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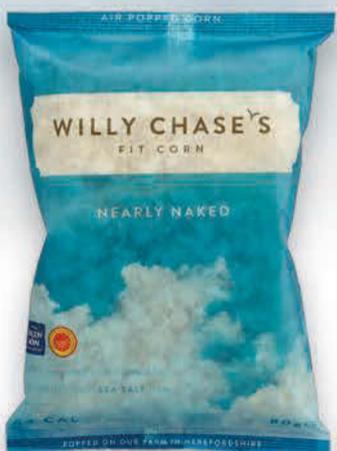
NEWS, COMMENT AND BUYING IDEAS FOR FINE FOOD RETAILERS

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## EDITOR'S LETTER

### Summertime Selling



While there is no guaranteeing suitable weather, summer is coming and with it the opportunities to sell all kinds of appropriate food and drink. Getting your selection right can be tricky; a spell of poor weather can dash your chances of supplying outdoor events and leave your barbecue goods untouched. Let's hope that not too much of what you bought in was perishable – even with non-perishable foods, no-one wants to be left with a surplus of what is clearly summer stock when the docks go back in October. Summer buying habits can be hard to gauge. Is summer a time for desultory food-buying, when someone drifting in for a quenching cordial might leave with the makings of an impromptu fresco meal? Or should you be preparing to cater for summer occasions like barbecues and picnics and providing packed lunches? In summertime it can be difficult to second-guess both the weather and customers' requirements.

So in this issue, together with an informative feature full of suggestions to help you make the most of summer selling, we look at the increasing popularity of barbecues and how to ensure you sell as much as possible of the expanding range of products which can shelter under the BBQ umbrella. Whether eating in the garden or

“It's hard to second-guess the weather and customers' requirements”

obliged to eat in, people will still be searching out lighter meals and wanting products that can lift these repasts above the ordinary. With this in mind, we have a guide to the best in oils, vinegars and dressings. There's now a burgeoning range of drinks you can sell to accompany these meals and these are duly considered. Fresh breads for picnics need artisan butter and you can find good examples here. Also between these covers is a preview of the upcoming British Cheese Awards at the Royal Bath & West, and there's more about how to finance your dream. Notably, together with *Speciality Food*, you'll find the second issue of *Cheese Buyer*, our comprehensive look at what's happening on the cheese scene today. We talk to the top people in cheese, both makers and retailers, in order to identify changes in demand and to provide you the cheese buyer with plenty of ideas for focused stocking.

Ross Gilfillan

ross@aceville.com

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### ONLINE TILLS SET TO RING

Online grocery sales are forecast to reach £9.8 billion this year, an increase of 13 per cent from an estimated £8.6 billion in 2015.

Mintel research has also suggested that sales are expected to grow by a further 73 per cent from now until 2020, to reach £15 billion.

Nick Carroll, retail analyst at Mintel said, "As we see Brits turning away from the main weekly shop and towards fluid, when-needed shopping, it is important for online grocery retailers to find a way to engage with these consumers."

"A wider proliferation of delivery passes may be one way in which retailers can do so as it makes more frequent online grocery shops viable."

### WAKE UP TO ORGANIC CAMPAIGN LAUNCHES

The second annual Wake Up To Organic breakfast campaign has been launched, aiming to encourage independent retailers to boost organic sales on the morning of 15th June.

Lee Holdstock, of Soil Association Certification said, "We know sales of organic through independent stores are climbing – this year our Organic Market Report showed an increase of 7.5% – and we want to help more people find out about how organic can make a difference."

Annie Seeley of the Organic Trade Board said, "The campaign is a great opportunity for independent retailers to communicate with their customers about the benefits of eating organic and to demonstrate how easy it is to make the switch at breakfast."

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# National Living Wage Now in Operation

The National Living Wage (NLW) has come into force, meaning that employees aged 25 and over will be paid at least £7.20 an hour.

Employees aged between 18 and 24 will continue to be paid the National Minimum Wage of £6.70 an hour.

An estimated 1.8 million workers will benefit from the NLW, while there are 1.3 million workers currently paid the National Minimum Wage.

The National Living Wage was announced by George Osborne, Chancellor of the Exchequer, as part of his 2015 Budget, and he plans to increase the rate to at least £9 per hour by 2020.

The decision was made without consultation with the Low Pay Commission, and there are fears that employees could lose their jobs due to their employers being unable to afford to pay the higher wages.

According to The Office of Budget Responsibility, 60,000 jobs could be lost as a result of the National Living Wage being enforced.

## IAN WILLARD, HEAD OF PERSONNEL AT PARTRIDGES



I broadly welcome the principle. The starting point should be at least 21 (pension auto enrolment starts at 22), although 18 would be better. Restricting to over 25 is unfair and reinforces growing wealth gap between generations.

The establishment of the idea

highlights the discrepancy between national and London rates and thus will put further pressure on London-based businesses.

I suspect the impact will be largely neutral in the medium term. National Living Wage comes at the same time as auto enrolment of pensions is extended and rates increased. I don't see retail jobs being cut in the short term, but it will inhibit further growth in the sector.

Firms will also put brakes on training and do no more than

minimum compliance with pension provision. They will look at more part time and zero hour contracts and "gigging employment". Enhanced payments and overtime will be reviewed, ie cut. Employment costs are increasing as an overall share of business costs.

There is a greater chance of job insecurity and reduced career expectations and this is the trade off for higher payroll bills.

## JANE THORNER, GENERAL MANAGER AT FODDER



We gave our staff a pay increase above minimum wage back in January.

We also gave this to everyone aged 18 and above as we didn't think this was fair to only apply it to staff aged 25 and above. After all, they are doing the same tasks and have the same skills.

We have done this without putting our prices up to the customer, therefore this has eaten into our margins. We haven't as yet had price increases from our suppliers but if we do we may have to consider increasing our selling prices.



## PAUL HARGREAVES, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF COTSWOLD FAYRE

In my view, responsible employers (retailers and producers) should be happy to pay the full living wage to their employees. The living wage based on proper research by the Living Wage Foundation is £8.25 for the UK in general and £9.40 in London (the true Living Wage is reviewed each year by independent academics and announced each year in November). The recently enforced, contrived government figure of £7.20 is not the right figure,

is too low and doesn't provide enough money for employees to feed their families.

I simply do not understand why you would not want to pay your team a living wage. Purely from an ideological point of view, business should not rely on government hand-outs such as family credit to subsidise the poor wages they pay their staff. Even from a selfish point of view, managers should want to pay their staff a good living wage as these staff are more likely to be more productive, less likely to take time off work due to sickness and less likely to look for another job, thereby ensuring the training you give them pays for itself.

In other words, as an employer it is to your advantage to pay your people properly – you will get your money back. It's a no brainer! At Cotswold Fayre we have always paid our team the true Living Wage and I recommend you do too. I have no problem in taking on younger people in a training role and paying them less, but please pay your adults a proper wage and you will see the fruits in increased profitability. What I do have a problem with is with those many leaders in business who have been complaining about the artificially low figure. Many of them are running companies where the directors are paid many multiples (up to 25x) the wages of their lowest paid member of staff. This too is not "good business" apart from being immoral.

“ I don't see retail jobs being cut in the short term, but this will inhibit further growth in the sector ”



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



### NEW MARKET COMES TO MIDDLESBROUGH

**A new artisan food market is launching in Middlesbrough, featuring around 25 independent food vendors with influences from across the world.**

Launching on Saturday 28th May, Orange Pip Market, on Baker Street, will be featuring arts, culture and entertainment in the form of pop-up art workshops and street theatre as well as food and drink stalls.

The market's organisers have been inspired by farmers markets, street food festivals and continental markets including Borough, Broadway and Maltby Street markets in London, Street Food Thursdays in Berlin, Brooklyn Flea in New York and Marché Raspail in Paris.

Running on the last Saturday of every month from noon until 7pm, the market will offer artisan scotch eggs from The Clucking Pig, Elodie Raclette offering the traditional Swiss dish, tea and cakes from Lotti's Voluptuous Delights.

Nicky Peacock, business development manager said, "The plan for Orange Pip Market was forged in late 2014 and we have carried out research into what makes for a great experience – we are pretty sure we have the balance right and look forward to seeing how Orange Pip evolves."

"The market name was taken from a Sherlock Holmes short story, The Tale of the Five Orange Pips by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle – it

fits with the age of the turn of the century buildings on the street and along with bars, Sherlock's and The Twisted Lip – we think it gives the venture a bit of extra personality."

Councillor Charlie Rooney, Middlesbrough Council's executive member for regeneration said, "Baker Street and Bedford Street are really leading the way in bringing a new energy and vibrancy to the town centre."

"They're demonstrating that given the right environment and support, independent businesses can thrive in even the toughest economic climate."

"Orange Pip Market is a fantastic addition to the mix which will complement existing businesses, further animating the town centre and offering something for everyone."



### CORNWALL FOOD & DRINK LAUNCHES RETAIL OUTLET

**The west country organisation has launched the Great Cornish Food Store as part of a new Truro development.**

The retail operation will be located alongside a new Waitrose store and will open this summer.

The Great Cornish Food Store will aim to promote understanding of the value of buying local – how it impacts community, economy and environment – in its 5,000 square foot space seven days a week.

The focus will be on fresh produce and strong service from a team selected by Ruth Huxley, managing director of Cornwall Food & Drink, which includes Angie Coombs, former general manager of the Duchy of Cornwall Nursery and Café; Paul Ripley, Michelin-starred chef; Claire Vickers, former head of marketing at Jamie Oliver's Fifteen Cornwall.

Philip Warren and Son will be overseeing the meat offering, sourcing



produce from Cornish farms with traditional methods of maturing and butchery.

Ruth Huxley of Cornwall Food & Drink said, "This is a fantastic opportunity to add a whole new dimension to our ability to celebrate and showcase Cornwall's outstanding food and drink industry. For the first

time, a comprehensive range of local produce will be available to people literally as they go about their regular supermarket shop, opening up tremendous new possibilities for the brilliant food and drink suppliers on our doorstep and new opportunities for shoppers who currently find it difficult to source all the local produce they would like."

Chris Reynard, recently appointed Waitrose branch manager said, "Cornwall Food & Drink's expertise and passion will be invaluable in helping to showcase the outstanding quality food and drink available from the region. We are looking forward to working together to create a real food lovers' destination, which can help encourage more people to visit and shop in Truro."



### SHIPPING CONTAINER RETAIL HUB GETS GO AHEAD

**The green light has been given to a retail hub made of converted shipping containers in Bristol, at the city's new harbourside development, Wapping Wharf.**

The developer behind the Cargo project, Umberslade, has created a hub of 10 converted shipping container units of varying sizes between Gaol Ferry Steps and Museum Square; work is expected to be completed in early summer.

The hub will have a strong food focus, with independent food and drink retailers creating a new food and community-centric quarter for the city.

Stuart Hatton, director of Umberslade said, "It has been great to receive such an enthusiastic response to our plans for Cargo. We have been inundated with expressions of interest from across the country, from pop-up street food vendors to fine dining restaurateurs. With 40 retailer enquiries in Cargo alone, we have decided to submit plans for a Cargo 2 to meet this demand."



"Both Cargo and Cargo 2 will be a fantastic addition to Bristol's vibrant 'foodie' scene and fit in perfectly with our community ethos and focus on independent food and drink at the wider Wapping Wharf development."

"It is a hugely exciting time for Wapping Wharf now that people are getting settled into their new homes

and retailers are gearing up to open on-site. Small Street Espresso will be opening a new café at Wapping Wharf soon and there are plenty of other announcements of this kind to come soon – watch this space! We are aiming for an eclectic mix of retailers from pop-up juice bars to florists, barbers to burgers, fine dining to street food."

## FROZEN IS THE NEW FRESH!

### POACH IN THE PACK, BAKE, GRILL OR ZAP!

## Award Winning Salmon Fillets in a Freezer to Table Format



# Farm Shop & Deli Award Winners Announced



The winners of the Farm Shop & Deli Awards 2016 have been announced, with Arthur Howell, a Norfolk butcher, awarded the title of Retailer of the Year.

Celebrating the highest levels of service, initiative, innovation, product knowledge and community involvement, the 350 entrants were judged by experts from fine food, speciality retail and food media, including Ross Gilfillan, editor of Speciality Food, Giles Henschel, co-founder and CEO of Olives Et Al and Jon May, managing director of Fabulous Food & Drink.

Nigel Barden, chairman of judges said, "The entries this year were outstanding – judging becomes harder every year. I think what stands out the most from the businesses we visited this year was a passion for customer service and continued innovation. There are some very driven and talented food retailers in Britain and they deserve to be recognised by awards such as these. I hope that the 2016 winners will benefit through increased press attention and footfall as a result of these awards."

Elaine Lemm, co-chair of judges said, "I was, once again, blown away by the standard of entries this year. It is fantastic to see so many businesses, new and established, working to consistently raise standards and maintain strong growth. These businesses owners deserve to be championed for the great work they are doing and I have been honoured to be part of that process."

John Troup from Arthur Howell, 2016 Retailer of the Year and East Anglian Retailer of the Year, said, "I'm extremely proud to have been named East Anglian champion at the Farm Shop & Deli Awards for the past two years running. The Farm Shop & Deli Show is a superb showcase for the very best food and drink producers Britain has to offer. Being recognised at the awards is a great achievement and very important to our business in marketing terms, as it demonstrates that we are right up there with the best in the country."

## THE WINNERS ARE:

**ARTHUR HOWELL**  
**RETAILER OF THE YEAR 2016,**  
**BUTCHER OF THE YEAR &**  
**EAST ANGLIA WINNER**  
Wells-next-the-Sea, Norfolk  
[arthurhowell.com](http://arthurhowell.com)

**BILLINGTONS OF LENZIE**  
**(DELICATESSEN)**  
**SCOTLAND WINNER**  
Glasgow, Lanarkshire  
[billingtonsoflenzie.co.uk](http://billingtonsoflenzie.co.uk)

**THE COURTYARD DAIRY**  
**CHEESEMONGER OF THE**  
**YEAR & NORTH WEST WINNER**  
Settle, North Yorkshire  
[thecourtyarddairy.co.uk](http://thecourtyarddairy.co.uk)

**DARTS FARM**  
**FARM SHOP OF THE YEAR –**  
**LARGE RETAILER &**  
**SOUTH WEST WINNER**  
Exeter, Devon  
[dartsfarm.co.uk](http://dartsfarm.co.uk)

**CLOGHER VALLEY MEATS**  
**(BUTCHER)**  
**NORTHERN IRELAND WINNER**  
Clogher, Tyrone  
[cloghervalleymeats.com](http://cloghervalleymeats.com)

**CROSS LANES ORGANIC FARM**  
**FARM SHOP OF THE YEAR –**  
**SMALL RETAILER**  
Barnard Castle, County Durham  
[crosslanesorganics.co.uk](http://crosslanesorganics.co.uk)

**K.D.DAVIS & SONS (THE**  
**GREENGROCERS) LTD**  
**GREENGROCER OF THE YEAR**  
**& NORTH EAST WINNER**  
Rotherham, South Yorkshire  
[KDDavis.co.uk](http://KDDavis.co.uk)

**LUDLOW FOOD CENTRE**  
**FOODHALL OF THE YEAR**  
Ludlow, Shropshire  
[ludlowfoodcentre.co.uk](http://ludlowfoodcentre.co.uk)

**PARSNIPS AND PEARS**  
**ONLINE BUSINESS OF THE YEAR**  
Colston Bassett, Nottinghamshire  
[parsnipsandpears.co.uk](http://parsnipsandpears.co.uk)

**RHUG ESTATE FARM SHOP**  
**WALES WINNER**  
Corwen, Denbighshire  
[rhug.co.uk](http://rhug.co.uk)

**SHROPSHIRE'S OWN**  
**LOCAL SHOP OF THE YEAR**  
**& MIDLANDS WINNER**  
Shrewsbury, Shropshire  
[shropshiresown.co.uk](http://shropshiresown.co.uk)

**STROUD FARMERS' MARKET**  
**MARKET OF THE YEAR**  
Stroud, Gloucestershire  
[fresh-n-local.co.uk](http://fresh-n-local.co.uk)

**BONDGATE BAKERY**  
**BAKER OF THE YEAR**  
Otley, West Yorkshire  
[bondgatebakery.com](http://bondgatebakery.com)

**THE HUNGRY GUEST**  
**DELICATESSEN OF THE YEAR**  
Petworth, West Sussex  
[thehungryguest.com](http://thehungryguest.com)

**VEASEY & SONS FISHMONGERS**  
**FISHMONGER OF THE YEAR &**  
**SOUTH EAST WINNER**  
Forest Row, East Sussex  
[veaseyandsons.co.uk](http://veaseyandsons.co.uk)

## JOHN SHEPHERD OF PARTRIDGES



### "The Bologna Ratio"

Last year I visited one of my favourite places – Bologna in Northern Italy, often described as Italy's culinary capital.

Bologna's nickname is actually La Grassa, based almost entirely on its vibrant food culture at the heart of Emilia Romagna. Prosciutto di Parma, Mortadella, Parmigiano Reggiano, balsamic vinegar, lasagne and tortellini, to name a few, are all specialities that have found a way into virtually every British deli. However, woe betide he who in Bologna asks for spaghetti bolognese rather than tagliatelle al ragu in any self respecting trattoria – as I am sure you all know. In addition to the wide range of great food it has a flourishing and wide range of small, independent food shops deeply embedded not only in a network of medieval streets with porticos but in the culture of the place.

It is in striking contrast to the streetscape of my part of Central London where, although we bemoan the dearth of charming family food businesses and their loss to the local community, we do nothing to support their survival. As an example I would like to compare the situation between the street where I live in London with the Via San Felice in Bologna. Both are residential areas and both close to the centre of town. The Via San Felice is about 700 yards long and contains 110 shops. At a cursory inspection, all seemed to be independently-owned and boasted a toyshop, plumbers merchants, several chemists, a number of gift shops, two opticians, several doctor's surgeries and barber shops, four restaurants and indeed the Church of San Felice itself. There was, as far as I recall, a solitary estate agents somewhat self-effacingly located up a flight of stairs. The retail contents of Via

San Felice are by no means a unique experience in Bologna or indeed in Northern Italy.

What interested me most was that out of 110 shops there were nine independent food shops and 12 bars/cafés that seemed to be coexisting alongside each other. Only two shops were unoccupied. There were also no multiple food retailers. I do not believe there is a street in Central London with that number of independent or speciality food shops. My own street in London is about a quarter of the size and contains 31 shops. Seven of the shops are unoccupied and of the remaining 24, six are estate agents (which is 25%). I know of six food-related commercial activities that have closed down since my time in the street.

Perhaps a more appropriate comparison would include Marylebone High Street. It is a highly regarded foodie destination, of course, and boasts four pubs, eight cafés and nine restaurants. There are also three multiples selling food and five speciality food shops.

There are many complexities when comparing various locations in different countries and it is very tempting to make sweeping generalisations, but the bottom line is that small independent food shops simply cannot afford the high commercial rents in Central London or many other city centres. Of course a fair rent needs to be paid for a fair location, but if landlords and town centres want to have local communities thriving with independent food shops they must be supportive in terms of rental income, fitting out costs and rent-free periods.

If we really wanted independent food shops, would we not try harder to keep and encourage them?



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## GILES HENSCHEL OF OLIVES ET AL



### “Man flu, equality and all that”

I've spent the last few days holed up with man flu. Through my near death, fever-ridden state, I've listened to Storm Kate batter the windows and Brussels recover from the latest terrorist outrage perpetrated by a group who would see us all kneel to them and see an end to the Western way of life.

Us Westerners are committed to the belief that all humans are equal irrespective of race, creed, gender, religious belief, age, height, eye colour or whatever. We fight for equal rights, equal pay, equal everything. But, to be blunt, none of us are equal and it's not always a good idea to suggest we are.

That man flu that laid me out over Easter really does exist. Men and women have a physiological difference to flu. All to do with differing levels of oestrogen and testosterone. It really is a fact that men suffer more with flu than women. So we're not equal, are we? And on that note, why is it Storm Kate not Kevin?

Olives Et Al respects all legislation surrounding equality and there is no pay difference between male and female members of staff. We are totally a-political, a-religious and a-sexist. After all we have to be – we deal with all sorts of nationalities, religions and attitudes to the sexes and have to be able to cope with them all with the appropriate degree of sensitivity. None, though, are equal to any other – all need to be treated according to case and merit. So again, we're not really equal here are we?

