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EDITOR'S LETTER



Welcome to the February/
March 2020 edition
of *Speciality Food*.

You might have noticed a green
tone to the issue thus far; that is
because within these pages you'll
find some of the best and most
valuable insight into the topic
of sustainability within the
food industry.

Not only are our esteemed
columnists – John Shepherd
of Partridges, Charles Campion
and Sue Nelson – ruminating
on the subject over the next
few pages, but we question a
number of temperature controlled
packaging businesses on the
sustainable credentials of their
industry on page 29 (you might
be pleasantly surprised).

This issue also hosts The
Sustainability Report 2020 (page
12), within which renowned
industry experts share their
insight; from our renowned
partners Cotswold Fayre and
Speciality & Fine Food Fair to the
Carbon Trust and the Department
of Trade & Investment, it's packed
with invaluable information to
help boost your credentials.

HOLLY SHACKLETON | EDITOR
holly.shackleton@aceville.co.uk



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Since the BBC's *Blue Planet II* documentary aired back in 2017, the message to ditch single-use plastic has become increasingly urgent. Retailers, suppliers and businesses across the food and drink industry have been reducing their use of it. Just recently Iceland launched what was described as an "industry-leading" trial to reduce its plastic packaging by 93% across a range of fresh produce. Retailers are also promising to make the plastics that are used within their stores more widely recyclable. It can be difficult, for example, to recycle black plastics such as those used in ready meal trays.

Single-use carrier bags in particular have come under fire, leading to retailers charging for bags, phasing them out or offering bags made of alternative materials. The core issue with plastic bags is that they take a long time to decompose. According to a 2011 Northern Ireland Assembly report, it can take between 400 and 1,000 years for this process to happen, leading to centuries-long environmental impact.

Morrisons, for example, announced last year that it would introduce paper carrier bags in all its stores. Indie retailers are able to adapt much quicker to consumer demands to reduce plastic and implement necessary changes than large scale operations, however. Nick Punter, marketing and design coordinator at Suffolk Food Hall, says

Plastic: are the alternatives any better?

With research showing that other options can be equally environmentally damaging, experts discuss how to proceed

that the business has been proactive; "I think most people in the industry are demanding less plastic, which is a positive move; we hope that this continues and we keep on reducing plastic use (especially single-use). Shoppers have reacted positively to the steps we have implemented, especially the use of paper bags in grocery and at the till. It will always be tough to convert customers when it comes to takeaway cups and to incentivise them to bring their own, but we are always looking to improve and we ask customers what we can do and take on board their feedback and suggestions," he says.

In May last year the government confirmed that a ban on plastic straws, drink stirrers and cotton buds containing plastic will come into force for England from April 2020.

With all eyes on plastic, the impact of alternative materials has been less publicised, but there is now an increased awareness of the effect production of these materials has on the environment, which means that navigating the best course of action can be tricky for retailers. Research published in a recent report by Green Alliance highlighted public demand pushing the swap from plastics to alternative materials, with a supermarket representative quoted as saying that these alternatives "aren't necessarily better from an environmental and climate impact point of view."

When it comes to the environmental impact of producing plastic bags and paper bags, the 2011 Northern Ireland Assembly report says that "It takes more than four

times as much energy to manufacture a paper bag as it does to manufacture a plastic bag". A report by the Ministry of Environment and Food in Denmark found that cotton bags need to be reused thousands of times to reach the same environmental performance of plastic bags.

Helen Bird, plastics expert at WRAP says, "When we make decisions about materials, including when weighing up what material to use for bags, we have to consider all the environmental impacts. It is never straight forward and there are always trade-offs. Considerations include greenhouse gases, not just in production but through to end-of-life, renewables versus fossil fuel derived, whether recycled material can be incorporated in making the

packaging, whether the material is practically recyclable and whether that bag/packaging can be used again."

Ethical water company BELU says that it is the first UK company to make all its plastic bottles from 100% recycled plastic bottles. CEO Karen Lynch says, "We have come to the conclusion that where the single use can't be removed, the answer to our anti-plastics challenge, is in fact, plastic. Our message is to first use less, but when you buy bottles, buy better. Using 100% recycled plastic is the lowest carbon footprint option that can be part of a circular economy." By making bottles from 100% recycled plastic it reduces carbon emissions, as it uses a resource that is already there and energy is not being used in creating something new.

Karen adds, "From the start we wanted to be a values-led business; and to build a confident and credible brand that customers can trust implicitly. This means transparency. So it was an obvious step for us to approach carbon emissions in the same way that we do our financial data; it is measured, audited and published. Choosing to be PAS2060 certified also ensures we publish our forward plans and commitments to reduce carbon. Understanding where our carbon emissions are generated focuses our efforts on where we can make reductions."

“We have come to the conclusion that where single use can't be removed, the answer to our anti-plastics challenge is, in fact, plastic”

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JOHN SHEPHERD PARTRIDGES



"Sustainable confusion"

New Year's Resolution number one: greater sustainability awareness in all our practices. This must be on every deli in the country's 2020 urgent to-do list. Climate change awareness should be at the very heart of our thinking in running our own businesses. However, as in many areas of retail, there is a lot of contrasting advice out there as to what exactly we should be doing.

For example we have been trying to reduce our use of plastic around the shop, encouraged by vigorous tweets and comments from customers. However this is while becoming increasingly aware that materials other than plastic could have a greater impact on harming the environment.

There are a number of examples of this recently highlighted in the press.

For instance, paper bags, it is claimed, have higher carbon emissions than plastic and are often single-use. Glass bottles are much heavier than plastic equivalents and therefore more polluting to transport. And new materials that make beneficial claims regarding sustainability have not yet had their impacts properly assessed over a long enough period of time.

Take coated cartons. They are widely touted to be recyclable but, at the present time, the UK only has the resources to recycle about one third of them, apparently. There is also a lack of understanding about what certain labels actually mean – such as bio-based, biodegradable and compostable – and when they should be used.

Not only that but in a recent report, entitled *Plastic Promises*, a cross party Parliamentary Group warns that ending plastic packaging could actually be more harmful to the environment.

The British Retail Consortium have also stated evidence where

plastic remains the most effective material in terms of food packaging – such as cucumbers that last up to 14 days longer when wrapped in plastic.

It all creates a very confusing dilemma for the local speciality food retailer, and the government and industry bodies clearly need to clarify the best strategy going forward – although this is not expected particularly soon.

In the meantime we have stopped using plastic straws, plastic cutlery and other disposables and are reviewing all other uses of plastic wherever possible around the shop.

Another area of confusion to my mind concerns Christmas sales. The Office for National Statistics recorded a fall of 1.3% in December in food stores. However, if one reads the Retail Week League Table published in January only two out of 14 food or drink retailers (Sainsbury's and Morrison's) admit to a decline in sales at all.

The answer may lie in the fact that when announcing Christmas sales only two of the retailers used the same parameters. Perhaps a question of 'expanding the goalposts' to project the best sales result? The Christmas periods vary considerably including five weeks, four weeks, 10 weeks, three months, 24 days, six weeks and 13 weeks for example. To be honest I am not entirely unsympathetic to this way of announcing sales and can even add my own version – for the calendar months of November and December 2019 Partridges was 4.2% up over the preceding year. For December alone it was 1.5%. But last year there was an extra Saturday which always helps us in the run up to Christmas.

To be honest I am happy with this. It could have been a lot worse but there is plenty of room for improvement – sustainably, of course.

Trade show Tavola celebrates artisan produce

Tavola is set to feature 500 exhibitors from 15 countries at its 2020 edition. The biennial trade show, which takes place from 15th-17th March in Kortrijk Xpo, Belgium, will showcase premium food and drink from a mixture of market leaders, artisan producers, start-ups and private labels.

This year extra zones have been reserved for artisan manufacturers and start-ups, and making its debut is Beer Avenue. Product sectors include frozen products, drinks, vegan, meat and confectionery, and within the categories visitors can discover a range of organic, local and regional and allergen-free food, to name a few.

The Golden Tavola awards will also bring the best food and drink innovations together, rewarding the best of 2020 in each of the four categories; Retail, Catering, Food Service and Delicatessen. Patricia Huyghe, exhibition manager, says, "The carefully curated mix of 500 market leaders and artisan producers ensures a unique range of premium food and drinks at Tavola. From craft to trendy, from large volumes to niche products, from market leaders to start-ups, from famous brands to private brands, from classics to unexpected discoveries... An exceptional trade event with high-end products with added value for over 17000 professionals from over 30 countries with a passion for quality, taste and innovation."

Success for Scotland's Speciality Food Show

Scotland's Speciality Food Show reported a successful event, with an increase in attendance figures of 4% compared to last year's event.

The 151 exhibitors showcased the best of Scottish produce and regions including Argyll, Fife, Orkney and Shetland were all represented.

Talks and workshops in the Talking Shop Theatre proved popular, as did the Best Product Awards. *Speciality Food* editor Holly Shackleton co-judged Nessie's Den, a session dedicated to start-ups pitching to industry experts.

Show director Mark Saunders

said, "Scotland's Speciality Food Show has grown consistently since it was launched in 2009. This year, the show attracted 151 suppliers and was the best balanced show in terms of content with a broad representation from all the main food and drink product categories. Five regional food groups now support the show with more looking to join in the future. More stands have already been built into the show to absorb the expected rise in demand from food and drink suppliers seeking to exploit the opportunities the show offers."



Funding boost for UK high streets

The first 14 pilot town centres have been announced as part of a government scheme to rejuvenate high streets. Towns across the country will be receiving the first part of a £1bn investment into towns and high streets as part of the Future High Streets Fund. Ministers announced the first 14 out of 20 pilot areas that will be given £25m each to help rejuvenate high streets, including Swinton town centre, Coventry city centre and Aldershot town centre.

The High Streets Task Force will give local businesses face-to-face support, access to cutting-edge research, new online training and local footfall data. Following the pilot the funding will then be rolled out across the country.

GCA reaches out to small suppliers

The Groceries Code Adjudicator (GCA), Christine Tacon, has launched the annual survey, which provides suppliers with the opportunity to express any Groceries Supply Code of Practice issues. The survey has enabled Christine, as the UK's first GCA, to achieve progress for suppliers, demonstrate where retailer efforts have improved Code compliance and identify areas for improvement. The day the survey was released marked 10 years since the Code came into force.

Christine says, "I am particularly keen for micro and small suppliers to take part as I would like to have more information about the Code issues they face. Last year, around 300 micro and small suppliers responded to the survey and of those, 22% of small suppliers and 30% of micro suppliers said they were unaware of my role, compared to only 9% of large suppliers."

Suppliers can complete the survey at yougov.com/GCA, and it closes on 29th March 2020.

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CHARLES CAMPION

"Fashion or for keeps?"

By and large we Brits are a tolerant bunch, which is a good thing given the lightning speed of change in the food and drink sector. Fashions ebb and flow as consumers continue to weigh up the relative merits of the various fashionable new products on offer. Enter the vegans. For most of us the term 'vegan' refers to the diet you turn to if a vegetarian lifestyle proves too tame. But as is so often the case, the judiciary has put its spoke in the wheels and come up with the judgment that 'ethical vegans' should be protected from harassment in the workplace just like the Christians, Jews and Muslims who already enjoy the protection of the law.

Quite suddenly 'ethical veganism' is looking mighty like a religion. Albeit this is a movement whose principles throw up some caricature "what ifs" – vegan MPs could refuse to sit on those green leather benches; vegans could refuse to handle banknotes (the new banknotes are 1% tallow); wear no more leather belts or woolly jumpers; and avoid bugs (every windscreen is a fly's graveyard).

And then there is the response of the food industry. Who would have thought that yogurt sales would dive in such spectacular manner? Estimates would have it that a downturn in dairy led to 193 million fewer yogurt pots being sold last year. Meanwhile, the bigger burger folk are hastily hustling up something that they can sell as a 'plant-based' menu. One burger chain's new product initiative is fine

for vegetarians, but unfortunately it includes a mayonnaise made using eggs, and cooks the veggie patties on the same grills as the beef burgers. You could ask for your vegan burger without mayo, but that seems to be missing the point.

It's all a matter of semantics, and doubtless we will soon see a fashionable surge in flexitarianism. Some relief for menu writers everywhere who are seeking the fashionable option that comes with a seat on the vegan and veggie bandwagon.

Do you remember the days when every butcher would prepare a special window featuring the prize beast from the local fatstock show? Well marbled, well hung and with a highly prized rosette. Such elaborate window dressing is a thing of the past but the important role of provenance lingers on. Chefs like cooking with the best ingredients and are sanguine about seeing their food cost margins melt away. The silliest prices are found at auctions, whether it is the largest truffle in the Périgord or the perfect round of Evesham asparagus. One man who knows his way around a premium purchase is Kioshi Kimura of the Kiyomura Corporation – a chain of sushi restaurants. He recently paid £1.3 million for a fish. Granted it was a large fish (a magnificent, 608 lb, bluefin tuna the pride of Tokyo Fish Market). You cannot help wondering how thin he would have to slice his 193.2 million yen investment to make a profit. Mr Kioshi Kimura told reporters that the fish was "expensive".

Indies defy "worst year on record"

Figures released at the start of the year revealed that 2019 was the first year to show an overall decline in retail sales. Stats from the BRC-KPMG Retail Sales Monitor covering 24th November to 28th December 2019 showed that total sales for 2019 decreased by 0.1%, compared with 1.2% growth in 2018. Helen Dickinson, chief executive of the BRC, said that 2019 was "the worst year on record" and cited Brexit alongside shop closures and job losses within the retail industry as major influences.

The numbers confirm how increasingly challenging retail is today. At the time of going to press, the Centre for Retail Research highlighted that since the start of 2020 nearly 10,000 jobs had been lost within the sector.

It's not all doom and gloom for retailers in the food and drink sector, however; many of whom are able to react quickly to consumer trends and behaviours and keep competitive.

Graham Webster, managing director, Rhug Ltd, explains that at Rhug Estate Farm Shop a focus on sustainability, supporting local suppliers and expanding certain ranges lead to the business seeing overall growth of just under 10% in 2019. "At Rhug we recognised the changes occurring in customer shopping habits over the past few years and have made changes to try to combat any decline in spend. This has included a focus on our packaging with all of our own packaging now being recyclable or compostable, as well as working with our suppliers to encourage less reliance on single-use plastic.

"We have also focused our purchasing on more unique gifts and supporting very local and small businesses, predominantly from

Wales. We now have over 140 local suppliers providing more than 50% of our products, so we offer a point of difference to our high street retail competitors. Along with our focus on providing great service, this strategy saw growth of over 11% from 2018-2019 in our farm shop.

"We have kept pace with dietary requirements with a far expanded free-from range and far more vegetarian and vegan choices in both our retail and catering businesses.

"Overall last year the business grew by just under 10%, but only due to us constantly reassessing our offering and challenging ourselves to do better by keeping pace with changing consumer habits and demands."

Susan Barratt, CEO at IGD, pointed out that the BRC-KPMG report showed some optimism for 2020, saying, "This is also the first time since June 2018 that just as many shoppers predict they will focus

more on quality as saving money in the year ahead when food and grocery shopping (18%)".

Charles Bradford, MD at The Gog Farm Shop in Cambridge, has seen customers becoming more considered with their purchases; "As an example, our butchery certainly witnessed a dip in meat sales at the beginning of the year as we experienced our first proper Veganuary. There has definitely been a significant swing in consumer habits towards meat over the past 12 months, with customers being much more considered about what they are buying. Quite rightly, people are consuming less meat, but when they do it simply must be better – better provenance, better quality and better tasting.

"As a result, sales from our butchery started picking up in Q2 and have tracked higher month-on-month than previous years ever since. I can appreciate that retailers who have little to differentiate themselves in the age of internet shopping are going to struggle. But like many reading this, we know that our infectious enthusiasm for supplying amazing food is difficult to compete with online."



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Tracklements appoints new commercial director

Tracklements has announced that Ben Hallam has been appointed as commercial director, with one of his responsibilities being overseeing delivery of business goals and identifying new market opportunities. Ben brings extensive experience in senior commercial roles including sales, development and procurement, as well as commercial management.

Guy Tullberg, managing director, said, "We are delighted to have Ben on board. He brings a wealth of experience to the team and joins us on our journey building a sustainable and successful business as we continue to grow the brand both in the UK and overseas."

Deli tackles food waste with Community Fridge

The Deli Group has launched a Community Fridge in Newton-Le-Willows in an effort to tackle the issue of food waste. The project, which is supported by environmental charity Hubbub UK, is the first of its kind in the area and is located inside the Newton Deli.

The company has called for local food businesses and allotment holders in the area to donate surplus food that would otherwise be wasted. This project is also part of the business' commitment to help those struggling in the community.

The Community Fridge will be open every day within the deli's normal opening times.



UK farming could be "the envy of the world"

A coalition of farming, environmental, animal welfare and public health organisations have urged the government to ensure its manifesto commitments to UK food standards are protected post-Brexit.

A letter to Boris Johnson, organised by the NFU and signed by 60 organisations, was sent to coincide with the passing of the Withdrawal Agreement Bill, which now has Royal Assent. Within the letter the groups say that Brexit "provides a vital opportunity for the UK to lead the way in devising a

global trading system fit for the 21st Century" and that it's also a catalyst for "UK farming not just to be the envy of the world, but to provide gold-standard model for high standard, high quality, sustainable food production."

However the joint letter states that it is "vital that we have more than just verbal assurances to ensure our standards are properly safeguarded." The organisations call for the government to establish a trade and standards commission to engage on the UK's trade policy and how it affects standards.

SUE NELSON



"Sustainable shopping? It's in the bag"

Never before has the future of our planet been such a hot topic (sorry about the pun). It used to be the preserve of eco-warriors and well-meaning environmentalists, but now the message has firmly stuck that this is everyone's responsibility. We can make our own impact on reducing plastic and carbon emissions through our behaviour at home, work, and of course choosing what to buy and where to shop. This is a huge advantage to independent retailers, with consumers actively looking to make a commitment to the environment.

