THE GREEN ISSUE

SUSTAINABLE INSIGHT, ADVICE AND INSPIRATION

March 2026
abc specialityfoodmagazine.com

SPECIALITY FOOD

CONNECTING THE FINE FOOD AND DRINK INDUSTRY

We do the Square stuff. Square

PATINA BAKERY, EDINBURGH

CHARITEA

JULIEN WAROWIOFF: PLANET-FRIENDLY DRINKS
P. 24



METZ CHEESEMONGER

EMMANUELLE METZ: FUTURE-PROOFING CHEESE RETAIL
P. 30



SOIL ASSOCIATION

LEE HOLDSTOCK: THE SUSTAINABLE SHOPPER
P. 39



FIELDFARE

CHOSEN, FROZEN & READY TO PICK

OWN THE COOLEST BUFFET IN TOWN



36% of shoppers want low or no packaging*

ENJOY THE FREEDOM OF FROZEN

- Pastries, meal makers, desserts, fruit & vegetables
- Loose or individually frozen
- 27 award winners in the range



Fieldfare's exceptional range of over 100 loose, frozen products provides a smart way to extend your premium food offer, while delivering strong margins, long shelf life and zero waste.

- Simple set-up with install and full branding of your freezer
- Straightforward ordering and ongoing trade support
- A future-proof choice for specialist retailers

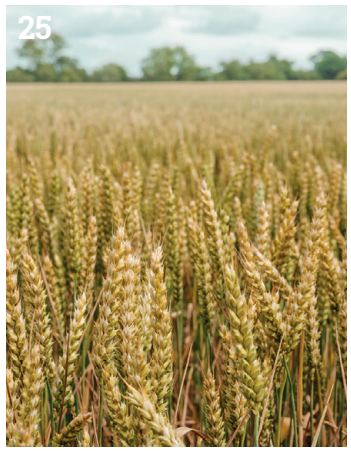
Get in touch or come and see us at THE FARM SHOP AND DELI SHOW, stand Q120.

enquiries@field-fare.com | 01732 864 344

* YouGov/Fieldfare survey of 2,000 British shoppers - February 2024

In this issue







8 Oliver Lloyd
Consultant

10 Paul Hargreaves
Cotswold Fayre

REGULARS

14 Trend Watch: Functional Drinks
18 Product News
30 Counterpoint: Future-proofing Cheese Retail
32 Cheese Uncut

FEATURES

16 lunch! NORTH 2026 preview
17 Pride of Wales
20 IFE 2026 preview
24 Sustainable Sips
25 A Green Future
28 The Future is Frozen
34 Clawson Farms: Setting New Standards in Sustainability
36 Sustainability on the Ground
39 Sustainable Champions 2026

EDITOR'S LETTER



Welcome to the latest issue of *Speciality Food* – our annual Green Issue – where we share invaluable industry insight, actionable advice from people in the know, and inspiring stories from businesses that have gone above and beyond to make their operations better for the future of both people and planet.

Our Sustainable Champions, celebrated on pages 39-45, are sterling examples of how food and drink brands and businesses can have a tangible impact on the world they inhabit, and the professionals interviewed for our Sustainability on the Ground feature on page 36 – pioneering stewards of healthy land – give us renewed hope for what's to come in the world of food production.

We also explore the potential of frozen food to be a cornerstone of retailers' sustainability efforts on page 28; find out how the drinks sector is evolving to be increasingly eco-friendly – in line with growing consumer demand – on page 25; and uncover the sustainable story of the brilliant cheesemaker, Clawson Farms. Plus, we preview the upcoming IFE and lunch! NORTH shows – and look forward to seeing you there.

HOLLY SHACKLETON | EDITOR
holly.shackleton@artichokehq.com





Italian food: What does the UNESCO heritage status mean?

Italian food has gained UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage status. Discover what it means, why Italian cuisine resonates globally, and key trends shaping premium food retail

UNESCO has delivered its verdict on Italian cooking and cuisine, paying ode to its unique cultural and social links; the fact it fosters an intimacy with food, respect for ingredients, and shared moments across generations.

"It is a means of connecting with family and the community," UNESCO says. "Whether at home, in schools or through festivals, ceremonies and social gatherings."

Passing recipes down through families, and enjoying them together, is a way of caring for ourselves and others, discovering and maintaining cultural roots, and safeguarding cultural expressions such as language and gestures, while promoting social inclusion, UNESCO continues.

Sally Assinder of Garofalo says she sees the decision as an acknowledgment of traditional production methods, regional specialities, and the values that underpin Italian food culture.

"It reinforces the long-term value of provenance, authenticity, and protected designations within Italian ranges," she continues.

Winette Winston, CEO of Origin Brands (owner of Seggiano), says Italian food heritage thrives in its regions and is as much about how and where ingredients are grown and food is made, as what the final recipe is.

"This is a culture of producers who work with purpose, passing down cherished methods through generations, rather than rushing towards shortcuts. UNESCO's recognition affirms the value of protecting traditions that are deeply tied to landscape and community."

Naturally the announcement has become a source of pride for Italian chefs and cooks. Somaia Hammah, head chef of London's Nipotina, says, "This recognition validates what Italian families and chefs have always known – our food carries stories, traditions and a way of life passed down through generations. It's beautiful to see that honoured on a global level."

While Andrea Asciutti, founder of 081 Pizzeria, says, "Food is literally everything to us. It's the heart of our culture, our identity, and it's like our love language. Honestly, 90% of life in Italy revolves around food, and the rest is just waiting for the next meal."

Why does Italian food resonate so strongly with consumers? For Somaia, the answer to this is simple. Italian food is both honest, and emotional, and it's built on simplicity, seasonality and care. "You don't need complicated techniques to enjoy it; just good ingredients treated with respect. It reminds people of home, even if they're not Italian."

Sally agrees that its familiarity and simplicity that's behind the success of Italian cuisine. "It's built around recognisable ingredients that offer both comfort and indulgence. Whether it's a family pasta dish or a celebratory meal, Italian food feels inclusive and adaptable."

It's provenance that sways clout in Winette's opinion. "Today's customer doesn't simply want to know if something is organic - they are even more curious, and yearn to be educated about how it was grown, who made it, and why it matters. Provenance and process are becoming significant priorities in consumers' lives. Italian food, when done properly, teaches us as much as it feeds us." When brands are honest and detailed, Winette adds, customers feel a strong connection to their food and all it nourishes.