There have been lots of arguments about the equality of sexes in the Armed Forces and whether women are physically strong enough to be allowed into combat roles. Well how about this for a point of view: of course some of them are whilst, at the same time, some of them obviously aren't and exactly the same goes for men. Some men are physically robust enough, or can be trained to be, likewise with women. Having served for 10 years in various bits of the forces I can testify to the amazing variety of shapes, sizes, attitudes and abilities that exist across the forces – not one single person was identical to another. No equality here either, then.

And how about this: The National Union of Students has just demanded that there be no more white gay men as representatives of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) societies on campuses because gay white men don't face as much oppression so, in effect, aren't equal. More to the point, how bloody ridiculous to have a society which exists to provide an umbrella for equality to all its membership, whether L, G, B or T, and then exclude a large part of them from representing it. Seems there's not even any equality in a minority body actively fighting for it.

So what's my point? Well – none of us are equal but we seem to spend a lot of time trying to be. For me, I'd rather we got over ourselves and celebrated our differences – in that there lies a rich, diverse and interesting existence where differences are tolerated. Not exterminated.

## WBC Announces New Retail Solutions

WBC, the UK and Ireland's largest wholesale supplier of gift packaging, display and Bags For Life for the trade has announced a new core range of store signage and ticketing solutions.

Recent industry statistics have shown that 76 per cent of British shoppers don't speak to a sales assistant when shopping, with a third of all sales lost due to a lack of product information, and this new range addresses the need for more effective in-store communication.

The range contains over 100 new products developed following customer feedback and industry

experts, including wall mounted and floor standing signage, artisan ticket holders and table top chalkboards – all available from WBC's website and delivered from stock within 48 hours.

James Hayward, marketing director at WBC said, "Customers need help to know which product is most suitable for them and at what price. With the correct store signage and ticketing, it's easier to turn a browser into a buyer, but without it, you could be missing out on sales. From simple messages written by hand on a blackboard to more complex merchandising displays,



the point of all POS and signage is to give customers just the right amount of information to encourage them to buy. And buy now!"

## field fare Unveils New Look



Premium frozen food specialists, field fare has announced a rebrand of its logo, freezers and packaging.

Launched at Farm Shop & Deli, the new look is modern and vibrant in order to strengthen the brand's premium position within the frozen food market.

The rebrand consists of an updated brand logo, redesigned packaging for its pre-packed range and new branding for its freezers – including header boards for fruit, vegetables, ready meals, savouries and patisserie.

The new branding will be rolled out to field fare stockists over the coming months.

Karen Deans, MD of field fare said, "We were keen to modernise the field fare brand whilst maintaining our roots and brand identity. Quality is always at the heart of everything we do here at field fare and we believe our refreshed brand image has significantly improved the communication of our premium positioning and given us a more impactful brand presence in-store.

Brian and Jane Down from Udder Farm Shop said, "We are really looking forward to being one of the first to get the newly designed field fare freezers in-store. Their clear colour differentiation for different product types, key brand messages and fabulous food photography will make the shopping experience much easier for consumers and will undoubtedly attract more shoppers and increase sales."

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## Budget 2016: Extra Support for Small Businesses

**The Government has announced England's largest ever business rate cut for all ratepayers, worth a total of £6.7bn over the next five years.**

It plans to permanently double Small Business Rate Relief (from 50 per cent to 100 per cent) as well as increase the thresholds to benefit a greater number of businesses.

The cuts mean that 600,000 of the country's smallest businesses will no longer have to pay business rates, businesses with a property with a rateable value of £12,000 and under will receive 100 per cent relief,

and businesses with a rateable value between £12,000 and £15,000 will receive tapered relief.

Meurig Raymond, president of NFU said, "I had really hoped that the Chancellor would have recognised by now that all parts of the economy should benefit from tax simplification, as it is there is little support for capital investment on farm for buildings and reservoirs."

"Significant falls in farm income, driven by world commodity markets, can be observed across almost all sectors. It's particularly disappointing

that the Chancellor has announced nothing to help mitigate the additional costs and pace of introducing the national living wage from April this year.

"We also welcome the announcement of a permanent increase in small business rate relief from £6,000 to £15,000 meaning that 600,000 small businesses will no longer pay business rates. This is welcome news for farmers with diversified enterprises.

James Lowman, chief executive of ACS said, "The Chancellor has rightly increased the thresholds for small business rate relief and the small business multiplier. We are continuing to talk to the Treasury about removing the smallest businesses from the process of being rated, which would bring huge savings to the VOA and rid the system of the endless appeals that currently tie up retailers, advisors, and the VOA for years after each valuation.

"We are interested to discuss with the Treasury their plans for replacing small business rate relief with an allowance, that could on the face of it help retailers operating in a number of different council areas. Sadly, we will have to wait four years for this to be introduced, which seems like an unnecessary delay."

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## CHARLES CAMPION



### "Singing the blessing"

**"S**o... my, my, what beautiful pies, They've got a great aroma Wafting up to the skies, And meat or veg or fruity We must give them a try; We thank God for the bakers so wise, Who have baked us all these wonderful pies." Amen

**F**ood awards come in all shapes and sizes, but it's not often that the first job of the judges is to sing along with the "blessing of the pies" – words by the Reverend Kevin Ashby and appropriately enough set to the tune of American Pie.

The venue was the impressive 12th Century St Mary's church in the middle of Melton Mowbray, 'The Rural Capital of Food'. Anyone who tells you that Brits are not interested in food should attend the British Pie Awards – 800 entries in 20 different classes ranging from classic pork pies to chicken or lamb pies. Football Club pies to apple pies. Pies hot and pies cold, with a special class for the 'Queen's Pie' in honour of her majesty's 90th Birthday (won by a golden pastried monster – a Victorian Corset Pork and Chicken Pie made by Walker and Son).

Then, just when everything seemed a bit "so what?" the winner of the Supreme Champion was announced and the top prize went to a beef skirt and vegetable pasty made by Cumbrian butcher A.F. Huddleston. The top table judges were bowled over by this pasty: "The winning pasty was

outstanding. It looked so appealing, an even bake with a perfect glaze and a perfect crimp". "Eating it was a delight, well balanced flavours". Then it all kicked off, with media folk ramping up the story – how dare the judges give the Supreme Pie Award to a pasty? Gradually it emerged that for the purist there was little to separate pies from pasties. A decent pie has pastry enclosing the filling on the top, the bottom and the sides, so does a pasty. A decent pasty has a rich filling that is packed tightly and doesn't leak out during cooking, so does a pie. Pies often have an edge that seals the lid, pasties are also crimped, on top or at the side.

In the Middle Ages, pies were known as coffins and the tooth breaker pastry was not edible but served to protect the contents during travel. Long ago when British rivers were in better nick Gloucester would send a large lamprey pie up to the monarch to mark any special royal occasion. This custom was revisited in 1952 when Gloucester Council sent a lamprey pie up to Buckingham Palace – but sadly, even in the fifties, the river Severn's lamprey stocks were in terminal decline and the "Gloucester" pie had to be filled with Canadian lampreys.

The old rule "simple is good" is as true today as it has always been. The perfect pie calls for plenty of skills and a baker who insists on using only the best ingredients. It's time we got behind our pie makers and gave them the credit that they so richly deserve. As the blessing would have it they have "a great aroma, wafting up to the skies" and that goes for pasties as well!

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## DIARY DATES

## April

25th-28th

ALIMENTARIA  
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alimentaria-bcn.com

## May

3rd-5th

LONDON INTERNATIONAL  
WINE FAIR  
Olympia, London  
londonwinefair.com

10th-11th

CAFFE CULTURE SHOW  
Olympia, London  
caffecultureshow.com

20th-22nd

BBC GOOD FOOD SHOW  
SUMMER  
ExCel, London  
bbcgoodfoodshowsummer.com

24th-26th

SWEETS & SNACKS EXPO  
McCormick Place, Chicago  
sweetsandsnacks.com

25th-26th

THE FOOD & DRINK  
TRADE SHOW  
The Centaur, Cheltenham  
thefoodanddrinktradeshow.co.uk

## June

1st-4th

ROYAL BATH & WEST SHOW  
Somerset  
bathandwest.com

IMAGE (L-R):  
MICHAEL RICHARDSON, AHDB  
BEEF AND LAMB; MILLY STOKES,  
CHAIRMAN OF FARMA; GARETH  
WOOD, CHEERBROOK FARM SHOP



# Young Butcher Wins National Award

**FARMA has partnered with AHDB Beef and Lamb to celebrate the skill of butchers working in the farm shop sector through its Farm Butcher of the Year competition.**

The second annual competition saw entries from leading farm retailers across the UK; the contestants were Donny Cockburn from Kilinford Farm Shop, Matthew Lewis from Blacker Hall Farm Shop, Gareth Wood from Cheerbrook Food Ltd, Jason Moore from Newlyn Farm Shop, John Breteton from Ludlow Food Centre, Matthew Robins from Rhug Farm Shop and Alastair David from Darts Farm.

Each butcher had an hour to butcher a lamb carcass and produce a full shop window, while the judges (Holly Shackleton of Speciality Food, Steve Perrins of Taylors Farm Shop and Barry Deane, independent butchery consultant.)

The 2016 Farm Butcher of the Year title was awarded to Gareth Wood from Cheerbrook Farm Shop, while Alastair David from Darts Farm and John Brereton from Ludlow Food Centre achieved Highly Commended awards.

Gareth Wood said, "I'm really proud to have won, especially considering how talented the other competitors were. My thanks go to Andrew Shufflebotham and Simon Roberts who have taught and guided me."

Sarah Shufflebotham of Cheerbrook Food Ltd said, "We are extremely proud of Gareth, he started with us a Saturday boy when he was 14 and joined the Cheerbrook team full time when he left school. We've watched him develop into an excellent butcher and it's lovely to see his hard work rewarded – a well-deserved award!"

Michael Mack of Savills, the managing agent for FARMA said, "This competition is designed to both celebrate the skills of the people behind the farm retail businesses and to provide those new to farm retailing with a chance to learn a few tricks from the trade."

"Farm shops spend a lot of time training and supporting their staff and to have a winner of the competition coming up through the business from a boy highlights what can be achieved by believing in your team."

Michael Richardson of AHDB Beef and Lamb said, "The judges were particularly impressed with the butchery skills, product range and innovation shown by the winner. It is a time of great opportunity for independent butchers but new ideas to keep customers happy are essential to make the most of this opportunity. That's what won it for Gareth."

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# Fit Corn Sensation

These days William Chase is perhaps better known as a pioneer of the drinks industry than for his past foray into potato chips, but he's delighted to be returning to the fray with his new popcorn venture. Here, he explains what made him diversify from vodka

**I** decided to make Fit Corn as I wanted to lose weight and get fit, and have discovered the error of my ways! I want to make fit food – low calorie, high fibre, gluten-free – and promote the lifestyle that goes with it. I'm loving making food without a guilty conscience.

**I chose to produce popcorn as it's a food I can grow and make on the farm that's healthy.** I went to America last year and was taken with the healthier production method of air popping corn rather than frying. Forward thinkers and trend setters are eating healthy not fried snacks.

**Producing food with pedigree is hugely important to me so I have built my own popcorn factory on the farm rather than outsourcing production.** We've even built out our own seasonings and we are increasing corn production on the farm.

**Willy Chase's will work alongside Chase Distillery, both on Chase Farm here in Herefordshire.** Willy Chase's will supply independent retailers directly, ensuring a fresher product straight from the farm with good healthy margins for our customers. We'll soon be sharing physical resources including our biomass steam boiler, making us an all-round greener business, too.

**Willy Chase's Fit Corn is available in a range of unusual flavours, and cider vinegar with the mother was the starting point.** It's a little-known superfood with a huge number of health benefits. What better way to promote this gem than to put it on popcorn! We produce

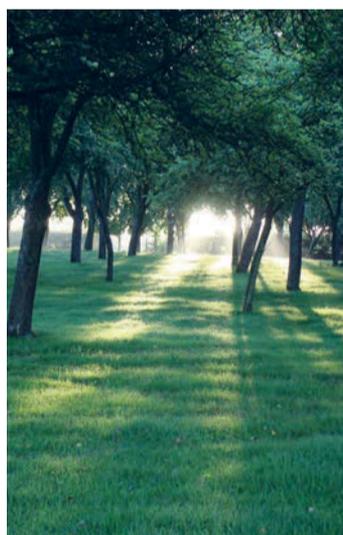


apple cider vinegar here from my 200 year old orchards. The whole range is inspired by my favourite ingredients and other natural superfoods including cacao and honey. They're grown-up flavours and we're not talking twee stories, we are talking genuinely healthy stuff.

**I decided to air pop the corn rather than fry it to keep the product as healthy as possible.** It's harder to set up, but air popping is the finest and cleanest way to make popcorn. It's so clean we're installing a web cam to show people, you wouldn't do that with a fryer as it makes such a mess! Air popping is a healthier method with far less oil needed. Not only that, but our popcorn is high in fibre and gluten-free.

**We have some really exciting new flavours on the horizon, using more ingredients I love –** including herbs from my vineyard in France, asparagus, elderflower plus juniper and ginger. We've also got some funky ideas for different packaging. Independent retailers and their customers love something different.

**I've lost a stone but need to lose another three so I've got to create some more fit foods!** Willy Chase's



is all about promoting healthy lifestyles – my philosophy is to make a difference, be fit and be happy. I really believe in the health benefits of apple cider vinegar with the mother and want to raise awareness of it. 'The Mother' is a natural remedy with curative super powers! We leave it intact within our vinegar to preserve its beneficial qualities which include aiding with weight loss, improving digestion and supporting the immune system. I'm looking at developing apple cider vinegar shots to add to your smoothies and cereals bars, too. Watch this space!



“ Willy Chase's is all about promoting healthy lifestyles – my philosophy is to make a difference, be fit and be happy ”

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## Budget 2016: Sugar Tax Announced

**C**hancellor George Osborne has introduced a tax on sugar as part of this year's budget.

The move has proved unpopular both with most manufacturers and within the Conservative party – reports state that four out of five Conservative MPs were against the new tax, which will raise an estimated £520 million every year for the Treasury.

The Institute of Fiscal Studies has described the effects of the sugar tax as "incredibly uncertain," while the Institute for Economic Affairs has stated that larger drinks manufacturers will be able to absorb the extra costs by raising the consumer price of their other items (for example, pure bottled water).

"I am not prepared to look back at my time here in this parliament, doing this job and say to my children's generation: I'm sorry, we knew there was a problem with sugary drinks," Mr Osborne said on the day of the announcement.

**Kate Smith, senior research economist at IFS**

"The effects of this tax are incredibly uncertain and will depend crucially on how people respond to their tax – both on the consumer and on the food industry side.

"Indeed, the effect of the tax on people's sugar consumption might be offset if people switch to fruit juices or other high sugary products.

"The design of the tax leaves a lot to be desired. Levying the tax per litre means that sugary drinks will attract a lower tax per gram of sugar and really a much more sensible schedule would have been to have a constant or an increasing tax per gram of sugar."

**Paul Bendit, founder of Metro Drinks**

The sugar tax is based on all non-alcoholic drinks other than pure fruit juice or milk based drinks. It will be levied at two levels: 18p/litre for drinks between 5 and 8g/sugar per 100ml and 24p/litre for drinks over 8g/sugar per 100ml. Metro Drinks (and Folkington's Juices) consider



that these proposals need to be thought through further, for the following principal reasons:

Tax should be on added sugar, not naturally occurring fruit sugars, and tax should not be levied on the manufacturer but instead charged to the consumer and paid to the

Exchequer by the retailer. I believe that a sugar tax should be an excise duty levied at the point of purchase by the consumer, rather than a tax on production.

Metro Drinks believes the following will be a more effective and simpler method of achieving the

same aims: 1. All bottle labelling to disclose the amount of added sugar per 100ml; 2. All drinks with added sugar greater than 8g/100ml should have a VAT rate of 33%; 3. Result for typical bottle of 500ml soft drink with 8g+/100ml sugar currently sold at an average price of £1.20.

“ We need to educate consumers, especially when it comes to food labelling, so they can make more informed decisions based on a knowledge of what is actually in the food that they are putting in their body ”

**Damien Kennedy, Co founder of Wheyhey**

"It's positive to see that Government is taking some action to tackle the obesity epidemic. However, the reality is that a tax on sugary drinks is not going to solve or really put a dent in the obesity epidemic. A few extra pence on top of a sugar-packed drink will not deter someone purchasing it.

"We need to educate consumers, especially when it comes to food labelling, so they can make more informed decisions based on a knowledge of what is actually in the food that they are putting in their body but also what impact that will have on their health.

"It's a start and great to see that there will be money invested in school sports as a result. However, like the saying says, you can't out exercise a bad diet."

**Russell Smart, commercial director of Rocks Drinks**

"Organic sugar already attracts a levy of £300/mt at point of import, so a further levy would effectively be a double tax.

"We are a small producer of organic soft drinks in Devon and already pay £100,000 per year to the government in Sugar Levy. This is already 7% of our Rocks Drinks' sales revenues.

"Any further levy will kill organic soft drinks."

**Gabriel David, founder of Luscombe Drinks**

"The sugar tax will have a very small effect on the Luscombe range of drinks, but ultimately it will help all consumers as the industry will have to lean heavily away from sweetened sugary drinks.

"Hopefully those two litre bottles of 'soft drinks' sold in supermarkets will become a thing of the past.

The real debate, however, should be focused on high fructose corn syrup (HFCS), which is simply labelled as 'sugar'. This is the real villain, we should be talking about the science of HFCS."

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Succulent apricot pieces combined with grated orange zest, and golden sultanas make this a truly delicious teabread.

**A**s a child and a teenager, my family travelled a lot and we were very experimental, eating food from all over the world. Food was central to my family's lifestyle, and as we were a very sociable family it always played a part of our plans. In time I moved to Spain, and got to know its places and people through the food we shared. I wanted to bring recognition of the food producers I'd met in Spain to the UK – I'd admired them and their products, and simply wanted to get them some more business!

The story of Brindisa begins in the Eighties, when Spanish food was unknown in Britain. Spanish wasn't on the school curriculum like it is these days, and Spain wasn't even in the EU, so it was unusual to be interested in bringing Spanish food to the UK. My brother was working in Barcelona selling British products, and through this he met Spanish retailers who suggested foods he should consider sending in the opposite direction. I began to ship some products to Britain, starting with wines and cheeses, and both categories were extremely difficult to sell. The market was quite resistant; at the end of the Eighties, Spanish cheese was an unknown – everybody associated Spain with the plastic cheese you get in a beach café. When people went on holiday in France they'd expect to eat lots of great cheese, but Spain didn't have the same reputation – France and Italy had the market covered in that sense. Spain was seen as nothing more than a bucket and spade holiday with paella and beer.

It was quite difficult to get people to take notice of us, but the people who did were the forward-thinking buyers at prestigious retailers. The Olympics were coming and Spain was joining the EU, so we had to start taking Spain seriously. They started making space in their cheese counters and shelves, and so we had quite a lot of promotion across good outlets when Spain became a member of the EU. Fortnum & Mason and Selfridges always supported us, and we sold quite a lot of ingredients to chefs for their menus.

Business is a balance of things going well and being hit by unexpected problems; you have to work through whatever happens so it's necessary to toughen up. Having said that, it's important to have an emotional connection with your business otherwise it's just a numbers game. You have to be brave. You also need to be assertive, so when things go well you can celebrate and find some strength when things go wrong – and be able to share that with the team. Whether the exchange rate has changed or a big customer decides to go with a competitor, people have to live with these things all the time.

It's getting harder and harder to stand out from the crowd, even though when we started we were pretty much pioneers. The only competitor of ours was the very friendly Products From Spain. They had a better range at that time but I had innovated a better cheese



## THE INTERVIEW

How to sum up Monika Linton, founder of Brindisa in three words? Adventurous, optimistic and determined

range which they bought from me for a good while. These days most Spanish foods are available from us or competitors so there's less exploration to be done. The way we keep ourselves special is to stick to what we do best – just because Spanish food has become more of a commodity than it was, we're not going to venture into French, Italian, African or South African food to be different.