Below are some steps to consider in order to embrace the clear desire from shoppers to become more sustainable:

Eliminate plastic packaging wherever possible and have an area or aisle that is plastic-free. It is still almost impossible to have a store which is entirely free of plastic packaging, but if there is a marked area that does not contain plastic it will really help consumers who are determined to avoid this indestructible material.

Sell discounted produce that is not quite at its best. Imperfect, nearing-expiration or otherwise flawed fresh produce can be put into a "too good to waste" box at a decent price reduction. Introduce a scheme to donate food that would otherwise be thrown out to charities or producers that specialise in 'food rescue' (turning waste into other food products).

For items that are simply past redemption or other food waste produced in-store, introduce

composting. Whole Foods Market use what they call a 'Full Circle Composting' programme, in which they take the compost from their stores and give it to local farmers.

Make recycling easier and help to cut down on food waste by allowing customers to pick their own quantities and sizes of fruit, vegetables and other products as much as possible. Consider introducing 'refill points' where they can bring their own containers or bottles to be refilled. You can get help in introducing these systems using companies such as Unpackaged.

Use local suppliers wherever possible to keep emissions down. Communicate your commitment to supporting local producers and farmers so customers know your policy on minimising transportation, so they can make purchase decisions on that basis. If your store includes local deliveries, ensure your vehicles are electric powered or at least hybrid.

Finally, if you have a food service section or café, make sure your cups and utensils are reusable or are free from plastic and compostable.

Consumers want to make sustainable choices and the major supermarkets will take years to deliver better environmental credentials. Tesco, Morrisons and Asda have stated that all their packaging will be fully recyclable by 2025. Independent retailers will be able to beat them to it by a clear couple of years.

Sue Nelson presents the FoodTalk Show with Holly Shackleton foodtalk.co.uk

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NEWS IN BRIEF

GIN DISTILLERY OVERCOMES ADVERSITY AFTER FIRE

Masons Yorkshire Gin's new distillery is set to open on 6th March after the business' former premises was destroyed in a fire back in April 2019. The industry and local community banded together to help keep production going over the last year, but the business is now ready to take on 2020 in its new bigger 12,368 sq ft distillery and with an expanded team. Karl Mason, director and co-founder says, "Without the incredible response from the fire department and the support we have received from our staff, community and our industry colleagues, we would not be in the fortunate position we are in today. When recreating our distillery, it was essential we kept everything under one roof. We are excited to launch our new distillery and drive Masons forward into the future."

NEW SECURE £20 NOTE TO ENTER CIRCULATION

A new £20 is being issued that is said to be "very difficult to counterfeit." The note, set to enter circulation on 20th February, now has two windows and a two-colour foil as new security features, and will also feature the artist JMW Turner. Retailers can continue to accept the old notes while they are gradually withdrawn.

NEW YORK BANS CASHLESS RETAILERS

In a move away from digital payments, cashless retailers are reported to have been banned in New York. The legislation, passed by the New York City Council, will see retailers not accepting physical currency face a fine. The reason behind the ban is to stop discrimination against customers that rely on cash payments.

Alimentaria returns to Barcelona for 2020 edition

Alimentaria will open its doors for its 23rd edition this year. Taking place 20th-23rd April at Fira de Barcelona, the international food, drinks and food service trade show will be showcasing quality ranges of Spanish food and drink.

The show is also set to attract a large number of British visitors and buyers. For the 2018 edition, the UK was ranked sixth in terms of visitor numbers behind Italy, France, Portugal, the Netherlands and Germany. In total over 4,500 exhibiting companies and around 150,000 visitors attended.

New to the 2020 show is the Alimentaria Trends section. Covering more than 4,500 sq m, this new

section will display the latest trends in production and consumption, such as delicatessen foods (Fine Foods), organic production (Organic Foods), allergen-free products (Free From), halal production (Halal Foods) and functional products (Functional Foods).

J. Antonio Valls, managing director of Alimentaria Exhibitions, said, "Participating as exhibitors at the leading food industry trade show provides companies from the United Kingdom with a great opportunity to increase their sales in the Spanish market and their areas of influence, where the British food and beverage sector still has a lot of growth potential."

Wales food and drink industry reports record-breaking year

The food and drink industry in Wales has recorded a successful year, with industry figures revealing that turnover hit £7.473bn in 2019. The figure surpassed the target of £7bn in sales by 2020, set out in the Welsh government's plan, *Towards Sustainable Growth: An Action Plan for the Food and Drink Industry 2014-2020*.

The Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths, called for the industry to continue thriving post-Brexit. She said, "I am in regular contact with Ministerial counterparts in the UK government and my message to them is clear. This sector is a real success story which we need to continue to promote and develop; it should not be overlooked or sold down the river."

"During trade negotiations and discussions on our future

relationship with the EU, the UK government must consider the impact on the 23,000 people who work in Wales' food and drink sector and the 217,000 employed in the wider supply chain.

"We have so much to celebrate here in Wales. I have every confidence, if we continue to support our food and drink industry and with the right economic conditions in place, our growing reputation as a food and drink nation will only get stronger."



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BREXIT IS ON: SPAIN RESPONDS

As one of Britain's most valuable international partners, how will Spain be affected by the UK's exit from the European Union?

On Friday 13th December 2019, Boris Johnson was re-elected Prime Minister, and one of the biggest questions which had been surrounding Brexit since it was voted for in June 2019 was answered. The British public's decision to keep the current Prime Minister in power came with an understanding: that by voting Conservative they were voting for Brexit. There was no longer potential for Britain's exit from the EU to be cancelled or delayed; it was happening, and the news was met with both gasps of delight and sighs of disappointment and worry

across the UK. There was a silver lining for both camps – the vote meant that progress could finally be made in terms of post-Brexit plans; for many the period of nervous uncertainty was over.

On that day, *Speciality Food* met with two of the biggest names in Spanish food and drink policy-making: Maria Naranjo Crespo, head of food, wine and gastronomy at ICEX Spain Trade and Investment and Mauricio Garcia de Quevedo, director general of FIAB (Spanish Federation of the Food and Beverage Industries). Here's what they had to say.

"We have a strong government which can take the measures to reach a resolution quickly"

MAURICIO GARCIA DE QUEVEDO, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF FIAB



There are two topics in which the consumer is demanding more and more. One is nutrition, and the second is sustainability, and Spanish food supplies that comfortably. Our food businesses are mostly rural SMEs; we

don't have big multinational brands. Those making our food are closer to the consumer, we have good security over our system and we are supervised by an administration. We're the fourth biggest economy in Europe but don't have a food business in the top 50. The biggest has a €1,000 million turnover, which in the context of Europe is nothing.

We have a number of routes to take our plan in the near future: we want to be perceived by consumers and regulators in the proper manner. We have a lot of reputational attacks from influencers spreading misinformation, so we need to educate so people have the correct knowledge to make a decision. Within the single market we have multiples challenges. One is that in Spain the regions are making decisions which are against the national law, which is affecting competitiveness. More and more there are European businesses which aren't working within the regulations that we have in Spain, which causes challenges. In our agricultural supply chain we have an imbalance between producers, industry and retailers so we need

to balance that. We are committed to sustainability and a circular economy and need to make advances in that regard. Internationalisation is one of the key strengths of the Spanish food and drink industry; around 30% of our produce is supplied to international markets – the biggest is France, followed by Italy, Portugal, Great Britain, Germany and the United States.

Spain's business relationship with the UK is great, and nobody wants that to change that. The Brexit decision is more of a political decision than a business one. We do not know what's going to happen, but the first thing we're concerned about is tariffs and customs. Import, export, cost and logistics, all of these things will be affected from a commercial point of view. We have struggled as a result of the reduction of the pound. We're concerned about how regulation and standards are going to be affected. All of these things are very complex, and we hope that between Europe and the UK there is a sense of not changing too much in terms of business.

Our response to the news that Boris Johnson was re-elected Prime Minister was positive – we finally had certainty that Brexit was going ahead. We have a strong government which can take the measures to reach a resolution quickly. I hope the Conservatives will make a deal with the EU which means that businesses will be either not or very slightly affected by Brexit.

"The worst part of the Brexit scenario is over"

MARIA NARANJO CRESPO, HEAD OF FOOD, WINE AND GASTRONOMY AT ICEX SPAIN TRADE AND INVESTMENT



I think the worst part of the Brexit scenario is already over. One of the scenarios we've been preparing for was a no-deal Brexit, which I now don't see happening. We have a period ahead of us during which nothing will change, and there will be discussions. Spain is the fifth biggest provider of food and beverage to the UK, and most companies have found a way to deal with the new scenario.

We are the biggest exporters to the UK in vegetables and fruit, wine and meat, and in all of these sectors we have already found a way to solve the logistics of the new scenario.

We know that the UK has been negotiating trade agreements with former colonies and commonwealth countries, so those competitors are there, but I believe the UK is a great partner for Spain and vice versa, particularly within the food and beverage sector.

I believe our gastronomy and its popularity with tourists are assets for our food and beverage industry. There are more and more restaurants promoting high quality foods in the market.

There's work to be done in our wine industry – we really have to promote high quality products and share our knowledge with the UK.

The speciality sector is very important to us because it's where we create the image we want to display. I believe that Spanish food has stories to tell which can really add value for consumers. Spain is the biggest producer in the EU but nobody knows about this very important strength we have. Consumers are really looking for sustainable products, and I see a lot of producers committed to it in a true way. I think these values Spain holds could be a strength for the UK market. Many of the actions we're going to promote in the UK link to Spanish gastronomy – particularly in the speciality niche.

WORTHY OF NOTE...

"OFF THE TOPIC OF **FOOD**, IT'S WORTH NOTING THAT MORE **BRITONS** COME TO **SPAIN** AS **TOURISTS** THAN ANY OTHER **NATIONALITIES**. WE WAIT TO SEE WHETHER **FEWER** BRITISH PEOPLE WILL **TRAVEL** TO SPAIN, WHETHER BECAUSE IT BECOMES MORE **COMPLICATED** TO DO SO OR MORE **EXPENSIVE**. IF THAT HAPPENS WE WILL HAVE AN **ISSUE**, AS OUR **ECONOMY** IS RELIANT ON TOURISTS"

MAURICIO GARCIA DE QUEVEDO, FIAB



The confectionery sector has seen plenty of change over the last few years, yet a brand that has been able to adapt in a competitive market while staying true to its essence is Mr Stanley's. Originating in 1843 (as Stanley's Confectionery) with a heritage as a producer of classic British confectionery, Mr Stanley's has become renowned for its fudge, toffee, coconut ices and brittles, which are still created using a traditional method in copper pots. Fast-forward to today, and the business is a cornerstone of the premium retail market, now exporting to over 20 countries around the world; a result of acquisition by The Gourmet Candy Company in the early 2000s.

The brand is by no means resting on its heritage laurels, however, as a complete revamp of the products and packaging has been going on behind the scenes for over a year. Sales director Jaime Waring explains, "We've been planning a rebrand for the best part of 15 months. Right now we are gearing up for trade shows, then as of April it will be available to the market. Mr Stanley's has always been a premium brand focusing on what Britain has in terms of the best of confectionery. That motto hasn't changed, but we felt that a refresh was necessary after 10 years of the previous styling, and it is quite dramatic compared to what it was like before. Importantly, the essence of the brand, which is of premium quality, is not changing."

It's clear that real creativity and passion has gone into revamping the product offerings in order to stand out within the market. Mr Stanley's motto is 'Feed The Imagination', and

SPOTLIGHT ON... MR. STANLEY'S

A heritage in British confectionery and a desire to stand out from the crowd makes Mr Stanley's a force to be reckoned with in the fine food industry



this has been applied to everything from product through to packaging.

The range now includes some exciting new boozy flavours including Monsoon Martini Fudge, boasting an espresso martini twist, and Dutch Courage, a fudge infused with gin and elderflower. Even some of the classic favourites have been revitalised – the much-loved Butterfingers Fudge has had its butter content increased to 18% for added luxury. Ranging from hard-boiled sweets to chocolates and caramels to nougat, the full range has everyone in mind. Indulgence is central to the confectionery that Mr

Stanley's offers, as well as creating a luxury experience for customers that goes beyond just taste. The brand now has a core range of 25 product lines, with packaging featuring the ongoing story of Mr Stanley and his search across the globe for new flavours and inspiration, joined by an array of charming characters.

Jaime says, "We really push the boundaries of what confectionery content can be like. There's some great flavours like the new Tiffin Fudge, which is unique. Even if it's subtle changes, it's about being different, which I think is so important in this day and age."

Christmas is a key feature in the brand's calendar, and there will be over 15 extra products added to the offerings for the 2020 season, including some unique chocolate novelties and stocking fillers. The focus will also be on showcasing the revamped range to the industry, and the team will be taking a stand at Speciality & Fine Food Fair for the first time in five years. Jaime explains, "We felt it was very important that with the relaunch this year we have our own stand and remind all the retailers that we are still here and much improved."

It's clear that this luxury brand

“We are dedicated to the speciality food sector. We want to create something that's different, unique and constantly pushing the boundaries”

MR STANLEY'S NEW FOR 2020 HIGHLIGHT REEL

- **Tiffin Fudge** - A chocolate fudge packed with cherries, marshmallow and biscuit pieces
- **Nutpopper Brittle** - Sweet toffee brittle with popcorn and peanut
- **Whisky Toddy Fudge** - A buttery fudge with a twist of stem ginger and whisky flavour

is playing the long game and intends to continue to stand apart from the crowd. Navigating the tricky waters of staying ahead of the game in a competitive industry, the Mr Stanley's brand has chosen to embrace its heritage and wear it proudly, while simultaneously pushing the envelope with its new creations.

"We want to keep our customer base premium," concludes Jaime. "I think many brands are launching in the speciality sector then ultimately moving into the fmcg sector. This isn't the direction we are taking with Mr Stanley's, we're dedicated to the speciality food sector. We want to create something that's different, unique and constantly pushing the boundaries."

With its newly revamped range, it would appear Mr Stanley's has done just that. Available from April.



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IMAGINATION**

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embrace the extraordinary.

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INTRODUCING PINTXOS: NORTHERN SPAIN'S ANSWER TO TAPAS

These small snacks served in the numerous (and very lively) bars of the Basque region are as much a part of everyday life as a siesta in the afternoon

Tapas and pintxos are similar, but Elke Panneels of tour company Basque Taste notes a few important differences: "Tapas are enjoyed in all parts of Spain when going out for drinks, while pintxos is specific to the Basque Country. In Central and Southern Spain a tapa might be offered on the house when ordering a drink, whereas in the Basque Country, you always have to pay separately."

There are differences in style, too. "Tapas are like a small version of a main dish, such as paella, pork cheeks or meatballs and normally require a fork to eat. Pintxos on the

other hand consist of a slice of bread on which various ingredients are mounted such as seafood, fish, meat or vegetables. Often this is held together with a toothpick, but not necessarily." The word pincho (singular) is Spanish for 'spike' in reference to this common presentation.

Nemanja Borjanovic is co-owner of Basque focused restaurant Lurra and owner of Mr Txuleta, a distributor of Galician beef to top restaurants. He thinks the appeal of pintxos lies in the quality and variety. "Pintxos is even smaller than tapas and it digs deep into that current status

of everyone wanting to try what's on everyone else's plate... if you get ingredients this good, there's no faffing around with garnish."

The town of San Sebastian, located on the Bay of Biscay, is the best place to visit for an education in this culinary tradition, and is considered an important food destination the world over. The narrow streets are packed with pintxos bars which stay open until midnight, feeding locals and tourists with an endless stream of small bites washed down with young wine called txakoli (chakoli), poured from a height to maximise effervescence. While

pintxos are typically bite-sized, they're often served alongside a range of other hot dishes such as steak and tortilla, which are also an essential part of the regional food experience.

GILDA

Gilda are one of the most famous pintxos and also one of the smallest, consisting of an olive, an anchovy and a pickled guindilla pepper (a mild chilli favoured in the Basque region). The snack takes its name from the 1946 film noir in which Rita Hayworth plays a bold femme fatale, and this salty, briny and spicy snack really punches above its weight. Consume it in one bite for maximum impact, preferably with a tiny glass of ice cold beer, called a zurito.

BREAD PINTXOS

Many pintxos are made by stacking ingredients on top of crusty white bread. Cheese, ham, seafood, omelettes, vegetables and other garnishes are layered and laid out on the bar for customers to choose from. Popular topping combinations include anchovy, red pepper and Manchego cheese; Membrillo (quince paste) with cheese and walnuts; sliced tortilla; Iberico ham with melon; tuna with garlic prawns and black pudding with a fried quail's egg. Hot toppings cooked to order are also popular, including fluffy salt cod fritters, creamy mushrooms and grilled seafood.

STEAK

The quality of beef in the region is world-renowned. The steaks, including the famous txuleton cut (a rib steak) come from grass fed ex-dairy cows which means rich fat and deep flavour. "The cows are reared to a much older age," Borjanovic explains, "so as the cow gets older it puts on more weight and more fat, and that fat infiltrates the muscles over time – we all know that fat is flavour. Usually cows are slaughtered at the age of two, but in Galicia it's 12-14."

Most consider San Sebastian's Bar Nestor to serve one of the best steaks in the region, and ordering requires adding your name to a list

In partnership with

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20-23rd April 2020
Barcelona

before the bar even opens for the day. Borjanovic likes his on a slice of bread, however, claiming, "it's a perfect two-bite mouthful."

TORTILLA

The tortilla de patata (potato omelette) is ubiquitous and for good reason: potatoes, onions and, often, lots of garlic are fried and bound with plenty of beaten egg resulting in a small, thick 'cake' which should ooze warm, rich egg when cut open. Variations are made with mushrooms, anchovies and ham.

SEAFOOD

Spicy mussels 'tigre' are a must-order in San Sebastian, and the best place to try them is La Mejillonera, a charming blue and white tiled bar which gets packed to capacity every evening. Mussels come drowned in a sweet, spicy and bright orange sauce, ready for slurping from the shells, which are thrown on the floor once emptied (discarding the shells is as much fun as the eating). Other local favourites include sea urchin, txangurro (spider crab), clams in a broth heady with garlic and parsley, bacalao (salt cod) fried into light fritters or croquettes, and angulas – tiny young eels like slippery fish spaghetti.