In addition to Italy's biodiversity and ingrained culinary regionality, Roberto says he's convinced much of the credit for the enduring appeal of Italian food can be given to the way the country's cooks and chefs interpret ingredients and deliver hospitality. "For an Italian, a well-laid table means family, friends and serenity, and this makes all the difference in how we interpret food."

"We are seeing increasing demand for speciality shapes and premium credentials such as Pasta di Gragnano IGP status as consumers trade up and seek products that deliver both quality and authenticity," reveals Sally.

At Seggiano, says Winette, they're seeing momentum for niche, story-rich products, like their new torrone, handmade in Sicily by a confectioner called Mario. "He took over the family workshop at just 15, after his father passed away. Though he experimented with modern machinery, he found the flavour suffered – so he returned to the traditional method his father taught him. Over time, he partnered with a local engineer to refine the stirring process, improving consistency without sacrificing quality. Products like these succeed because they're grounded in skill, story and cultural context."

Seggiano is also seeing growth in dietary-friendly Italian staples. It recently launched an expanded gluten free range including pasta shapes made from chickpea, teff, rice and quinoa. "Crucially, these aren't 'alternatives' as we'd typically think of them. They're made in Italy by producers who craft food they'd serve on their own tables. This is a distinction that matters to our customers," says Winette.

Why should speciality retailers be upgrading their Italian ranges? "It remains one of the most reliable and well-known categories," reveals Sally, who advises focusing on premium-led ranges that are not widely available in supermarkets, supported by clear usage occasions and consumer education.

"Retailers are more than stockists," Winette adds. "They're curators. Our advice is to stay loyal to producers who go slow, even when speed is easier, choose clarity and transparency over trend chasing, back products with real integrity, and to understand the future of food retail isn't about being everywhere. It's about showing up with intention – and standing for something real."





Health is top priority for UK shoppers in 2026

According to NielsenIQ, sales figures for the first few weeks of 2026 are demonstrating a growing consumer awareness around nutrition – as well as increased instances of 'looking behind the label'.

The data shows that sales for both protein-based foods and fibre-based foods have seen an considerable increase, of 9.6% and 14.1% respectively. The meat/fish/poultry sector saw a 7.7% increase in sales, and no/low alcohol options were found to be popular, with sales of low/no cider growing by 28% and low/no spirits by 8%.

Mike Watkins, head of retailer and business insight at NielsenIQ, said, "Shoppers have entered 2026 with caution and a need to continue to balance budgets. This is felt most by two-thirds of households who still expect to be moderately or severely impacted by cost-of-living increases."

"However, what's interesting is that as well as a shift to essential food and drink there is continued interest in health and nutrition, fuelled by new product launches. For example, we are seeing a 20% boost to sales of cereal bars where there is a protein claim."

THE POWER OF PRICE

50%
of UK shoppers say the total price is the first thing they look at when judging value

42%
think "Everyday Low Pricing" offers the best value for money

71%
approve of loyalty pricing schemes, but fairness concerns persist if non-members feel left behind

55%
of consumers feel reassured by price-match schemes, yet 25% say they're confusing or gimmicky

SOURCE: VYPR PRICING REPORT

Gen Z workforce highlighted as natural fit for SMEs

Recent research has found that, despite its reputation, the Gen Z workforce holds qualities that make it an ideal source of candidates for jobs within SMEs.

Citation, HR and employment law experts, found that 55% of SME firms agreed that Gen Z graduates are confident with new technology and solutions, 48% states that they valued Gen Z's fresh perspective, and 32% appreciated their desire to challenge the status quo.

Gen Z is widely considered to have high demands when it comes to workplace flexibility, but Gen Z respondents stated that it is of lower importance (31%) than salary and benefits (51%) and work-life balance (39%).

Matt Stewart, managing director at Citation, said, "Our research shows there are SME employers out there ready to take on young, fresh talent. And many of the things Gen Z value in a role align perfectly with what an SME can offer. Working for a smaller business, you don't feel like a cog in a bigger machine; you're able to effect greater change, be exposed to more personalised opportunities for hands-on training and development, and benefit from a smaller, more close-knit team environment."

> "Many of the things Gen Z value in a role align perfectly with what an SME can offer"







SEGGIANO

SUSTAINABILITY, PRACTICED DAILY

At Seggiano, we partner exclusively with family-run producers who share our devotion to provenance and integrity.

Every jar reflects low-impact sourcing, small-batch processing, and the character of its region — all to preserve the future of Italian food.

Discover the full collection.
seggiano.com



"Robots can't sell stories"



OLLIE LLOYD
CONSULTANT

In January, I went to Dubai for a major international food show, along with thousands of others from across the industry, to do what these events are really for: to understand where food and drink are heading, not just in terms of flavour and format, but in how food is produced, sourced and consumed more responsibly. The halls were vast and energetic, filled with enormous stands from global brands, ambitious start-ups from every corner of the world, and striking country pavilions from India, China and Korea that confidently showcased their food cultures and export ambitions. There were some British brands too, but far too few. The atmosphere was busy, social, and full of curiosity, with conversations everywhere and a sense that this was where ideas, challenges, and opportunities were exchanged.

And then, almost hidden away amongst it all, were a handful of robots and AI avatar screens. They felt strangely out of place. People stopped, looked, smiled and then quickly moved on. Beyond the novelty, they didn't add any meaningful value. They didn't deepen understanding, spark ideas or help anyone make better decisions about food. In contrast to many of the more compelling conversations happening elsewhere on the floor, around reducing waste, shortening supply chains, using ingredients more intelligently and building more resilient food systems, the technology that sought to replace human interaction felt like it missed the point. In a room full of people who had travelled a long way to connect, learn, and be inspired, it felt like a solution in search of a problem.

That contrast matters because it says a lot about where retail, particularly speciality and premium food retail in the UK, is heading. We are surrounded by technology, yet we are also living through a well-documented loneliness crisis closer to home. A large number of UK adults report feeling lonely at least some of the time, a reality intensified by the long-term shift towards working from home, where days can pass with little meaningful face-to-face interaction beyond a screen. This isn't just a social issue; it's a commercial one. People are increasingly craving real interaction, to be seen, heard and acknowledged, and that desire shows up in unexpected places, including shops. Independent food retail has always played a quiet role in sustaining communities, not just through what it sells, but through the relationships it fosters.

The emergence of "slow checkout" lanes in UK supermarkets is a telling example. Of course, not everyone wants to talk; sometimes you just want to get what you need and rush home. But the fact these lanes exist at all tells us something important: for many people, even a brief, human exchange still carries real value, perhaps today more than ever.