Continuing to work with people who love good food will avoid us having to chase the numbers to stay in business. You need to share a love of what you do with your colleagues to maintain creativity. We've changed a lot from when we first started, but we've tried very hard to keep the principles the same – we've grown, we're a bigger business than we were, but we're trying not to be all things to all men because that

just doesn't work. We've established that we know a lot about Spanish food, and we're now going to focus on areas where our skill base can really make a difference to the category we're working within. We've always invested a lot in ham and cheese, so we're developing our carving and cheese skills. We're honing in on what we're really fond of and what we think will make a difference to our customer service.

It's important not to be too faddish or trend-led; I believe that foods with integrity last forever – nobody's going to say that Cheddar's going out of fashion! We're not trying to be fashionable, we're just trying to sell really good food that has integrity.

### QUICKFIRE QUESTIONS

#### THE FUTURE

**We have a relatively small retail offering – our little shops and online commerce only take up 10% of the business – so this year we plan to stabilise that so we can set a good example to our trade customers and help grow the market for them. We're currently launching our own brand range; we understand that independents don't want their shelves taken over by someone else's brand, so rather than putting a Brindisa label on everything we sell we're filling the gaps by bringing in recipes which complement our supplier lines. Also, I've spent the past few years putting together a book charting Brindisa's journey – this will be out in the next few months.**

#### INSPIRATION

**'All in good time' is a favourite saying of mine – I think there's a destiny in things, and all things line up when they should. Also 'patience is a virtue' – if things are meant to happen they will. I'm inspired by small producers who have devoted generations of their family to making their product, and think the small cheesemakers of Europe are very brave! Meeting these people is an inspiration; they've sacrificed so much to do what they love.**

#### TEAMWORK

**What drives me is patience, determination, a sense of optimism and adventure balanced with quite a lot of common sense. I've had no formal training in business – I've learned from colleagues, suppliers, friends and family, and I've never been too shy to ask for help or a favour. Openness and determination have helped drive the business to this point, but I haven't done it on my own – since the very beginning I've been surrounded by experts who have skills complementary to mine. For example, I have blind determination and don't add up the numbers, but I have colleagues who bring an element of reality back to the plan.**

“ You need to share a love for what you do with your colleagues to maintain creativity ”

### MAKING IT WORK

**I've learned to keep pushing the benchmark up, to never settle for the lowest common denominator.**

We don't want to just meet the market – just because a percentage of the public wants cheap food, doesn't mean we have to go there. I don't think food needs to be elitist in that good food is only for the people who can afford it, I think people can be taught that there are ways of consuming better food that don't necessarily mean it costing more. Eating a lot of meat does not make you healthier, but by having

a small amount of meat with some lentils you can have a really hearty meal that's inexpensive. It's a case of re-educating people about what's actually nourishing. Fine food may have seemed expensive to some people in the past, but the sector is now promoting healthy, educational messages – it's no longer all about foie gras, it's about ancient grains, dairy-free milks and ingredients from across the globe.

**I find the complexity and cost of logistics and bureaucracy within the food industry shocking.** When a customer complains about the price of

something, they have no idea of what percentage of that price goes to things the system insists on. A while ago a café owner received a complaint on his business's TripAdvisor page from a customer taken aback by the cost of a drink. His reply was superb, justifying the cost by explaining all the behind the scenes expenses – customer service comes at a price!

**Packaging and labelling is another issue in the industry which concerns me, as on the one hand you have more and more detail being included on the labels, but on the other there's no policing of the message the labelling**

**may give.** For example, if the packaging features an image of a pig in a beautiful field, you would assume that the meat would be free-range even if it's not. We came across difficulties recently, as we were told that we could describe items in our range as 'Product of Spain' even if the raw ingredients came from elsewhere and the product was only packaged in Spain. If it's not grown in Spain, we don't want to say that it was – we want to say 'Product of Peru, Packed in Spain'. Producers have different pressures and criteria for different markets and are faced with many challenges (Spanish hazelnuts, white asparagus, saffron, piquillo

peppers, capers, fresh oranges plus many other products all have cheaper crops from abroad that undermine the Spanish version in terms of price and quality). We are not so naive that we do not accept this as a reality, but where we can have transparency we prefer to label accordingly – we have managed to insist on this within our own range labelling. It's a real talking point across the whole food industry at the moment – where do you draw the line when it comes to transparency with origin and processing? Our aim is to improve integrity and transparency whenever we can.

Take stock with our new food and drink round-up

## Tyrrells Releases Sweet Potato Range



**Premium hand-cooked crisp brand Tyrrells has launched a new range of crisps made from sweet potato.**

The new My Sweet Potato range aims to tap into the current consumer demand for sweet potato products; according to recent

research carried out by Nielsen, sales of sweet potato crisps have risen by 89 per cent year on year.

The crisps are available in three flavours: Lightly Sea Salted, Coconut & Lime and Sweet Chilli, and contain no artificial ingredients.

Jocelyn McNulty, marketing director at Tyrrells said, "We are really excited about this new launch. We see that consumers' love for sweet potato-based products continues to strengthen and therefore a dedicated sweet potato range was an obvious next step for us. Flavour and naturalness are so important to the brand and we see this range sitting in its own space, between crisps and vegetable crisps.

"Offering consumers a flavoursome treat, we created the My Sweet Potato range with the typical Tyrrells quirkiness and honed in on the nation's new love affair with the orange tuber, making it perfect for couples' sofa time, or even just something different at lunchtime to snaffle all to yourself."

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



**Independent ice cream company The Licktators have launched a new Sea Salt ice cream exclusively through independents and Ocado.**

Based on a homemade recipe, the ice cream is made using British milk and

## Licktators Unveils Maritime-Inspired Ice Cream

West Country whipping cream plus Cornish sea salt as a nod to Britain's maritime heritage.

The Sea Salt flavour is the latest addition to The Licktators' God Save The Cream collection, which also includes Custard, Marshmallow, Popcorn and Doughnut flavours.

The collection shares its name with a campaign, featuring a unique ice cream sculpture, which is launching in June to coincide with the Queen's 90th birthday.

Founder of the business, Matt O'Connor wishes to support Britain's dairy farmers by pressing retailers

to ensure that at least 20 per cent of their ice cream range is created by independent ice cream makers in the UK.

Matt O'Connor, founder of Licktators said, "We wanted to create an ice cream that was uniquely British and told a story about our maritime history. It's delicately flavoured with Cornish sea salt, which gives the ice cream a subtle, seafaring twist. It's already creating a lot of interest and we think it will generate strong word of mouth and pull through in independents this summer." [thelicktators.com](http://thelicktators.com)

## Norfolk Distiller Creates Ultra-Premium Vodka

**Norfolk-based Wild Knight has produced an ultra-premium vodka, described by some as 'liquid silk'.**

Soft, smooth and lightly sweet, Wild Knight Ultra-Premium English Vodka is made using English barley grown in Norfolk and water from Eastern England's ancient chalk aquifers.

The vodka, single-distilled in small batches, is the result of the founders' passion for creating the purest vodka possible.

Matt Brown, co-founder said, "We feel it is time for vodka to be put back on its pedestal and appreciated for the wonderful spirit it is. Our Ultra-Premium, single-

distilled, hand-crafted vodka is so different to the products you'll find on the supermarket shelf, it is smoother and can be enjoyed without a mixer.

"We're excited to see what retailers think of it and hope that it'll be an exciting new product for deli owners across the UK."

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



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MADE IN THE USA

# Pomegranate Ketchup Enters Speciality Market

**A new condiment has entered the fine food market: Pomegranate Ketchup, made by London-based Aphrodite's.**

Rich, sticky, subtly spiced and slightly sweet, the ketchup can be used as a flavour base for stews, marinades and casseroles, as well as for using in sandwiches and as a dip.

Inspired by the flavours of the Eastern Mediterranean, it contains Lebanese pomegranate molasses, tomato salsa purée and a number of sweet spices, which have been cooked in small batches to ensure each serving is consistently good.

Gift sets are also available, containing a canvas bag and a carved bone spoon.

Dixie, founder said, "This is a completely unique ketchup, full of luscious fruity flavour.

All-natural Lebanese Pomegranate Molasses gives the sauce its delicious sweetness from the naturally occurring sugars. Different to any other ketchup you've tasted, the rich tangy molasses takes ketchup to the next level.

"It is such a versatile sauce, great for dipping, marinating, a base for stews, slathering on burgers and sandwiches, especially good with a good strong cheese or sausages. Yotam Ottolenghi likes to eat it with roast chicken!"

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



# Brown Bag Crisps Produces Tiger Prawn Flavour

Surrey-based crisp producer Brown Bag Crisps has added a Tiger Prawn variant to its range of hand-cooked potato crisps.

Pairing tiger prawns with chilli and lime, the new flavour joins Oak Smoked Chilli, Sea Salt & Malt Vinegar, Smoked

Bacon, Lightly Salted and West Country Farmhouse Cheddar & Onion in the Brown Bag Crisps product offering.

The new crisps are gluten-free and made with only natural ingredients.

Vivien Lambe, co-founder of Brown Bag Crisps said, "The newest member of the Brown Bag Crisps' family is our Tiger Prawn with a hint of chilli and lime and they're proving just as popular as our other award-winning flavours. The subtle prawn taste is followed by a chilli kick and finally a zest of tangy lime, to give a unique and delicious combination of flavours! Like all our handcooked potato crisps, our Tiger Prawn crisps are gluten-free and the seasoning is made with only natural ingredients."

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



# Ugly Drinks Pioneers 'Unsweet' Category

**A 100% natural soft drink has entered the independent market, containing no sugar, no sweeteners, no artificial flavours, no preservatives, no fat, no salt and zero calories.**

Available in Lemon & Lime and Grapefruit & Pineapple flavours, the drinks have been created to launch a new 'unsweet' category within the drinks sector.

Hugh Thomas, co-founder of Ugly said, "We believe that the drinks market is saturated with products that over promise and under deliver. With Ugly our aim is to keep it simple and pioneer a new 'unsweet' category in the drinks market. We

have no sugar, no sweetener and no artificial ingredients. Ugly water doesn't promise to make you faster, smarter or more beautiful but it's all-natural and tastes great."

Joe Benn, co-founder of Ugly said, "With the explosion of healthy eating and increased consumer awareness of the effects of sugar and sweeteners, we believe there is a huge gap in the market for a drink that's completely transparent, with nothing hidden. Ugly water aims to be 'beautifully different' and we've been thrilled by the response from the industry to date."

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

Created in partnership with Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

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## AHDB SEASONAL SPECIALS

BEEF & LAMB



**Ensuring beef and lamb products on the market are consistently good quality and fit for purpose is central to AHDB Beef & Lamb's trade marketing strategy this year, explains Michael Richardson, independent retail sector manager.**

The rise of barbecuing and alfresco dining presents a huge opportunity for farm shops and independent retailers to tap into, as more consumers move away from basic burgers in favour of gourmet options, and look for greater quality to offer their guests.

This summer will see two major sporting events in the European Championships and the Rio Olympics, giving consumers a great reason to get together to watch the sports and throw some meat on the barbecue. To capitalise on this trend, this summer we will be promoting two of our most successful product development initiatives, Gourmet Burgers and our Steak Bar range. We've also developed some useful and easy-to-follow barbecue videos for retailers and farm shop owners to share with their own customers.

### Flavour trends

AHDB Beef & Lamb produced the informative Summer Retail Trends report to review the key eating trends anticipated for 2016 and in particular highlighted influential flavour trends. Global spice trends are set to make a big impression this summer, and new flavours can be incorporated into barbecue product ranges through the addition of marinades and rubs. Big and bold South American flavours, especially Brazilian, are set to make a big impact this summer.

For independent retailers and farm shop owners wanting to embrace this flavour trend, we recommend offering a beef cut from our Steak Bar range which will work well with these international flavour influences. We've found that the Topside Ranch steaks (Code: Topside B009) are proving very popular. It's a great way of improving carcass value, product range and eating quality while offering customers excellent value for money.

### Diversify barbecue product ranges to encourage growth

We've developed the Gourmet Burger initiative to help butchers drive their sales of quality assured mince and premium quality burgers this summer, and those that want to highlight how great lamb burgers are for the summer season can head to our Point-of-Sale hub to create a variety of posters, window banners, cabinet cards and leaflets for customers to take away with advice and tips. Butchers can find video demonstrations on the website, highlighting the benefits of cuts not traditionally associated with barbecuing.

### Quality remains a priority for consumers

As well as presenting customers with a variety of added value lamb cuts this summer, quality remains an important purchase influencer. Our twin objectives of delivering a better product for consumers while ensuring a more efficient, and thus profitable, use of the carcass for the supply chain have guided the new product development initiatives under the QSM Scheme.

@qsm\_beeflamb  
f QSMBeefandLamb



For further information about the QSM Scheme and the benefits available to members, including advice, yield and costing information and free promotional materials, visit [qsmbeefandlamb.co.uk](http://qsmbeefandlamb.co.uk), call the hotline on 0845 491 8787 or feel free to give me a ring on 07790173625.

AHDB Beef & Lamb is the organisation for beef and lamb levy payers in England and is a division of the Agriculture & Horticulture Development Board.

## PRIME CUTS

Jamie Willows, owner of Rose House Butchery, talks to Speciality Food about doing it right



“Be honest, stick to your principles and don't worry about charging fair prices for quality meat – customers will come back for great-tasting meat”

We started in October 2013, prior to that I was head butcher at Jimmy's Farm but decided to start my own butchery. We do all rare, native and traditional breeds – we look to sell different things, so we do lots of goat and mutton which lots of butchers don't sell. All our meat is hung properly, for example all our beef is hung for a minimum of 28 days and our mutton for at least 14 days. We don't cut corners and pride ourselves in being a proper butcher. We produce everything ourselves from scratch, our own sausages and bacon, and do our own smoking on-site – that way I have control of the whole process.

I know where all my animals come from; I buy direct from local farmers so I know the quality of it and exactly where it's from. This means I can pass the knowledge onto the customer – they're becoming more interested in knowing where the food they're eating is coming from, and it's great to be able to answer their questions.

We are a whole carcass butchery, which lots of other butchers aren't these days. A lot of butchers simply buy in boxes of cut meat, whereas I buy whole animals. That's the best way to make the most of the whole animal; some of the cheaper cuts are seen as being lesser cuts, but it's simply a case of explaining to them that even though it's a cheaper cut doesn't mean it has less flavour or is an inferior product in general.

As we're so small we can be very reactive – I know that if I see someone doing a recipe on TV one week, people will be coming in a few days later for that certain cut of meat. Chefs are great these days, with Tom Kerridge in particular always telling people to go to their local butcher to pick up the meat for their meals.

There's nothing worse than walking into your butcher and finding that he doesn't know where the meat he's selling has come from. You wouldn't buy a car without knowing the history of it, but with meat people tend to not be too bothered about its story. In my view, consumers shouldn't be asking why meat is so

expensive, but why it's so cheap. Over the years, meat has become a cheap commodity.

'Pride, passion and provenance' is my motto. You have to have pride in the work you're doing and the passion that comes along with that, and you must know everything about the animal you're selling. Don't compromise your standards – free-range is our benchmark, and rare and native breeds is on top of that. I've had customers coming in asking if I can get cheaper chickens to sell to them, and I tell them that I can but that would make me like all the other butchers out there. I could make more money selling cheaper meat, but that would mean turning my back on my principles – that's not what I'm about, and I wouldn't feel right doing it.

I always say, 'meat is a treat'. We should be eating better quality meat less often. We're all eating far too much meat, and even I as a butcher

am vegetarian for at least two days of the week. I'd rather have a small amount of chicken that really tastes of chicken, then a lot of something insipid and not be entirely sure what I'm eating.

All the meat I sell is local and traditionally-reared. A lot of people come into the shop asking if the animals I sell have been fed antibiotics and are put off when I say they may have been, but I believe there's a difference between routinely pumping animals full of antibiotics as part of their diet and feeding it to them when they're unwell. A lot of poultry producers would accept a 30% loss of birds without questions – how can they get away with that? Ultimately, it's down to supermarkets driving down the price of meat. Raw meat is very hard to make decent money from – the fact is that if you're selling meat from a three year old cow, that cow has been fed, watered and kept healthy for those three years, plus everyone in the chain has to make a living from it.

We focus on selling things that will complement the meat and don't want to stray too far from that. As well as meat we sell free-range eggs from local farms, a range of oils and dressings, and in the summer we do a lot of rubs to go with the meat – choosing to sell them separately rather than coat the meat in them, to give the customer the option. We're just starting to sell barbecue equipment and wood chips so we can be a real one-stop-shop for everything for your barbecue.



## Q Guild Launches New Product Campaign

The Butchers Q Guild has unveiled a new national initiative with the plan of feeding the British public's appetite for new meat products.

The member-led meat sector body's 'Q Guild Product of the Month' promotion began at the beginning of April, and will see a selection of innovative new products launched at its 110 member retailers across the UK.

The Q Guild, represented by award-winning independent butchers across Britain, has partnered with the product development teams of its partner industry suppliers to put the campaign into practice.

Mark Turnbull, Q Guild national chairman and Alnwick-based butcher said, "The promotion will continue every month with exciting

new products launched to the public with the help of our member businesses and key partners.

"These products will be unique to our members and we are confident they will prove to be a real hit with our customers. We are feeding an ever-increasing hunger from the general public for new product ideas that are both inventive and inspirational."



**DAVID  
HARTLEY OF  
WENSLEYDALE  
CREAMERY**

## “Best of British”

**T**he quality of British cheese is fast gaining international recognition, with exports reaching an all-time high in 2014 as we continue to strengthen our reputation globally as quality cheesemakers.

Within the UK cheese market, we've seen the growth of the major brands, which has been dominated by Cheddar, and has been key in driving the market forward, particularly through value.

Development of different formats of cheese, such as slices and convenient portion sizes, has made cheese more relevant and accessible to today's consumers. Usage has become a lot more important and progress has been made in educating consumers to understand how and when they can use the product.

There's also been a great deal more emphasis placed on artisan cheeses with unique recipes and places of origin, too. There's certainly more diversity and recognition of provenance in the UK market than we've ever had before.

We've become more educated as a population in the last five years, and the influence of

imported cheese has caused the UK consumer to become more discerning and understanding of where their cheeses come from and the quality they expect.

In turn, if you look at emerging export markets, the appetite for British cheese is very strong – exports account for 14% of our overall sales, and our range of Yorkshire Wensleydale cheese is exported worldwide from Europe, the US and the Far East. I visited Dubai recently and British cheeses feature much more in the international mix than they did a few years ago.

British cheese is firmly establishing its place within the international offering, sitting on shelves across the world alongside classic French cheeses like Brie, Camembert and Saint Agur, Italian Parmesan and Gorgonzola and Spanish Manchego. Historically, this might have been predominantly Cheddars and Stilton, but now we're seeing increased demand for territorial cheeses and, a key market for Yorkshire Wensleydale and blended cheeses such as Yorkshire Wensleydale & Cranberries.

Provenance and authenticity are

incredibly important for brands in ensuring British cheese appeals to international markets and stands out in a competitive marketplace, but ultimately for a cheese to be successful in an export market, it's got to be good.

With a global appetite for discovering new tastes and exploring new flavours, the focus for cheesemakers is not only about authenticity, but about flavour. It's about appealing to markets that want to buy cheese from Britain whilst ensuring that we're delivering a taste and flavour that consumers within that market are looking for and enjoy.

Take regional cheeses for example. Some of them have had a hard time breaking into international markets and others have performed reasonably well, particularly those which have expanded their categories. By broadening our range of Yorkshire Wensleydale to include speciality cheeses such as Kit Calvert and blended cheeses such as Yorkshire Wensleydale & Cranberries, which is a particularly popular product for us in international markets, we've been able to open up the brand to bigger markets.

There's also been an increase in the types of soft and Continental-style cheeses coming out of Britain, all of which put the UK on the international map in terms of producing quality cheese – and rival our French counterparts, showing that it's not just the French that can produce a good soft cheese!

This year has seen the launch of a Great British Food Unit by DEFRA and UKTI in a bid to promote British

food abroad and back British food at home. Since 2010, the number of protected foods in the UK has increased from 40 to 64, 17 of which are cheeses. The Great British Food Unit has ambitions to grow the number of Protected Food Names from 64 to 200 and open up further export opportunities.