CHEESECAKE

Basque cheesecake is arguably the best in the world. Completely unlike the dense biscuit-based varieties, it's light, wobbly and incredibly creamy. The cheesecakes are often referred to as 'burnt' due to the dark, flavoursome crust which forms on the outside during baking. The high cooking temperature means the cakes rise in the oven, then sink to their signature shape on cooling. A voluptuous mouthful and nearly impossible to share.

“Pintxos is even smaller than tapas and it digs deep into that current status of everyone wanting to try what's on everyone else's plate... if you get ingredients this good, there's no faffing around with garnish”

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THE SUSTAINABILITY REPORT 2020

STATISTICS ● INSIGHTS ● SOLUTIONS

- How important is sustainability, really?
- What's shaping consumers' retail decisions?
- Realising responsibility

STEPPING UP TO THE PLATE



Sustainability is a subject hot on the lips and fingertips of shoppers, brands and decision-makers across the planet right now – and no wonder. The wave of realisation that began with Blue Planet II in 2017 has become a rip tide, transforming murmurs of idealistic change into powerful must-act-now statements.

The developed world is recognising the part it has played in the gradual degradation of our environment, and no sector is exempt – especially the food industry – but it's not only our comfort and bottom lines that are at stake, with often the smallest



players in this change experiencing the largest impact.

Thankfully, brands, retailers and governing bodies are stepping up to the plate, making swift changes where possible and vowing to take big action where needed. Here, together with industry greats

Cotswold Fayre and Speciality & Fine Food Fair, Speciality Food has gathered the statistics, insight and inspiration you need to move forward on this increasingly important topic.

HOLLY SHACKLETON | EDITOR

“75% OF UK SHOPPERS WANT SUPERMARKETS TO ONLY STOCK FOOD FROM SUSTAINABLE AND ETHICAL SOURCES”

SOURCE: LLOYD'S REGISTER

“The world has woken up to the impact of food and agriculture on our environment and our climate – from now on the sustainability of farming and food systems is no longer marginal, its role is of central importance in addressing climate change”

PATRICK HOLDEN, SUSTAINABLE FOOD TRUST

PAUL HARGREAVES.
COTSWOLD FAYRE



“Don't let perfection get in the way of progress”

Like several other businesses, Cotswold Fayre declared a climate emergency in 2019. Every business must realise their responsibility of being part of the solution to climate change as we and our predecessors in the western business world have created a large part of the problem during the past two centuries.

Clearly words are empty unless followed by action. In August 2019, Cotswold Fayre announced that we would be net zero for carbon. We did this by changing our logistics model, which reduced the distance our orders travelled by 1.7 million kilometers, and by off-setting all the remaining carbon in the business. Off-setting is only a short-term solution until we are able to be completely carbon neutral, which we will do as soon as electric lorries are available that can cover the distances we require. Until then we are assessed by an external organisation (carbon.neutral.com) and off-set our carbon in two projects in Central and South America.

Our supplier conference in May 2019 had only one agenda – climate

change. It was a remarkable business event, the like of which I have never seen before. Many of us were emotional as we confronted the damage we have done to the world, and feeling emotion is important, as it is generally what leads to change. We asked everyone to write down an easily-implemented personal and work change on a Post-it Note, and we have displayed these in our office as a sign of things to come.

One of the main messages coming out of the day was “Don't let perfection get in the way of progress.” The danger with climate change is that we think that anything we do to change will be insignificant and unsubstantial, but this attitude can lead to inaction. It's better to all strive to make constant improvements; collectively these make a huge difference to the world.

By all of us changing ourselves, encouraging and incentivising our employees to change and insisting our suppliers change, progress will be made. Don't delay, declare a climate emergency in your company today!

“Clearly words are empty unless followed by action”

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ELENA ATTANASIO, EVENT MANAGER

Promoting sustainability at Speciality & Fine Food Fair

Sustainability has fast become an important topic within the food and drink sector, from processing and packaging, wastage, materials and even transit solutions. We all need to do our part in providing a solution to this ongoing challenge and in response

to this, Speciality & Fine Food Fair is taking action to make our operation as sustainable as possible.

How do we intend to do this? As part of our ongoing initiative to take care of our planet as well as our people, we have created a dedicated Sustainability Zone within our 2020

showcase, taking place 6th-8th September. Within this zone we will be removing the carpets, reviewing our choice in shell scheme to reduce unnecessary use of materials, and taking more consideration of the overall type of materials being used around the Fair.

Not only is it important to us that we take steps to be more sustainable at the Fair, but also that our exhibiting producers aim to be more sustainable too, and we will be reviewing five key areas with anyone featuring within the Sustainability Zone:

- Waste & Recycling
- Energy
- Packaging
- Raw materials
- Water

As our Sustainability Zone takes shape, we are excited to see that it has already piqued the interest of some

very exciting brands, with sustainability at the heart of their mission.

Alongside this exciting new feature, we will be hosting all the classic industry favourites such as our content-packed panel discussion stage, featuring some of the most forward-thinking and thought-provoking sessions on all those key industry issues. In addition, we will be hosting a collection of established and up-and-coming chefs at our live demo kitchen where delicious dishes will be prepared daily.

If you want to showcase your

contribution to sustainability within your establishment or are revolutionising your industry, then there is no better time to get involved – get in touch to tell us what you're up to. You can also keep an eye on our website to stay up to date with this exciting project and find out all the latest improvements being made to Speciality & Fine Food Fair 2020.

Follow us at #SustainabilityatSFFF across Twitter - @SpecialityFair, Instagram - @SpecialityFair and Facebook - @SpecialityFair.

See you in September!

“As part of our ongoing initiative to take care of our planet as well as our people, we have created a dedicated Sustainability Zone at our 2020 event”



“Previous research from Kantar has shown that the food category has historically enjoyed more trust than

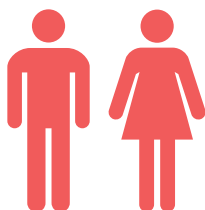
other categories such as personal care. However, given the types of environmental issues that are now most important to consumers and the fact these factors are influencing their decisions, food manufacturers can no longer rest on their laurels”

MARK CHAMBERLAIN, KANTAR WORLDPANEL

SHOPPER POWER

“In the last 12 months, over three quarters of consumers have switched, avoided or boycotted products based on brands’ environmental policies”

83% OF CONSUMERS SAY THAT TODAY'S ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES ARE IN PART CAUSED BY LACK OF RESPONSIBILITY TAKEN BY LEADING BRANDS



MEN ARE MORE PREPARED TO SWITCH OR BOYCOTT BRANDS THAN WOMEN

OVER HALF RANK OVERUSE OF PLASTIC AND PACKAGING IN THEIR TOP THREE CONCERNS



Source: Mintel



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FOOD WASTE

- How much food waste does each sector create?
 - Decide to do things differently
 - Acting on food waste

“STILL A GREAT DEAL OF WORK TO DO”

Alan Hayes, Head of Technical Programmes at IGD



The food and drink we consume forms the single biggest part of our sustainability impact, and thus our contribution to climate change; bigger than the emissions created from travel and from the energy we use at home. Therefore, reducing food waste is very important in efforts to address climate change.

In September, we celebrated the first anniversary of IGD and WRAP's ground-breaking Food Waste Reduction Roadmap, developed to help food and consumer goods companies adopt a consistent approach to Target, Measure and Act on the food waste they create. The roadmap aims to help the UK achieve both the (UK) Courtauld Commitment 2025 targets, and the (international) United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12.3.

The roadmap is hugely ambitious, and the UK was the first country in the world to set a nationwide plan of this size, scale and ambition.

At the time of writing, 162 UK food businesses have already committed to target, measure and act on food waste, representing more than half of the UK food industry by turnover. Many are already providing evidence to WRAP of their work to reduce waste. In addition, more companies than ever are reporting their food waste data publicly.

The 121 businesses now reporting on their waste have a combined turnover of more than £220bn and generate over 1.1 million tonnes of food waste in their own operations. This shows what a difference can be made when industry works together, even in such a short time frame. There is still a great deal of work to do, but the progress to-date has been significant.

“IF FOOD
WASTE WAS
A **COUNTRY**,
IT WOULD BE
THE **THIRD-
LARGEST**
CONTRIBUTOR
OF **CARBON
EMISSIONS**
AFTER THE **US**
AND **CHINA**”

SOURCE: FAO 2015

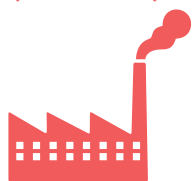
SURPLUS FOOD IS AN ISSUE ACROSS THE FOOD INDUSTRY. IN TONNES, THIS IS HOW MUCH EACH SECTOR CREATES:



FARMING:
100,000-500,000



RETAIL:
47,000-110,000



PROCESSING & MANUFACTURING:
52,000-160,000



WHOLESALE
& DISTRIBUTION:
80,000-120,000

Source: WRAP

ON THE GROUND: TOAST ALE



James King,
marketing and
brand manager

Toast Founder, Tristram Stuart, is an environmental activist and long-term specialist on food waste – starting the charity Feedback. Toast began when he visited Brussels and tried Babylone, a beer brewed with bread and based on an old Babylonian recipe. When he tried it, he immediately saw three ingredients for something special:

- *He knew where industrial quantities of day-fresh bread were being wasted all over the world*
- *The craft brewing movement had become a global super trend*
- *He had spent the past 20 years catalysing a global movement of food waste activists and entrepreneurs*

Bring all these three phenomena together and you have a delicious pint-sized solution to food waste.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Toast combines surplus fresh bread with malted barley in their grain bill – the bread replaces one-third of the malt typically used to brew beer. Bread is packed with carbohydrates, which are broken down to simple sugars by enzymes in the barley. Hops are added for aroma and bitterness, and to help preserve the beer. Finally, yeast converts the sugars to alcohol.

“APPROXIMATELY **ONE-THIRD**
OF ALL THE **FOOD** PRODUCED
IN THE **WORLD** IS **LOST** OR
WASTED”

SOURCE: WRAP



ENVIRONMENT

- Organic farming in figures
- Demand for reduction of single-use plastic
- Reducing your carbon footprint

MOVING AWAY FROM SINGLE-USE PLASTIC



Martin Wickham, food and drink investment specialist at the Department for International Trade

For a long time, plastic packaging has been widely used across the food sector as it protects food from spoiling, allowing it to travel further distances and stay longer on shelves. However, single use plastic leads to environmental degradation, loss of biodiversity, and climate change. There are also concerns about the adverse health implications. Globally we produce about 359 metric tonnes of plastic a year, which is set to double by 2035 and quadruple by 2050. This has led to increasing pressure from retailers, industry stakeholders and the government to develop sustainable packaging for food and drink as the industry is responsible for 40% of this global plastic production.

However, the biggest pressure is actually coming from consumers themselves, with nine in 10 UK consumers wanting all their food and drink packaging to be recyclable, and 88% of shoppers wanting on-package information on packaging sustainability. The Department for International Trade (DIT) is helping UK businesses respond to this demand.

474,000

HECTARES ARE FARMED ORGANICALLY IN THE UK

70%

OF THE UK'S ORGANIC LAND IS ACCOUNTED FOR BY PERMANENT GRASSLAND

8%

OF THE UK'S ORGANIC AREA IS USED TO GROW CEREALS

THERE ARE **6,200** ORGANIC OPERATORS IN THE UK

3.3%

OF THE UK'S CATTLE IS REARED ORGANICALLY

61% OF THE UK'S ORGANIC LAND ENGLAND IS IN ENGLAND

SOURCE: Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs

HOW TO REDUCE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT



Tom Cumberlege, associate director of the Carbon Trust

Carbon impacts vary significantly across the food and drink sector as farming, transportation, packaging and the processing of food and drink items all contribute towards the carbon footprint of an organisation or product. The key steps to carbon footprint reduction are:

1 Measure the full lifecycle impact of a food and drink product and identify the main carbon emissions hotspots. These will differ depending on the nature of your business. For a soft drinks manufacturer these could be in the packaging (sourcing/recycling of aluminium cans or PET bottles). For a dairy processor, the main impact will be back on the farm and the management of the dairy herd that produces the milk

2 Develop a plan to reduce these emissions. This is not limited to actions within your own organisation – engagement with supply chain partners is essential

3 Provide transparent communication to customers. Outline how your business has measured the impacts and what actions you are taking to address the most material impacts

“Over 70% of consumers agree the response from businesses to the environmental damage being caused to our planet is ‘too little, too late’”

SOURCE: KANTAR WORLDPANEL



Sustainability at Speciality & Fine Food Fair

For September 2020, the Fair are delighted to introduce our Sustainability Zone.

As part of our ongoing initiative to take care of our planet as well as our people we have created a dedicated Sustainability Zone within our 2020 edition. We want to support and champion food and drink brands who are leading the way in environmentally friendly initiatives and making all the difference.

We will be monitoring 5 key points around the Fair:

1. Waste & Recycling
2. Energy
3. Packaging
4. Raw Materials
5. Water



@SPECIALITYFAIR



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If you would like some more information about the Sustainability Zone, please contact:

Elena Attanasio - Event Manager
elena.attanasio@montgomerygroup.com

PRODUCTION

- The power of small businesses
- How to become more sustainable
- Case study: Blue Goose Coffee

“Small businesses are the true creators of positive change”

CASE STUDY: LEX THORNELY, CO-FOUNDER OF BLUE GOOSE COFFEE

It was when visiting a waste processing facility that Nick [co-founder] and I first understood the scale and threat that coffee capsules posed to our planet. It was also really evident that the big pod manufacturers were too heavily invested in materials like aluminium to consider alternatives, while others were taking advantage of the huge growth in capsule coffee popularity and pumping out cheap plastic capsule offerings filled with equally cheap commodity grade coffee. None of this sat right with us. Not just because of our own morals and realisation of the effect mass consumption and its waste was having on our environment, but because we also knew there was a realistic alternative behind the smoke screen that the bigger brands were so eagerly creating to propel the capsule gravy train.

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

We're not in the game of token gestures. We're literally roasting eco into our product offerings, our materials and our supply chain rather than just jumping on the eco band wagon. Yes it's more expensive, especially when investing in sustainability throughout every part of our offering, from FSC board and vegetable inks to being the first capsule company to adopt plastic free glues to secure our boxes. But following your heart rather than the endless pursuit of profit means your focus and outlook are very different from those of big businesses. It's a mentality that is also making total business sense in today's world, so why pursue any other path?



NEXT STEPS

One of our projects is to embrace carbon capture technology and actually extract the equivalent of our carbon emissions out of the air rather than just offset through planting trees, for example. We're also tackling plastic pallet wrap, which is utterly horrid stuff, pushing changes back up through our supply chain while working in partnership with the University of Exeter on a Government-funded project investigating alternatives to fossil-based materials for plastics and how to improve post-use reclamation.

HOW TO BE MORE SUSTAINABLE

Q I want to boost the sustainability of my business. How do I get started?



A Prioritise action towards the most significant environmental impacts of your business,” says

Dr Martin Wickham, food and drink

investment specialist at the Department for International Trade. “This could be in the supply chain, packaging, transportation, or your own operations. Collecting data from suppliers is the first step in starting a dialogue on managing environmental impacts. Set clear expectations across your operations and supply chain partners that measuring environmental impacts and target setting is important to your business. Consider setting science-based targets; aligning your ambition to the goals of the Paris Agreement.”

“THE **WASTE AND RESOURCES** ACTION PROGRAMME (WRAP) AIMS FOR **100% OF PLASTIC PACKAGING TO BE RECYCLABLE, REUSABLE OR COMPOSTABLE BY 2025**”

SOURCE: DIT



“We really believe that saving the world starts with positive action – no matter how big or small. There's a danger that businesses are paralysed when confronting the scale of the climate crisis we face. The best thing to do is get started – think small and then go bigger – it's amazing how quickly impact can accumulate. All it takes is the decision to do things differently for the planet”

JAMES KING, TOAST ALE

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RETAIL, MARKETS & FOODSERVICE

- How markets are going eco
- Retail pioneers
- Anti-food waste formats



CASE STUDY: PLANET ORGANIC

We work our socks off to minimise food waste in the first instance, but we do inevitably have some waste," explains Peter Marsh, CEO at Planet Organic. "We spent years scouring the market for a partner with the necessary food handling processes to redistribute this unavoidable waste, and OLIO was the first we came across that had the necessary capabilities. We have seen some enormous benefits since embarking on our partnership, and if more companies engaged with this wonderful initiative the amount of food wasted could be dramatically reduced, not to mention the enormous impact it can have in addressing issues relating to poverty and hunger in communities."

TRADE TALK



Rebecca Barratt,
director of
communications and
marketing for Covent
Garden Market Authority

"Questions from the traders' customer base around sustainability are growing year on year, and following our recent 2020 trends survey, queries around plastic reduction are particularly prominent. The traders have reported requests such as no window brown bags for single items, as well as a reduction in excess packaging and calls for reusable boxes."

"Customers on the market are also buying more loose produce over pre-packaged versions in a bid to improve their sustainability practices. However, not all customers are committed to this, which can present a challenge for traders who are considering using more expensive packaging, such as starch based bags."



EVENT SPOTLIGHT:
ALDEBURGH FOOD & DRINK FESTIVAL
JESS BROWN, EVENT ORGANISER

HOW DOES THE EVENT CATER FOR SUSTAINABLE SHOPPERS?