This becomes even more relevant when we move beyond purely transactional retail. Shopping with an independent retailer or choosing a premium brand is a financial investment, and people want a meaningful return on that investment. They're not just buying ingredients; they're buying confidence, inspiration and a story. In-store, that means teams who engage, not just transact. People who can explain how products have been produced, how to cook something properly, suggest what's new and exciting, and help customers get the very best out of what they've bought. Good advice doesn't just inspire confidence; it also helps customers waste less, cook smarter and use ingredients more thoughtfully. That guidance, delivered well, turns a purchase into an experience, and experiences build loyalty.

What's changed is what customers are cooking and why. More people are eating lentils, beans, and other pulses, driven by cost, health, and a growing awareness of the environmental impact of their food choices. They're experimenting with new cuisines at home, often outside their comfort zone, and trying to balance saving money with creating meals that still feel generous, nourishing, and meaningful. Alongside this, there's a rapidly growing focus on eating better, more protein-dense, more nutrient-dense meals, with greater emphasis on gut health, accelerated by the rise of GLP-1 medications and broader conversations around metabolic health. Consumers are asking more informed, more complex questions now, and retailers and brands are well placed to help them answer them.

The danger is standing still. If we believe that what counts as excellent today will automatically be excellent tomorrow, we are wrong. Consumer expectations are moving too fast for that, shaped by changing relationships with food, health, value and sustainability. The most important question retailers should ask themselves is simple but uncomfortable: what do our customers really want now, and what will they want next? The answer won't come from a screen on the shop floor pretending to be human. It will come from listening, observing, engaging and being genuinely curious about the people who walk through the door and buy our brands.

Treat people like you care, invest in human connection, and use technology to support, not replace, that relationship. Do that well, and they won't just come back. They'll bring others with them.

Millennials, not Gen Z, driving evolution of low/no drinks category

According to research conducted by Censuswide UK for TRIP:

- 65% of Millennials plan to drink less in 2026, compared to 63% of Gen Z
- 70% of Millennials agree feeling good the next day matters more than drinking, compared with 52% of Gen Z
- 58% of Millennials state alcohol is no longer their favourite way to unwind, compared 48% of Gen Z
- 61% of Millennials agree drinking alcohol negatively impacts how they feel in terms of sleep, mood and anxiety, compared with 53% of Gen Z

The shift extends beyond younger demographics, with Gen X and Boomers joining the movement:

- 55% plan to drink less alcohol in 2026
- 47% drink less frequently than two years ago, compared to just 7% drinking more
- 58% no longer reach for alcohol to relax
- 40% are actively rethinking their relationship with drinking

Paul Askew, chef patron of The Art School in Liverpool, on the latest business rates update

"It's abundantly clear that this government has no intention of helping the UK's wider hospitality industry.



"Whilst we're pleased to see pubs and live music venues get some business rates relief, there's still great swathes of the UK's hospitality industry who are desperate for help.

"It's inconceivable that the chancellor has neglected this opportunity to broaden the scope and help [those] who are in the same situations as pubs – crippling Covid debts, high business rates, all on top of the recent NI and minimum wage rises and a VAT rate at odds with most of Europe."

Do you have an opinion on business rates? Get in touch via holly.shackleton@artichokehq.com





THE ONLY CRACKERS BAKED BY A CHEESE COMPANY

THE FINE CHEESE CO.

We know about crackers – and cheese.

"Transform for good"



PAUL HARGREAVES
COTSWOLD FAYRE

"We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them" is a quote often attributed to Albert Einstein, and I believe it also applies well to the area of sustainability and businesses creating positive impact in the world.

Our world is currently more volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) than ever and there is a growing anxiety in society that has arisen from huge socio-economic shifts, climate breakdown and global empire-building. There seem almost too many factors at play directly opposed to the sustainability movement and they are in danger of reversing the progress made over the past decade.

So, what shall we do and should it be different to what we were doing five or 10 years ago? First, let's celebrate the wins. Progress has been made and let's not forget that. My company, Cotswold Fayre, became a B Corp over 10 years ago, and the progress of food and drink businesses towards sustainability in that time has been phenomenal. To give an indication of that progress, in 2015 when we first certified as a B Corp, we had one supplier and one customer that were fellow B Corps. Even in April 2020 there were only 6 suppliers that had undergone the rigorous B Corp certification, yet now we have over 90 B Corp suppliers and approaching 20 customers within the movement.

Last year there was some negative press about B Corp not making enough of a difference. Undoubtedly there are some companies that have jumped on the B Corp bandwagon, and I question how much of a cultural shift there has been within them. This is likely to happen with any successful movement as companies think they will gain revenue by evidencing more sustainability credentials. However, there is still reason to celebrate business that may seem to be going through the motions. Even if the B Corp certification is being treated as a box-ticking exercise, some progress to becoming a better company will have been made by any company going through the process.

However, it is important to treat any sustainability certification as a starting gate rather than a destination. The problems businesses have created both socially and environmentally have come from an extractive mindset and 'profit at all costs' mentality with a control-manage leadership style. Back to the Einstein quote at the top, if we are using this style of leadership to engineer our way out of the problem we will fail. Box ticking a number of sustainability metrics, whilst better than nothing, won't get us out of the current mess.

We need a more radical approach, which I believe, comes from an approach that doesn't just involve the mind, but our heart and soul. It involves deep connection with others and with nature. Even in sustainability circles we think about nature as something separate to ourselves. It is not. We are nature. In fact, there are more non-human cells in our bodies than human, 100 trillion microbial cells compared to 10 trillion human cells. We are integrated with nature in ways that scientists are only just beginning to discover.

The mindset of separation and dualistic thinking came along initially through the agricultural revolution and later with the thinking of Descartes and Bacon during the scientific revolution. They brought a way of thinking to the western world that has remained for centuries, namely that anything that can't be proven to the rational brain has no value. "I think therefore I am". This was at odds with ancient wisdom at the time and has since been proved to be completely wrong. (see Descartes' Error, Antonio Damassio, 2006) But it is this illusion of separation on a conscious level that has created many of the problems in the world today.

Many of us have discovered the joy of being in nature and we have sometimes experienced a deep connection with both animals and other humans. These connections are happening at a level beyond the rational brain. Psychologists, quantum physicists, neuroscientists and even anaesthetists are discovering scientific proof that we are connecting at a heart and soul level well beyond the physical brain. The science is not completely understood yet, but there is now considerable proof from all these specialisms that there is a lot more to our minds than the physical brain.