The campaign is gaining popularity and we're keen to support DEFRA's commitment to growing exports through food and their ambitions to make 2016 the 'Year of British Food'. The Wensleydale Creamery has already benefited from the support of people like UKTI and DEFRA in terms of trying to drive export sales of cheese. Support from HRH The Prince of Wales, who recently visited The Wensleydale Creamery, can only widen the appeal of British cheese abroad.

Gaining European Protected Food Name Status in the form of Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) status for our Yorkshire Wensleydale is one element that is helping with that. This international mark guarantees the quality and authenticity of our Yorkshire Wensleydale and differentiates it from Wensleydale cheese produced in other counties across the UK. This has been advantageous when selling into international markets and gives us a platform for telling the story of our provenance and authenticity globally.

As an industry, we're driving forward change and development in a challenging cheese market, and, at this rate, Britain certainly has the potential to rival its neighbours as the Capital of Great Cheese.

# Cheese Talk

## New retail perspectives from industry experts



**GEORGE  
PAUL OF  
BRADBURY'S**

## “Reward, Discard and Fraud”

**A** great chasm begins to open in the cheese trade, essentially fuelled by the declining milk price and the divergent demands of suppliers and customers.

It seems a never-ending challenge for the farming community as last year's nightmare continues for the British farmer. Milk production remains high and well above last year, and with the mild, moist winter and arrival of warm weather we will see the grass growing like crazy, potentially giving us a spring flush of huge proportions.

We hear that some farmers are giving up and that slaughter houses are full; none of this benefits either the artisan or the volume makers.

The value taken out of the market by endless milk price reductions, and the quick grasp of the major retailers to gain this and either pass it on

or boost margins, has seen more output and less cash downstream.

Cheddar, as the consumer market maker in price and the everyday purchase, has slithered lower and lower in value without any appreciable rise in volume. A slugging turf war between the retailer private label and major brands has seen the war first move one way then the other, and the shoppers simply buy the best bargain and show a willingness to be totally promiscuous. We can expect little change here in this broken model, and with Irish Cheddar mounting up in vast volume we can expect another bloodbath on the Cheddar front soon.

Contrast this with the ability of most regional and artisan cheese to hold their price, as well as a significant number of Continentals

too, and the dairy picture for the trade and consumer alike becomes very confusing.

The Cheddar mentality pervades the conscious thinking of so many that when the inevitable increase in Italian Parmigiano Reggiano arrives, as it must in the coming days and weeks, there will be howls of disbelief. Comté too has been struggling to meet demand both in France and in export on the best of quality, and no weakness is coming here.

The good news is that the shopper has money in their pockets, albeit they have become more savvy in the past three years and their judgements of value are more demanding than before.

Nobody ever loses the desire for new, especially when the spending power is released, so if there is something truly new and with a point of difference it may yet find traction even in these confusing times – so for some there is still reward in these tough periods.

Goats cheese continues to find growth, and at the recent Salon exhibition in France the overwhelming offers on soft and additive varieties was an indication of a moving trend.

There is a plethora of local British blue cheese now, all with fetching local names, and in the meantime

Long Clawson are flying the innovation flag for the favourite Blue Stilton with many new developments.

Now the news coming from various directions is of a variety of food frauds. These were first brought to light when experts found that chilli powder and other recognised ingredients were being adulterated at source, bringing the wrath of the technical brigade down on a whole new area of opportunity.

Meanwhile, across the Atlantic the USA authorities have alleged adulteration of Parmesan flakes in major retailers, with something akin to wood chipping said to be present. There is no defence for deliberate fraud complicity, but maybe part of culpability is the relentless driving down of prices on volume premium sectors, where for some makers perhaps the loss of major business may seem terminal. Hence cheating to meet unrealistic price expectations.

Cheating is not confined to those outside the UK. On journeys around the retailers of the world I have seen some best before dates on cheese that simply defy belief. Crumbly Territorials with nine months plus, blues with six months, additives with six months or more.

In one retailer I took off their own shelves a cheese from the UK and challenged them to taste it – the result was proof that someone is cheating the shopper with an appalling level of quality, and British exporters are complicit in it, even if asked to do it by the buyers.

I worry about the thoughts of people who buy this substandard product and then never revisit buying it because of that.

In a coming year with so much production, price and supply discord, for some there is a reward to be had, whilst no one has the right to commit fraud on the market or the shopper.

“ In a coming year with so much production, price and supply discord, for some there is a reward to be had, whilst no one has the right to commit fraud on the market or the shopper ”

News, opinion and comment from dairy insiders

# Barber's Unveils Modern New Look



**Somerset-based cheesemakers Barber's has rebranded its range of Cheddars to promote the product's provenance and quality.**

The brand formerly produced Barber's 1833, a West Country Farmhouse Cheddar, under its own individual brand and its other products under the Maryland Farm brand (named after the company's home), but is now positioning all the cheeses it makes under the Barber's 1833 label.

The rebrand is designed to reinforce its family credentials and give the entire range – including

Mellow, four months old; Mature, 12 months old; and Vintage, 18 months old – more relevance to the brand's successful Barber's 1833-branded cheese.

The newly-uniform brand name has been partnered with a fresh new look, pairing hand-etched illustrations of cows – to represent Barber's heritage – with a contemporary quality seal to represent the company's modern thinking.

Giles Barber said, "We felt that using the family name gave a more personal endorsement to the

consumer, and its success showed that people more readily connected with the family name rather than the name of the farm."

"We've tried to combine the key messages consumers will appreciate, so we're using hand-etched illustrations of all the cows that have featured in the business since we first began to reflect our heritage.

"The new look demonstrates that we embrace the best of both worlds, having both the tradition, ingredients and know-how to make the best cheese we can, and the technology to do it consistently."



## New Cornish Cheese Brands Hits Market

A soft cheese range has been launched by new Cornish cheese makers Curds & Croust, in a purpose-built dairy set up in the heart of west Cornwall.

Handcrafted from Cornish milk, this launch range consists of four artisan soft cheeses: a creamy soft Brie; a rich, bold and buttery Camembert; an earthy truffle Brie and a full-flavoured, cider-washed Brie with distinctive russet tones.

All cheeses will be made under the award-winning master cheesemaker Martin Gaylard, who has been dedicated to crafting prestige soft cheeses for 25 years.

Martin Gaylard, cheesemaker said, "I believe that being at one with the curd is vital to the making of any great cheese. This is only possible with artisan methods and the skills learnt over generations. Understanding the subtleties of the curd is the artistry of a master cheesemaker and it is this dedication which has been given to each of the cheeses in our range.

"Quality of the milk used is vital, and that is why we have worked in association with Rodda's to only use milk from their producer group which is carefully sourced from farms that are based within 30 miles of the dairy."



## Northumberland Landmark Inspires New Cheese

**The Northumberland Cheese Company has launched its first new cheese in six years, inspired by a landmark on the Blagdon Estate where the producer is based.**

Northumberlandia is a land sculpture which will benefit from sales of the new cheese, as a donation of the sales of the cheese will be donated to the Land Trust to help maintain the landmark.

The cheese is tangy and crumbly with a fresh taste, and encased in black wax as a nod to the mining legacy of the landmark.

Martin Atkinson, production manager at Northumberland Cheese said, "Northumberlandia has a high level of acidity, which lends itself to a crumbly texture, and a complex finish.

"To diversify our offering,

we wanted to experiment with maturation within a wax coat, and the result is a firm and creamy cheese, but with a slightly drier texture than some of our other farmhouse cheeses.

"Northumberlandia is a beautiful landmark, evolving through time, like the maturation of the cheese. We are confident Northumberlandia will become a mainstay on the cheese board as a quality cheese, inspired by this iconic 21st century image of Northumberland."

"The best biscuit for cheese out there"

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To nominate British cheese producers and retailers visit [www.greatbritishcheeseawards.com](http://www.greatbritishcheeseawards.com)

PETER'S YARD

## Norseland Drives Awareness with Deli Van

Norseland Ltd is hitting the road this summer with a new state-of-the-art deli van. The campaign, called The Big Cheese Melt Road Trip, is a new brand initiative that seeks to drive awareness and showcase the versatility of its three leading brands, Jarlsberg, Applewood and Mexicana.

The deli van, with the brand logos fully visible to consumers, comes with a fully-equipped kitchen, serving hatch and an on-the-go shop, making it the ideal vehicle to promote awareness and trial at food festivals and trade shows this summer.

Wrapped in eye-catching, vibrant colours alluding to the different taste profiles of each cheese, with the tag line 'Creamy... Smoky... Spicy... Which will YOU choose', the van is set to appeal to existing brand fans, as well as to bring in new customers to the category.

Lisa Harrison, UK brand manager for Norseland Ltd said, "It's all go for Norseland at the moment, with the launch of Jarlsberg Light earlier this month, and now The Big Cheese Melt Road Trip.

"We're looking forward to tempting consumers to try the

tasty Norseland range, and urging them to discover their favourite, whether creamy, smoky or spicy, which we're confident will then translate to in-store sales.

"We'll be rustling up hot cheesy delights for consumers to enjoy at food festivals, and will offer the options of paninis, wraps and toasties, as well as selling specially made bags of mixed cheese for consumers to take home and thereby increase the longevity of Norseland's brand presence.

"Over the coming months we're looking to introduce and re-establish relationships with over 100,000 shoppers through food festivals and shows, kicking off the tour at The Liverpool Food and Drink Spring Festival in April and the Nantwich show in July."

## Cheesemakers Join Forces

A group of some of Scotland's finest cheese makers have come together to raise the profile of Scottish cheese in Scotland as well as in British and export markets.

The group – named Fine Cheesemakers of Scotland – currently represents 33 cheesemakers from across Scotland, and has been awarded funding by the Community Food Fund which it will use to enhance the group members' innovation and communication.

It is working closely with the Dairy Growth Board and is supported by SAOS (via Think Local) and in time aims to work towards product innovation and improved routes to market for fine Scottish cheesemakers.

Jane Stewart of the St Andrews Farmhouse Cheese Company and chair of the Fine Cheesemakers of Scotland said, "The Fine Cheesemakers of Scotland aims to strengthen existing and develop new markets for quality Scottish cheese both in the UK and abroad. We will achieve this through collaborative learning, marketing and innovation, helping to further enhance Scotland's global reputation for amazing produce."

Anna Robertson from SAOS said, "SAOS is delighted to have worked with the cheesemakers to help form the organisation and financial support from the Community Food Fund has been particularly helpful. The

group are at a very exciting stage with a number of new initiatives and showcase events. Given the quality of the products and the enthusiasm of the cheesemakers, I think for the Fine Cheesemakers of Scotland – it is very much watch this space!"

"The group has recently been awarded funding by the Community Food Fund. This money will be used to hold two industry specific workshops for the members of the group to enhance their business development through innovation and communication. The group is supported by SAOS via Think Local and works closely with the Dairy Growth Board.

"Next stages for the group include learning journeys for further networking and knowledge transfer, working with academia on product innovation, and improving routes to market for quality Scottish cheesemakers."

## JUSTIN TUNSTALL RETAIL CONSULTANT



### "Raw! Huh yeah. What is it good for?"

Our dog, Dexter (the cereal killer), is fed a diet called Raw Meaty Bones. Akin to the 'paleo' regime for humans, the idea is that dogs should return to the foodstuffs available to their antecedent, the wolf. There's something attractive about the presumed authenticity of food as fuel, from a time before processing and genetic modification.

For years British shoppers were led to believe that eating unpasteurised dairy products was a little like playing Russian roulette – invigorating perhaps, but potentially harmful. Thankful a number of producers carried on making their cheese in exactly the same way they always had; distribution and availability became less widespread however. But there's been a fight back. Writers and bloggers have extolled the taste advantages of unpasteurised cheeses for a decade or more; pioneers like Joel Schneider have added to the British cheese canon with great cheeses like Stichelton, reimagining popular pasteurised varieties, but with unpasteurised milk.

Savvy consumers realise that there's a broader range of flavours to experience from unpasteurised cheeses and also that a little extra activity in the gut is possibly not a bad thing in an era when there's much finger-pointing about the growth in allergies. Certain unpasteurised cheeses are not taboo in pregnancy – it's worth looking at the latest recommendations from NHS Direct. Here's the current list, (reviewed in July 2015):

"Cheeses that are safe to eat during pregnancy: Hard cheeses are safe to eat during pregnancy, even if they're made with unpasteurised milk. These include: Cheddar, Edam, Emmentaler, Gouda, Gruyere, Jarlsberg, Parmesan, Stilton."

I take issue with the way that the examples are primarily of non-domestic cheeses – there's no mention of Red Leicester, Wensleydale, Cheshire and other territorials, but the broad range of endorsed cheeses is certainly an eye-opener for many expectant mothers. I recommend printing the sheet out to give to pregnant shoppers who may have been relying on over-cautious hearsay.

The truly great news for independent retailers is that consumers don't associate unpasteurised produce with supermarkets. When they seek it out, their first port of call is to delis and specialist retailers. Recently I helped a client decide on a launch range of cheeses for a new venture. We ensured that, wherever possible, we had an outstanding unpasteurised option for every class of cheese. A note of caution, though – many unpasteurised cheeses reveal their charms in a slow and subtle way, so if giving samples to shoppers, then allow time for them to 'get it'. These gems are unlikely to be delivering their characteristics in the first 2 or 3 seconds of mouth time.

"Raw. What's it good for?" Absolutely nothing? Nope – I'd say attracting customers with a point of difference!

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# PREVIEW: THE BRITISH CHEESE AWARDS 2016

Celebrating its first year under the ownership of the Royal Bath & West Show, the British Cheese Awards goes from strength to strength. Mike Pullin, chairman of the awards, previews the event



AMANDA STREATFIRD (DENHAY FARMS)  
NIGEL WHITE (BRITISH CHEESE BOARD)  
MIKE PULLIN (FORD FARM)



The Royal Bath & West Show is a fitting setting for the British Cheese Awards, offering even more opportunities for entrants and visitors alike. With a heritage in rural activities spanning centuries, the society was formed to encourage agriculture and commerce, and to provide a marketplace for countryside products. Where better then, to appreciate and reward excellence in the very best cheeses Britain can produce?

## Increased range of dairy classes

The four-day event comprises a range of activities to support, promote and champion the dizzying range of cheeses on show this year, with approximately 1,000 entries from producers across the UK. As well as the same classes and categories regulars to the event have seen in the past, this year the show includes an increased range of dairy product classes including butter, yoghurt and ice cream.



## Live judging day

To support the society's mission to help educate and inspire in every area of agriculture and production, judging day is now open to the public for the first time this year and visitors can see for themselves exactly what goes into choosing a winning cheese. While judging is taking place within the Cheese Hall, the public

will have plenty of opportunity to observe what's going on in a viewing area overlooking the judging by the entrance. Stewards will be on hand to answer questions and make observations about the judging, bringing the whole experience to life and encouraging tastings which are available throughout this fascinating four-day event.



## People's Choice Awards

The People's Choice Awards, taking place on Friday 3rd June, will give visitors the chance to get really involved in the event. Members of the public will be selected to judge a cheese, and an expert will teach them exactly what they should be looking for when evaluating the category cheeses – how the cheese looks from the outside, the smell, texture, consistency and taste are all the technicalities that the People's Judges will have to consider as part of the process. An opportunity like this, while great fun, also helps inform about the work and dedication that goes into cheese production.

## British Cheesemonger of the Year

Becoming a cheesemonger is more than learning how to operate a cheese wire. Understanding cheese varieties, plus how to care for and sell cheese is a skill that takes years to develop. At this year's show, we're testing eight nominated contestants to decide who is the British Cheesemonger of the Year. On Thursday 2nd June, eight contestants will take part in three rounds: Identify Territorial – taste and identify five cheeses; Cut & Wrap – five different weights from five whole cheeses; Quiz – five questions. This last round will be like Mastermind in style, putting all eight contestants under pressure to perform!

## Awards Dinner

As well as a great opportunity to educate the public about the fantastic range of cheeses we produce in the UK, the awards are, of course, a time to network and meet up with colleagues and friends within

## IN DETAIL

**WHAT:** The British Cheese Awards 2016

**WHERE:** The Showground, Shepton Mallet, Somerset BA4 6QN

**WHEN:** Wednesday 1st – Saturday 4th June

**WEB:** bathandwest.com

**By car:** The show is situated on the A371 between Shepton Mallet and Castle Cary. From the Bristol area, turn off at M32 and take the A37. From Devon or Cornwall, turn off at junction 23 off M5. From the East, take the M3, A303 or A371.

**By train:** Nearest stations – Bristol, Castle Cary, or Temple Combe. Website: nationalrail.co.uk

the industry and to celebrate their achievements. Another first for this year, the Awards Dinner will take place on the first night of the show, allowing those attending the Dinner to enjoy a day at the show and experience all that it has to offer beforehand, helping to create a real buzz about the day's events. With experts on hand to answer questions from the public and categories designed to award across the board, The British Cheese Awards are a recognised standard for British cheese and an award win here provides a great PR opportunity, endorsing winners to customers and peers alike.

**For entry forms, dinner tickets and details please contact Rachael Hann on [rachael.hann@bathandwest.co.uk](mailto:rachael.hann@bathandwest.co.uk) or tel no: 01749 822215.**



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# MEET THE PRODUCER

Karen Deans is managing director of newly-rebranded field fare, which produces top quality frozen foods for independent retailers

For time-pressed customers, high-quality frozen meals provide an attractive solution. Serving this market is field fare, "a frozen food specialist supplying premium fruit, veg, bakery, fish, ready meals, pies and desserts to farm shops, delis, garden centres and butchers nationwide," says managing director, Karen Deans. Karen and her small, friendly team are pioneers of the unique 'scoop your own' concept where customers are able to buy their food loose, meaning they choose how much they buy. Another advantage, Karen says, "is that there is minimal packaging and no food waste with our 'scoop your own range'. Some of our more recent launches are sold in c-pet trays with branded sleeves, e.g. our ready meals range."

Shoppers, she says, "are always looking for convenient products for when they haven't got time to prepare a meal from scratch. Our ready meals are of the highest quality, use Red Tractor Meat and include 25% more meat than our competitors. Recipes have been inspired from around the world and include dishes such as Green Thai Chicken Curry, Lamb Tagine, Lancashire Hotpot and family favourites like Cottage Pie and Lasagne. These meals really are at the top-end when it comes to quality and taste homemade, but offer all the convenience required from a ready prepared meal. We are so confident about the taste and quality of our ready meals that we are prepared to offer new customers a case of c-pet tray ready meals for them to try in-store for free!"

Wherever possible, field fare sources British ingredients. "The meat used in many of our ready meals is British, as are a number of our fruits," Karen says. "Our peas and potatoes are from Yorkshire and our

fish cakes and Coquille St Jacques are from Devon. If we need to go a little further afield to source an ingredient, this is to ensure we have a top quality, authentic product e.g. our all-butter croissants are made in France."

### Next phase

The company has recently rebranded. "We are very excited about our brand refresh," Karen says. "We felt our existing branding needed modernising as the retail environment is such a dynamic place; you need to keep up with it! We have worked

really hard to incorporate key messages to portray the uniqueness, great taste and quality of field fare and have taken advice from a number of our customers (some of whom have been with us for over 20 years!). We have worked really hard to create a brand that can be adapted to fit all freezer models and sizes. The next phase will be to refresh our packaging, which we are just starting to work on now, and we are revamping our field fare website."

The range is a perfect fit with existing lines in delis and farm shops,

Karen says. field fare's range "enables retailers to offer fruit and vegetables that may not be in season, so offering a year-round choice. Having such a large range of field fare products also means retailers are able to simplify the buying process as they only

need to deal with one supplier. We offer impactful branding for freezers, recipe-inspired backboards using our own commissioned photography of field fare products and retail-compliant POS labels. In addition to this, field fare runs marketing activity including regional in-store campaigns, advertising, email campaigns, blogs, competitions, branded website and social media supporting our stockists and engaging field fare consumers. We are also planning an in-store campaign, with a number of stores, to further drive sales." The company offers free delivery on 25 cases, but can deliver less and invoice pro-rata for the cost of delivery.