- Reusable shopping bags
- Sourcing local for services and products when possible
- Promoting the 'shop local' ethos
- Bus shuttle services to reduce traffic
- All the site waste is collected and then sorted for best recycling results

“The growth of organic into foodservice increased steadily again this year – by 7.8%”

SOURCE: SOIL ASSOCIATION

HOW TO: BE BEST IN CLASS

"Single use packaging affects all food businesses, no matter what the size, speciality, or where you sit in the supply chain. But happily, it's also something you can do something about – whether you're a producer making choices about your retail packaging, a retailer deciding what products to stock, or even as a consumer choosing what to buy. The best way to start is to ensure that what you already have is best in class. Do an audit to really understand what your packaging is made of, what can be done with it at end of life, and speak to your suppliers to see how you can improve material content and recyclability. Otherwise you're just leaving your packaging problem with the consumer, which is becoming socially unacceptable as well as a brand risk given how vocal some consumers can be on social media against products they don't like. Once your offering is the best it can be, then you can think about how you might improve and take advantage of the new zero waste movement – can you produce or sell products in bulk with no packaging, or in reusable packaging? That's where the magic lies."

CATHERINE CONWAY, FOUNDER OF UNPACKAGED



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BUSINESS

- Being the change you want to see
- The danger of greenwashing
- The value of certification

PRODUCER SPOTLIGHT:

DOISY & DAM

Ed Smith, co-founder

WHY REGISTER AS A B CORP?

We've always wanted to build a sustainable and responsible business from day one; both for personal reasons and because cocoa can be an ethically murky raw material to deal with and we had the opportunity to address that. We initially thought that having a personal audit of our business would be the best way forward, but coming across the B Corp certification made us change our mind. It allowed us to look at more than just our sourcing, but also our social, environmental and ethical approach to business as a whole. It also presented us with a structure to monitor and continue to improve our ethical approach.

WHAT CHANGES HAS THIS LED TO?

We've changed our supply chain to ensure that all of our cocoa is fully traceable back to its original source. Working only with Colombian producers, we personally make sure that we have one of the most ethical and carefully sourced supply chains of any chocolate business. We are also in the process of applying this



approach to our packaging, with a goal to use 100% recyclable packaging by the end of next year. Doing good is at the heart of our company values, ensuring that everyone who works at the company is of the mindset to leave behind more than we take. Overall, being a certified B Corp gives us clear guidelines as to how we should act as a business and helps with every decision we make.

“There's a lot of talk about 'purpose' and what businesses are all about, and that's great - but is it just words? Purpose is a timeless statement of why you exist, why you deserve to exist”

“OVER A **QUARTER** OF THOSE WHO **RESPONDED** TO OUR **YOUNGOV** SURVEY STATED THAT THEY HAD **AVOIDED** BUYING A **PRODUCT** OR USING A **SERVICE** DUE TO ITS NEGATIVE **ENVIRONMENTAL** IMPACT IN THE PAST **YEAR** – AN INCREASE OF **65%** SINCE **2016**”

SOURCE: ETHICALCONSUMER.ORG

“There's huge risk around greenwashing...”

CHARLOTTE BAKER, CONTEXIS

“... Which is where we believe organisations like B Corps have a big role to play. Your purpose isn't necessarily your end point but something you have to keep alive. A lot of companies will say they're not always going to get this right. So Unilever under Paul Pulman had a focus on more sustainable brands, but accepted they can't change the world overnight... I think that's more credible. People aren't idiots, but when green washing becomes a marketing message, the risk is that nothing meaningful gets done. Everyone wants to go to work feeling they'll make a difference.”

“**ETHICAL** FOOD AND DRINK [IS] UP **16.3%**, THE **LARGEST** INCREASE SINCE **2012**, FUELLED BY **GROWING** SALES OF **VEGETARIAN** PRODUCTS”

SOURCE: ETHICALCONSUMER.ORG

“We need ‘morally conscious’ approaches”

Kate Cawley, founder of Veris Strategies



“Food is not only wasted on an unprecedented level, it is often produced at the expense of unnecessary animal suffering, human rights, equality and environmental protection.

“It's clear that morally conscious approaches can be better applied and promoted when it comes building more resilient, resource-efficient food systems. Importantly, these approaches can help address the ethical issues that matter most to consumers – animal welfare, meat reduction, fairer farming, reforestation and food security.”

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PEOPLE

- The global impact of our choices
- What is a social enterprise?
- Promoting sustainability to consumers

"It's easy to say our actions don't matter"

MAURICE SADLIER, DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMMES FOR WORLD VISION IRELAND



"At the end of 2019 I sat with a group of women smallholder farmers under a large mango tree in Ndala, Tanzania to talk to them about our programmes and to hear how our work was improving their and their children's lives.

"Behind us land preparation was in full swing for the planting season that was about to start with the oncoming rains. I asked how the last season's harvest had been – not good was the answer – they had suffered periods of drought delaying planting and then heavy rains damaging crops: changing weather patterns as

a result of climate change.

"These women did not own a car or have electricity in their homes or have any of the benefits of the fossil fuel-based development that we have. But being among the poorest and least resilient members of our society they are those hardest hit by the impacts of climate change. This is the injustice of climate change – those least responsible are most impacted.

"These women's ability to provide food for their children was impacted by climate change. Unlike other issues, climate change knows no international boundaries and – like it or not – our choices, including food choices, have a global impact.

"Our choices matter; being more conscious about our food consumption and waste is essential to combat climate change. It's easy to say that we are a small country or only one person and our actions don't matter, but they do. Change needs to happen at an individual and societal level. We need to reduce our meat intake, make more sustainable food choices and reduce our food waste.

"Reducing our carbon footprint and making sustainable food choices is not only essential to combat climate change and meet the development needs of women like those in Ndala, Tanzania today, but also to ensure we leave a health planet for generations yet unborn."

“Unlike other issues, climate change knows no international boundaries and – like it or not – our choices, including food choices, have a global impact”

HOW TO PROMOTE THE SUSTAINABILITY MESSAGE

- Small changes that are easy to understand are influencing changes to diets and food choices
- People are challenging where information comes from
- They are drawn to sustainability campaigns from sources they perceive as trustworthy
- The messaging is strengthened by simple, visual communications that elicit an emotional response
- Messaging is even stronger when people can take simple action themselves

“The messages that are cutting through are simple, blunt and visually memorable”

SOURCE: SOIL ASSOCIATION

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE (NOUN):

The term 'Social Enterprise' is defined by Government as "a business with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners."



Save the Date

for something special...

Speciality & Fine Food Fair will be returning to Olympia London 6-8 September 2020 with a host of new features, exciting developments and key takeaways on the flourishing industry of artisanal food and drink.

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Make sure your customers have everything they need for the perfect afternoon tea with these tasty treats

1 HOFFMANN & RATHBONE SPARKLING WINE

Sussex-based Hoffmann & Rathbone's Blanc de Blanc 2011 is crafted using the winemaker's best Chardonnay base wines. Long ageing in the cellars is key to complementing the citrus flavours and complex yeast and brioche aromas that are said to enhance the long finish. hoffmannandrathbone.co.uk



2 TIPTREE COCKTAIL CONSERVES

Inspired by classic cocktail recipes. Choose from Lime Mojito, Piña Colada, Berry Daiquiri, Bucks Fizz or Peach Bellini. They're terrific on toast and will add a tipsy twist to any cream tea. tiptree.com



3 YORKSHIRE TEA

Yorkshire Tea builds strong relationships with the world's top tea estates and does business in a way that respects people and planet. They pay fair prices for really good tea from farms in Africa and Assam to make a rich, smooth and satisfying tea blended by the family business in Harrogate. yorkshiretea.co.uk





4 TIPTREE PATISSERIE CAKES

Handmade cakes are freshly made to order and come as traditional round cakes or Afternoon Tea selections. Award-winning Victoria sponge is filled with delicious buttercream and Wilkin & Sons Raspberry Jam. The Afternoon Tea selection boxes contain a mixture of luxurious bitesize cakes which are ideal for meetings, buffets and special events.
tiptreecakes.com



5 CLOTTON HALL DAIRY CLOTTED CREAM

A farming family now in its sixth generation, Clotton Hall Dairy produces its products in the heart of Cheshire. The dairy's luxurious clotted cream is made using creamy milk from the farm's free range cows which range in breed from Jersey to Danish Red and Holstein Friesian.
clottonhalldairy.co.uk



6 NOURISH MACAROONS

Nourish Coconut Macaroons and Mini Bites are handmade in a hidden corner of the Surrey Hills. All products are free from gluten, grains, dairy and refined sugar. Nourish is committed to using only the best certified organic ingredients and to running a sustainable business.
nourish-growcookenjoy.com



7 TIPTREE PATISSERIE SCONES

The artisan bakery and patisserie based in Witham, Essex was established in 1995 and is the home of handmade bakes. It produces these freshly baked, sweet, golden-crusted scones which are deliciously light and fluffy – irresistibly perfect for any afternoon tea.
tiptreecakes.com





TEAWARE FLOOR, FORTNUM & MASON

HOW FORTNUM & MASON BECAME A TEA ICON

A sought-after tea selection, knowledgeable staff and interactive elements have been key to the retailer's legacy

THE FORTNUM & MASON RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

- High quality product
- Large product range
- Sensory table to create an experimental moment for customers
- Time for Tea in the Tea Studio
- Counter of rare teas
- Knowledgeable staff
- Diamond Jubilee Tea Salon

Brits are known for having a love of tea, but as a nation we have actually been buying less of the traditional stuff over the last couple of years. Figures from Kantar found that the UK purchased 2.57m fewer kilos of tea in 2019 compared to 2018 (52 w/e 24 March 2019). Black tea has been declining in popularity, however spending

on speciality teas, such as green and white, is up 4.2% (Kantar 52 w/e March 2019 vs. 2018).

Selection

Tea is such a core component of Fortnum & Mason that the retailer has devoted half of the ground floor of its store to it, alongside a Tea Studio on the first floor and Diamond

Jubilee Tea Salon on the fourth. Otilie Cunningham, tea and coffee buyer, says that the selection of teas displayed come from far and wide. "Having sold tea for centuries, we stock a huge range of blends to suit every taste. Teas are displayed in their family and ranges – Fortnum's Famous blends, Classic World for single origins, Infusions and

Odditeas to name just a few. We have over a hundred caddies on the tea counter where customers can buy our blends and single origin teas loose, as well as a fantastic range of rare teas – everything from a unique New Zealand Oolong to a perfect example of a First Flush Darjeeling from Seeyok Tea Estate."

Experience

Simply having a great selection on offer is only the first step, however. The key to success is to become a destination for customers, and at Fortnum's giving shoppers the opportunity to interact with the products is essential. There is a sensory table where customers can view the tea leaves, with steam punks always available and offering three blends to taste. Otilie explains, "Our mantra is to make Fortnum's more relevant, to more people, more of the time – and tea is no exception in this pursuit. We're able to demonstrate the wide variety of blend and brewing techniques, to make the process as interactive as possible with sampling and tasting during our 'time for tea' moments, every day at 11am and 4pm. We also work with highly trained staff on the tea counter who are able to guide customers through the range and make bespoke recommendations."

Sustainability

According to the UK Tea & Infusions Association, 96% of all cups of tea drunk daily in the UK are brewed from tea bags. It's worth keeping this in mind when choosing stock, especially with today's spotlight on sustainability. Some tea bags contain plastic in the form of polypropylene, which is not a biodegradable or recyclable material, a fact that many consumers are becoming more conscious of. Manchester-based Brew Tea Co., for example, highlights its tea bags as being 100% plastic-free and compostable.

Sustainability is an important consideration at Fortnum's too;

"We've been going since 1707 so are certainly here for the long-term and want to ensure our planet is too," says Otilie. "We're therefore always on the look-out for ways to streamline our business and become more environmentally sustainable. We are also members of the Ethical Tea Partnership. All teabags – both pyramid bags for loose leaf and paper teabags – are also free from petroleum-based plastic."

Being answerable for questions such as sustainability credentials, curating a sought-after tea selection and developing a reputation for going the extra mile for the customer experience ensure that shoppers continue to return time and time again.

TEA TRENDS

To ensure that all shoppers are catered for, keep an eye on the trends and movements within the industry and adjust stock accordingly. Cold brew teas, for example, have become more of a feature within the tea world and are a refreshing alternative to a hot drink in the warmer months.

WHAT TO STOCK

Candice Fonseca explains what teas have been proving popular at Delifonseca:

"We are seeing a rise in the popularity of speciality tea, in particular herbal, fruit, redbush and green tea blends that promote different wellbeing properties.

"Traditional black teas (other than breakfast blends) are not as popular and are certainly not enjoyed in the same quantities as they were just a decade ago, and although white teas claim to have strong antioxidant properties they do not appear to be as high in demand as green tea.

"Fruit and plant 'infusions', whilst not technically 'tea', are a great way to fill the gap for people who are trying to reduce their sugar intake."

“Our mantra is to make Fortnum's more relevant, to more people, more of the time – and tea is no exception”



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Tempt shoppers with a wide variety of some of the best in fine food and drink. This issue we share store cupboard essentials such as nut butters and oils, tasty and convenient ready meals, as well as plenty of sweet treats including luxury chocolate and tasty biscuits. Peruse these pages for stocking inspiration to suit all customers



Naturelly

The multi-award winning Naturelly is a fun and fruity juicy jelly in a pot or pouch, and is a brilliant snack or dessert for kids and parents alike. The Summer Fruits flavours are bursting with raspberries and strawberries whilst the Tropical Fruits varieties delight with the taste of pineapples and oranges. Both pots and pouches contain no added sugar or artificial sweeteners, are only 36 calories and are made from real fruit. They contain no nasty allergens and are vegan approved. Meanwhile, the juicy jelly pots have the added benefit of being boosted with 3g of prebiotic fibre to help you achieve your 20g a day target.

01619 155 248 play@naturelly.co.uk naturelly.co.uk

Walker's Nonsuch

Family toffee maker, Walker's Nonsuch offer lovely toffees perfect for spring time treats. Both Milk Chocolate and Banana Split eclairs are particular favourites for when the weather starts to get a little warmer. Both have real chocolate centres, so there's no melting messy chocolate but you still have the satisfaction of chocolate in the centre. Mint toffees are also refreshing for the time of year. All toffees are packed in convenient 150g bags, great for giving and perfect for sharing. Bags come in shelf ready boxes. Made with good ingredients, all Walker's Nonsuch Toffees are free from artificial colour, preservatives, hydrogenated vegetable oils and gluten too.

01782 321 525 sales@walkers-nonsuch.co.uk
walkers-nonsuch.co.uk



Banhoek Chilli Oil

Handcrafted in the beautiful Banhoek Valley near Stellenbosch in South Africa, Banhoek Chilli Oil is a premium grade, handmade chilli oil made from just two ingredients: the highest quality rapeseed oil and dried Thai Birdseye chillies. All natural, no preservatives.

Winner of a Great Taste 2019 award, our delicious oil has been specifically created to be a complement to a wide range of ingredients and to deliver just the right level of spice without compromising the flavours of the other elements. Goes with almost everything – the only limit is your imagination!

ed@banhoekchillioil.co.uk banhoekchillioil.co.uk



field fare

From classic comfort foods like Cottage Pie, Deep-Filled Savoury Pies, Pastry Purses and Suet puddings; Great Taste Award winners Lasagne Verde, Coquilles St Jacques, Asparagus & Gruyere Crowns and Mushroom, Stilton & Pine Nut Parcel and true family favourites Chicken Tikka Masala, creamy Fish Pie, Toad in the Hole and Macaroni Cheese. There are also gluten-free and vegetarian options within the range.

All of a high quality that you'd expect from field fare; using only the finest ingredients, cooked in small batches, with a richness of flavour and generous portions.

Impactful branding with food photography is also available for in-store freezers which creates an eye-catching display for the ready meal range.

Our extensive frozen range means we can supply a retailer with all their frozen food needs – keeping the buying process simple and efficient with one order, one environmentally friendly delivery and one invoice.

01732 864 344 enquiries@field-fare.com field-fare.com

Blossoms Blueberry Syrup

Our syrup is made with smaller blueberries bringing a sharper and higher intensity to this classic flavour. As for the rest of the Blossoms Syrups range, the ingredients are not heat-treated and therefore taste as natural as can be. Blossoms Syrup uses only premium ingredients and adds no aromas or preservatives to the syrups. Our syrups are all suitable for vegans.

Blossoms Blueberry syrup is absolutely fabulous drizzled on porridge, pancakes, waffles or ice cream and, being so versatile, you can also use it as the perfect ingredient in cocktails, smoothies, water and many more end products.

0800 233 5611

sales@blossomssyrup.co.uk
blossomssyrup.co.uk



DTM Print

DTM Print, international OEM and solution provider for speciality printing systems, recently announced the new LX610e Color Label Printer. The LX610e is the only full-colour, desktop label printer/plotter in the world that delivers photo-quality labels in any size and shape. It combines colour inkjet label printing with a built-in digital die-cutting mechanism. The printer features a built-in die-cutting knife blade for cutting labels into custom shapes and sizes and also a built-in and pizza wheel-style cutter for horizontal cutting of labels. LX610e includes an easy-to-use software, called PTCreat™, for laying out print and cut files. That allows the fast production of custom labels of virtually any size or shape all in one process. Like any other desktop colour label printer the LX610e can also be fed with standard pre die-cut labels and tags for just printing. The LX610e Color Label Printer sells for €2,495 (MSRP) and is available through authorised DTM Print resellers and distributors.

0049 6119 2770 sales@dtm-print.eu dtm-print.eu



Quarterpast

Life is too short for bland! Enjoy a flavoursome hot drink made with authentic ingredients. Our amazing new QUARTERPAST Turmeric Lemon Ginger & Honey is rich in flavour and packed with amazing benefits. This soothing combination is perfect for cold or hot days. Our new style liquid fruit infusions are brimming with real fruit and delicately infused with herbs and spices. Just add to hot or cold water.

07727 225 218 verity@shottbeverages.com shottbeverages.com



Gruyère AOP

Made in western Switzerland, Gruyère AOP has been produced in the same way since 1115AD, using raw milk from cows fed on grass in summer and hay in winter. The skilled cheesemakers use 400 litres of fresh milk to make a single 35kg Gruyère AOP wheel. It is the only cheese that has won the title of Best Cheese in the World at the World Cheese Awards four times, which just goes to show how much work and skill is needed to create its unique and delicious flavour.