Even without knowing the science, the more we connect with nature, the less we would want to harm it and the more we will discover about creating businesses that are not just sustainable but regenerative, just as nature itself is by default. The more we connect with other human beings with compassion, the more we will want to use our businesses as a force for good for our workers, our local communities and our supply chains. We need to move from a "do less harm" mentality to a regenerative "transform for good" mindset. We need to move from a scarcity and fear-based approach, resulting in an extractive mindset to an attitude of abundance.

It is when we do this that we will start to see progress as we balance the spreadsheets with love and compassion into our businesses. And that requires a personal transformation and almost certainly some self-sacrifice, but as we do this, we will know a deep fulfilment in our work that we have never experienced before.



Shoppers seek healthy indulgence

Finding harmony: Where health meets indulgence in food, a new study released by EIT Food, has demonstrated that consumers are looking for balanced indulgence without compromise to satisfy their cravings, and are looking for indulgences that are natural and minimally processed.

The study found that positive language which frames considered indulgence as self care is taking over from alienating 'guilt-free' language.

Klaus G. Grunert, professor of marketing at Aarhus University and lead of the EIT Food Consumer Observatory, said, "Consumers want to make better choices, but they also want pleasure and connection. Healthy indulgence succeeds when it feels authentic and natural and isn't positioned as a compromise. By aligning products with how people actually live and eat, brands can offer healthier choices which are both appealing and convincing to consumers."

Sara De Pelsmaeker, group health & well-being director at Puratos, said, "Healthier indulgence is no longer a niche but a rapidly evolving expectation. Consumers are clear that they want treats they can feel good about, but trust and taste must come first. The opportunity for the industry lies in combining authentic ingredients, clear communication and the emotional pull of indulgence to create products that genuinely deliver on both pleasure and wellbeing. These insights support Puratos's ambition to lead the bakery, patisserie and chocolate sectors toward improved nutritional balance while maintaining the joy and connection that indulgence brings."



GREAT-TASTING

ORGANIC PANTRY STAPLES THAT CUSTOMERS COME BACK FOR

From quality canned heroes to convenient cooking pastes, Biona delivers a complete range of pantry essentials that meet the growing demand for clean-label, planet-friendly food.

Biona has the **highest brand recognition** in the ambient **organic category***







Certified Organic & Non-GMO











No added artificial preservatives or additives

Discover the full Biona pantry range

Stock Biona today and bring your customers pantry staples they'll return for.
Contact our team at salesteam@windmillorganics.com

Source: *Biona Organic Consumer Survey | July 2025



THE UK FOOD & DRINK SHOWS

The food and drink event no business can afford to miss

To see and sample the very best of British food and drink – from artisan producers to the largest global brands – chart a course for The UK Food & Drink Shows.

Taking place from Monday 13th to Wednesday 15th April, the event comprises four shows that each target a sector of the food and drink industry: Farm Shop & Deli Show, Food & Drink Expo, National Convenience Show and Forecourt Show.

The venue for the shows is the NEC Birmingham, which is connected to Birmingham Airport by a free air-rail link that takes just minutes. The NEC is also served by motorway links from all parts of the UK and can be easily reached by rail.

Around 1,200 businesses will be exhibiting across the four shows, and more than 25,000 visitors are expected to attend the event to sample the latest in food and drink innovation and explore services and equipment that will help their businesses flourish.

As well as being a showcase for fantastic food and drink from the United Kingdom, The UK Food & Drink Shows attracts exhibitors from across the globe. Some of these will be featured in national pavilions including Colorado, Lithuania, Northern Ireland and Wales.

The event will also feature many exhibitors that can help retailers tap the evolving and burgeoning demand for health and wellbeing products, including CLF, Dundeis UK, Infinity Foods Wholesale and Suma Wholefoods.

As ever, The UK Food & Drink Shows will feature a packed programme of insightful panels, expert speakers and inspiring demonstrations on the topics and trends that are driving the industry.

To ensure visitors make the most of their visit, an online digital event companion will offer a comprehensive event guide, interactive floorplan, seamless indoor navigation and real-time notifications.

The UK Food & Drink Shows is organised by market-leading business information provider William Reed. Covering industries ranging from food and drink to pharmaceuticals and cosmetics, William Reed publishes digital and print media, including *The Grocer*, and organises prestigious awards, business events and conferences.

"We are excited to once again welcome exhibitors and visitors to The UK Food & Drink Shows and share with them what makes this industry so vibrant and innovative," said Dan Dixon, managing director of exhibitions, William Reed.

"We appreciate that retailers and suppliers continue to face intense pressure and are confident the shows can help to equip businesses with the knowledge and inspiration to grow and flourish. At the heart of it all is the power of face-to-face interaction; the chance to have meaningful conversations, experience products first-hand and build relationships."

To find out more and register for free tickets visit the website ukfoodanddrinks.co.uk



Advice on growing your business

The UK Food & Drink Shows feature a packed programme of insightful panels, expert speakers and inspiring demonstrations on the topics and trends driving the industry. Among these are presentations designed to help grow retail and hospitality businesses, such as:

Building a team to thrive: Leading specialist retailers explore how cultivating a positive, inclusive and purpose-driven workplace can directly impact customer experience, employee retention and business performance.

Generating footfall at no extra cost: Key steps retailers can take to increase footfall and revenue to their stores, with testimonials from shops that have already achieved this.

The convenience shopper: Find out how shopping habits have changed over time, the outlook for the future and how you can adapt to capitalise on these trends.

The biggest food trends of 2026: From GLP-1 to gut health, discover what's driving consumer behaviour and how innovative ingredients are transforming NPD.

Social media trends to watch: This presentation will dive into how Gen Z and Millennials are reshaping consumption through values-led choices and a demand for authenticity.

Navigating the challenges facing UK specialist retail: Industry leaders explore the challenges impacting specialist retailers and how businesses can adapt and innovate.

The future of fast food: Leaders from across the quick-serve restaurant channel discuss and dissect the opportunities and challenges on the horizon.

How hospitality menus have evolved: Understand the shifting landscape of hospitality menus, with a focus on how pricing strategies and menu offerings have adapted over time.

How the UK food to go market is changing: Learn how economic pressures, health-conscious trends, sustainability demands, and digital innovation are reshaping what's available, how much it costs, and how it's consumed.

Hear inspiring stories

The UK Food & Drink Shows brings together industry leaders to talk





> "We exhibit here as opposed to other trade shows as it's one of the biggest in the UK. It's the most well-known, and footfall is in the tens of thousands"
>
> **CLARE JAMES, SENIOR SHOPPER**

FOUR FANTASTIC SHOWS IN ONE LOCATION

FARM SHOP & DELI SHOW

This show offers the best-quality local and regional produce alongside exciting new product development and the latest in equipment, labelling and packaging solutions.