"We are really pedantic about our service and also the quality of our products," Karen says. "Our broad range means one order, one delivery and one invoice. This ties in with the advice given by Paul Hargreaves in his recent article about how retailers should cut down on the number of suppliers and use a wholesaler." Future plans for field fare, she says, will include "rolling out our new branding for our freezers over the coming months. The next phase will be to refresh our packaging, which we are just starting to work on now. We are also updating our website to make it more consumer-friendly and in keeping with our new brand image." The company will be "looking at new lines and continue to add these throughout the year. Most recently, two new potato lines have been added, and another three new lines are under consideration for launch after Easter."



“ The range is a perfect fit with delis and farm shops and enables retailers to offer fruit and vegetables not in season ”

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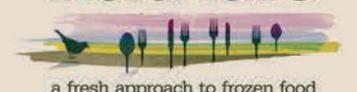
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## Doing their shop-fitting in-house and a deep involvement with the local community has proven a successful recipe for Smiths Farm Shops

FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLES WELCOME CUSTOMERS TO THE CHAPEL BRAMPTON SHOP



The most important consideration in opening a farm shop is location, says Adrian Smith, who owns Smiths Farm Shops. "The main shop is at Chapel Brampton, where our farm is, on the Northern edge of Northampton," Adrian says. "We then have a smaller shop at Great Billington, on the eastern side of Northampton. The main shop's location is good and has got better as the area has been developed. We have been very fortunate in that we have grown with Northampton."

The shop has traditional roots. "Fifty years ago, my father was an out-and-out market gardener. He started selling retail to get a better price for his produce," Adrian says. "He began with a barrow of strawberries at the farm gate and an honesty box. Then, as people asked for other things, we put some veg out and this led to us starting a shop and becoming more professional about it. We converted a stable which we opened around 20 years ago. It remained like that

COVERED EXTERIOR SPACE PROVIDES EXTRA STORAGE



for a while, as my father's main interest was farming, not retailing. My mother ran the shop on her own and we sold purely fruit and veg, supplementing what we didn't grow ourselves from Leicester Wholesale Market. Then, some fifteen years ago, we scaled down the agricultural side of things and looked more consciously at the retailing. We have expanded the shop since then."

The present premises were converted from "asbestos-roofed Dutch barns, which aren't very attractive, no matter what you do

with them," Adrian says. "I built the shingle-clad porch to serve two purposes, firstly to store some of the outdoor stock and secondly, to shield the ugly barn behind it. Inside, we've put up false timbers and clad or painted steel beams brown to give them a timber effect. Over time, we have turned what was an agricultural barn into something which is more like an established and olde worlde barn. We built all of our own shop fittings and have our own workshop. I employ someone full-time to look after the farm and build the fittings, so all

of our checkouts and displays are bespoke. This works very well for us and gives us an edge, allowing us to really work the space."

The shop's layout has improved over time. "We have refitted or remodelled the shop over the years, because this has been one of the biggest problems. As you expand, the shop does not always evolve in the most sensible manner, in terms of shopping and directing people around. We got to a stage where we had sweet and savoury biscuits on opposite sides of the shop and the sweet biscuits weren't anywhere near the cakes. It wasn't making much sense, so at the end of last year we rethought it. The new layout upset the customers, just as it does in supermarkets when they change things around but we've only had to do it once and now they are used to it, it works much better. We had to move the checkouts around the corner and that works great; before that, people were queuing through the shop and preventing other people shopping. We have

also extended the car park. We don't yet have a café but we will definitely do that once we have our tenancy sorted."

### Price conscious

The Smiths opened the second shop seven years ago. "It was a bit of a gamble at first," Adrian says. "It's a smaller shop and has about 20% of what we have here so we have to be very selective in our offering. It's a slightly different market and so we have to tailor things a little bit differently too. This shop is close to a very large caravan park where there are a lot of residential and holiday caravans. This means that you can't do big bags of frozen food because everyone has smaller freezers over there. We have to be a little bit more price conscious, too. We work with the same stock, just less of it. It works very well as a business. There are two staff and in terms of labour, it's quite a tight little unit."

Fruit and vegetables remain cornerstones of the Smiths Farm

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Shop operations. "We still sell produce grown on the farm, but we focus on niche crops that make the most of their freshness and the fact that they are grown on the doorstep," Adrian says. "We've got two acres of new potatoes which I sell through the shop. I don't look to wholesale anything because we are not that mechanised, and retail is what I want to do. We also grow and sell broad beans, asparagus (which I think my father was the first in the county to grow) some spring and summer veg and pumpkins, which used to be a really big thing for us before the supermarkets hammered them in the last few years."

"Fresh fruit and veg welcomes you when you walk in the shop," he says, "and then you come to the frozen section, where we offer a full range. We have quite a big packing department, so we buy in and vac-pack or pack down things like fish, which is one of our main lines of frozen foods. We can offer people just one piece of fish rather than having to go to a supermarket and buy a kilo of it. Some of the old customers appreciate that."

The shop's bread is supplied by "a traditional local bakery in Northampton. It's lovely to be able to offer traditional old-style bread. We have a dairy section and are very fortunate to still have a dairy which bottles its own milk. Then we have a range of about 65 cheeses from across the board. We do try and focus on local and British cheese but as with the delicatessen, you have to go further afield too, so we have a full range of French, German, and other cheeses. Our top selling cheeses are the West Country Cheddars:



people like good, strong vintage Cheddars." A local butcher supplies hams "which he cooks and we slice in the deli and serve. He also makes pies and pates and these work very well for us."

### Free-from

Getting his stock right was difficult to begin with and "it never stops being difficult," Adrian says. "We obviously have till systems that we can look at and see what is happening with the stock but they don't tell you what to start with and which way to go. In the early days it was more difficult because you had to source it all, whereas now we tend to be showered with things. Producers will naturally want us to sell their things because they are now more aware of who we are, and we are now more of a catch for a produce. This isn't to say that we don't go out and look for it and we find that side of things interesting.

"One of the lines that we have focused on and increased in the last couple of years is the free-

from sector. This is very well suited to what we do. There are so many free-from products that supermarkets don't want to bother with. It works very well when it is stocked right, which I think we do. We are still learning about it; some lines work and some don't. We chop and change until we get it right. Pulses and rice add colour to the shelves and are a perfect addition to our base shop. We are now pulling people in who weren't reaching before, so that is a really good side to the business and something that we will be looking at expanding. So many of the free-from producers are little, niche businesses that can't deal with the multiples, so it's good to get them in and offer them direct to the customer, as we do."

Adrian grew up on the farm and was always interested in food, he says. However, "I felt that I wasn't using all my creative abilities on the farm, so the farm shop has been quite good. I didn't anticipate remaining on the farm but it has



worked out very well." The shop is now run by Adrian and his mother and sister, who are all partners in the concern. The shop employs 30 staff and presently sees around three and half thousand visitors every week. Customers, Adrian says, will travel to the shop from within a fifteen mile radius. "We catch a lot that are travelling into Northampton, but we are not one of these shops that try to catch the tourist trade. Our trade is so regular that I can guarantee what I am going to take next Saturday. This means that we know where we are. It's regular because we offer very realistically-priced fruit and vegetables and other stuff, and we don't work on silly margins or rely on impulse. The same shoppers come in and fill their trolleys or baskets." A KuneKune pig, Quessant sheep and Adrian's father's old Massey Ferguson tractor offer distractions

for shoppers with children in tow. It's an added attraction, Adrian says, although "we do occasionally get people who see the animals, take photos on the tractor and then get back in the car and go."

The farm shop has close ties with the local community. "We try to do that," Adrian says. At Smiths Farm Shop in Chapel Brampton, people are given the use of plots of land on which they can grow what they please. "We've had schools, scouts and other childrens groups take pieces of land, allotments that they can easily drive up to and use. They can use the facilities at the farm, the toilet and so forth. We prepare and plough the land and they can do as they like with it. We also do tours for schools. It's good to get people out into the countryside. It's surprising how little they know. I'm very happy for them to come and get involved in the countryside."

“ The free-from sector is very well suited to what we do. There are so many free-from products that supermarkets don't want to bother with ”

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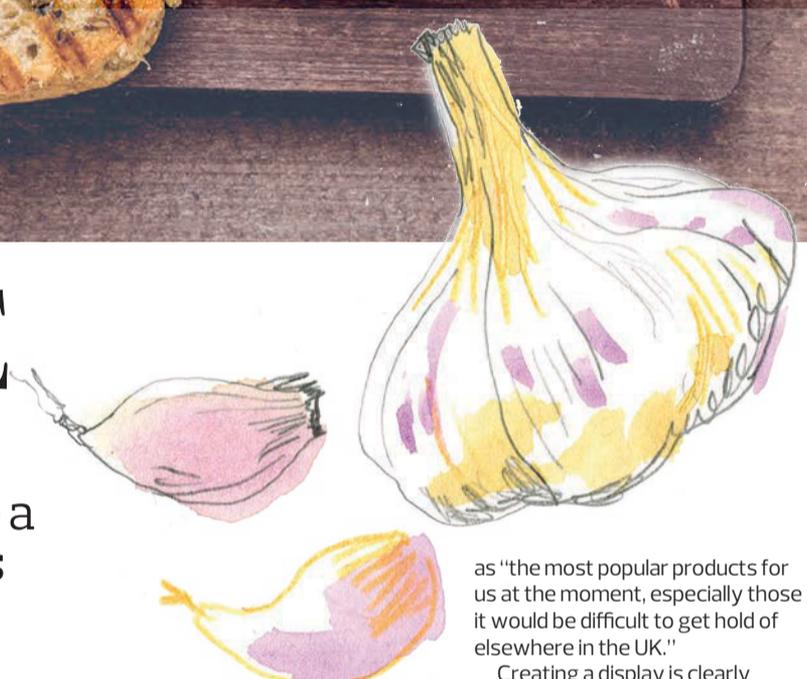
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# FRENCH FARE

It's widely recognised as one of the world's finest cuisines, yet French food is yet to make a big impact on British retail. Here, the experts explain why it should



**F**rench food has long been considered to be one of the finest cuisines in the world, but in Britain its food and drink has all too often been overlooked in favour of that of its European neighbour, Italy, in independent retailers across the UK. Perhaps it's the visceral image of frogs legs and snails, commonly unpopular in Britain, which has put consumers off, but it would appear that image is being shaken off – not least thanks to young, French-run restaurants recently opening in London to critical acclaim.

Here, three pre-eminent retailers explain why the British public should give French food a shot – and when they have, what they enjoy and what you should stock. We also speak to a fine food distributor, who shares their ideal French feast.



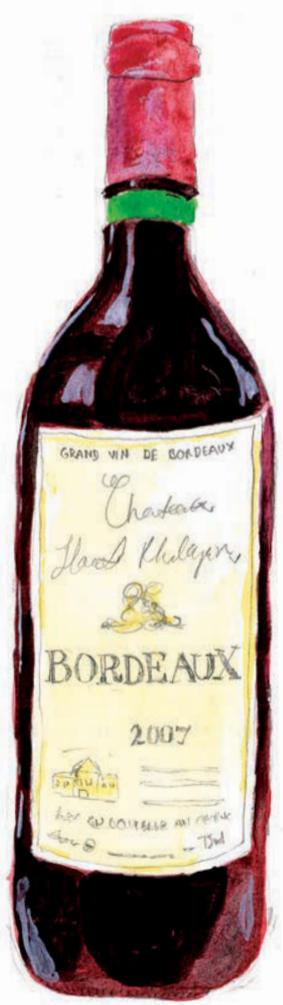
At Le Pascalou on London's Fulham Road, Vincent Saladin has been flying the flag for French food since it first came to London. "We sell everything

except for French meat," he says, "including French yoghurt, cheese, butter, ice cream, groceries including mustard, vinegars, spices, sardines and wines as well as ready-to-eat meals such as boef bourgignon." Fresh food is also a strong seller for Le Pascalou, Vincent says: "We also sell charcuterie, pâtés and hams, and outside we have a display of fruit and veg." It's this fresh display which could be partly to thank for the deli's success, as Vincent describes them

as "the most popular products for us at the moment, especially those it would be difficult to get hold of elsewhere in the UK."

Creating a display is clearly a passion for Vincent, as future projects include a pancake stand ("for fun and for children to enjoy"), as well as freshly-ground coffee for customers to drink on the go.

There is most definitely a place for French food in the speciality food sector, Vincent says, although he admits that his deli is ideally positioned. "In the surrounding areas to us, there are people who travel to France quite a lot, whether it be Nice and Monaco in the summer or skiing in the winter, and they get a taste for French food – for example really great French mayonnaise." Vincent is more than happy to oblige. "People travelling in the south of France enjoy the big markets there, where there are huge stalls with everything you could want on them," he says. "People miss that when they come back to the UK. They particularly enjoy the ambience of the markets over there, and that is what we try to recreate at Le Pascalou."



### Selling French Cheese with Leo Guarnieri of Androuet



**When British citizens travel in France they get to experience small scale cheese production.** Then, when they are back in Britain and come across French cheese, it brings back positive memories. 30 years ago

there were not many truly great cheeses made in the UK, including West Country Farmhouse Cheddar, so I believe most people believed that they had to turn to France for fantastic cheese.

**We make a point of respecting the seasonality of cheeses, stocking small production cheeses which are only available for few months of the year.** We are here to advise our customer, and it doesn't matter to us if they are not a "connoisseur" or not – we are simply here to create the most memorable experience.

**My favourite French cheese is St Nicolas De la Dalmerie; it's made by monks in the South of France using ewe's milk.** It's raw and made on a really small scale so it's very special. On a more general scale, our best-sellers are Mont D'Or, Brie de Meaux and Bleu d'Auvergne.

**When it comes to pairing, Ossau-Iraty goes brilliantly with black cherry jam, while goat's cheese is delicious with quince.** Also, most French cheeses can be paired with white truffle honey. Fresh grapes are really nice to cut the flavour between different cheeses, and regarding crackers/bread: the preference is yours. When it comes to wine pairings, I recommend choosing a wine from the region where the cheese is from. Do try to avoid wine with lots of tannins, though.

**What do you think of the British versions of French-style cheeses?** I think Tunworth is really well made and tasty, but if you compare the price to a Camembert de Normandie (raw, cow's milk), the difference is too big.

## 5 MINUTES WITH...

### John Shepherd, managing director of Partridges



#### WHAT FRENCH PRODUCTS DO YOU SELL?

We have a wide range of French speciality, regional and everyday products. We sell a wide variety of produce including: French cheese, meat, charcuterie, yoghurts, biscuits, drinks, mustards, jarred vegetables, escargot, and, of course, wines.

#### WHICH ARE THE MOST POPULAR?

One of the most popular French ranges we do is the La Belle Chaurienne selection of ready meals, and the very popular duck

confit sandwiches which we sell every Saturday at the Partridges food market in Duke of York Square.

#### WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO STOCK?

Creperolles bacon – a we have a great demand for this product but it is proving very difficult (almost impossible) to get it from our supplier.

#### WHAT'S NOT SELLING AS WELL AS YOU EXPECTED IT TO?

Crustamor (Bretagne) products: rillettes de truite fumes, salmon rillettes and trout rillettes – we stock them but they are very slow sellers.



“ There is absolutely an audience for French food in the UK – it is one of the most world renowned cuisines and probably every British person could name at least one French food ”

## FROM THE DISTRIBUTOR...

### Marion Lebreton, brand manager at Empire Bespoke Foods, talks us through her ideal French meal

At Empire Bespoke Foods, we are passionate about distributing specialist food products with authenticity and provenance from around the world, and offer a wide selection of prestigious French products for your delectation.

With the arrival of sunny days, our traditional lemonade La Mortuacienne is a perfect refreshment. Produced in the purest tradition since 1921, with water from the local city, natural flavourings and sugar, La Mortuacienne offers a range of seven fruity flavours.

Our range also includes the essentials to prepare a perfect French meal: start with our Marie Amelie and Marine Gourmet range of traditional French fish soups and accompaniments, made using only the best fish and seafood from the Mediterranean Sea. Otherwise,

choose Charles Basset's premium canned tuna. Charles Basset produces some of the finest tuna in the world. Manufactured by Chancerelle, a French cannery which has been in operation since 1853, Charles Basset tuna are MSC-certified.

Carry on with some mushrooms produced by Borde. Located in the heart of Massif Central, Borde offers a range of exquisite chanterelles, porcins and wild forest mushrooms, all of which have been gathered by hand, then meticulously sorted and hand-packed. To go with the mushrooms, cook some finest Burgundy Snails, produced by the family-run company Sabarot, perpetuating its ancestral know-how. Finally, season your meal with our co-operative salt, Le Guérandais, produced with the same methods as

those used in the 9th Century: the salt is simply sorted and sieved to ensure consistent quality.

With the coming of barbecue season, our authentic Fallot Mustard and Delouis mayonnaises will go perfectly with grilled meat. Fallot has produced authentic Beane mustard since 1840, using mustard seeds that are selected for quality and still ground as they have been for centuries, utilising traditional methods. The French manufacturer Delouis has a selection of succulent mustards and sauces. This all-natural range contains no artificial preservatives or flavours. The mayonnaises are made to authentic French recipes with no added water and taste as good as homemade.

All year round, our little weakness is the Filet Bleu Salted Caramel Sablé. Le Filet Bleu Breton biscuits, established in Brittany in 1920, uses carefully selected ingredients to offer a range of delicious flavours. If you're not a fan of Salted Caramel, you can satisfy your tastebuds with the Lemon Sablé, the Dark Chocolate Butter Biscuit or the Butter Shortbread with Guérande Sea Salt.

“ We believe French food will continue to have a strong future in the UK. British people want to experience new products from across the channel. French cuisine is still relevant now, as a lot of people who taste these flavours during their holidays want to experience them at home as well. Bon appétit! ”



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# Retail School

Paul Clapham explains how to make grant funding work for you

If you are looking seriously at expansion or aiming to start up a new food business, £300 million is available if the business you are planning is located in rural England. This is newly available money which could cover 40% of your set up costs, and could well persuade you to firm-up your expansion plans.

Many people look at such promises with scepticism, not to say cynicism. Which is why it's always somebody else who gets that money. But government bodies at all levels do have grants available as long as you, the potential grantee, fit the requirements.

That is one of the key barriers that stops people applying for a grant. Just what are the requirements and how do I find out about them? Also, those requirements can seem odd, but that's the deal if you want free money.

The reality is that you have to do a chunk of research. That research will take you into the nuts and bolts of government, since that's where grant moneys come from.

Recognise that banks, as commercial operations with a profit to make, publicise themselves as a source of business finance, whereas grant providers have no such need. You have to find them.

At the same time, those grant providers are required to give out the money they have available. Failure to do so is not success. Again, this is quite different from banking practise.

Next, recognise that this is not uniform on a national basis. What is available to John Smith & Sons in Lancashire may well be quite different to what Fred Smith & Sons, just over the border in Yorkshire, can apply for. The local variations in grant provision are one of the frustrations that put people off this source of finance.

## What can the grant funding support?

The grant funding is primarily focused on the capital costs of setting up a business. To ensure that the application can be audited, the RPA has limited support in areas where the items could easily be removed or are viewed as standard.



Ineligible items would therefore include standard computers and laptops, fixtures and some fittings. Also, only costs incurred after the grant is approved and contracted would be eligible and if you start a project before approval it will be viewed that the project does not need grant funding.

## Is it worth the effort?

If you choose to apply for funding you will primarily have to deal with a delay in the project commencing.

Under LEADER support projects you should expect a four month approval process, and under the Growth fund it could be longer still. When applying for the funding you will need to complete applications forms, create a business plan and get at least three quotes for all costs.

If you are successful you will have to continue the business for at least five years after the last grant payment, and you will be subject to inspections and audits by the RPA.

But if you are successful, a 40% contribution to a business's start up could make a very big difference to the business's overall success, especially at the outset.

## So where do you start?

I recommend a phone call to your county council to start with. I spoke to my own (Kent) and got a lot of very useful input, such as grant funding can start at the community level but can go national, indeed international. This can result in information overload but, to repeat my original point, who expects free money to be easy money?

Since this process is an investment in the future of your business, you may well be thinking 'I need an expert – just as you would do if investing the profits in a pension fund or, indeed, selling the business.

If you read last month's column on this subject you might well have noticed that funding under the

LEADER scheme (the one for smaller projects) allows you to include costs of a facilitator in your plans. Therefore, in such cases, a LEADER facilitator looks like what you want. You may not like the civil servant-speak but you have to live with it.