Gruyère AOP can be found with different maturities: the Classic is matured for six months and has a delicate, nutty, creamy flavour. The Reserve is matured for 10 months and has a drier, more grainy mouthfeel. Then you can find an older Gruyère AOP, 14 months or more, giving it a much stronger flavour. The age brings a difference in taste, but the recipe always stays the same.

gruyere.com



ManiLife

Craft peanut butter start-up, ManiLife is the first in its category to win three Gold Stars at the Guild of Fine Food Great Taste Awards with Deep Roast Crunchy. As part of their rave reviews, judges said the variant was 'best in class' with an 'exquisite taste' and they 'could not think of a way to improve it'. ManiLife Original Crunchy scored two Gold Stars for its flavour and use of quality ingredients. Founded by Stuart Macdonald, ManiLife is going from strength to strength, accounting for 22% of the £3.68m growth in peanut butter retail sales last year. Stuart said, "We're absolutely delighted with the awards and the judges' comments – it means so much to the team, especially as the creators of the Deep Roast range."

0207 052 3843 stu@mani-life.com mani-life.com



Charbonnel & Walker

A delightful combination of pistachio and white chocolate ganache in a white chocolate shell. With a rich and nutty flavour, perfectly balanced with a not too sweet and delicious chocolate centre. Pistachio truffles make the perfect foodie gift, an ideal after dinner treat with coffee or paired with something stronger!

0207 318 2075 chloe.choularton@charbonnel.co.uk
charbonnel.co.uk

Peter's Yard

Peter's Yard, famous for their award-winning Sourdough Crispbreads, introduced a new Sourdough Flatbreads range in 2019. Long and thin, they are designed to go with your favourite dips for a delicious snack.

They are made from simple, natural ingredients including Shipton Mill organic flour, British rapeseed oil, Halen Môn Sea Salt and, of course, their own 45 year old sourdough starter. Fed daily, their sourdough is allowed to ferment for 16 hours before each batch is made. Hand-baked, they come in three recipes – Sea Salt, Seeded and Smoked Chilli.

The Flatbreads are all high in fibre, low in sugar and saturated fats and with no artificial colours, flavours or preservatives. They are also Peter's Yard's first products suitable for vegans.

orders@petersyard.com petersyard.com



Original Biscuit Bakers

Biscuit specialists Original Biscuit Bakers have launched Mini Gingerbread Men into the UK market.

The bite-sized novelty gingerbread jacks are handcrafted to a traditional gingerbread recipe and wrapped in clear cellophane wrappers to make them a fun product which consumers of all ages are sure to find attractive.

Gemma Williams, product development manager said, "Our mini gingerbread men are the ideal bite-sized snack for those on-the-go, superb as a little treat and make the ideal accompaniment to a cup of tea, coffee or hot chocolate."

originalbiscuitbakers.co.uk



Pawfect Foods

Pawfect Foods targets health conscious 'pet parents' who want their four-legged friends to have everyday access to all-natural, 'nutritionally convenient' treats made from tasty, human-grade ingredients.

Pawfect rejects the old taboo that dogs are single-track carnivores by recommending a better balanced flexitarian approach to daily eating regimes, a nutrient-rich outlook that embraces top drawer fruit, veg dairy and herbs.

Pawfect Foods eclectic offering includes freeze-dried fruit and veg, herbal infusions, vegetarian base mixes for any hound pursuing a BARF diet and an award-winning range of Himalayan cheese treats made at 15,000ft using traditional Nepalese 'chhurpi' traditions.

hello@pawfectfoods.com pawfectfoods.co.uk

Hawkshead Relish

Family-run business Hawkshead Relish has over 100 products on offer, from marmalades and curds to mustards, chutneys and pickles.

Proudly based in the heart of the Lake District, the company uses quality ingredients in each of its products, which are all made by hand using traditional open pans.

Its Pink Grapefruit & Gin Marmalade features tangy yet sweet pink grapefruit and a healthy glug of gin, which combine to create a perfect breakfast condiment. This delicious marmalade is perfect spread over crumpets, pancakes and toast.

Not only that, it's gluten-free, vegetarian and vegan-friendly and contains no additives or preservatives.

01539 436 614 info@hawksheadrelish.com
hawksheadrelish.com



Squbes

Here at Virginia Health Foods, Ireland, our mission is delivering healthy, functional, delicious foods to the marketplace. Squbes are our new innovative healthy snacks jam-packed with nutritional seeds and nuts! Squbes are a bite sized, cube-shaped gluten-free snack, which are high in fibre, a source of protein, and made without any refined sugars. Squbes are available in guilt-free sweet and savoury flavours to satisfy any snacking occasion... deliciously!

squbes.ie



Divine Chocolate



Spring is on its way and Easter is just around the corner. This year, treat your family and friends by giving them something special from Divine Chocolate's range of stylish and delicious Fairtrade chocolate eggs, with new flavours and old favourites. Our Easter eggs come in a variety of flavours including Hot Cross Bun and our best-selling Dark Chocolate with Raspberries.

We also have two flights of flavours:

a selection of five differently flavoured eggs. Our Egg Box, presented in a quirky little egg carton, is perfect for Easter egg hunts. Our Mini eggs are great for sharing to get into the spirit of Easter.

0207 378 6550 sales@divinechocolate.com divinechocolate.com



Comté PDO

Does our Comté still need an introduction? The first French PDO, Comté cheese is also one of the top selling cheeses in the British Isles, and for sure a cheese counter favourite in the country.

Comté cheese's flavours are heightened over time and it develops more intense aromas as it matures. This is why we now propose five degrees of maturity for Comté, with varied aromas which will delight the most discerning connoisseurs!

For a mild flavour, Comté Doux, matured for at least four months. For fruitier notes, Comté Fruité, matured from six to 10 months depending on the season. For strong cheese lovers, Comté Vieille Réserve, matured for at least 10 months and made with summer milk. For an aromatic explosion on the palate, Comté Prestige, matured for at least 18 months and also made with summer milk. And we now offer Comté 24 months all year around. Who wants to try our 24 months old Comté?

From Sodiaal, French Dairy Cooperative delivering to the UK.

0203 865 2369 info@sodiaal.co.uk sodiaal.co.uk

Cooks&Co

Fine food specialist Cooks&Co has unveiled a colourful new look across its range of ambient ingredients. Designed to inspire amateur chefs and kitchen connoisseurs alike, the bold new look has been rolled out to the brand's entire 100-strong range of antipasti, oils and vinegars, mushrooms, canned goods and meal solutions. Cooks&Co is also delighted to announce new additions to its line-up for 2020: jarred Roasted Red & Yellow Peppers and Roasted Red Pepper Strips, a catering jar of Vegan Green Pesto and a can of vegan-friendly Young Green Jackfruit – a handy meat replacement for those opting for a plant-based diet.

01494 530 200 info@cooksandco.co.uk cooksandco.co.uk



Hello Straw

Hello Straw stands for high quality paper straws with reasonable price. Well-known problems are that paper straws become quickly wet and soft, and you taste the paper when drinking. Hello Straw spent three years in researching and testing with the goal to create the safest and strongest paper straws with the best drink experience. Hello Straw has the following key features:

- 100% food safe certified
- Strong and long lasting, stay about two hours in shape when in use
- Clean cutting, no paper fibers remain
- Cost effective with own factory in China
- Only FSC-certified papers used

hellostraw.com

Roka Cheese Crispies

Famous since 1949 for intensely flavoured, delicate cheese biscuits with 30% mature cheese. These original ROKA Cheese Crispies are made with mature Gouda cheese, and each biscuit has over 90 layers, resulting in a delicious, crispy and light bite. The ROKA Cheese Crispies Gouda cheese got a 2017 Great Taste award for their outstanding quality, crispiness and taste. Besides this Gouda cheese variety, ROKA has a full range of different flavours and formats.

cheesecrispies.com



The Protein Ball Co

Looking to boost your vegan snack selection? Then look no further than The Protein Ball Co's 100% natural protein balls. Vegan, gluten-free and containing no added sugar, they are the perfect protein-boosting snack for any time of the day.

Hand-rolled in Sussex, these delicious bite-size balls are a fantastic pick-me-up for health and time-conscious customers and a great impulse purchase to display at point of sale. There are four vegan-friendly flavours in the range: Peanut Butter + Jam, Raspberry Brownie, Lemon + Pistachio and Goji + Coconut.

The Protein Ball Co.'s vegan range is available in 45g bags (containing six bite-size balls). theproteinballco.com

Island Bakery

Offer your customers Island Bakery's range of all-butter organic biscuits from the Isle of Mull in the Hebrides. The biscuits are baked in a unique oven, fuelled by local and sustainable sources of wood, and all the electricity for the bakery is generated from the island's plentiful supplies of rain and wind.

The fun packaging tells the story of the island and its characters, presided over by the much-admired highland cow, MacMoo!

Luckily the biscuits can be found beyond the island's shores. Joe and Dawn Reade would encourage stockists to get in touch so they can be included on the stockist database on the Island Bakery website, which helps biscuit-seekers to find stockists near them.

01688 302 223 info@islandbakery.co.uk islandbakery.co.uk



South Caernarfon Creameries

Introducing Dragon Handcrafted, a curated range of cheeses with each product having its unique story. South Caernarfon Creameries have collaborated with specialists in their crafts to bring quality and provenance to this range. The Dragon Handcrafted range includes: Welsh Slate Cavern Aged Cheddar, aged 500ft underground in slate mines in North Wales; Halen Môn Sea Salt Cheddar, made using sea salt from the Menai Straits; Maple Smoked Cheddar, smoked to perfection over maplewood in Anglesey; Slate Cavern Aged Cheddar infused with Penderyn whisky to create the perfect pairing and a real treat. All the products are presented in distinctive packaging so they stand out on shelves or in deli fixtures.

sccwales.co.uk



EXPANDED AWARDS CALL FOR BEST OF BRITISH INDEPENDENTS

The 2020 Great British Food Awards, partnered with Booths, are asking independent local retailers of all shapes and sizes to put themselves forward in this year's programme.



The awards, which have been run by Great British Food magazine for the last seven years, have just launched a host of new retail-focused categories in a bid to uncover local gems that wouldn't normally get national press attention. These include Best Bakery, Best Butcher, Best Fishmonger, Best Cheesemonger and Best Food Market.

In previous years the shortlist has been compiled in-house for each category, with consumers having the final say by voting for their favourite options. This year, however, it will be up to shoppers and retailers themselves to decide on the shortlist.

Co-founder and chair of the judging panel Natasha Lovell-Smith hopes this will invigorate the awards and encourage smaller, lesser-known

retailers to get involved: "The world of British food wouldn't be half as exciting or vibrant without the incredible farm shops, butchers, cheesemongers and markets that sell it. National and global uncertainty makes this a tricky climate for independent retailers, making those businesses that manage to innovate and excel all the more inspiring."

As well as encouraging traditional bricks-and-mortar shops to nominate themselves, Natasha and the team are hoping to see entries from market stalls, pop ups and online sellers too. "Independent retail in the UK is so dynamic, we want to hear from businesses of all shapes and sizes that represent the future of British food. Don't be afraid to shout about your success and encourage your customers to do the same by nominating your business," she adds.

The Great British Food Awards were launched in 2014 to celebrate the country's finest artisanal produce, as well as the hard-working people behind the scenes. This year, the awards are bigger and better than ever, with lots of new categories and celebrity judges.

Retailers interested in entering food and drink into the producer categories - judged by top chefs including Raymond Blanc, Monica Galetti, Eric Lanlard and Michel

Roux Jr - will find full details on the website below or can email info@greatbritishfoodawards.com.

Nominate your business at greatbritishfoodawards.com. Nominations are now open and close on April 3rd 2020.

PRIZE INCENTIVE

To encourage consumers and companies alike to get involved in the awards, those who submit a nomination will automatically be entered into a prize draw to win one of 16 bottles of British craft gin (worth over £550 in total) from some of the UK's most acclaimed distilleries, including Piston, Deerness Distillery, Isle of Bute Gin, Curio, Penrhos Distillery and many more.



“ Cambridge is becoming an exciting hotbed of food talent ”

Charles Bradford, managing director of The Gog Farm Shop in Cambridge, which was voted best independent retailer in the East of England in the Great British Food Awards 2019

HOW DID IT FEEL TO WIN LAST YEAR?

We've won two years in a row now so we were absolutely thrilled. With so many fantastic businesses out there to be even considered once is astonishing; to be voted twice is truly humbling.

WHY DO YOU THINK YOU WON?

I would like to think that it is down to our guiding principle of 'making exceptional food available to all'. We are very fortunate to have an amazing team of people working here and their enthusiasm and passion can be really infectious.

WHAT'S THE FOOD SCENE LIKE IN YOUR REGION?

At first glance, I think that one would be justified in saying that the South East isn't a 'classic' region for sourcing most foods, unlike



somewhere such as Yorkshire. Yet dig a little deeper and you'll find amazing fish, cheeses, salads, beers and wines. And that's without getting started on some of the phenomenal new producers in the region. Cambridge specifically is becoming quite an exciting hotbed of food talent as the city continues

to grow with the influx of biotech companies.

HOW DID YOU ENCOURAGE YOUR CUSTOMERS TO SUPPORT YOU?

We broadcast the awards through our social media channels and the response from our lovely customers was as fantastic and encouraging as ever.



How to get involved:

Stage 1:

Retailers and businesses are invited to nominate themselves in the various categories and encourage their customers to do the same.

Stage 2:

After the nominations close all entries are counted and verified, with the top five in each category being put to a final public vote.

Stage 3:

One winner and two runners up will be chosen and crowned the winners. Final results are announced in the winter edition of *Great British Food* magazine (on sale 29th October 2020)

THE CATEGORIES

- Best Bakery
- Best Butchers
- Best Cookery School
- Best Fishmonger
- Best Cheesemonger
- Best Food Market
- Best Independent Online Retailer
- Most Influential Chef, Cook or Food Writer
- Best Cookbook
- Best Pub
- Best Restaurant

BEST FARM SHOP OR DELI:

- North of England
- South of England
- East of England
- West of England
- Midlands
- Wales
- Scotland
- Northern Ireland



“ Good food is in Yorkshire's DNA ”

Christine Garnet, co-owner of Hunters of Helmsley in North Yorkshire, which was voted best independent retailer in the North of England in the Great British Food Awards 2019

HOW DID IT FEEL TO WIN LAST YEAR?

It's always amazing to receive any award, but particularly one voted for by members of the public. We love what we do and it means a lot to us to know people enjoy it as much as we do. I feel very proud of my team for all their hard work and their unfailing commitment to Hunters. And were immensely grateful to our customers who took the time to vote for us, we appreciate it so much.

WHY DO YOU THINK YOU WON?

Our customers often comment on our cheerful, welcoming and knowledgeable staff who are always happy to help and offer advice when needed. We also pride ourselves on our extensive range of quality products both fresh and ambient, sourced locally, nationally and internationally. A large proportion of what we offer is from Yorkshire, and we love to support local producers and suppliers - and our customers love knowing they are buying local.

WHAT'S THE FOOD SCENE LIKE IN YOUR REGION?

Yorkshire and the North East has an incredible number of passionate, quality food producers, which is ever



growing. They are all dedicated to creating and producing the most wonderful tasty food and drink, making the task of selecting which ranges to offer our customers incredibly difficult. Hunters is in an area which is surrounded by excellent restaurants, quality cafes and gastro pubs (several with Michelin stars) - good food is in the DNA of the region I think!

HOW DID YOU ENCOURAGE YOUR CUSTOMERS TO SUPPORT YOU?

When we were shortlisted we issued a press release to the local papers, talked about it on our Facebook and Twitter and placed a notice in store. We're a bit shy about things like that but everyone was very supportive and nice about it!



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THE RISE OF CBD

Does it get you high and will profits be far out, man? Sally-Jayne Wright investigates CBD food and drink

CBD stands for cannabidiol, an ingredient made from hemp plant extract – and public interest is growing fast. It's estimated that the number of British consumers using CBD products has quadrupled over a two-year period to half a million (Cannabis Trades Association). Gummy sweets, gin, honey sticks, hummus, chocolate spread and ice cream are just a few CBD-infused foods we've spotted.

WHO STOCKS THEM?

Independents. Health food shops, smaller grocery stores, cafés, vape shops, pharmacies and online retailers. Planet Organic first sold CBD oil in 2016 and now carries 120

CBD food and drink lines. In Dorset, Joe Drennan of Spill the Beans has been selling CBD tea, chocolate and apple juice for a year and oils for two years.

I'VE SEEN THE CBD OIL DROPPERS...

The most popular way to take CBD is as a food supplement, a few drops under the tongue each morning. This is how cafés offer a CBD shot in your drink – perhaps CBD-infused tea at James' Café Bistro, Leicester or a CBD shake at White Wolf Yoga Kitchen, Liverpool.

IT'S CANNABIS, RIGHT? SO IT GETS ME HIGH?

No. Marijuana gets you high because it contains high levels of the psychoactive ingredient THC (tetrahydrocannabinol). Think of CBD as marijuana's well-behaved cousin; CBD-infused products contain only trace amounts of THC, the legal limit being 2%. While CBD is not 'psychotropic', it does affect cognitive functions. There's

anecdotal evidence it alleviates anxiety, lifts mood, relieves chronic pain and reduces insomnia.

YOU CAN GET CANNABIS ON THE NHS. TRUE OR FALSE?

True. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has approved a small number of products (CBD and THC) classified as medicines. There is also a minute number of unlicensed 'specials' which a GP may prescribe at their discretion for anything from chronic pain to epilepsy.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN BARRIERS TO CBD SALES?

Fear and lack of knowledge (yours and the customer's), confusing regulation and the high cost of good products. Quality varies enormously. A survey by the Centre for Medicinal Cannabis found more than half of the most popular CBD oils sold in Britain don't contain the level of CBD promised, and one contained none at all.

WHAT ABOUT THE LEGAL SIDE?