2026 exhibitors include:

- Cook
- Cottage Delight
- Cress Co
- Diverse Fine Foods
- Glebe Farm Foods
- Mahalo
- Oatly
- Spraga



NATIONAL CONVENIENCE SHOW

The biggest event for the convenience retailing sector, this is a one-stop destination for c-store specific products, services and innovations to help boost footfall, increase basket spend and gain a competitive edge.

2026 exhibitors include:

- Booker
- Coca-Cola Europacific Partners
- General Mills
- Imperial Brands
- Kellanova
- MFG
- One Stop
- Spar

FOOD & DRINK EXPO

This is the destination for discovering fresh ideas, forging connections and gaining insights into the future of food. It attracts key foodservice buyers as well as decision makers from retail and wholesale grocery operations.

2026 exhibitors include:

- Belvoir Farm Drinks
- Borough Broth
- Filippo Berio
- Hello Fresh
- Mai Chai
- Meadowvale Foods
- St Michel Biscuits
- United Food Brands



> "The benefit that's really happened from attending the Farm Shop & Deli Show is effectively just meeting people and building relationships. For us, it's all about getting the right brands into our stores. And the only place that you can really find them is trade shows like this"
>
> **ALEX EMMANUEL-JONES, COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR, THE BLACK FARMER**

about how they have made their businesses a success, and what developments and trends are likely to shape them in the future. Among those sharing their stories at this year's event are:

Alistair Maddox, Borough Market: The chief executive of one of London's most iconic food destinations discusses his vision and offers a behind-the-scenes look at how Borough Market continues to thrive while staying true to its heritage.

James Robson, Fallow: Entrepreneur James Robson tells his story of transforming a sustainability-driven pop-up into a thriving restaurant group.

Katie Secretan, Co-Op Wholesale: Managing director Katie Secretan discusses the story behind the Nisa rebrand and what it means for retailers, partners and customers.

Mark Tate, Field to Fork: The owner of this Warwickshire business discusses his multi-channel approach, the challenges and opportunities facing the farm shop and deli market and what the future may hold for the specialist retailer.

Tom Athron, Fortnum & Mason: CEO Tom Athron talks about his plans for the luxury retailer as it aims to become more relevant all-year round to British foodies.

Sangita Tryner, Delilah Fine Foods: The current Farm Shop & Deli Retailer of the Year reveals what makes her tick, her views on the future of the industry and how the business is adapting to the challenges the sector is facing.





> "I've met visitors from all over, from supply chain companies, from customers that own smaller convenience stores to multiple retail chains to wholesale depots. It's been really, really interesting"
>
> **JANEL FATANIA, CUSTOMER MARKETING MANAGER, DIAGEO**

NEED TO KNOW

WHAT: The UK Food & Drink Shows

COMPRISING: Food & Drink Expo, Farm Shop & Deli Show, National Convenience Show, Forecourt Show

WHERE: NEC Birmingham

WHEN: Monday 13th to Wednesday 15th April 2026

WEB: ukfoodanddrinkshows.co.uk

WHAT'S NEW FOR THE 2026 SHOWS

The UK Food & Drink Shows is constantly evolving to reflect the vibrant and fast-moving industry, with new attractions for 2026 including:

SPOTLIGHT ON COFFEE SHOP & CAFÉ

As the food-to-go market continues to boom, this dedicated space at Farm Shop & Deli Show will highlight the latest trends and products.

SPOTLIGHT ON FUTURE FOODS

Part of Food & Drink Expo, this area will celebrate the brands and innovators redefining what good food means by showcasing wellness-driven, clean-label and sustainable products that deliver on taste and convenience.

TASTE THE FUTURE

Food innovation will also be highlighted by this competition, which gives visitors the chance to sample and score 40 trailblazing products across a range of categories. The winning supplier from each category will go forward to the live final and will get 10 minutes to pitch their product to a panel of industry experts. The brand chosen by the judges will win a package worth £5,000 from consumer testing agency Stickybeak.



NEW-LOOK BRANDING

The UK Food & Drink Shows branding has been designed to reflect the evolution of the shows and the energy and ambition of the industry. The new look retains the event's existing colour palette but features a contemporary typeface and new background textures.

FOOD & DRINK EXPO
FARM SHOP & DELI SHOW
NATIONAL CONVENIENCE SHOW
FORECOURT SHOW
THE UK FOOD & DRINK SHOWS
13-15 APRIL 2026 NEC BIRMINGHAM
Where the industry comes together
Encompassing food development, manufacturing, grocery, hospitality, specialist retail, forecourt and convenience retail, wholesale and foodservice. Join us for the latest launches, actionable insight and networking opportunities.
Find out more and register free at →
ukfoodanddrinkshows.co.uk
This is a trade event. No under 18s will be admitted.
WilliamReed.

SPONSORED BY

Tracklements



FUNCTIONAL REFRESHMENT

The next generation of drinks has arrived, and they're doing a whole lot more than simply quenching customers' thirst

31%

of British shoppers are looking to increase their energy levels; the same number want to improve or maintain their fitness levels

Levercliff Consumer Tracking Survey, Edition 17 June 2025

Health boosts can come from unexpected places. Recent research has proved that 10g of wholegrain mustard – or a heaped teaspoon – eaten every day, can help to achieve a healthy blood glucose and/or cholesterol level: 86% of participants in the study saw a significant drop in their blood glucose and/or cholesterol over a 12-week period

Tracklements



The global functional ingredients market size is forecasted to reach

$189.27 Billion by 2035 from $119.57 Billion in 2026

Business Research Insights

Many shoppers are prioritising "sleep and mind" with regard to their health goals – this means they want to improve sleep, reduce stress/anxiety and improve their cognitive function.

50% of 18-34yo
47% of 35-54yo
40% aged 55+

Levercliff Consumer Tracking Survey, Edition 17 June 2025

SO FUNCTIONAL DRINKS ARE NOW A THING?

They certainly are. But if the thought of hulking slogan-emblazoned bottles gives you the ick, don't worry – functional drinks have moved far past the simplistic, often protein-heavy, functional drinks of yore. The universal challenges posed by modern living, and the thirst for personalised nutrition to cater for individuals' unique lifestyles and bodies, are fuelling a desire for drinks that seamlessly blend into shoppers' lives – providing the balance and nutrients that can be hard to come by in these oh-so-busy days.

THERE'S DISTRUST APLENTY WHEN IT COMES TO HEALTH CLAIMS IN 2026. HOW ARE FINE FOOD BRANDS NAVIGATING THIS?