I spoke at some length to Michael Mack of Savills, a big name in rural development. He has been involved as a consultant helping people to access grant moneys for some ten years. Location of such a consultant is less important than level of expertise and track record, but you may still prefer someone in your area.

As well as the usual internet searches (remember that term LEADER facilitator), talk to your accountant, especially if he focuses on a rural area. You could also go back to your county council and find out from the relevant department if any local consultant(s) regularly sits across the desk from them with a client.

“ If you are successful, a 40% contribution to a business's start up could make a very big difference to the business's overall success, especially at the outset ”

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# MEET THE BUYER

Jeroboam's Holland Park deli is the flagship shop of seven smart London stores. Manager, Kathy Hodgekinson explains what makes it special

**J**eroboams is a chain of London delis and wine merchants. Six operate under the Jeroboams brand and one retains its former name of Mr Christian's. Two of the stores now sell large ranges of cheese and deli goods, together with broad selections of wine. Manager of the flagship Jeroboams in Holland Park is Kathy Hodgekinson, who tells *Speciality Food* about the shop's prime location and the importance of being part of an area which is known for its independent stores.

"We have a fantastic vegetable shop around the corner, bakeries, and a great butcher. We started off primarily selling cheese and wine, but the range has grown to include everything else." Her customers are "very selective" she says. "They like to shop locally and they like to shop in independent stores, so they really support us." The shop has the appearance of a well-kept, interesting-looking independent. "We are always having people stop and take pictures and we get comments on the pleasing appearance of the shop. We have attractive window displays which we change every month, generally with a theme. The overall effect is smart and upmarket."

The Holland Park shop opened in 1985, Kathy says, and "there are seven shops in the chain, including Mr Christian's in Elgin Crescent." This store retained its name after it joined the group "because it is quite a famous shop. They do similar products to us, but they have a kitchen so they do meals and a lot of outside catering as well. The other shops are wine only." Kathy runs Holland Park as a seven-day operation with a staff of eight, and offers customers a 60-strong range of cheeses. "We sell cheeses from France, Spain, Switzerland, Italy and worldwide," she says. "We are selling increasing amounts of English and Irish cheese, too." The most popular cheeses here are the classics: Comté aged Gruyère and Brie de Meaux. British cheeses selling well include "fantastic Cheddars such as Montgomery, but Wigmore and Waterloo are also very popular. We are selling more sheep's and goat's milk cheeses." The strongest-selling blue, Kathy says, "is probably the Roquefort, then the Stilton. That is always popular here and all year round, too. The Brie de Meaux sells very well too. It's a nice soft one which



everyone loves. Seasonal cheeses such as Vacherin do well. We also have some Scottish cheeses that we have just taken on. One is a ewe's milk cheese from Fern Abbey, which is very good indeed."

## Wine selection

Also playing an important part in Jeroboam's Holland Park business is its wine department. "Our wine selection is vast," Kathy says. "We stock wines from all over the world and we also have a fine wine selection

We have a private sales team and a team of buyers which is constantly finding new wines. It's quite a large department. People can always find something different that's not available in the supermarket aisles." Wine is often used to cross-sell the cheese and deli goods. "Last weekend, we had some New World Pinot Noir on tasting which we matched with three differently-aged Comtés. That was very interesting – people generally picked up some cheese with the wine. Some tastings are producer-led, which are especially popular; customers do like to meet the person behind the product. We have cheese on tasting daily, sometimes charcuterie and olive oils as well. Just now, we have a very nice, organic Italian olive oil called Casaloste. About 70% of people who try the product, buy it. Quite often, they don't buy it on the day but they will remember it, come back and ask for the product we had on taste on Friday or whenever."

The shop, Kathy says, is "always on the lookout for new cheeses and new products." "People contact us daily with their products and we invite them to send them in. We have

a tasting and and might give the products a try. They don't always work: sometimes we will have a product for a while and then drop it, but we do try to give everything a chance." Beyond its cheese and wine, the shop sells Spanish, Italian and English charcuterie. Average basket spend at Jeroboams, Kathy estimates, is around £21.

Well-trained and highly-knowledgeable staff are essential



for success, Kathy says. "If staff are helpful, friendly and trusted by your customers, you will increase your sales." Most of Kathy's staff have been with her for a long time, because, she says, "it's a nice place to work. You have to treat your staff much like you treat your customers. I usually bend over backwards to give them time off for holidays. I like to treat them well and they respond by staying with us." Finding good staff is easier than it was, Kathy says, because of a change in the perception of cheese-selling. "A lot of people now think that working in a cheese shop is glamorous," she says. "When I advertised a position 20 years ago, I would only get a few applicants. Now I now get inundated with people wanting to work in cheese." Staff are sent on "various courses," on farm visits and even to Champagne to learn about wine. "Jeroboam's," Kathy says, "is all about the products, the service and the great location."



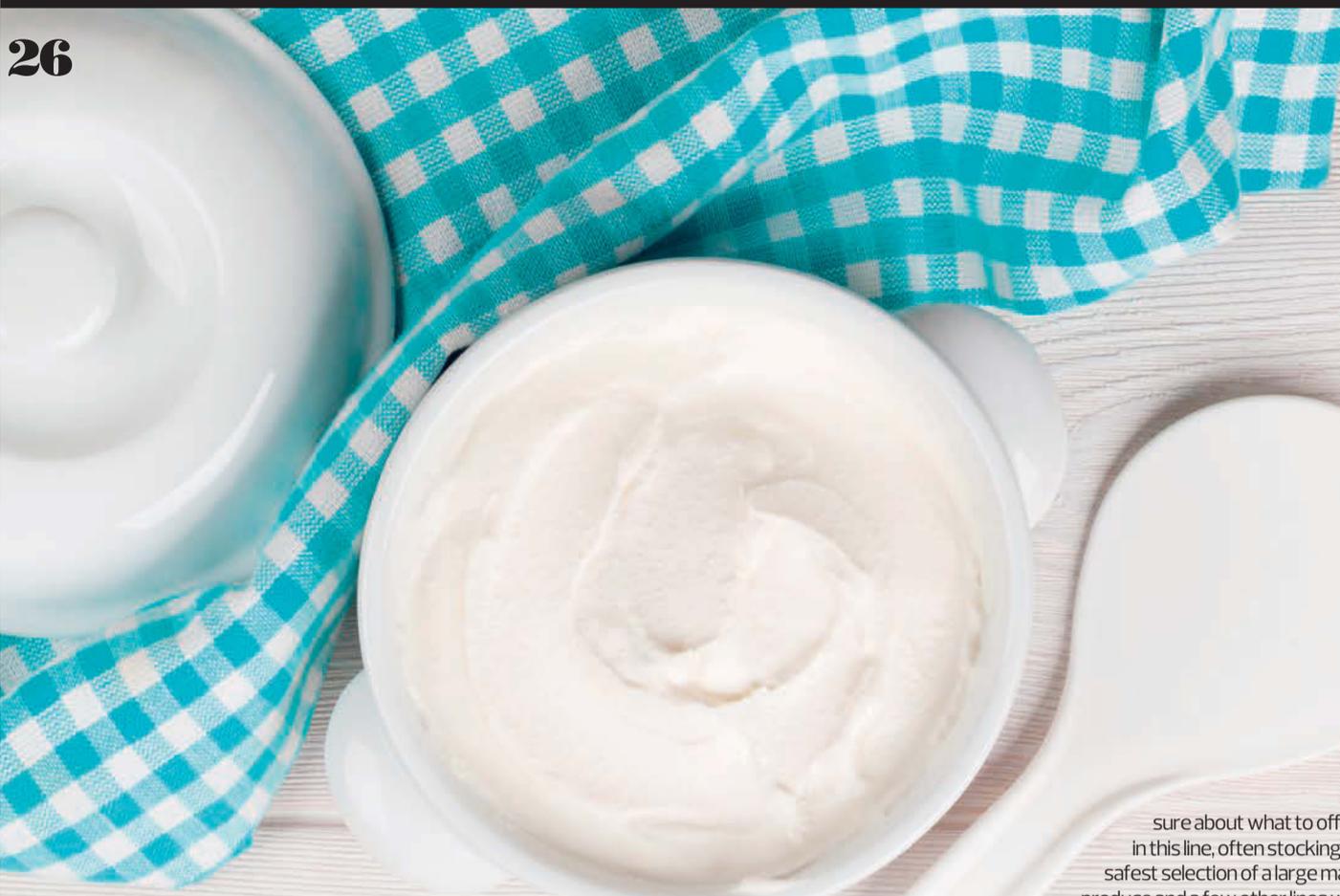
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# CREAM OF YOUR STOCK

A strong showing of artisanal yogurt, cream and other dairy produce can give you another edge on the supermarkets

**A** chiller cabinet which is filled with interesting variations on expected products can become a destination in your shop as well as another feature to draw in customers. It's not only artisan cheese, pâtés and charcuterie which can be profitably sold from these. They are also places in which you can

make strong displays of artisanal, traditional butters, clotted and other creams and also of local and artisan yogurts. Artisanally-made butter has a taste that's miles apart from the mass-produced, run of the mill butters. The same can be said of good, artisan and clotted cream and this latter product has the obvious

advantage of lending itself for cross-selling with strawberry jam and scones for a cream tea, an essential offering if you are located by the sea, in the West Country or anywhere of interest to tourists. It's worth your while making an effort with your yogurt offering, too. Supermarkets never seem too

sure about what to offer in this line, often stocking the safest selection of a large maker's produce and a few other lines which seem to be there as experiments.

One maker of artisan butter and cream with a strong presence in the independents is Rodda's, whose "authentic farmhouse

butter has an unmistakably smooth, thick texture and traditional marbling coloration throughout," says managing director Nicholas Rodda. "Traditionally churned and hand-wrapped, our butter has nothing but a little salt added, and nothing is taken away, so you have a product which looks and tastes of indulgent



luxury. We only use Cornish milk from farms that are especially selected from within 30 miles of our creamery. Manufacturing processes have altered over the years to enable us to guarantee consistency, hygiene and longer shelf life, but nothing is ever added to Rodda's cream and nothing is ever taken away. And importantly, the traditional methods used still closely resemble the production techniques adopted by the Rodda family five generations ago. Our Cornish clotted cream has a distinctive golden crust and silky underneath."

Sales of both products have been aided by a change in their perception by customers, Nicholas says. "People are becoming increasingly aware of the provenance of the products that they are buying and enjoying and this is certainly the case with both our artisan butter and Cornish clotted cream. All of our products are made with natural ingredients – this is an important value for many of our consumers. We have seen significant growth in both our butter and Rodda's Cornish clotted cream sales. There has also been a move away from margarine, and traditional butter is benefiting from this. Also, cream tea sales have increased dramatically and are forecast to increase by 30% over the next couple of years. We also believe that the investment we have put into our brand is an important factor in our continued growth."

## Fresh tasting



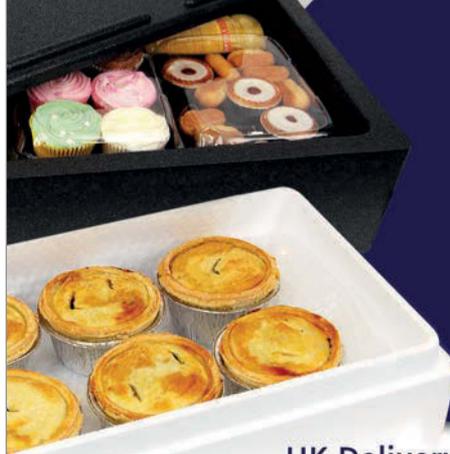
Noting an upswing in demand for artisan butter is Debbie Levisseur, dairy sales manager of Bodnant Dairy. Our product is different, she says,



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because "we are following a traditional Welsh recipe, using local Welsh cream and making everything by hand. The butter is produced in small batches, with the churning done in a traditional way. We add 1.3% salt and we hand-pat, shape and wrap all of our butter."

This results in taste which is markedly different from that of mass-produced butters, she says. "When we have taken it to shows the customer reaction is always very good," Debbie says. "We sample it on hot toast and customers will often say something like, 'that reminds me of when my gran used to make it in her farmhouse.' It's that sort of reaction. People say that you can't get that taste from run of the mill butters. Ours is a fresh-tasting butter. When it's first made, it has a light, fresh taste, with the creaminess coming through and little salty pockets as well. As it matures, it ripens and becomes a little bit more golden in colour and the flavour becomes more pronounced. It's a little like maturing cheese – butter does a similar thing. Making it by hand, we get the flavour, and also marbling in the butter. Customers quite like the fact that it has been made by hand."

It's an ideal product for farm shops and delis, Debbie says, who like to have locally and handmade, artisan-looking products. They want to offer something different from the supermarkets. Because we are wrapping in wax paper, the product looks traditional as well. It is not a mass-produced block that is perfectly wrapped." Butter, Debbie says, is "having a bit of a comeback. A lot of people went to margarine because of the proclaimed health benefits, but I think a little bit of what you fancy does you good. People appreciate the flavour far more than spreads that they have to spread thickly before

any flavour comes through. They appreciate that they don't need to put as much on to get a lovely flavour"

Retailers can increase awareness of artisan butters by "pointing out its handmade credentials" and suggesting its many applications, which include cooking where, Debbie says, "it works very well as a finishing butter. for glazing vegetables, running through hot pasta and simply adding to mashed potato." Sampling works very well, she adds. "Once customers actually taste it, then most are sold on it."

The cheesemakers Appleby's produces a whey butter. "The whey we use is a bi-product of our raw cow's milk Cheshire cheese process," says Sarah Appleby. "Instead of considering the whey as waste and the curds as the valuable element of milk, we have long wanted to return to extracting the remaining fats to make another product (think Ricotta). We produce only approximately 15kg per make. Whey butter is unique in that it has been a part of the early stages of the cheesemaking process – it contains the starter cultures that begin the fermentation process." One of the reasons why whey products are quite rare, she says, "is because of the quantities involved."

"The butter itself has a beautiful deep straw colour due to the natural colouring annatto that we use to make our coloured Cheshire. The texture is creamy and soft, but not greasy or waxy. The flavour is that of our raw milk – delicious dairy tones, sweet, mineral, grassy and fresh."

A continental flavour can be added to chiller cabinets by opting for Douceur de France butters from Entremont. These are made in two regions of France, the Auvergne and Quimper in Eastern Brittany, by

farmers working in co-operatives. These top-quality butters, made by traditional French butter-making techniques, are available in attractively-wrapped rolls, both salted and unsalted.

Chris Timotheou's Greek heritage has given his range of products authenticity, he says. Chris, managing director of Tims Dairy Limited, says that the yogurts use "fresh British milk, natural ingredients, live and bio-live cultures and 67 years experience."



With the benefit of tradition and experience we think of ourselves as skilled craftsmen in the manufacture of Greek-style, wholemilk and low fat yogurt." This is important, he says, because "consumers are increasingly aware of the provenance and production methods used in making the foods they eat. Artisan yogurt is the result of carefully selected and purely natural, fresh ingredients of known provenance, combined with skill and expertise in manufacture."

The yogurts can be ordered in a range of flavours and sizes. "Our bio-live yogurts are available in Greek style, and live yogurts in wholemilk and low fat varieties, all in natural and in fruit flavours. Large 450g and 500g pot sizes, including a new 450g Greek style with Raspberry, are perfect for family sharing, whilst the medium 150g, 175g and 200g pots make great individual servings. Eye-catching stand-out packaging with coloured foil lids and on-label back stories offer a great shelf presence. Tims Dairy believes in supporting stockists with sampling sessions, point of sale materials, recipe booklets and a good 'where to buy' section on the website.



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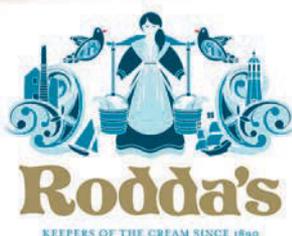


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# SUMMER SELLING

Think fresh, chilled and portable when stocking for the warmer months ahead

**W**ith the evenings now light, the warmer days approaching and the garden inviting, it's time to think about the various possibilities presented by meals taken out of doors. Al fresco eating gathers together a wide selection of goods which can be promoted for eating in the garden or packed for a picnic. Some of these items will be easier to shift in larger numbers when seen as ingredients of a pleasant supper under the stars or as one of many delicacies to be found in a picnic hamper.

There is necessarily some overlap with the barbecue sector (about which more can be read in the feature in this issue) and both selling devices happily push salad dressings, sauces, salads themselves and more. That said, with al fresco we are mainly talking about the cold collations

and accompaniments which lend themselves to being sold under this umbrella.

For customers looking for a quick solution to impromptu evening eating or an easy-to-prepare lunch, then a selection of ready-made salads will be snapped up on warm days. Link these to your hams and charcuterie by positioning your promotion in their proximity, or make a centrepiece of a leg of ham, about which you can group your olives, hummus, pâtés, dressings, mustards, chutneys, pickles, condiments and so on.

Now is a very good time to draw attention to your summer, goat's and ewes milk cheeses, too. Bear in mind that the UK now produces cheeses which can compete with and replace Feta in Greek salads. Artisan breads and butters, extra virgin olive oils and balsamic vinegars (see our oils,

dressings and vinegars feature for suggestions) are also worth an extra push during the warmer months. Snacks such as good quality crisps, sausage rolls and nuts are all likely additional buys and draw attention to your ice cream, too.

Ready-packed picnics save people work and offer inspiration. Especially saleable in areas of high tourism, a good picnic will offer both a satisfying, perhaps exciting repast for regular

customers and a taste of your deli or farm shop to new ones. Picnics can be themed according to the selection of foods you want to move, perhaps because they deserve more attention than they are presently getting. Your picnics can be offered at a range of price points and can be sold with or without soft drinks or a bottle of wine. You can of course offer a hamper too, which adds a gifting element to the purchase and offers similar possibilities to the winter hamper in that all sorts of foods can be included, some of which customers may be trying for the first time.

**Tony Goodman, CEO of Yumsh Snacks Ltd, creators of Ten Acre, discusses the renaissance of summer snacking.**

No picnic is complete without great accompaniments. This is where snacks, when chosen carefully, really come into their own. Not only are they conveniently packaged but they also come in an abundance of fabulous flavours to enhance any food or drink offering.

For me, the snack of choice is undoubtedly popcorn. Once simply the staple for cinemas and movie nights at home, it is enjoying a renaissance and a real growth in sales. This is due to the wide range of innovative flavours which are now readily available, and the widely-held belief that it is a healthier alternative to crisps. Retailers should certainly recognise this when stocking their essentials for summer.

Ten Acre offers a range of popcorn flavours to suit all tastes – both traditional and innovative – which epitomise the Great British Summer. Fennel & Lemon, Lime & Sea Salt and the new Strawberry & Cream and Cappuccino popcorns are all flavours which will complement picnic drinks

such as sparkling wines and Prosecco, and desserts such as cheesecakes and cupcakes. Alternatively, our Great Taste Award-winning Wasabi and Sour Cream & Chive popcorns can add a savoury twist to enhance picnic sandwiches and pies.

For those who prefer more crunch, Ten Acre's premium hand-cooked crisps are available in 10 varieties. They include the Great Taste Award-winning Hickory BBQ and Sweet & Sour, and new Pastrami & Cracked Black Pepper, all of which add texture and contemporary flavours to the picnic basket.

Ten Acre snacks are all premium quality without the premium price tag. They also cater for any dietary requirement or lifestyle choice. The number of people choosing a free-from diet – whether that is gluten, dairy or meat-free – has dramatically increased. Our crisps and popcorn come with unrivalled free-from credentials. They are Free From Plus – great tasting plus gluten, dairy, MSG and GM-free, vegan, halal and kosher. It means that at sharing events such as picnics and barbecues, everybody can share and enjoy one range. All Ten Acre snacks are available in a variety of sizes for retail including sharing bags, ideal for picnics and other alfresco get-togethers.



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SEASONAL FAVOURITE

**Ice cream is one of summer's most profitable foods, but how can you boost its sales still further? Sally Newall of Simply Ice Cream tells *Speciality Food* how to make it work for you**

**How can artisan ice cream give your shop a point of difference?**  
Artisan ice cream should be made using quality ingredients, less air and no preservatives, stabilizers, fillers or colours, unlike some of the mass-produced ice creams available. By including artisan offerings in your shop you are supporting local business, giving your customers more choice and standing out from the supermarkets. Telling the story behind the producer is a great draw for your customers and the range from artisan producers is usually greater and more interesting.

