reasons I love the job. Don'ts are thinking that you know it all and ignoring criticism. Sometimes it may not be constructive but you have to acknowledge it, take on board what you can and then use it to be better. Also, never take anything for granted and stand still, keep pushing yourself, the team and the business, otherwise it will become stale very quickly.

**Delegation is hugely important; you cannot do everything on your own.** You have to develop others and put trust in them to meet your standards and expectations. They may not always get it right but then who does? As long as they learn and come back stronger, then that is the most important thing.

**I take great pride in teaching others and watching them grow as chefs and individuals. We have a very strong**

**ethos in the kitchen and business of developing people from within, and I am extremely proud of the fact that I now have a sous chef, chef de partie and commis chef that all started with the business as kitchen porters.** If you give people opportunity, it's amazing what they will give you back in return.

**I think the kitchen and restaurant has become stronger and continues to become stronger all the time.** This is because we learn from what went well but also from the mistakes that we have made. We know that we don't always get it right but we now have a very good understanding of what we want to be and the direction we are going in. Personally, I think my mistakes have led to me becoming a better person, chef and manager. They keep me on my toes and stop me from taking things for granted. No one likes to be wrong but I think it's how you recover from a mistake that makes the difference. I have had my fair share of criticism and mistakes and I like to think that every time I have got up and come back better and stronger.

**I am not sure that this article is big enough to disclose everything that I have learned, to go from being a chef to a head chef and having a team to manage is extremely difficult.** I have learned a huge amount about myself and my personality and character, not all of it has been good and I have had to change and adapt. I had huge amounts to learn about all aspects of management and understanding how a business runs from top to bottom but the key thing I have learnt is to never stop learning, every day really is a school day!

“ We have a very strong ethos in the kitchen and business of developing people from within, and I am extremely proud of the fact that I now have a sous chef, chef de partie and commis chef that all started with the business as kitchen porters ”

## COTSWOLD FAYRE\*



Tuckey's, Rodda's, Ppura, Norfolk Cordial, Belgian Boys, Green Lady, Soda Folk, Bath Pig, Oloves, to name but a few, of our suppliers exhibiting within our pavillion at the Farm Shop and Deli Show this April.

#CFPAVILION  
A185 FARM SHOP & Deli SHOW  
18-20 April 2016 NEC Birmingham

Our **Speciality Food Charity Ball** will take place in Warwickshire on **Friday 8th July**. For more details and to reserve your tickets please contact: [marketing@cotswold-fayre.co.uk](mailto:marketing@cotswold-fayre.co.uk)

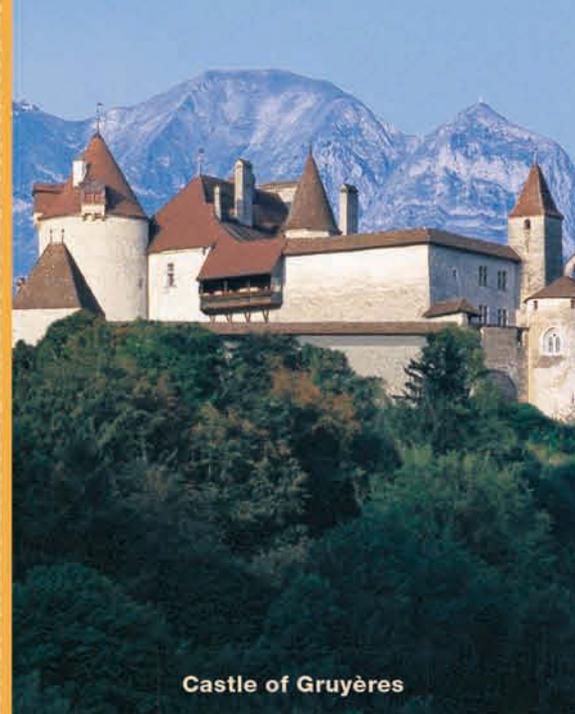


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# LE GRUYÈRE AOP\* BORN IN SWITZERLAND, 1115 A.D.

*And remains the only cheese that's 100% Natural, 100% Traditional,  
100% from Switzerland and 100% Le Gruyère AOP*

\*AOP = PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) – must be traditionally and entirely prepared and produced within the region, thus acquiring the unique properties of Gruyère AOP cheese, to bear the name Le Gruyère AOP.



Castle of Gruyères



When you're looking for the uniquely smooth, savoury Gruyère flavour, there's only one cheese that fits the bill: Le Gruyère AOP, since 1115 AD. The fact is, the flavour in any cheese is a product of its surroundings – the fields (**only in the villages of Western Switzerland**) where the cows that supply the milk are raised and fed, the way in which the cheese is produced (**hand-made, in small batches, with fresh raw milk**), and, of course, the centuries-old recipe (**slow-aged in the region's cheese cellars and caves**). This is what creates the unique characteristics found in the only cheese that can call itself Le Gruyère AOP.

**LE GRUYÈRE**<sup>®</sup>  
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