While there is undoubtedly a raft of consumers who are taken in by the – sometimes pretty wild – health claims made by food and drink brands, fine food shoppers tend to be more discerning than most. They are used to turning over packets to check ingredients labels (and know what to look out for) and are wise enough to not be convinced by inflated claims. The latest generation of functional drinks brands are treading a careful path between providing health-boosting, natural ingredients lists with provenance and not preaching to an audience who, while keen to learn more about this relatively new territory, are put off by holier than thou attitudes.

"We've made the clear decision to not market health claims," says Victoria Connor of Inoumi. Instead, the brand is making a point of being a food product rather than a supplement, with its ingredients not only classified as foods but sourced within the UK and EU. "Everything we use is in its purest form, there are no extracts or added sugars, because we want our customers to be easily able to add the Inoumi range into their diets." Victoria recognises that people lead demanding lives, so creating a selection of wellness-upping products that are genuine food as opposed to pills or tinctures was key to their launch in September 2025.

ISN'T ADDING FUNCTIONALITY TO ONE'S DIET A BIT OF A FAFF?

Mushroom-enhanced beer brand High & Dry also recognise the challenge of asking consumers to add another layer to their diets, so are offering a straight swap; if you're going to drink a beer, why not make it beneficial to your health as well as delicious? The brand has partnered with Bristol Fungarium – a producer of 100% organic mushroom extracts – to create a low alcohol beer which over time can boost clarity and energy. "Shoppers these days want more bang for their buck and they're being fed a lot of information about various new ingredients, so we're offering them a simple solution: a delicious, gluten-free non-alcoholic beer which can help them optimise their budgets," says Lou Church, founder.

> "Consumers are embracing functional, alcohol-free drinks with ingredients that have added benefits, eg CBD for relaxation, L-Theanine for focus and mood enhancement, and natural caffeine alternatives for sustained energy without the crasht"
>
> THE FOOD PEOPLE, BEER WINE & SPIRITS 2025

THE LIFE & SOUL OF THE PANTRY · Tracklements

VOTED
BEST SUPPLIER OF PICKLES & CHUTNEYS
14 YEARS ON THE TROT



Order yours: TRADE.TRACKLEMENTS.CO.UK

Certified B Corporation

Scan me for more information

We hand selected the best, just for you

KALTBACH

The Kaltbach Cave Aged family of Cheeses

EXPERT CRAFTSMANSHIP: In our KALTBACH Cave, Cavemasters carefully refine each cheese, ensuring exceptional taste through skill and precision.

NATURAL PERFECTION: Aged in a 22-million-year-old Swiss sandstone cave, our cheeses benefit from a naturally stable climate, enhancing flavor without artificial control.

TRUSTED QUALITY: With 70+ years of expertise, KALTBACH is a globally recognized brand, delivering premium, refined cheeses that customers trust.

For more information on our Kaltbach range of cheese go to **www.emmi-kaltbach.com/international** or email **info.uk@emmi.com**

lunch! NORTH 2026

The renowned show dedicated to cafés and coffee shops returns to Manchester Central on 10th-11th March 2026



This March, the North's food-to-go, café & coffee shop sector will once again take centre stage with the second edition of lunch! NORTH, sponsored by Uber Eats, the trade show dedicated to celebrating innovation, talent and expertise across the industry. Taking place at Manchester Central on 10th-11th March 2026, the show is a key calendar event for professionals in this growing industry.





Co-located with Northern Restaurant & Bar (NRB26), lunch! NORTH offers hospitality professionals a unique opportunity to explore the latest speciality food trends and gain insights from some of the most respected voices in the industry. Together, the two events will create an unrivaled platform for the entire northern hospitality community.

Speciality exhibitors

lunch! NORTH will once again showcase exhibitors specialising in the food-to-go, café & coffee shop sector. Attendees will have the opportunity to explore the latest in artisan beverages and foods, baked goods and innovative snacks, with confirmed exhibitors including:

- **Hip Pop:** crafters of bold, naturally fermented sodas with real fruit and live cultures for a vibrant, gut-friendly refreshment.
- **Blendsmiths Drinkmakers:** offering expertly crafted artisan beverage blends for a premium café or coffee shop experience
- **Yorkshire Tea:** experts at blending a high quality brew that's loved by millions, every day.
- **Lindt:** creating luxurious, family favourite Swiss chocolates through generations of master chocolatiers
- **Pip Organic:** making delicious organic snacks and juices from simple, responsibly sourced ingredients for little ones and grown-ups alike.

Keynote theatre, panels and live sessions

2026 will once again feature a range of food-to-go leaders, each sharing valuable insight into the future of the sector. Among the first confirmed speakers is Nick Ayerst, managing director of GAIL's who will take part in a keynote interview on the second day of the show. His session will explore the brand's continued expansion and sustained growth, offering a behind the scenes look at one of the UK's most successful bakery businesses.

Also confirmed is Matt Farrell, co-founder of Bold Street Coffee, who will share insights into the brand's expansion across the North West. With six sites now operating across Liverpool, Manchester and Derbyshire, and more openings planned, Farrell will discuss the challenges and opportunities of scaling a food-to-go brand.

NEED TO KNOW

WHAT: lunch! NORTH
WHERE: Manchester Central
WHEN: 10th-11th March 2026
WEB: lunchnorth.co.uk

The Marketing Leaders Panel will feature Annabel Mackie, director at Itsu, who will discuss how food-to-go brands can cut through in 2026 and beyond. Drawing on experience from a business with more than 70 restaurants across the UK, Mackie will gain valuable insights on competitive markets.

Each session will offer attendees unique insights and practical takeaways from some of the most influential voices in food-to-go today.

Networking and inspiration

lunch! NORTH provides a powerful meeting point for café owners, coffee shop operators and food- to-go professionals seeking to network, source new ideas and stay ahead of emerging trends. From independent businesses to multi site operators, the event delivers valuable opportunities for professionals across the sector.

Running alongside NRB26, lunch! NORTH continues to strengthen its reputation as a must attend event for the food-to-go, café & coffee shop industries in the North. Over two days, buyers can explore innovative products, gain fresh insights and take part in conversations that drive collaboration and business growth.

Taking place on 10-11th March 2026 at Manchester Central, a lunch! NORTH ticket also includes complimentary access to NRB26. Visit lunchnorth.co.uk for all the details.

> "lunch! NORTH provides a powerful meeting point for café owners, coffee shop operators and food- to-go professionals seeking to network, source new ideas and stay ahead of emerging trends"



PRIDE OF **WALES**

It's not for nothing that St David's Day is a key date in the diary of any food lover; the array of culinary treasures on offer is reason enough to relish this special day



Diary Date

St David's Day celebrations fall on 1st March, when Welsh pride will be out in force within Wales and far beyond its borders.