You may not give out medical advice or advertise CBD edibles on social media. They are classed as novel foods and makers need a novel food authorisation.

£30 FOR A SMALL TIN OF CBD MINTS. £2.95 FOR AN OAT BAR. £15 FOR SIX MARSHMALLOWS! WHY SO EXPENSIVE?

It costs a lot to bring a product to market because makers have to

prove products have been tested by an independent, accredited lab. Scan the QR code on the packaging with your phone to see the makers' certificate of analysis (COA) on their website. Cannabis growing must be secure and the CBD has to be extracted, making sure there's no THC. Bona fide manufacturers also pay for organic and novel food certification.

WHEN A TEAM FROM THE GUARDIAN WEEKEND NEWSPAPER TRIED A RANGE OF PRODUCTS, THEY MENTIONED 'AFTERTASTE' A LOT. JUST HOW PALATABLE IS CBD?

It's naturally bitter but if you over-refine oils to improve taste, you can lose efficacy and health benefits. Trend Watch enjoyed the grassy back-note in The London Botanists chocolate, but some may not.

I POLLED MY CUSTOMERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND THEY WANT CBD. HOW CAN I MAKE THE MOST OF THIS TREND?

Educate yourself – no mean task. You'll learn about broad spectrum oils, terpenes, phytocannabinoids and isolates. Most manufacturers provide leaflets but as Joe Drennan warns, "Everyone says their product is best." Insist on quality and purity. Does their supplier use one of only three European labs accredited and certified for cannabinoid detection and quantification and can they verify results?

“ It isn't just middle class, trend-setting millennials with anxiety who're consuming, but also working class baby-boomers with arthritis. Most buy online and could welcome a knowledgeable local source ”

WHOSE PRODUCTS SHOULD I BUY?

CBD edibles make fabulous gifts for wellness-focused customers. Spill the Beans found The London Botanists chocolate bars sold well. The Naturalis teas, The Marshmallowist's grapefruit treats, OTO bitters for drinks and cocktails and Nooro CBD oat bars are also worth a go.

Olives Et Al and Goodbody Botanicals have launched the first UK range of culinary CBD extra virgin oils, £20 for 250ml.

CBD is tailor-made for functional sparkling drinks with sexy, illicit-sounding names and psychedelic packaging. Look out for Green Monkey, 420 and Leaf Life.

WILL THE TREND LAST?

Yes, because it isn't just middle class, trend-setting millennials with anxiety who're consuming, but also working class baby-boomers with arthritis. Most buy online and could welcome a knowledgeable local source.

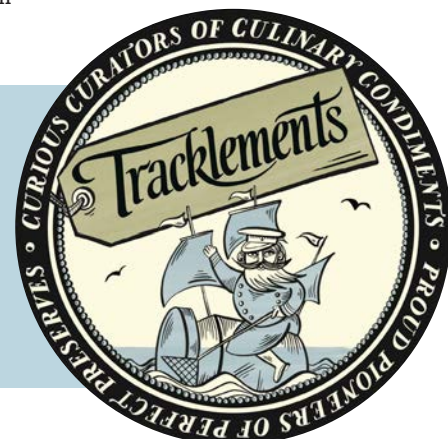
The best evidence now available confirms that pure CBD is not addictive and presents no health risks from sustained use. But there's regulation to sort out and much more research to be done. While the supermarkets await more clarity, there's a golden window of opportunity for indies to supply this niche product.

Planet Organic buying director, Al Overton, says, "As a supplement, CBD is probably here to stay, but it's early days for edibles. Let's see how the market settles down."



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BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN FINE FOOD & CONVENIENCE

Tackling negative connotations of frozen was step one. Educating customers on its premium offerings is next on the agenda

There was once a perception that frozen food only emerged during those time-poor evenings when it was necessary to shove an 'unhealthy' ready-made meal into the oven or dump some peas into the microwave for a quick heat up. With many consumers having a lack of time for scratch-cooking during the week, there is high demand for convenience foods. Figures show that consumers are frequently putting frozen food items into their shopping bags; according to Statista (published June 19) over 2.7 billion units of frozen food products were sold in UK supermarkets in 2018.

While the notion that frozen options just consist of bags of chips or ready meals high in salt, fat and sugar is being left behind, there is still work to be done to show consumers that frozen does not compromise on quality.

Richard Harrow, chief executive of the British Frozen Food Federation explains, "As the frozen industry makes headway tackling negative consumer perceptions about frozen food, the next step is to bridge the gap between frozen and fine dining. Frozen food is purchased by 99% of consumers 48 times per year, appearing in 1.3bn baskets. Yet despite the popularity of frozen food, the sector still suffers from an image problem. Recent research from Kantar reveals the frozen shopper



“ We need to do more than challenge perceptions of frozen, we need to elevate them ”

still tends to be less affluent and suggests product development is crucial to re-engage customers.”

Changing perceptions

The gap between fine food and convenience is getting smaller, however. Richard continues; "Consumers are waking up to the fact frozen food is not processed or inferior to ambient. Many of

the products we sell in the frozen category, such as vegetables and fish, are natural products preserved at their prime using nature's pause button – freezing. But we need to do more than challenge perceptions of frozen, we need to elevate them.

"For the fine food caterer, fresh from the freezer products offer more than just great taste and a prolonged shelf-life. Products can

be batch-produced, hand-finished and supplied in a frozen format, providing the additional advantage of defrosting products based on footfall. This means the amount of food thrown away each day is significantly reduced. Across the industry frozen brands are developing products that apply all the advantages of frozen to fine dining."

Movements such as veganism have seen a wave of products launched to cater to this ever-expanding consumer audience. Brands are seizing the opportunity to reach a new wave of consumers who are looking for exciting, premium food options that fit their dietary requirements. Deliciously Ella, for example, has a range of plant-based frozen ready meals including Five Bean Chilli and Yellow Thai Curry. The Brook offers Rich & Smoky Mac & Cheese and Slow-cooked Jackfruit Rendang among its offerings and boasts a presence in the frozen dessert category too, thanks to its Spiced Ginger Sticky Toffee Pudding and Rich & Indulgent Double Chocolate Brownie.

It's not just the influence of free-from demands that are sweeping the frozen food category: eco-friendly concerns are also having an impact. Headlines over the last couple of years have been dominated with the harmful effects that plastic packaging has on the environment. field fare offers premium scoop-your-own produce, and MD Karen Deans explains how today's increasingly environmentally aware shoppers are looking to package-free frozen options: "A more educated shopper is now aware of food waste, food miles and the benefits of preserving foods naturally, reducing seasonality and thus air miles in doing so; and of the minimal packaging required by naturally-protected frozen produce," she says.

Karen acknowledges the challenge of showing customers that freezing produce doesn't have a negative effect on the quality, but explains that for field fare, remaining

THE TOTAL
VALUE OF
FROZEN FOOD
RETAIL **SALES**
REACHED
APPROXIMATELY
£1.4BN IN **2018**
SOURCE: STATISTA (JUNE 2019)

consistent with using quality ingredients and promoting premium produce is key. "The challenge to educate the consumer that frozen and convenience food can also be fine food is an ongoing one. For us, a simple strategy of maintaining exceptional, quality and ease of preparation with serious foodie provenance is key – consumers concertedly look for authenticity. Our genuine French patisserie, Danish pastries and cookie pucks, for example, can be baked fresh with no preparation, providing fine quality, freshly baked pastries at home."

"Our six core ranges, loose frozen vegetables, fruit, bakery, fish, ready meals and savouries and desserts have been in constant growth for the last 18 months and continue to do so. Some of that is down to this changed understanding of the quality of frozen food and the eco-credentials attached to using it, part of it is down to our own efforts to communicate this fact to our shoppers through a slick, contemporary rebranding and a concertedly courted trophy cabinet of foodie awards to rubberstamp that quality profile; but much of it is down to listening to what the consumer wants and responding to it.

"That means premium produce, innovative and international ready meals, larger serving options for families – now that feeding your family frozen is no longer shameful – and authenticity, which means provenance of geography, where relevant, of ingredients and of specialist producers."

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BALANCING PERFORMANCE WITH PLANET PROTECTION

Temperature controlled packaging businesses are satisfying consumer demand for future-friendly options

While sustainability has been an increasingly hot topic on everyone's lips the past few years – from industry professionals to consumers and policy-makers – the food and drink sector is doubtless one of its biggest movers and shakers. All kinds of questions have arisen regarding what we eat and drink regarding sourcing, impact on people and planet, and (last, but certainly not least) packaging – which comes with its own plethora of talking points.

The temperature controlled packaging sector may seem a particularly compromising one, with its reliance on plastic and protective

materials, but it boasts businesses keen to boost and promote their eco credentials.

This evolution often comes at a cost, however. The team at White Bear Design, based in London, explains that, "The noticeable trend in packaging is an increased demand for sustainable packaging from consumers, however not all companies (particularly start-ups who we often work with) are able to afford more eco-friendly options at the early stages." Sometimes, an eco approach can only materialise with time and scale: "One solution we have been recommended is to provide clients with sustainable solutions and get them to agree to

a transfer to these once they hit a certain goal. For example, if a client is able to expand its production 10x then they agree to explore more sustainable solutions." In the meantime, short-term design solutions including avoiding harder to recycle materials and printing techniques are advised.

"The issue of cost is inevitable," they continue, "however as consumer demand continues to grow for eco products, it may be most cost-effective in the long term in order to maintain the market's attention."

When it comes to packaging with a focus on temperature control, "Priorities will always be on safety first," says the White Bear Design team. As a result, "tried and tested conventional packaging often wins over sustainable options because of the suspicion over their effectiveness. As sustainable options become more commonplace, hopefully their reputation will build and larger companies will be willing to transfer to these options."

Packaging pioneers



Rising to the challenge of eco-friendly temperature controlled packaging is Woolcool, an

award-winning business using natural sheep's wool for insulation in its products. "Woolcool is the innovative packaging company known for our strong environmental values," starts Josie Morris of Woolcool. "Our pioneering use of 100% natural sheep's wool as an insulator in chilled packaging solutions has allowed us to create ecologically-sound products that outperform traditional alternatives such as polystyrene," she continues. "The wool we use is naturally abundant, recyclable, compostable, biodegradable and reusable."

Maintaining both sustainable

credentials and practical application is a challenge, but Josie states that, "Rigorous testing to industry standards consistently proves that Woolcool insulated packaging maintains food contents at their required temperature for longer than conventional materials. Woolcool has also been independently proven to keep food contents below the all-important 5°C for next day deliveries and beyond." The business also offers ranges for frozen and ambient shipment challenges.

"The performance credentials of the wool fibre, along with it being lightweight and easily tailored into specific sizes, means that parcels shipped using Woolcool are typically lighter and smaller than the man-made alternatives. Significantly reducing the carbon footprint in delivery chains, including eliminating the need for temperature-controlled vehicles.

"After a decade of research and investment," Josie says, "our ground-breaking approach has created a wide range of insulated packaging solutions. The entire product line provides a number of options to deliver temperature-sensitive products. We have insulated boxes, pouches, envelopes and bags – with all kinds of combinations to suit individual needs, collaboration with our customer is at the heart of what we do.

Introducing the insulated paper pouch

"We believe in using the right material for the right application, whether that is wool, paper and/or plastic and we work closely with customers to find the best

“ Woolcool commit to always working with the same ethos: the right material, for the right application with total transparency on material origins, supply, ingredients and end-of-life impact, to allow a full circular economy analysis, protecting the planet for future generations and not just for now ”



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performing, most cost-effective and environmentally-sound solution,” explains Josie. “Our new Insulated Paper Pouch provides another option for customers who are striving to reduce their use of plastic further. Built with a gusset and featuring a sealable lip for security in shipment, our Insulated Paper Pouch is the latest stage of evolution for our range, significantly reducing plastic whilst maintaining the high standards, quality and performance expected of Woolcool insulated products.

“The outer pouch uses a strong paper outer envelope to replace the traditional outer plastic pouch. As this outer envelope isn’t coated, it is easily recycled. Yet, as it’s made from heavy-duty ‘mailer’ paper, it’s able to withstand the variety of conditions parcels shipped through courier networks experience. What’s more, through investment in research and development,

and innovation in our Woolcool protective liner bag, the Woolcool liner inside the Insulated Paper Pouch now uses 33% less plastic in its covering, whilst still fully conforms to the grades required to package and send food products.”



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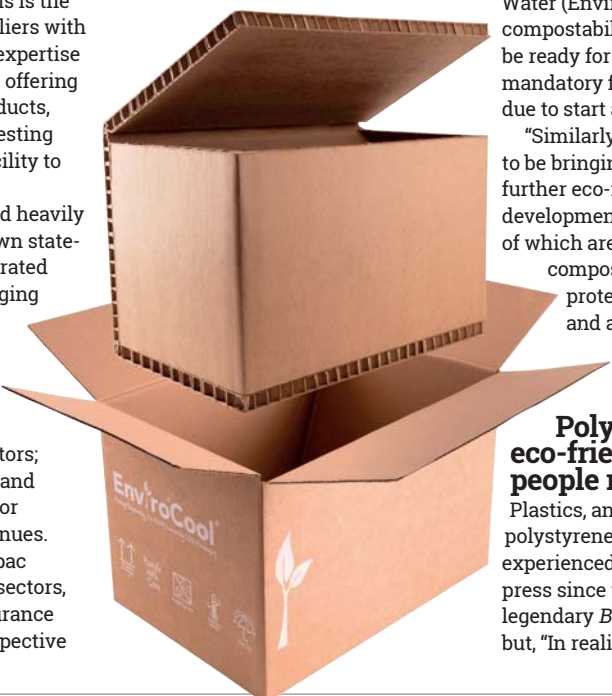
gmpolystyrene

“ My message to customers looking for the right packaging partner is to ensure the packaging comes with either validations, all season test scenarios, or the supplier has proven laboratory support engineers to further offer reassurance of legitimacy in the cold chain field ”

Innovation not imitation
“Hydropac have been pioneering products for the past 18 years, but had noticed recently how the e-commerce food and meal kit packaging market had become very trendy due solely to the highly topical subject of providing eco-friendly products,” explains Colin Rowland, managing director.
“This in itself is great and provides for healthy competition, but the negative side of this is the explosion of copycat suppliers with very little or no technical expertise in the cold chain industry, offering what look like similar products, but without any credible testing information or support facility to back up the data claims.
“Hydropac have invested heavily in recent years with our own state-of-the-art laboratory, calibrated test equipment and packaging engineers, whose sole purpose is to develop products suitable and equipped to supply the cold chain industry in both food and pharma sectors; where latterly, the testing and data have to be validated for obvious reasons,” he continues.
“This is something Hydropac take very seriously for all sectors, and should provide reassurance to our customers and prospective

customers when looking for the right packaging partners. My message to customers looking for the right packaging partner is to ensure the packaging comes with either validations, all season test scenarios, or the supplier has proven laboratory support engineers to further offer reassurance of legitimacy in the cold chain field.
“Hydropac have worked very hard to bring to market revolutionary and

proven insulated packaging such as RecycleAir and EnviroCool to meet either the ever growing pressure of cost and performance demands. But additionally, the question always arose about how the industry still hadn’t solved the irritable problem of plastic ice packs. Well now we have, and rather excitingly we are now bringing to market a world’s first innovation: Compostable Ice Packs in both Gel (EnviroGel and Water (EnviroIce). Both conform to compostability standards and will be ready for disposal through the mandatory food waste collections due to start all over the UK by 2023.
“Similarly, we are very hopeful to be bringing to market some further eco-friendly packaging developments very soon, both of which are innovative and compostable, providing protection and performance and a healthy addition to our current and developing range of products.”



Polystyrene: more eco-friendly than most people realise
Plastics, and in extension polystyrene products, have experienced a lot of negative press since the airing of the now-legendary *Blue Planet II* in 2017, but, “In reality a manufactured

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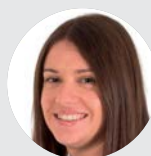
polystyrene box (EPS) is a whopping 98% air, so only consists of 2% material – it is extremely resource efficient,” explains Samantha Barrett of JB Packaging. “EPS also has an Ozone Depletion Potential of zero which means it causes no damage to the ozone layer because no CFCs or HCFCs are used during the manufacturing process. EPS is inert and does not leach any chemicals so is food contact safe.”

An effective option



JB Packaging also offers a range of Expanded Polypropylene (EPP) boxes; these can be used multiple times and are popular for catering and food delivery and storage. “Imagine these boxes just like an extra-large lunch box, the only difference being the superior insulation,” Samantha continues, adding, “All of our manufacturing sites working towards ISO14001 demonstrating our environmental commitment.”

“EPS offers superb insulation which ensures that temperature sensitive products are kept cooler for longer during transit,” she says. “The material has a low thermal conductivity in relation to other materials such as card. EPS is packed with tiny air pockets, and because air is a poor conductor of



“We have been receiving an increasing number of enquiries for more sustainable and environmentally friendly packaging solutions,” says Alex Pawley of Icertech

Icertech launched in 2005 with the view to providing high quality and reliable temperature controlled packaging solutions at an affordable price. The solutions are designed to enable businesses to get their perishable items from A to B, within a 24-72 hour time frame. The range includes high quality insulated boxes, long lasting coolants, as well as all of the sundry items required to pack your product.

The range of boxes started out with the traditional polystyrene boxes, and has evolved and expanded over the years as consumers have requested more environmentally friendly alternatives.

The issues surrounding the impact of packaging (and more specifically

single-use plastic) on the environment have been more prominent than ever. As a result of this, we have been receiving an increasing number of enquiries for more sustainable and environmentally friendly packaging solutions. From this, we have developed The Enviro-Range.

We are really excited to have a full range of sustainable and environmentally friendly packaging solutions available. The main products in the Enviro-Range include the Pluumo-Box; a completely biodegradable solution made of surplus feathers, and the Eco-Box; a 100% curb side recyclable solution made entirely of paper, and paper only. We've also added coolants and sundry packaging to the range, so that our customers can have everything

heat this minimises heat transfer keeping goods as hot or as cold as they day they packed.”