**How does scoop ice cream attract the more casual customer?**  
Scoop ice cream displays always draw the eye, and if positioned well they will encourage sales from passers by who may not have been coming in to the shop. A queue always attracts attention and when scooping this happens regularly as customers decide which flavour and additions to have. You can also offer new and interesting flavours as one offs or as the flavour of the week/month.

**Which are your on-trend flavours for this summer?**  
Salted caramel is still very popular as is honeycomb. We have been getting requests to make bespoke flavours for our food service customers that encompass more of the amazing fruit that is available in Kent and also more unusual flavours using spices and teas, but for the average consumer and regular sales the old favourites will still be popular. However, with the increase in the price of vanilla it will be interesting to see what happens to the old staple.

**Do you think your flavour range covers all the bases?**  
We currently have 32 flavours in our retail range which gives retailers a good choice to suit their demographic. Retailers usually find that stocking the core range and then adding seasonally changing flavours/flavours of the month to create interest works for them. We provide a bespoke packing service so a retailer can order one or two of each variety this gives them the luxury of trying new flavours without having to order a box.

**Why should delis and farm shops stock Simply Ice Cream?**  
Our ice cream is made with 45-50% cream, making it one of the most indulgent ice cream brands on the market, so even though you may have a local supplier we believe our ice cream sits very well alongside your local offering giving your consumers choice. Its a fantastic ice cream to serve alone or as an accompaniment to a dessert, whether in the depths of winter (cinnamon is amazing with any hot dessert) through to the summer months when zesty lemon curd ice cream or any of our sorbet ranges are very popular – not forgetting our best-selling honeycomb.



5 MINUTES WITH...

**John Shepherd, managing director of Partridges**

**HOW DO SUMMER SALES TECHNIQUES DIFFER TO WINTER SALES AT PARTRIDGES?**  
More shelf allocation for soft drinks, water and alcohol. There are more sporting activities so drinks and snack food are more prominent generally. In our part of London sales decrease in August and it is traditionally our second quietest month of the year, but we have more tourists and visitors so it is a good time for the own label range and gift items. The delicatessen sales and the café sales increase significantly from Easter to the second week in July.

**HOW DO YOU UTILISE YOUR OUTDOOR SPACE DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS?**  
We put more staff on the outside café with extra seating where possible. We place the ice cream stall prominently and introduce a barbecue stall on the rear patio with Pimm's, Aperol Spritz and Prosecco being constantly available. We also run themed events such as a Chelsea Flower Market, and this year a market to celebrate the Queen's Birthday.

**WHAT FOOD AND DRINK PRODUCTS ARE PARTICULARLY POPULAR DURING SUMMER?**  
The Chelsea Flower range of tea, jams and biscuits is growing every

year. Partridges Champagne is the best-selling Champagne, empanadas now have a large following, and anything sourced locally such as honey or dips or bread does well. We also tend to stock more lighter, summery cheeses, with more sheep and goats milk, more dips, yoghurts, snacks, crisps and tortilla chips.

**WHAT ARE YOUR TOP-SELLING SUMMER PRODUCTS?**  
Ice cream, soft drinks, water, Champagne, smoked salmon, charcuterie, prepared salads, chickens from the rotisserie plus own label jute bags and Chelsea Flower Tea.

**WHAT ITEMS ARE NOT SO POPULAR AT PARTRIDGES DURING THE SUMMER?**  
Frozen foods, chocolates, craft beers, sauces, soups, Chelsea Buns and biscuits.

**WHAT FOOD AND DRINK ARE YOU EXCITED TO STOCK IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS?**  
Bamboo water, craft gins, canelés, hickory nuts, vegetarian caviar and items made by start-ups from our Startisans scheme such as Woodford & Warner. We also are trying to stock as many products from Royal Warrant Holders as possible.

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A good range of olive oils, balsamic vinegars and salad dressings is expected of any self-respecting independent. Recent years have seen rapeseed oil offer a viable British alternative to Mediterranean olive oil. "Farringtons Mellow Yellow was the original cold pressed rapeseed oil," says Kelly Castelet, Farringtons' marketing manager. The brand has more advantages for the independent retailer than simply being British, she says. "We are an environmental brand, so we produce our oils to Leaf Marque standards, which links environment and farming," Kelly says, "so we have a very strong story with our provenance. The rapeseed is grown here on the farm where we cold press it, which is in itself a very traditional process. Our entire range is additive-free, so it really is a quality range. We are a brand that sells, so we know that once customers try our products, they will buy them again. This I think is a real advantage for independents, where shelf space is really important. They want products that are of the right quality but which will also sufficiently appeal to customers to be added to their baskets."

Farringtons rapeseed is grown on the Farringtons family farm in Northamptonshire run by Duncan and Eli Farrington and Duncan's father, Robert. "Everything is still done on the family farm," Kelly says. "The rapeseed is grown, pressed and bottled here. We pretty much produce the oil to order. Once we have pressed the seed, filtered the oil and put it in the bottle, it is on the shelf within days or weeks of it being pressed. That in itself is a huge advantage for our oil."

There are a number of reasons why customers might choose rapeseed over olive oil, Kelly says. "Firstly, it's a brilliantly versatile oil and can be used for all types of cooking and baking. It can be used for high-temperature cooking, having a smoke point of 230 degrees celsius. It's fantastic for dressing because it emulsifies really well –



## DELI ESSENTIALS

Extra virgin olive oils, good balsamic vinegars and salad dressings are deli essentials. We look at this season's quality offerings



use it in our own dressing range. It's also a healthier option, containing half the saturated fat of olive oil and is very rich in Omega 3, so it has all those good essential fats which help to lower cholesterol. Our oil has at least ten times more Omega 3 than any other culinary oil in the marketplace. The British Nutrition Foundation, to give an example, says that rapeseed oil has a very good profile."

### Sensory notes

Retailers looking for an Italian extra virgin olive oil can avoid the larger makers by choosing to source from independents. Patrizia Pace owns Oleificio La Selva, an olive oil mill in Puglia, southern Italy. "Oleificio La Selva

and the smell." The oil is made entirely in the town of Laterz "in our own oil mill, from olives harvested in the fields surrounding our place. We do not import olives and oil from abroad. We use three main qualities or cultivar: Olearola, Coratina and Leccina olives." To make the oil, Patrizia says, "the olives are defoliated, washed and crushed in granite millstones. The

paste passes through the kneading machine where the continuous mixing is done by special helical blades that rotate slowly to facilitate oil extraction. Then the paste goes into the extractor, where it's cold-pressed to obtain oil and water (contained in the olives). In the last phase the oil is separated from the water and stored in stainless steel containers at a constant temperature not exceeding 18 degrees celcius."

Oleificio La Selva Extra Virgin olive oil has "an intense, distinctly fruity bouquet with a full bodied feeling of fresh herbs and a hint of bitter ness and spice," Patrizia says, and the oils are 'Provenienza certificata', which "means certified origin. That's to say we can certify where we bought the olives since we've got all documents with producer's names and the quantity we bought."

It might be said that selling a good olive oil obliges you to offer a balsamic vinegar of similar quality, so the two can be used to produce the sort of dipping experience you can't buy in the supermarkets. Acetomodena produce s high quality balsamic vinegar made in the traditional way, says export manager Gary Paton. "We use our family grapes from our own vineyards – and the wooden barrels we age our products in are of the highest quality. Making a perfect balsamic relies on a combination of skill and knowledge and is affected by natural elements to do with the land in Modena."

It's the grapes and the process which make balsamic vinegars of Modena special, Gary says. "The two types of grapes traditionally used to make balsamic vinegar are Trebbiano and Lambrusco. Over 400 years of cultivation of local expertise and effort has established these grapes as the

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steamed or boiled vegetables, or as a refining touch to meat and fish. It's also excellent with rice dishes such as risotto, or with mature cheeses, or fresh fruit such as strawberry."

The company, he says, "was born out of the love and Modenese tradition of making balsamic vinegar. The family of the owner of Acetomodena has been making balsamic vinegar for generations." Acetomodena products are available through Cotswold Fayre.

best ones to use in order to make quality balsamic vinegar. Balsamic Vinegar of Modena PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) is produced from cooked grape must of local Modenese grapes and wine vinegar, which are delicately and skilfully mixed together. Acetification and maturation then take place in barrels made of precious woods, such as oak, chestnut, mulberry, juniper and cherry. Differing percentages of cooked grape must and wine vinegar mixed together result in a range of products which can vary greatly in density, colour and taste. Goccia Oro and Goccia Argento have an intense brown colour and a balanced and delicate acidity. They both have a rich, sweet aroma with hints of cherry and oak." The vinegar works very well, he says, "with fresh,

**English producer**



Scarlett & Mustard is an English producer of oils and dressings whose oils have a rapeseed base. The founder of this Suffolk-located venture is Sandy Ruddock, who with the help of Julian Pollard and her family, has been making "better-tasting" oils since April, 2012. "We started on the kitchen table," Sandy says, "but we were able to move into a proper kitchen in September of the same year." The company offers a wide range of award-winning products in stand-out branding including nine dressings and marinades.

"Two are oil-free," Sandy says, "but the ones which aren't, are made with

rapeseed oil from Hillfarm, which is up the road from us. We do a lot of work with Hillfarm, in a lot of different areas. Sourcing locally-grown ingredients is very important to us." Local Suffolk firm Aspoll provides all their vinegar. Like other products made by Scarlett & Mustard, the production of their oils is governed by four essential drivers: "great taste, great branding, great provenance and great service." As for flavours and varieties, these are decided on the basis of "trying to do something a bit different," she says.

Scarlett & Mustard also makes a range of flavoured oils "and we have just started doing our own rapeseed oil, which is sourced from Hillfarm." The flavoured oils include English truffle oil, and others which are flavoured with dill, basil, chilli, garlic and a naturally smoked oil. "This is a very stand-out product," Sandy says, "as to the best of our knowledge, it is the only naturally-smoked rapeseed oil being made in this country. Our pumpkin seed oil, which we source from Slovenia, has been very popular."

A similar degree of consideration is applied to the choice of dressings. "We took what we thought were the standard ones and we tried to add a bit of difference to each one," Sandy says. "You can look at it almost like a pyramid, with the standard dressings which everyone knows at the bottom. These are Honey & Mustard, Balsamic, Caesar. Then you have the slightly more adventurous ones which would be Ginger & Soy, Poppy Seed and a Lime & Chilli dressing. Then there are the 'be brave and have a go' ones such as our creamy Original Tarragon dressing. Wherever we can, we try and make the flavours more punchy and a bit more stand-out than other people's. We don't use any colourings, flavourings or preservatives, ever."



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This vibrant red English vinegar offers a fantastic burst of fresh raspberry flavour that is surprisingly sweet and works well in both sweet and savoury dishes. [druryandaldis.co.uk](http://druryandaldis.co.uk)



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As summer approaches, it's not only picnics and cold drinks that can be used to attract extra custom. Properly exploited, the British barbecue offers endless possibilities for moving stock and offering customers a taste of something different. To get the most out of BBQ season, it's important you think beyond the obvious. Your friendly neighbourhood supermarket will be offering bags of frozen meats, burgers and sausages to accompany their price-slashed multipacks of beer, so offering something that's different, more attractive and a couple of notches upmarket is the way to go.

Modern barbecuing is a pot-pourri of possibility. If you have a meat counter, then gourmet (perhaps venison) burgers made with locally raised meats are going to sell well. Think too about marinated spare ribs, slow-cooked pork and all the things people can do with your chicken, from spatchcock piri-iri to sticky drumsticks and Caribbean grilled jerk chicken. Lamb can be used for kebabs, koftas and much more. There are plenty of recipes for all sorts of barbecued fish, too. Stocking barbecue equipment itself may not be a good idea because you will be competing with multiples who can sell it cheaper, and a kettle or gas barbecue will hog your space.

Collate and print out recipes which will move plenty of primary product – your meat – along with preparations and accompaniments. Offer these as recipe cards, especially if customers aren't sure what to prepare for their barbecue parties. Among the preparations you can cross-sell will be spicy rubs and prepared marinades, while condiments to offer will include BBQ sauces, artisanally-made ketchups and mayos, potato salads and coleslaws, mustards, gherkins and pickles. You can also direct attention to your olive oil, balsamic vinegars and dressings for the salads.

And you can, of course, sell barbecue to vegetarians. A good barbecue will cater for the growing



## DOLLAR GRILLS

Barbecue season is a time when you can pair various cuts of meat with all sorts of ambients and cold drinks and give your revenue a seasonal boost

number of people on meat-free diets and providing gluten-free bread buns and other products is something that opens up barbecues to people with food intolerances as well as chiming with currently-popular eating habits. If you are strong on vegetables, ensure that the focus is on anything which might be sold with your barbecue items. There has been a strong trend for roasted vegetables of late, so it's time to put out the asparagus and corn on the cob (in late season). Locally-grown tomatoes, lettuces, onions and potatoes for potato salad and cabbage for coleslaw are also likely inclusions in your barbecue promotion. Vegetarian customers can be sold British-made Halloumi style cheese by creameries such as High Weald.

Don't forget desserts – the presently popular Eton mess will use up local dairy products, eggs and your frozen berries. Another essential is the provision of high quality or artisanal soft and alcoholic drinks that are sufficiently intriguing to prevent the customer from completing his or her shopping expedition in the cut-price aisles of the supermarket. Including a selection of fruit drinks, light local beers and some English white and sparkling wines completes your barbecue display.

### Biggest sellers

An increase in foreign travel, particularly to the USA, means that people are becoming more knowledgeable about barbecue food and want more of it. Catering for such demand is BBQ Gourmet. "There

is so much more to barbecue than burning a sausage outdoors," says BBQ Gourmet founder Richard Orme. American barbecue, he says, is a very different kettle of meat: "it's all based on cooking low and slow, that's low temperature and slow cooking. For

a full brisket, you could be looking at 12–16 hours to smoke it properly. Our mission is to spread the word about real barbecue. It's a rapidly-growing market in the UK and all over Europe. Last year alone, something like 30 plus barbecue restaurants opened up around the country, and the number of competition barbecue teams has grown massively in the last couple of years. We identify and import the top championship-winning BBQ rubs, sauces and marinades along with the more specialist injections, brines and soaks from the United States and then supply these throughout Europe and the UK, both retail and wholesale.

"What we are trying to educate the public about is barbecue rubs. Most British people know about barbecue sauce and think that you can slap it on and cook with it and then they wonder why it comes out black as the ace of spades because all the sugar is burnt. What they are not aware of is that the real source of barbecue flavour is not the sauces, it's the rubs. These are spice mixes which are applied to whatever the meat you are using, prior to cooking. Rubs enhance the flavour whether the meat is cooked by direct heat, as with a grill, by slow cooking in a smoker, or in the oven. They are usable year-round and work just as well in an electric oven in the middle of winter as they do on an outdoors barbecue."

BBQ Gourmet offers "nearly 500 products," Richard says, "and the range is constantly increasing based on requests from customers. We pick and choose the very best rubs and sauces, all of which have been proven



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in BBQ competitions in the States. Unless the products have won big awards, we don't bring them in. Every year there are probably several hundred barbecue competitions around the United States, some with prize money over \$100,000. When a team starts winning competitions with a particular rub formula, that's when they bottle it up, give it a silly name and we import it." A particularly strong line in BBQ Gourmet's comprehensive rub range, is Oakridge BBQ "a very good range that has won over 3,000 awards in the last three years," Richard says.



At Calcott Farm Shop, owner Peter McTurk says that barbecue season is a time for his butchers to pull out all the stops.

"They will be making lots of traditional barbecue food and obviously, the most common preparations will be the biggest sellers," he says, "but they also like to offer some more unusual products such as butterflied lamb, lovely minted lamb chops and lamb koftas. The more inventive and different things are put out to get people excited."

Barbecue season, Peter says, "provides probably the best opportunity to link your butchery and fresh produce with your ambient jars and drinks too. There is a lot of impulse buying with barbecues." Because of this, he says, "from June through to August, we have a big table close to



the butchers with a big selection of sauces, special offer salad lines, maybe special offer lettuces and cherry tomatoes. Promoting barbecues encourage people to buy a better range of salads, he says.

Calcott Hall is known for its fruit and vegetables, Peter says. "Recently, we have been pushing the flavoured olive oils and vinegars. We do a fair range of these, especially the flavoured vinegars because they are really good value. We are selling them alongside the ketchups and the mayonnaises." Offering tasters of the flavoured oils, dressings and vinegars "works really well because you only have to cut up a little bread to dip and we would normally do this on a weekend when barbecue parties are possibilities. Good dressings and oils can take a barbecue to the next level."

The tasters and displays draw attention to his barbecue goods,

and Calcott Hall has various ways of ensuring that in the summertime, people are thinking in terms of barbecues, whatever the weather. "As with most things, you need to create a display and get people believing that even if it's not hot and sunny that day, it's worth picking up a few barbecue items today. Sometimes we will put up a little board on which we will print the weekend's weather forecast and say the weekend weather is looking good. The weather may not be great on Wednesday or Thursday, but if you can show customers that it is expected to be sunny on the weekend, people think they may as well grab one or two bits for that weekend barbecue." Grand barbecues displays are not always a good idea, though. "If you put up a big barbecue display, you will be taking it down every time it's cloudy,"

STUBB'S BAR-B-Q SAUCE

Barbecue lovers and busy homemakers can use the Stubb's family of sauces on just about anything they decide to make. Stubb's sauces became legendary thanks to the tangy tomato, vinegar, molasses and black pepper flavours of the Original BBQ Sauce that customers couldn't resist. With the addition of the Spicy BBQ Sauce to the line-up, a hotter habanero and cayenne kick brings more heat to the palate. If the thick flavours of brown sugar and molasses are what you crave, Stubb's Sticky Sweet BBQ Sauce will be the perfect addition to any meal. For flavour that really soaks all the way in, Stubb's makes marinades especially suited for beef, chicken or pork. Proud grill masters like our namesake, C.B. Stubblefield, will value a good quality rub that's the first step to great

barbecue. For them, a bottle of Stubb's BBQ or Pork Rub will really get things cooking. When you want food that you and your family can feel good about, use Stubb's full line to bring high-quality, authentic heritage and legendary Texas flavour to everything you feed them. Check out our website for recipes to help you get the most out of each product. C.B.



Stubblefield was born and raised deep in the heart of Texas. He prided himself on making the best barbecue around, not only as an honour to his Texas heritage, but also out of a desire to feed the world. Even in 1968, he knew that the only way to do that right was with quality ingredients. That's why Stubb's sauces, marinades and rubs are still made the same way today with high-quality, gluten-free ingredients and no high-fructose corn syrup.

“ You need to create a display and get people believing that even if it's not hot and sunny that day, it's worth picking up a few barbecue items today ”

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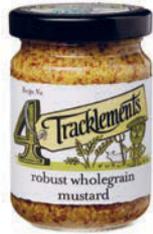
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Peter says, "so you find other ways to promote it. A four or five day weather forecast on a board can help increase sales."

Barbecues can sell all sorts of foods beyond sauces and salads. "Over the last year or so, following the gourmet burger trend, we have seen a noticeable increase in popularity in brioche buns," Peter says. "These go well with the more unusual mustards and our sliced gherkins. There has been a huge increase in sales of these in the last year or 18 months." Peter also sell local charcoal "but it's difficult to make any money on it," he says.

#### Soft drinks

The drinks side of things is important as well, he adds. "Soft drinks sales are significantly up during barbecue season. Once again, we try to go beyond the obvious beers and wines and offer some lovely soft drinks." Good soft drinks are essential, it seems: "sometimes people will have a last minute, unplanned barbecue and they may not necessarily want to have alcoholic drinks. We have had some lovely new ones coming

in during the last year or so which are proving popular, for example the Galvanina range, which includes Blood Orange, Clementine and Sicilian lemon flavours. These sell really well."

Some barbecue-intended product have yet to catch on at Calcott Hall. "Barbecue rubs haven't sold well for us," Peter says. "Some of the marinades work but we tried various rubs without success. The idea is good but we struggle with them. It may be because our butcher works with a lot of flavours and some people will buy their meat already marinated and rubbed."