With its internationally famed cornucopia of fabulous food and drink, it's no wonder that food lovers of all persuasions are excited to celebrate St David's Day this year. From the country's growing family of GI food and drink, which garner acclaim across the world, and award-winning products to Wales's powerful and inspirational sustainability initiatives, there is plenty to be proud of when it comes to the Welsh food and drink offering.

The Value of Welshness

Wherever your business is based, we are confident that your customers will have a keen appetite for Welsh food and drink. The spectacular Welsh landscape, with its breathtaking coast, awe-inspiring mountains and rich land has great meaning to fine food consumers, who recognise the built-in quality of produce hailing from the country. From expertly cured fish to uniquely delicious seafood, rich cheeses and world-renowned meats, there is an array of ways for Speciality Food retailers to tap into the growing demand for Welsh food and drink in time to celebrate St David's Day.

On St David's Day, more shoppers than ever – across the world, but particularly in Britain and across the EU – are interested in exploring Wales's culinary treasures. Within Wales itself, the numbers are staggering, demonstrating that wherever a food retailer is based, there is tangible value in stocking Welsh food and drink. Food & Drink Wales data shows that 8 out of 10 consumers would choose Welsh produce in a like for like scenario, while the power of provenance reigns supreme, with 65% of shoppers in Wales willing to pay more for produce demonstrating Welsh heritage.

While an annual display centred around Welsh GI products and other products will undoubtedly reap rewards, a year-round offering is well worth exploration and investment. You will find plenty of inspiration around brands and products to stock in the Celebrating Welsh Food & Drink publication, which is downloadable from the Speciality Food website.

A Sustainable Future

In order to future-proof their operations and work towards a safer shared future, Welsh food and drink businesses are supported to consider their environmental impact and how the changing environment affects their future operations, lower their carbon emissions, improve their waste management systems and maximise the use of renewable energy sources.

To find out more about the sustainable credentials of the Welsh food and drink industry, download the Celebrating Welsh Food & Drink 2026 publication on the *Speciality Food* website.

SPOTLIGHT ON: **WELSH GI PRODUCTS**

If you're seeking food and drink with premium quality, purchase-inspiring stories and heritage innate within GI products, there is plenty to choose from. These are the latest additions to the GI family:

WELSH HEATHER HONEY PGI
100% natural and minimally processed, this honey is the ultimate expression of Wales' Ling Heather blooms and a full-bodied delight for food lovers far and wide.

DOVEY NATIVE BOTANICAL GIN PGI
17 botanicals from the Dyfi/Dovey UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve are celebrated in this gin, which offers a unique taste of this environmentally valuable landscape. Its peat moorlands, woodlands, salt marshes and coastal areas are distilled into every bottle.

PEMBROKESHIRE NATIVE OYSTERS PGI AND PEMBROKESHIRE ROCK OYSTERS PGI
Combining a history spanning back to the 17th Century and the nutrient-rich waters of the Daugleddau Estuary, these oysters bring together ancient farming skills and innovative sustainability efforts for a flavour revered by renowned chefs.

AWARD-WINNING TASTE

Wales boasts a large number of award-winning products, from condiments to meat products and baked goods to drinks. Here are a few bound to be popular with customers of Speciality Food readers.



FLAVOUR MOMENTS GOATS CHEESE PEARLS WITH FIG
Named Most Exciting New Product – 2025 at Taste Wales, these unique and versatile goats cheese pearls have a taste-packed fig centre.
flavourmoments.com



WELSH LADY PRESERVES SÔS COCH/TOMATO KETCHUP
An award-winning condiment packed with tangy tomato flavour and proudly made sulphite-free in Wales.
welshladypreserves.com



BLIGHTY BOOCH ORGANIC GINGER KOMBUCHA
Made in small-batches using traditional fermentation methods, this award-winning kombucha is infused with organic ginger.
blightybooch.com

> On St David's Day, more shoppers than ever – across the world, but particularly in Britain and across the EU – are interested in exploring Wales's culinary treasures. Within Wales itself, the numbers are staggering, demonstrating that wherever a food retailer is based, there is tangible value in stocking Welsh food and drink



Tracklements' announce latest Special Edition product

Wiltshire-based business Tracklements has announced the latest iteration in its popular Special Edition line: Sweet Carrot & Pink Peppercorn Relish.

A modern twist on a traditional Bengal pickle, the relish is made with naturally sweet carrots and Bramley apples, and brought to life with fragrant ginger, garlic, coriander seeds, pink peppercorns and a little chilli.

Sweet and crunchy with a mild warmth from pepper, it is delicious served with Indian dishes – from snacks and dals to curries – as well as with cheese and grilled meats.



Liz Cuff, marketing director at Tracklements, said, "We can't promise it will help see in the dark but this vibrant Special Edition will certainly liven up shelves. It's a superb showcase of when sweet and sour really works. We suggest customers try it with poppadoms or in a "superior" cheese sarnie – freshly baked bread, a good slab of Wensleydale and a hearty helping of this inexplicably tasty pickle; or it's perfect with a mug of tea after a spring-time walk."

tracklements.co.uk

New chapter for Salty Dog

Craft crisp pioneers Salty Dog are back with a fresh new flavour alongside a revamped look.

The new range consists of Prawn Cocktail, Sweet Chilli, Ham & Mustard, Roast Beef, Salt & Vinegar and Sea Salt and the new Jalapeno & Paprika.



Dave Willis, co-founder of Salty Dog, said, "Perhaps it's fair to suggest that we'd got a little set in our ways. Having carved out a diverse vocal following, a far-reaching retail landscape and an unflinching commitment to flavours with extra zip! In 2025, a change in our production set-up provided the kick up the backside we'd needed, with a slew of NEW suitors reminding of our brand's unique cache and retail potential, whilst pointing out that the appetite for heartfelt disruptor brands has never been greater.

"The feedback oiled our ambitions (sunflower oiled) to get back on the front foot and introduce ourselves to a new generation of fine crisp enthusiasts, because in these healthier living times, true snackifists only break ranks for something truly memorable!"

saltydog-grrr.com

Sea salt brand dips toe into drink seasoning

Cornish Sea Salt have released a new product designed to elevate at-home mixology as well as boost the flavour of a wide range of dishes.

Spicy Marg – a combination of the business's signature mineral-rich sea salt flakes, harvested on the Cornish coast, and a strong chilli kick – taps into the growing demand for flavour-led and versatile ingredients that make entertaining deliciously effortless.