Tests carried out demonstrated that polystyrene boxes are thermally the most effective option for transporting fresh food. “The

thermal performance of polystyrene boxes was tested against two alternatives: waxed cardboard boxes and plastic corrugated boxes,” explains Samantha. “Using 3.3kg of rainbow trout and 1.8kg of frozen ice sheets as a cooling

they need to send their delivery via the most sustainable means possible.

We're proud to say our customers have always been happy with the quality of our products, but the addition of eco-friendly solutions has opened up new markets to us, as today's consumers are more aware of the purchases they're making and the environmental impact that they have. We first looked into developing eco-friendly solutions in 2008, but at the time they were more expensive to the customer than existing box solutions. The solutions which we have now brought to market are far more cost effective and the pricing is comparable to the rest of our range.



The more businesses that can afford to make the switch to sustainable solutions, the bigger (and better) the impact on the environment.

“ The more businesses that can afford to make the switch to sustainable solutions, the bigger (and better) the impact on the environment ”

“ There are clear challenges around the single-use plastics debate, however it is important not to lose sight of the positive role that good, reusable or recyclable plastic packaging can play in protecting products and make supply chains more sustainable ”

medium, the boxes were subjected to ambient temperatures of 5°C and 15°C to assess how long an internal temperature below 5°C could be maintained over 72 hours. Results showed polystyrene boxes far outperformed both packaging alternatives in both situations and were able to maintain a temperature of under 5°C for the full 72 hours in the ambient 5°C test.”

Recycling polystyrene boxes

“Expanded polystyrene boxes often get a bad reputation when they are disposed of irresponsibly,” says Samantha. “Sadly, within the UK local recycling infrastructure is not as prominent, even though EPS can in fact be fully recycled. We accept clean EPS at all our plants for recycling.”

Spent polystyrene can be repurposed to a surprising extent, as Samantha explains; “Clean

material can be reused in the manufacturing of new EPS boxes and material which is contaminated can be compacted and turned into rigid plastic products such as coat hangers and even wooden fence panel and decking substitutes.”

POLYSTYRENE BOXES MAINTAINED A TEMPERATURE OF UNDER 5°C FOR THE FULL 72 HOURS IN THE AMBIENT 5°C TEST

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JULIET HARBUTT



"Great Brexpectations"

We may have exited stage right from the EU but that is no reason to cut off our noses and toss back across the Channel the Olympiads of the cheese world, as their history can be traced back four, 40 or even 4,000 years – way beyond the recent political squabbles and, like wine, art or medicine, they are sans frontiers.

It's not that we shouldn't wholeheartedly support our spectacular, star quality artisan cheeses, but realistically we don't have the geography, geology, diversity of breeds or complex micro-climates that produce these masterpieces. Any more than Europe can copy our champions. For every cheese is unique, wherever it's made. It is a reflection of its environment and further influenced by the culinary history, the vagaries of Mother Nature and the palate and passion of the individual cheesemaker. So, despite efforts to emulate the masters, no one can recreate the unique conditions that go to making these iconic cheeses.

The first time I really appreciated this was when I was invited to see how Queso de La Serena, a voluptuous, almost liquid cheese was made. This involved travelling through Extremadura, a journey back in time, crossing mile after mile of arid, stony fields, passing small, ancient villages and the occasional herd of hardy Merino sheep grazing on scrubby oaks, wild herbs and parched grasses. Yet these meagre pastures produce some of the sweetest, richest milk in the world and, with a few pistils from the wild thistle, cardoon to coagulate the milk, this great cheese is born. Slice off the top, breathe deeply and scoop out the inside – a true taste of heaven.

Behind every great traditional cheese is a similar story. Parmigiano Reggiano can trace its history back to the 1300s, and

its texture and distinct aroma of fresh pineapple is something no doppelganger could achieve. The hard mountain cheeses of Italy, France and Switzerland attribute their unforgettable flavour to the myriad of wildflowers and grasses in the ancient mountain pastures.

Ned Palmer, author of the hugely successful *Cheesemongers History of the British Isles* says, "One should stock international cheeses because cheese crosses borders. For thousands of years cheese-making cultures have shared their practices with each other and become enriched by that sharing. Also, given that there are more than 1,500 named cheeses in the world, it would be a shame to limit our cheese-loving customers to only those from one country."

So, whatever you think about Brexit and no matter how many glorious, modern and traditional local cheeses you stock – there are now over 800 – it's hard to image a cheese shop without at least some of the great classics. It would be like not having European wines in Britain! This is something wine lovers have long recognised but the cheese world has been much slower to realise; that 'terroir' applies to cheese, perhaps even more so, than wine.

Each also has a unique place in the culinary world. Imagine pasta without Parmesan, caprese salad without Mozzarella di Buffalo or chevre salad without Crottin. No doubt there are similar cheeses amongst our British, Welsh or Scottish cheese but they are not the same, just as aged Gouda or Gruyère can never replace artisan Cheddar or Gorgonzola replace Stilton!

Now we are independent of Europe maybe there will be an even playing field when it comes to the price of European versus home-grown cheese. Did I mention how much I miss having them at my doorstep?

ANTOINE FARGE COW, PARIS



"It can be easier to work with people outside of France than those within it"

France has over 1,000 different types of cheeses, but around the world there are many cheeses too, and every time we travel we discover new products. COW was created to celebrate the world's cheeses, all in one place.

It's not easy to run a cheese shop with that philosophy in France, because we consider ourselves the country of cheese. People within the industry dismissed the idea, saying that within three months it would close because it wouldn't work. Conversely, consumers have been open-minded and want to experience new cheeses. For us, the consumer is most important.

At the start, we searched for great cheeses country by country, producer by producer, cheesemonger by cheesemonger, looking into how we could sell them in Paris. We collected a small range of cheeses and now have around 50-60 different ones

from 15 countries. Most of them are European and British, and some are coming from America and Japan.

The idea is to work only directly with producers, with nobody in between, and it can be easier to work with people outside of France than those within it. When we presented the idea to Neal's Yard, for example, they said that it would be a big challenge but they wanted to be part of the story because it sounded interesting.

For foreign cheesemakers, being sold in a cheese shop in Paris is very exciting. For example, we have a small producer from Norway who is so happy to be in Paris; in the first month he came regularly, and now comes every month with his own cheese because he wants to travel with it and take pictures of it in the shop. It's an honour for international cheesemakers to be showcased in the country of cheese.



ALEXANDRE RENAULT COW, PARIS

The big problem with sourcing from abroad is the logistics.

In Paris there's a big platform where you can connect with the cheese industry in big volumes; our method is different. Because we order direct from overseas producers, I order once a month and mature large amounts of cheese in a space underneath the shop. The approaches are very different. At the beginning the process was new to

me, but because the shop is bigger than others I'm able to work to this system relatively easily. I sometimes buy cheeses younger than other retailers so I can age them in our cellars perfectly. Another challenge we sometimes face with sourcing from abroad is that the producers don't always speak or write English, but I think that if Brexit changes the way we work together we will be able to adapt.

Cheese Talk

New retail perspectives from industry experts

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PETER'S YARD



HOW TO SOURCE CHEESE

Kevin Sheridan, managing director of Sheridans, values supplier relationships as highly as new discoveries

There is no simple system or process for sourcing great cheese. Many times, particularly with new Irish farmhouse cheese, the producer contacts us and a discussion begins which may after some time result in the cheese being stocked in our shops. In some cases, we come across cheeses while travelling in Europe – often from visiting other cheesemongers.

“OFTENTIMES SAMPLES RECEIVED DO NOT REFLECT ACCURATELY THE CHEESES THAT WILL ARRIVE”

In general, when we source a new cheese we will trial in one of our outlets. Oftentimes samples

received do not reflect accurately the cheeses that will arrive. In addition, farmhouse cheeses by their nature change through the seasons; by trialling a cheese in one outlet we can assess these changes and know the impact before we decide to allow the cheeses a full listing. Of course, no matter what we think of a cheese, the only real test is our customers. We have often sourced what we believed to be a great cheese and then our customers have disagreed!

“WE LOOK FOR CHEESES THAT ARE FIRST AND FOREMOST OF GREAT QUALITY OR SHOW POTENTIAL TO BECOME GREAT”

In every case the basic criteria are the same. We look for cheeses that are first and foremost of great quality or show potential to become great. This is a simple process and involves tasting the cheese. This may sound obvious but it is surprising how many retailers don't use this as the first step in selection. Unless we believe that some of our customers will really enjoy the cheese then we are not interested.

“VALUE DOES NOT MEAN CHEAP BUT THAT THE PRICE REFLECTS THE QUALITY OF THE PRODUCT AND THAT IT IS COMPARABLE TO SIMILAR CHEESES”

Taste is not the only criteria we use when we select a cheese. Of course, price plays some part and we have to be sure that our customers will receive value for the cheese they purchase. Value does not mean cheap but that the price reflects the quality of the product and that it is comparable to similar cheeses. A part of price is logistics; there may be a wonderful cheese at a good price somewhere in Europe, but unless

we can get it to our warehouse in a cost effective manner then it is of no use. As many cheeses have a short shelf life or change considerably as they continue to mature over time, frequency of purchase is really important. We need to be able to ensure that we can organise a regular supply in a cost effective manner. In general, we prefer to work directly with our cheese producers.

“THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OURSELVES AND OUR CHEESE PRODUCERS IS CENTRAL TO OUR WHOLE OPERATION AND ETHOS”

The relationship between ourselves and our cheese producers is central to our whole operation and ethos. We look to build long-term sustainable relationships with our producers; this partnership ensures that we understand the farms and the artisans who produce our cheeses, and that our producers understand ourselves and our customers. Sometimes it is not viable to purchase directly from the producer where we are not buying large quantities of a European cheese. In these cases, we have partners in several European countries who we work with. These partners consolidate the cheeses at a single

point and make it easy to bring in the cheeses regularly. However, we always look to have a direct relationship with the cheesemakers even where we working through a partner.

“IF WE STOCK A PARTICULAR CHEESE TYPE AND HAVE A LONG AND POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHEESEMAKER, WE WILL NOT REPLACE IT UNLESS THERE IS REALLY SOME INCREDIBLE REASON”

Provenance is very important to us and to our customers. Our customers trust that we are firstly open and honest about the source of the cheeses we sell. We look at the whole provenance of a cheese, from the milk source, farming practices, production methods and ownership model to ensure that they fit in with our company ethos. Although we like to offer our customers a range of cheeses from across the European tradition, we do favour cheeses made in Ireland. If we believe that an Irish-made cheese can offer the same quality as one from another region we will do our best to replace the imported cheese. The production infrastructure for farmhouse cheese in Ireland very often means that cheeses are more expensive to produce here. To counter this somewhat we apply a smaller margin on Irish cheeses in order to help them compete.

There are many great cheeses produced that we don't stock, it is impossible for us to stock the many hundreds of really wonderful cheeses that are made in Ireland and across Europe. If we stock a particular cheese type and have a long and positive relationship with the cheesemaker, we will not replace it unless there is really some incredible reason. In a retail world where newness is often a driving force we prefer long term sustainable relationships. We have worked with many of our cheese producers for over 20 years; in that time we have forged partnerships of real value to these producers, to ourselves and to our customers.

“ Although sourcing new cheeses is important, working with our existing producers to continuously improve our cheeses is of much higher importance to us ”




PETER'S YARD

The natural
choice for
cheese

New retail perspectives from industry experts

UK cheese export market worth £675m

The UK cheese and wine industries reported a bumper decade of growth at the end of last year.

According to Defra analysis of HMRC Domestic and Overseas Trade Data, cheese production in the UK has risen steadily by 7% since 2015, with 465,000 tonnes of British cheese being produced in 2018 alone.

The UK cheese export market is now worth £675m, and while British Stilton, Caerphilly and Wensleydale continue to be some of the UK's most popular cheeses, Cheddar is one of the UK's top exports.

Environment secretary Theresa Villiers commented, "One of the great opportunities of Brexit is the chance to expand exports of our world-renowned food and drink, and the growth of our innovative cheese and wine industries is testament to this."

CHEESE FACT FILE...

TALEGGIO

- Country of origin: Italy
- Milk: Cow's
- Type: Semi-soft
- Vegetarian: No
- Texture: Creamy



Said to be dating back to the 10th century, Taleggio is a soft and washed-rind PDO cheese made in Lombardy, and named after the caves of Val Taleggio. It takes between six and 10 weeks to mature on average. This cheese has a strong smell but a milder taste, with a fruity tang.



"AS A GROWING INDEPENDENT IT'S COUNTERPRODUCTIVE TO IGNORE THE VEGAN TREND IN CHEESE"

With the demand for vegan-friendly products continuing to increase, cheesemongers are having to adapt to new customer demands. Owner Fran Sterry explains why she has incorporated vegan cheeses at Cheese Please:

"I have definitely seen an increase in demand for vegan cheese in recent years; as a growing independent business it would be counterproductive for me to ignore this trend. Vegan cheeses have improved in quality and taste, definitely having a place in the artisan food market, and for those choosing a plant-based diet or those with dairy allergies and intolerances this is a major revelation. I have returning custom for the range of vegan cheeses I stock. My passion is of course traditional farmhouse cheese, but I fully support those choosing an alternative plant-based diet – a lifestyle choice that is only going to grow"

French retailers report stronger sales

A survey of French cheese retailers conducted by the Cheese and Dairy Products Show (June 2019) revealed that the industry is seeing positive sales, with 69% reporting stronger sales in 2018. 77% predicted that this trend would continue over the next two years.

The results also highlighted that retailers are providing more interactive experiences for customers. 58% of those polled organise events in their stores, compared to 48% in 2015.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

NEW CHEESES LAUNCHING FROM BALLYLISK

Ballylisk of Armagh in Northern Ireland is set to add two new cheeses to its range. The award-winning cheesemaker has announced that a soft blue and creamy Brie-style cheese will be hitting the market soon.

PLANT-BASED BUSINESS REVAMPS OFFERING

Vegan cheese brand Raw food Rosie's has rebranded to the name Kashyu. Said to be one of the first tree-nut cheese companies in the UK, the products are made from natural ingredients using traditional methods and are cultured in a similar process to dairy cheese manufacturing. Products include Kashyu Soft Che'ses in Original, Garlic & Herb and Porcini Mushroom & Truffle.

VEGAN CHEESE PRODUCER IN PDO DISPUTE

London-based artisan vegan cheese company I Am Nut OK had to change the name of one of its products after receiving a warning letter from The Parmigiano Reggiano Consortium. The product, named *Parmesans*, was labelled as an Italian-style dairy-free "artisan not cheese" but was said to have violated the PDO for Parmesan by the Consortium. I Am Nut OK posted the new name Oh, Grate! with the tagline of 'alternative to a certain cheese we cannot mention' on its social media accounts.

80% OF CONSUMERS ASK ABOUT **CHEESE** AND **WINE** PAIRINGS, **76%** HOW TO MAKE UP A CHEESE **PLATTER**, **72%** ABOUT **SEASONALITY** AND **52%** ASK ABOUT THE **PRODUCER**

SOURCE: SURVEY OF FRENCH RETAILERS BY CHEESE AND DAIRY PRODUCTS SHOW (JUNE 2019)



Dairy breaks barriers with vegan-friendly tour

The Ethical Dairy is set to host a one-off farm tour in May designed with vegans and those following plant-based diets in mind. The aim of the event is to give visitors the chance to ask questions directly to the farm team.

The farm and cheesemaker will also be running cheesemaking workshops, a morning milking viewing and a tour of the farm this year.

Wilma Finlay of The Ethical Dairy said, "This event is about breaking down barriers and recognising that there are many different reasons why people make the dietary choices they do, and as producers of food we are respectful of the choices our customers make. The idea behind these events is basically to share our experience, explain why we do things the way we do and, where possible, to share our skills."

JUSTIN TUNSTALL RETAIL CONSULTANT



"Sticky fingers"

A food producer friend received a late night call from his farmer landlord. "Do you have CCTV?" he was asked; a van had just been seen cruising suspiciously around the farm's courtyards. He duly invested in the kit, but for weeks, caught nothing untoward on it. A while later, he was on a business trip and with a cancelled meeting in the afternoon, tuned into his online CCTV feed. He saw his two employees locking up the front door and driving away from the site, a good three hours before the usual quitting time. He called the landline, without response, then tried one of them on their mobile. "Everything okay?" he asked, "I tried the landline just now..." "Sorry boss, just up in the storeroom." A blatant lie. He continued his surveillance for the duration of the trip and realised that this was a regular occurrence.

Some business sectors have been hotbeds of employee 'innovation' – breakthroughs in the science of stealing time, money and/or goods from their bosses. The Fleet Street that I worked in during the 1980s was one such.

But this is not what we expect from staff members whom we may even regard as friends. My chum told his guys that he knew what they'd been up to, and being unwilling to dismiss and recruit anew, sent them a written warning. It seems that these days they tow the line. In general speciality food shops and producers are not faceless corporations, and it hurts when our trust is abused. Retail is moving away from being a cash business and opportunities for trousering cash

are reducing, but stock is another matter. Would many of us notice the disappearance of an occasional jar of chutney or a waxed cheese?

During last Christmas' frenzy another friend elected to deal with incoming deliveries, a task usually delegated to her team. One courier was particularly helpful; she presented him with a jar of own-label pickles as a thank you. "Very kind," he said, "but I've got a shelf full of that one – any chance of another flavour?" Her staff had been routinely dishing out freebies to all and sundry. Perhaps they might have seen her doing similarly, but she was shocked.

The solution to these issues is a clear policy that sets boundaries for team members. I'd suggest a generous discount scheme that encourages staff to try products. The level of that discount depends on your gross profit margin – I was gobsmacked to hear that a similar retailer was offering staff discounts at over twice the level I had allowed. Then I realised that their margin was closer to 60% rather than the 40% at which I traded.