The focus of celebrity chefs and weekend newspapers and "people wanting to spend more time in the garden" has much to do with the increasing popularity of the barbecue, Peter says. Factors such as these have also expanded the menu. "Ten years ago it was still all burgers, sausages and chicken drum-sticks," Peter says. "Now there are different cuts of meat such as spatchcock chicken and minute steaks." These thinly-cut steaks sell well, he says. "Most people don't

want to spend a fortune of big slabs of meat. These smaller cuts cook much quicker and that's ideal for barbecues when people are still a bit nervous about whether their food is fully cooked."



At Walsingham Farm Shops, general manager Sam Bagge says that while the shop doesn't necessarily run a

barbecue promotion, "we often do a bulk-buy offer on a Wednesday and during the summer and this will include barbecue packs and/or options. A barbecue pack often includes enough for a couple or a family of four."

This, he says, is "a great way for us to use forequarter of beef, which is used in mince etc. We have a lot of forequarter because we try to only use a beef supply from a single farmer less than one mile from our shop." When it comes to selling barbecue sauces and marinades with the meat, the shop likes to make its own, "although Stokes sauces are a very good seller," he adds.

"Barbecue has always been a large revenue stream for butchery counters and shops," Sam says, "though it does vary year to year depending on the great British weather! Lately, gluten-free products and products for the health conscious have been very popular. However we still see a big demand for fresh locally-sourced or homemade products. Our traditional barbecue sauce and peri peri chicken rubs are very popular now, and we are developing a Norfolk-grown chill rub with a local supplier which I'm sure this will be a big hit."

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# SUMMER SIPS



No longer dependent on lemonade and rosé, the summer drinks market is evolving to make it one of the most exciting sectors in the fine food world

**F**or a long time, sugar-laden soft drinks have ruled the roost when it comes to summertime beverages, but – not least in part due to the recent headline-grabbing Sugar Tax being implemented – the tide is turning. Consumers are increasingly looking for healthier alternatives to the standard supermarket soft drink, and independent food retailers are well-placed to fill this gap. Drinks claiming natural health benefits are being launched at an impressive rate, and thanks to their often artisanal credentials they are the perfect fit for *Speciality Food* readers.

Sharing this artisanal focus are British distilleries, which are cashing on the trend for unusual spirits with a story. We speak to Rupert Holloway, founder of Conker Spirit, one of the newest craft distilleries to hit the UK market, to find out what's behind the booming gin trend.

Also, we speak to two top retailers in our sector to discover their must-stocks and tips for future trends, plus a distributor shares their stocking advice and take on the Sugar Tax.

## Hot Topic

Drinks with benefits are enjoying a boost in popularity, aided by the increasing health-consciousness of the public. Here, we speak to two producers cashing in on the trend

### Melanie Millin, founder of Love Kombucha



Love Kombucha is an organic soft drink made with fermented tea. Popular in many parts of the world

(and grossing \$500 Million in the US in 2015), kombucha has long been touted for its health benefits. The brewing process leaves kombucha packed with antioxidants, organic enzymes and beneficial yeast and bacteria that make kombucha a functional food in its own right.

In recent years, we've experienced the rise of orthorexia (an obsession with eating foods that one considers healthy) and many questionably limit their intake of specific food groups or obsess about the minutiae of which



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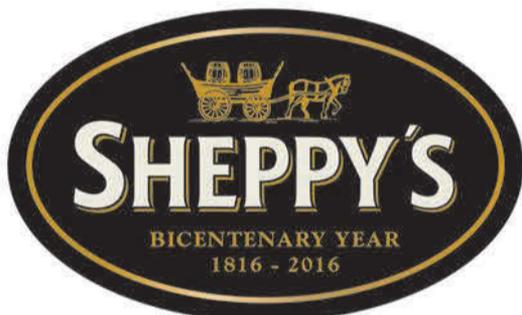
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nutrients should be consumed alongside which! However, the fact remains that even outside these specialist pockets of food-faddiness, consumers are wising up and are looking to limit excessive sugar intake. Soft drinks have long been a place where manufacturers can sneak in extra sugar without coming under too much scrutiny – but not for much longer.

Love Kombucha launched in 2013. Since then, we have seen a real surge in support not just from the health industry, but a much broader customer base who are increasingly taking responsibility for not just counting calories, but actively checking the sugar content on labels. Not only that, but there is a cultural sea-change around alcohol consumption among young adults as we are now seeing dry-bars (yes, bars where people choose to go on a night out where there is zero alcohol on offer!) pop up in some of London's trendiest locations.



**Daniel Reeds,**  
Marketing  
Representative  
for DRINKmaple  
Europe.

DRINKmaple is one of the most straight forward drinks to produce. It is collected by simply tapping maple trees, a process that doesn't harm the plants, and allowing the water to run into buckets. The organic maple water is then bottled without anything being added or taken away and without any boiling.



The drink is jam-packed with a host of nutrients and minerals the trees have amassed through their roots. Unlike maple syrup, the tree's water isn't high in sugar, in fact maple water has only about half the sugar of coconut water (less than 1.5g per 100ml), but does contain 46 other nutrients, including more manganese than a cup of kale – a nutrient which plays an important role in our bodies' energy systems.

Coconut water aside, birch water has seen a big rise in interest recently and aloe vera juice has also become popular. There are some even adventurous drinks, like cactus water, that have appeared,

but these haven't really made a mark. Keep an eye out for watermelon water though, it's recently launched in the States and making big waves there.

Retailers should promote these healthy drinks by showing consumers that they are more versatile, and often tastier, than they think. Offer tastings of mocktails made using different waters, share smoothie recipes or, on a hot day, give out small samples of DRINKmaple over ice. We can't vouch for other waters, but we find once consumers try our drink they love it and go on to make a purchase.

### FROM THE RETAILER...

#### Selfridges, Terry Threlfall, wine and spirits buyer



**WHAT TRENDS DO YOU THINK WILL BE IN EVIDENCE THIS SUMMER?**

Proseccos are always popular during the warmer seasons and we've just started stocking Skinny Prosecco exclusively which is organic, vegan and has 60% less sugar so is set to be a summer favourite. Gin will continue to be popular this year, as it's such a versatile spirit, and we will be stocking an exclusive Grapefruit Gin by Chase which will be perfect for summer cocktails. We'll also be stocking up on craft beers, local ciders and sparkling English wines so there will be a strong British theme this season.

From the non-alcoholic category, we're predicting cold brew teas to be a big trend. Similar to cold brew coffee the tea is steeped in cold water over a long period of time. This process gives the tea a sweeter flavour profile as it produces less bitter catechins. It's very refreshing whilst still containing zero sugar.

#### TELL ME ABOUT SEEDLIP – WHAT MAKES IT SO POPULAR?

Alcohol free beers and wines have been available for a while now but

no one has really experimented with alcohol free spirits before, making Seedlip a pioneer in this field. It's the first time there has been a product in the market that talks to people who don't want to drink alcohol or want to abstain from alcohol but who want an 'adult' beverage can enjoy the same great taste of a martini or gin and tonic without the alcohol. It sold out within three days of launching at the end of last year, showing there is a real market for superior tasting non-alcoholic options, so it's definitely a category we're looking to expand.

Gin and craft beers have continued to be popular and are selling well across all our stores, showing it's not just a London or cosmopolitan trend but something that there is nationwide interest for.

#### WHAT DO YOU THINK IS NEXT FOR THE SUMMER DRINKS SECTOR?

The cocktail scene has had a big influence and has started to make its way into our homes, making consumers become more experimental with what they serve their guests. We've seen increased sales in vermouths, cocktail kits and premixed cocktails, so I think this summer we'll see more flavoured gins and unusual mixers emerging.

“ It is the dry notes to a classic gin such as Conker that makes it so refreshing. Mixed with an ice cold classic Indian tonic and a strip of lime peel – what could be better! ”

FROM THE DISTRIBUTOR...

**Nikki Castley, buyer of Cress Co shares her stocking recommendations**



It's important to stock a wide selection of drinks year-round, but in the summer we note an increase in particular flavours and drinks types. Heritage brands and flavours are always popular with people reminiscing their childhood over a glass of dandelion and burdock or cream soda. Drinks that have multiple uses and 'storecupboard essentials' are also a must-stock such as tonics, lemonades and fruit juices. Alcohol-alternatives for barbecues

are a good option, like alcohol-free ginger beer. Cordials and freshly squeezed juices are a must-have to help create interesting cocktails and mocktails as this sector has recently enjoyed a resurgence in popularity.

Health drinks shouldn't be forgotten to help detox from any excess summer parties, so drinks rich in antioxidants will sell. The new drinks with health credentials certainly have a place in the sector, and at present seem well placed and most popular amongst health food stores. What these drinks have done is allow smaller niche

brands to enter the market, create interest and ultimately invigorate the soft drinks sector. There is a definite shift towards organic, especially amongst younger consumers, who are increasingly health conscious. Organic sales are showing year-on-year growth which reflects this change in buying habits. Vegetable juices are starting to make headway, with things like beetroot and carrot juices emerging as stronger performers.

- San Pellegrino – always has a great rate of sale
- Bundaberg – a long standing brand that always performs well
- Luscombe – a staple brand for independents
- Pimento – fantastic chilli ginger beer for little difference
- Matcha teas – on trend at the moment

PRODUCER SPOTLIGHT... CONKER SPIRIT



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We pride ourselves on doing everything ourselves, the right way, with a focus on quality without the shortcuts. Conker Spirit is the real deal; we are the distillers, the bottlers, labellers and even the botanical foragers, hand picking New Forest gorse flowers destined for our copper pot still.

We are all waking up to the fact that there is so much more to gin than the few gin brands we have all grown up with. The gin category is very broad now and there really is something for everyone. Gin is also so versatile when it comes to cocktails, doing so much more in the glass than vodka.

Whether it is buying sausages or choosing an ale, people are no longer interested in quantity over quality. The same now stands for spirits, people care about how their drinks have been produced. Story is king now, because it gives meaning to what you are drinking.



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# COTSWOLD FAYRE\*

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# Last Words

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of fine food

## Porters Deli

Owner: Tracey Hughes Opened: July 2007



### HOW'S BUSINESS?

The season is just kicking in again. It's a little slower than last year, the post-Christmas blues seemed to have lasted longer but an early Easter has helped. Being in a tourist town, trade is quite weather-dependant, so we just need the sun to shine.

### DESCRIBE YOUR DELI

Locals call us the cheese shop, but we actually stock a wide range of Welsh, British and Mediterranean produce. We don't have as much space as we would like, but then who does? So we try and make the most of what we have got.

### WHO ARE YOUR CUSTOMERS?

We have a loyal following of local people who especially like our cheese counter. Some of them travel quite a distance for their cheese fix. Because Llangollen is a busy inland tourist town, we also have lot of out-of-town visitors, who are either here for the day or passing through on their way into Snowdonia. Llangollen is also in an area of outstanding natural beauty so attracts self-catering groups who like to buy locally. It's especially good fun to talk to all the American visitors we get, many of whom like to take a little bit of Wales home with them.

### WHAT DO YOU SPECIALISE IN?

Cheese – we usually stock around 60 at any one time, with over one third being Welsh and virtually all from small artisan producers.

### HOW DID YOU BECOME A DELI OWNER?

Both my late husband and I were made redundant after having worked

in agriculture for over 20 years.

This gave us the opportunity to get involved in something we have had a love for for many years.

### HOW IMPORTANT IS YOUR LOCATION?

We are on the main road between the main town car park and the high street – the high street would have been better, but this is the next best place to be. Footfall is paramount!

### WHAT CHEESES DO YOU SELL?

Our locals like to try something new, so we try and ring the changes and have something a little different – currently selling well is Old Winchester and Truffled Pecorino. We always have at least six to eight different blues and we are never without Colston Basset Stilton and Perl Las. Our Welsh range is particularly of interest to visitors and we cover the full spectrum of hard, soft, blue, smoked and flavoured. Over the last couple of years we have seen much more interest in sheep's and goat's milk cheese and now stock at least 10 different varieties at any one time.

### WHAT SELLS ESPECIALLY WELL?

Both Parma and Serrano ham – sliced at the time of ordering – it tastes so much better than pre-packed. All cheese but especially Colston Basset Stilton, Snowdonia Black Bomber and Perl Wen from Caws Cenarth, Seggiano flatbread biscuits and the full range of Fine Cheese Co biscuits.

### NAME ANY LOCAL FOODS YOU SELL

The most local are Llangollen and Hafod Brewery Beers, Patchwork

Pâté, Snowdonia cheese, cakes from Temptations in Corwen and local honey from Mr Hannaby.

### HOW IMPORTANT ARE YOUR CHEESE WEDDING CAKES?

Cheese wedding cakes are a relatively new venture for us but one which is growing as word is spreading. Most we do are based on Welsh cheese and the whole process of tasting, selecting, delivering, decorating etc is quite time-consuming, but enormously enjoyable.

### WHICH FOODS ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT?

Cheese, cheese and cheese. Having worked for over 20 years advising farmers how to get milk out of cows, to now work at the 'other end' selling an end product is enormously rewarding. It fascinates me that so many diverse and different cheeses can be produced from the same raw material.

### THREE THINGS TO GET RIGHT

Find the right premises with a big enough footfall and match your offering to your customer base; we get offered some beautiful products I would love to stock but we just wouldn't sell them, and perhaps most importantly, make sure you and your staff enjoy what they are doing; it comes across to your customers if you don't!

### IF YOU HAD TO START OVER AGAIN, WHAT WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?

Probably go for larger premises which could have accommodated a café, and definitely invest in better, more energy-efficient fridge, freezer and chiller cabinets.

### WHAT ARE THE REWARDS OF RUNNING A DELI?

You won't make a fortune, but you meet lots of interesting people, both customers and producers, and food is such a lovely, diverse product to be involved in.

### WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT RUNNING A DELI?

The variation, meeting people and seeking out and trying new products.



Richard Fox

"The first meal experience"

As an ex-working chef and someone who has been involved in the magical world of food and drink for the best part of thirty years, the question:

'What is the best meal have you ever eaten' is posed with yawning regularity. I'm sure, as professional and enthusiastic foodies, you have all faced this same little head-spinner on countless occasions. I prefer to re-interpret the question to 'the finest meal experience'. The change is subtle; the implication is enormous. It's also a far more fascinating and revealing conundrum than the over-simplified original question appears to pose.

Perhaps if I can offer an overview of my number one it may help stimulate your own thought process on the subject. It essentially features a remote Greek island, the back of beyond of that island to boot. The sun is setting (always good), the company is familiar and easy. Three generations of the same family make up the staff – three people to be precise: grandfather is in the little bobbing fishing boat tethered to the jetty below, mother is in the open kitchen and her offspring is offering the service element. To be fair, there isn't much call for the service side of things as there is no menu offered, only one dish (the little haul of silver, slippery fellas from the boat). I can't even give you the name of the restaurant – not because I have forgotten it, but because there wasn't one. I will leave it to you to imagine the rest.

Perhaps the business lesson from this is to start to embrace some of these intangibles that make up 'the experience' in our own food-oriented businesses – sensory perception, family values, non-formulaic – and it may just have a magical effect on customer base. And who knows, perhaps that homemade pork pie, that jar of piccalilli, the coffee, the table decorations, the pictures on the wall... the magical blend of individual parts that make up the whole become folklore in the minds of your ever-expanding line of devotees.

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# SPECIALITY BITES

Paul Hargreaves of Cotswold Fayre



Everyone knows now that the way people shop has changed dramatically over the past few years. It is essential as we create new products and plan our retail outlets that we understand consumers and how they are shopping. Our own PR agency, Escapade PR, has recently done some research in the world of grocery shopping, which I think is particularly relevant to the speciality food sector.

Shoppers are categorised into five different types. I will summarise the five types and then outline ways in which to appeal to them.

**The Intelligent Impulsive:** 15% of people shop 3-4 times a week, are time-poor and care about the quality of ingredients and value for money. 25% of this 15% will shop in speciality food shops. These consumers are ideal for an up-market convenience store positioned near a train or tube station. The convenience sector, I expect, will become increasingly important for us

over the next five years. Look at how well Whole Foods is doing in commuter locations such as Richmond.

**The Functional Foodie:** Interestingly, this is the only group heavily influenced by social media in terms of food purchases. Ethics, organic and quality of ingredients are key drivers here – and healthy eating their main aim. Push the quality of your ingredients via social media, ensure your point of sale stresses the healthy credentials of your products, and if the product has a characteristic such as low sugar – shout it loudly!

**The Price Driver:** This group (a staggering 31%) are largely fuelling

the tremendous growth of Aldi and Lidl and they will generally spend £100 a week on groceries. They are price savvy, and may not be the most obvious customer of the food hall or farm shop but love a price deal. So if your fruit and veg is cheaper than Tesco's, make sure there are signs to say so. If you have a promotion on, signpost it well at the front of the store which will entice the Price Driver in.

**Meat-iculous Planner:** This group only represents 10% of the population, who plan for one big shop per week with all the meals planned. They engage heavily with discount and coupon sites, so if you have a loyalty card they will be interested, particularly if you offer

them money off for coming back a second time. Beware though – 75% of this group have shopped at Tesco in the last three months.

**The Brand Loyalist:** This large group (30%) consider that grocery shopping is an enjoyable part of their lifestyle, and the good news is that this second-largest group love good service and attractive brands. They love their local farm shops as well as Waitrose and M&S. They have a high disposable income and spend up to £150 a week on groceries. Treat them well, offer tastings in store, and they will talk to others about your brand, whether that be a food brand or a retail store. Clearly, we don't to walk around our stores assessing which group our customers are in, but as we design new products and merchandise our stores, having these five types of customers in mind will lead to greater profitability.

“ Having these five types of customers in mind will lead to greater profitability ”

## Best Practice

Harry Pratt and Daniella Elstone, deli supervisor and sales advisor at Suffolk Food Hall, share their retail experiences

**My role is setting the standard and leading by example, giving great customer service and ensuring I have competent knowledge on the products we sell so that I can share this with my team.** Communicating with our suppliers both local and further afield is a big part of my role to keep consistency in the quality and range of the products we sell.

**Keeping the products and displays looking fresh and within the style of the company is key for the whole team.** Maintaining the health and safety standards to ensure that the team and I are correctly trained to use any equipment that we use on a daily basis is a must. The delicatessen is on the main shop floor to keep in with the flow of customers; this helps the staff feel like we are part of the team as a whole.

**We use local suppliers, but constraints on shelf life and delivery dates impacted sales, therefore we made the decision to start production on our own site.** This allows us the freedom to choose the style of products, it guarantees consistency and ensures quality of products as well as giving us flexibility with seasonal changes.

**Our kitchen is located in one of our production kitchens in the Cookhouse building on-site.** Experienced chef James Alexander, who has been a friend of the Food Hall for several years, has come on board as the front man for our kitchen. We have since seen improvement in sales and been able to offer our customers fresher



products which achieve higher margin.

**I am new to the role, however I have been working closely with Abby, our head of retail to continue to push the deli to a new level of excellence.** We champion local, and fantastic cheeses from small local artisan producers are our best sellers. We also sell our own ham which is from our own pigs on our farm in Broxstead, Suffolk. We focus on seasonality and maintain interest in the counter by researching food trends to keep it current.

**Being new to the role, I'm learning all the time, but one of the greatest lessons I've learned is that communicating with my staff and customers about what they want is essential to being successful.** Having confidence about my knowledge of the wide range of products we sell through the deli has been my biggest challenge, but customers come to us for something special or different and expect a high level of service from all the staff on the shop floor, making it a much more enjoyable and inspirational place to work and for customers to visit!

### DO

- Know your products, get excited about what you are selling, chat about serving suggestions and other lines that complement the product
- Put samples out! People love free food, it will attract them to your counter and give you the opportunity to sell to them
- Have clean glass and a tidy counter at all times!

### DON'T

- Don't face away from the counter, and always acknowledge customers even if you are busy cleaning or checking off a delivery
- Don't place hard cheeses on top of soft ones – a simple one but it still happens!
- Don't judge your counter from where you serve – walk round the front and view how the customer sees things, as there will always be things that need tweaking or refreshing

“ Empowering the team to have strong service skills and knowledge of the range allows me to be able to spend time placing orders and organising supplier samplings to maximise the profitability of the department ”

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