I made it clear to all employees that as the business owner, I was the only person entitled to give stock away, with the exception of 'on date' cheese which I suggested they gift in small 100g portions to regular customers at the end of their shopping. Team members were also allowed to take any remainders home, as long as it was first cleared with me. We all like to know where we stand, and too much largesse might swell staff egos but shrink profits.

MOZZARELLA HAS SEEN THE **LARGEST** GROWTH IN YEAR-TO-DATE **EXPORT** VOLUMES, SHIPPING **83%** MORE FROM JANUARY-OCTOBER **2019** THAN THE SAME PERIOD IN **2018**

SOURCE: AHDB



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MAKING AN OCCASION OF GREAT CHEESE

The best cheese deserves to be celebrated; here's how to do just that

Cheese is a great conversation starter, especially in food-loving circles, and a fine food retailer is in the perfect position to get this chat rolling. We all know how to approach sharing knowledge in displays and on blackboards, but it's one-to-one interaction between customers and staff that really brings the cheese retail experience to life.

Running cheese events

When a group of people who love cheese come together, social magic is made. So long as the host has a good amount of expertise to share and the environment is warm and

inviting, a cheese tasting event – pairing is a particularly popular option, with wine, beer and cider suggestions helping to warm up the conversation as well as attendees – will be great new addition to your calendar.

It doesn't need to be an overly regular item on your To Do list, at least at the beginning. An intimate group of cheese lovers which meets every quarter to indulge in their favourite food would sound like heaven to a lot of customers, for sure, and you could always gauge demand once you've got the rhythm and feel you could manage to up the regularity.

Offer an array

"Having a cheese tasting is a great way to introduce people to the wonderful variety and sheer pleasure of the world of cheese," says Nick Copland, co-founder of *Homage2Fromage*. When it comes to display, "We love to keep the cheese whole and let people help themselves," he says. "That's our style, but if you want people to be a little bit more orderly, it's still a good idea to let people see what the cheese looks like. People find this fascinating and get quite excited to see big wheels of cheese!"

"It's always a good idea to have contrasting kinds of cheeses," Nick continues. "It's not just about taste, but texture, shape, size and style. We aim for something fresh, something blue, something aromatic – like a washed rind – and always something majestic, hard and mature." As well as treating attendees to a full array of flavours to enjoy, choosing a range of cheeses which differ in appearance will make the range even more inviting.

Be generous

Giving generously might seem unnecessarily costly, or even

wasteful, but it's a sure-fire way to create an atmosphere of bonhomie. "Give people plenty," agrees Nick. "There's nothing worse than turning up to a tasting event to find a teeny tiny piece of cheese with your name on it. If you can, let people tuck in and eat the cheese as they would do at home. Having plenty also lets people try different parts of the cheese – the rind, the centre and the edges" – allowing them to gain a deeper understanding of the cheese as a whole.

Share your expertise

"Guiding people through the various different flavours and aromas of a cheese can be a revelation for your

guests – but don't forget to ask them what they think," says Nick. Don't allow the reputation of fine cheese as an 'exclusive' enjoyment stand in your way; explore attendees' understanding and palates, and welcome beginners to the events. Equally, there's no need to get too technical. "We find people want to know about the stories, the people and the places behind cheese – not the chemistry or the technicalities of the industry," Nick explains.

Keep accompaniments simple

"Hot chilli jellies, vinegar pickles, flavoured breads and crackers all go well with cheese – but these can



“ Give people plenty of time to sit down, relax and enjoy the cheese. This is not a race, it's not a hard sell, it should be an easy and intriguing way to encounter some new cheeses ”



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some new cheeses. Great cheese should never be rushed!"

Connecting with customers

A great strength of the independent retailer is its ability to engage directly with its customers. Another is its passion for the products it sells. So, why not combine these two facets of your business to really set yourself apart from other cheese sellers on the market?

One of the greatest pleasures of life behind a specialist cheese counter is the close connection to the producers you source from. While day trips to dairies may seem an extravagance, an unbeatable understanding of the cheeses in question and its makers could reap rewards – particularly if you share that knowledge in a number of formats, from signage to over-the-counter conversation and events. Sourcing directly from each producer may prove a logistical challenge and isn't necessarily required here; what you're looking for is the kind of connection one just can't get from a website or catalogue, and a few hours each month spent building relationships could prove invaluable.

Having said that, it's important to recognise what your customer wants – and that might not require this investment of time and travel funds. It could be a balance of showmanship, knowledgeable conversation and one-of-a-kind expertise; equally, they could simply be after a great quality, well looked-after cheese without needing to stop and chat. In this instance, an attractive grab-and-go style counter with clear signage, eye-catching hero products and speedy service if they need it is sure to be appreciated.

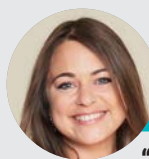
Whatever camp your customer falls into, by ensuring that at every level your service goes above and beyond that of the competition – and delights no matter how quick the transaction – you'll make your cheese selling an experience for cheese experts and novices alike.

be a bit off-putting. Remember the cheese is the star," Nick says. That's not to say that you can't include these items in your accompaniments arsenal, but carry out a private tasting before the event to work out what cheeses work well with what condiments. Also, bear in mind that some customers might prefer meek and mild cheeses with an accompaniment to suit, whereas others would opt for a thoroughly punchy combination.

Remember to look beyond the ambient shelf for a refreshing option. "Offer some fruits and celery," says Nick. "The fruit, like grapes or apples, brings a welcome sweetness and contrast. Celery is a great palate cleanser."

Take your time

Finally, Nick advises to, "Give people plenty of time to sit down, relax and enjoy the cheese. This is not a race, it's not a hard sell, it should be an easy and intriguing way to encounter



HOW HARRODS MADE ITS CHEESE COUNTER ICONIC

"There is no comparing Harrods' cheese experience to any other in the market"
Davinia Pearl, head of food, Harrods, explains what makes the iconic retailer's cheese counter such a destination for cheese lovers

"There is no comparing Harrods' cheese experience to any other in the market, as the display is second to none, particularly in London. The lighting and storage fridges provide an incredibly unique perspective that other retailers do not have, and our customers are encouraged to taste a vast array of cows', goats', ewes', pasteurised and raw milk cheeses, alongside daily tasting events to celebrate a range of exciting new produce. The remarkable and passionate service from our staff comes with their depth of knowledge and expertise on artisan cheeses from all over the world, as well as their ability to carefully curate a cheeseboard tailored for any occasion.

"As industry leaders we strive to always have exceptional and distinctive products with a point of difference, more developed flavour and incredible heritage. Our specialist team of buyers frequently visit a collection of producers' cellars and select the cheese wheels for Harrods, ensuring each one exudes the finest quality and flavour profile. The cheeses picked are matured in limited quantities and only released once per year, for example a 36-month matured Comté from Fort St Antoine, matured by Marcel Petite, is an exceptionally rare delicacy and specifically released in June each year. You never know how many wheels there are going to be, but you can always be sure to find some in Harrods' food halls when it has been released.

"Aside from hosting an exclusive and special offering, we strive to have a wide range of seasonal specialities and goats' cheeses on offer. We believe it's important to push the boundaries and challenge our customers in order to develop. For example, last Christmas we debuted an exclusive Gorgonzola Dolce combined with fresh black truffle shavings which was a huge success. At the same time, we also launched a truffle Feta cheese which was not as successful, however it was a chance to give our customers an option, challenge their taste buds and develop their palate for unique cheeses.

LOOKING FORWARD

"Today we recognise that more and more of Harrods customers are

turning to veganism, and because of this Harrods now offers a variety of vegan cheeses – which is an area we would like to evolve and elevate throughout 2020. Each year we aim to work closely with more producers, providing our customers with access to the best age profiles, most unique flavours and most incredible creation within the cheese industry, all of which allows the Harrods offering to grow."



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TALKING SHOP

January is typically known as a tough month, with the dark and cold weather to contend with and the joys of spring feeling a million miles away. But with new resolutions and a multitude of campaigns to get involved in, January has been much more interesting this year. The month offered the perfect opportunity to try lots of newly discovered products, and I am not one to turn such a chance down. The Veganuary campaign, which saw a record-breaking 400,000 people sign up this year, has shown that veganism is no longer a trend but a full-blown movement. There has been a plethora of launches hitting the shelves, with brands wanting to cater to this legion of consumers that have been taking part in Veganuary. We wanted to use this as an opportunity to discover some new vegan-friendly products and brands, and it proved to be a very rewarding enterprise. I tried and tasted chocolate, crisps, sauces, ready meals and more, all in the name of *Speciality Food*.

As a long-term vegetarian myself I have witnessed the evolution of meat-free products over the years, from soggy vegetable-filled burgers to all the choices that are available today. While not strictly a vegan, I am definitely interested in plant-based options and have been impressed with what I have seen over the last month in particular. It's fascinating to see the innovation coming through from manufacturers and brands, and the use of natural ingredients and flavour to create products that don't compromise on quality.

Here are a couple of personal highlights of products from the last month. To see more of what we featured over #Veganuary2020 follow us on Instagram over at @specialityfoodmagazine.

- BUTTERMILK DAIRY-FREE ROCKY ROAD CRUNCH
- JAKE & NAYNS VEGAN CHICKPEA NAANSTER



We always want to hear the opinions of our readers – do you have a story to share, expertise to pass on or a comment to make? Please do get in touch with us at lucy.macdonald@aceville.co.uk.

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INSTAGRAM POLL

Are you increasing the selection of vegan products you stock in 2020?

YES
56%

NO
44%

Editor
Holly Shackleton, 01206 505981
holly.shackleton@aceville.co.uk

Deputy Editor
Lucy Macdonald, 01206 505971
lucy.macdonald@aceville.co.uk

Group Editor
Charlotte Smith
charlotte.smith@aceville.co.uk

Group Advertising Manager
Sam Reubin 01206 505936
sam.reubin@aceville.co.uk

Advertising Manager
Jessica Stevenson 01206 505901
jessica.stevenson@aceville.co.uk

Accounts
Sue Carr 01206 505903

Art Director
Lee Whiteford
lwhiteford@btconnect.com

Publisher
Helen Tudor 01206 505970

Published by
Aceville Publications Ltd, 21-23 Phoenix Court, Hawkins Road, Colchester, Essex, CO2 8JY

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01293 312188
specialityfood@subscriptionhelpline.co.uk

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Tel. 01778 392464

5 MINUTES WITH... FRANKIE SNOBEL, FOUNDER OF TIPPLESWORTH

WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING IF YOU WEREN'T IN THE FOOD INDUSTRY?

I used to be a journalist in the engineering sector, so I'd likely still be writing about building technology. Or I'd pack it all in and open up a beach bar somewhere hot and sunny.

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST JOB?

I worked as a jewellery clerk in the evenings after school and as a shooter girl on the weekend at a local nightclub. Eventually I managed to get behind the bar, and the rest is history.

WHAT'S THE WORST JOB YOU'VE DONE?

I have a biology background and volunteered at a veterinary clinic. This involved cleaning up after the animals and



also the crematorium. The smell was awful and heart-wrenching.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF THE JOB?

Recipe development and product innovation!

AND YOUR LEAST FAVOURITE?

Admin and logistics.

HOW ABOUT THE FOOD INDUSTRY?

There's so much innovation, opportunity and support here at the moment. It's a great time to be a food/drink producer.

TEA OR COFFEE?

Tea – I have about 10 giant cups a day. But an Espresso Martini tops my list of favourites too.

WHAT WOULD BE YOUR LAST SUPPER?

Quattro stagioni pizza and a Negroni.

WHAT'S YOUR MOTTO?

'It is what it is'. I've learned to not dwell on the past in order to fully embrace the future.

WHAT'S THE WEIRDEST THING YOU'VE EVER EATEN?

Fish eyes in Molokai, Hawaii.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE BOOK?

The Five People You Meet in Heaven by Mitch Albom. A bit of a tear-jerker and beautifully written.

SWEET OR SAVOURY?

Savoury all the way. Or a combination of both!

SPECIALITY FOOD MAGAZINE

The next issue will include:

- Farm Shop & Deli Show Preview
- Food & Drink Expo Preview
- Ice Cream & Desserts
- Coffee
- Food to go
- Low Alcohol and Adult Soft Drinks
- Spanish food

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The final word on fine food

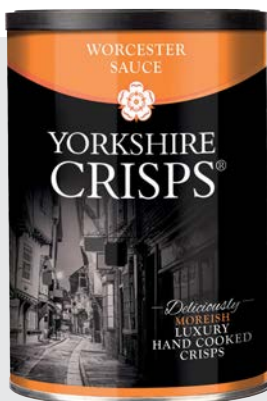
TRIED & TESTED

THE YORKSHIRE CRISP COMPANY WORCESTER SAUCE

As a real crisp lover I was more than willing to try these, and was happy to discover that they are packed with flavour and delightfully moreish. The brand's Sweet Chilli & Lime, Natural Sea Salt and Nowt On crisps are also well worth a try.
yorkshirecrisps.co.uk

SQUIRREL SISTERS PEANUT CARAMEL

Always being on the hunt for a snack to satisfy that 3pm slump, I was looking forward to giving the new Peanut Caramel flavour natural protein bar a try. These vegan bars are made from 100% natural ingredients and contain no added sugar. Plant-based and gluten-free, they're tasty and can be enjoyed by pretty much everyone. A real winner.
squirrelsisters.com



IN ASSOCIATION WITH



“ The business belongs to the customers and producers as much as it does to us ”

FRANCESCA CONTINI, MANAGING DIRECTOR, ON THE DEFINITION OF 'FAMILY' AT EDINBURGH'S VALVONA & CROLLA

The business was started in the 1890s by a man called Ralph Valvona – he was importing produce from Italy to sell in Edinburgh. My great-grandfather, Alphonso Crolla, joined in 1934 and that's when the business became Valvona & Crolla. Valvona left the business after a few years but we retained the name.

The Italian community in Scotland had been growing since the late 1800s. When the war ended in 1945, my great-uncle Victor took over the business which really started to serve the local community as Scottish soldiers who had been based in Italy during the war came home with a taste for Italian food. My father Philip took over the business in 1986 and that's when the business changed and became focused on quality, artisanal products, importing directly from growers and wineries in Italy rather than London wholesalers. That was a big game-changer for the company as we were sourcing products which weren't available elsewhere, and were able to be price competitive on superior products as we were buying them direct from source. That's our ethos to this day; we're back and forth to Italy finding small manufacturers and producers and have a weekly delivery of fresh Italian cheeses and vegetables.

I always worked in the shop as a kid during weekends and summer holidays, and after a while working at St Ormond Street Hospital decided to make the most of this quite unique opportunity. That was 15 years ago. I started at the bottom and gradually worked in

every different part of the business, taking on more responsibilities from purchasing and operations to financial management. Over the past 18 months we've had a transition period where I've been running the business, with advice from my parents, ready for me to take over as managing director.

Family is essential to Italian culture, as an ethos of sharing with the people around you and enjoying together. Our customers and suppliers are part of that family too; we're all invested, from the field to the customer enjoying the product with their family. We all respect this ethos and history in order to maintain the business for the next generation. The term 'family business' isn't about genetics for us; it's about understanding the ethos of what we do and enjoying doing it. You have to really be invested to enjoy it as a profession, which means that our staff become part of our extended family.

We recently refurbished our shop in line with our sustainability goals, and the customers were fiercely protective of the shop. They're as protective of it as we are; Valvona & Crolla is the comforting great aunt! I serve customers who were served when they were kids by my grandfather, and bring their children and grandchildren here to shop too. The business belongs to the customers and producers as much as it does to us.



THE INDEPENDENT SHOPPER

Tom Aikens is the chef founder of Muse and Tom's Kitchen



I live in South West London with my wife and two daughters, and we're absolutely spoilt for choice when looking for high-quality produce in London.

If I'm cooking for a special occasion and really want to impress friends and family, I like to head to Pimlico market for fresh fish and meat.

If I'm short of time and can't get to the larger London markets, there are also a wonderful selection of local farmers' markets I like to visit which include Alexandra Palace, Herne Hill and Chelsea.

One of my favourite London butchers is HG Walters on Palliser Road – a good option for meat.

At The Chelsea Fishmonger, you'll find the freshest and highest quality fish and shellfish; it's also on my way back from work so it's easy for me to pop in. For cured fish such as smoked salmon. I would shop at Fortnum & Mason's food hall, although I must admit I'm not a smoked salmon lover so this tends to be when I'm making canapés for guests.

For fruit and vegetables, Andreas of Chelsea Green is a lovely little

gourmet grocery shop offering seasonal produce. I like to pop here for my Sunday roast vegetables.

Daylesford Organic is also a good option for fresh produce as well as condiments and preserves, and you can also grab a coffee while you're there!

When looking to buy cheese, I recommend heading to Broadway Market which showcase some really fantastic British cheeses, and while you're there you can purchase some cheap and beautiful flowers to dress your dinner table. If markets aren't your thing, a great local shop for cheese is Paxton & Whitfield – I tend to visit the Cale Street shop as it's closer to my house. They have a huge selection of artisan cheeses suited to all budgets and tastes and I always pay them a visit before entertaining at home.

I usually make my own sourdough, but if I don't have time I buy it from Bread Ahead near Sloane Square. Orée on the Fulham Road is also fantastic; it's a premium French artisan patisserie and boulangerie which serves some delicious pastries!

“ We're absolutely spoilt for choice when looking for high-quality produce in London ”

DIARY DATES

February

16th-20th GULFOOD
Dubai World Trade Centre
gulfood.com

23rd-26th CHEESE AND DAIRY PRODUCTS SHOW
Paris Expo, Porte de Versailles
en.salon-fromage.com

27th-29th BREW/LDN
The Old Truman Brewery, London
brewldn.com

March

3rd-5th EXPOWEST CORNWALL
Royal Cornwall Showground, Wadebridge
expowestcornwall.co.uk

3rd-5th HOTEL, RESTAURANT & CATERING SHOW
ExCel, London
hrc.co.uk

15th-17th TAVOLA
Kortrijk Expo, Belgium
tavola-xpo.be

25th-26th CASUAL DINING
ExCel, London
casualdiningshow.co.uk



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