The new product can be used to add a punch of flavour as a finishing salt for a range of Mexican-inspired dishes, from nachos, tacos and grilled corn to fries and sharing plates, as well as in the form of a margarita seasoning: by running a lime around the edge of their glass and dipping it into the salt mixture, consumers can create a bold and bar-worthy cocktail in moments.



Anais Hancock, marketing manager at Cornish Sea Salt, said, "Created for the modern tequila lover, The Cornish Sea Salt Spicy Marg blend adds a bold, spicy kick to a zesty classic margarita, delivering a lip-tingling twist."

cornishseasalt.co.uk



Biona creates new ready meals

A new range of organic World Bean Meals has been announced by Biona, in a bid to feed the growing consumer appetite for premium and healthy ready meal options.

Inspired by global flavours, made with certified organic ingredients and crafted around beans and chickpeas, the range consists of Bean Chilli Mexican Style, Chickpea Coconut Curry Indian Style and Chickpea Tagine Moroccan Style.

Each meal in the new range is plant-based and a good source of fibre and protein, and contains no added sugar, preservatives or artificial additives.

The glass jar format is convenient and premium, catering to the increasing desire for plastic-free packaging.

Carmen Ferguson, brand manager at Biona's parent company Windmill Organics, said, "We're hugely excited to enter the ready meal category with this new range of World Bean Meals and believe it's a great time to do so, as many consumers are now looking for healthier and non-processed quick-cook options which are also premium, adventurous and a bit different to the norm, so this new range should really hit the spot."

biona.co.uk



Clean label dressings brand enters market

A new brand is entering the British fine food category, on a mission to redefine the condiments scene with its range of boldly flavoured and clean-label dressings.

TOSS's range consists of Green Goddess, Sweet Tahini, Miso Magic and Viva La Vinaigrette.

Ticking the versatility and flavour-forward boxes, the dressings can be used for dipping, drizzling, dunking and marinating and are vegan-friendly, gluten and refined sugar-free, and made using only real ingredients – giving shoppers a lighter alternative to conventionally mayonnaise-rich dressings.



Sophie Devlan, co-founder of TOSS, said, "We are here to bring big flavour energy back to the dressing aisle. I have always been obsessed with great salad bars, the colours, the creativity and that feeling of building something fresh and exciting in minutes. I wanted to recreate that experience at home without relying on the bland, beige or ultra processed dressings that dominate supermarket shelves.

"With TOSS, my goal was to create something I would be proud to keep on my kitchen counter, playful, fun and full of personality, inspired by the brilliant brands I love that have disrupted other categories. We want to make it easy for people to eat more plants, cook more creatively and bring that same sense of joy and abundance into everyday meals."

toss-world.com



Seedless variants join Fearne & Rosie's range

B Corp-certified Fearne & Rosie, the UK's fastest-growing jam brand, is adding two new seedless products to its range.

Raspberry Seedless Preserve and Strawberry Seedless Preserve are the first reduced sugar seedless jams on the market, and offer the same delicious taste as their seeded jams while being super smooth.

Each of the new jars are packed with 51 raspberries or 31 strawberries, contain 40% less sugar than standard jams, are vegan-friendly and are made using all natural ingredients.

Rachel Kettlewell, founder of Fearne & Rosie, said, "Launching our new seedless jam range feels like a natural next step for the brand. With no added concentrate and no seeds, we've taken two of our flavour favourites and made them seedless, while keeping everything else our customers know and love exactly the same. The seed debate can divide opinion, so we thought it was time to make sure there was something for everyone.

"Seedless is 14% of the category and we're excited to provide a fruit filled, lower sugar option for consumers. As a brand, we are focused on continuing to bring energy and excitement to the category by offering delicious, 'better-for-you' choices, and the 'Seedless' launch presents an exciting range extension opportunity for us."

fearneandrosie.co.uk

Luxury hot chocolates launched by Divine Chocolate

Divine have released a three-strong Luxury Hot Chocolate Collection, all centred around responsibly sourced, Fairtrade cocoa and featuring indulgent flavours.



The three products in the range are: Luxury Hot Chocolate, which delivers a classic, full-flavoured cup of smooth and creamy hot chocolate; Hazelnut Praline, roasted hazelnut blended with cocoa for a rich and nutty taste; and Salted Caramel, a combination of cocoa and buttery sea salted caramel.

Vegan-friendly and B Corp-certified, the range contains only premium, ethically-sourced ingredients.

Lydia Stubbins, group marketing director at Divine Chocolate, said, "We know customers are increasingly seeking responsibly made, indulgent hot drinks that don't compromise on taste. Our refreshed Luxury Hot Chocolate Collection brings this to life, with rich new flavours that take our premium hot chocolate offering to the next level.

"Our 'made to matter' approach ensures quality and ethical sourcing at every stage – from Ghanaian cocoa farms to the finished cup. This gives retailers a product that delivers exceptional taste while telling a strong ethical story, meeting growing consumer demand for responsibly made, premium hot drinks."

divinechocolate.com

PARTNER CONTENT


LULU'S LONDON

TAKING CARE OF THE SQUARE STUFF

So that fine food retailers can concentrate on what their business is all about

We all want one less thing to worry about – managing stock, payments, cash flow. That's 'The Square Stuff'. As an all-in-one system for payments, POS, reporting, and access to funding, Square handles all the things that get in the way, leaving you free to do what you do best: building relationships, curating products, and hunting down the next big thing – whether that's the ingredients for a perfect grazing platter, the finest locally-sourced meat, or a range of trending tinned fish.


LULU'S LONDON

STREAMLINE, SIMPLY

Square is designed to evolve as your business does, helping to streamline operations and enhance customer experience your way. From farm shops to food halls, grocers to delis (like Lulu's deli here!) it's intuitively built to work for retailers, no tech expertise required.

The all-in-one system simplifies the day-to-day by managing inventory, connecting online and offline channels, and taking payments. And, when you're ready to grow, it will grow with you, helping you manage new locations, more employees and bigger ambitions.

Take Square's Loan System – this flexible financing solution for businesses processing payments with Square ensures sellers are supported through the highs and the lows, allowing loans to be used for more inventory, new equipment, cash flow, or anything else to keep the business moving.


LULU'S LONDON

Square makes instant insights at your fingertips possible, making it easier than ever to make informed decisions and plan for the future with confidence. Like "how many deli-made sandwiches have sold in a day?" or "which customers can't get enough of the new pasta in stock", Square puts all your business data in one place.

It's all about tools that serve you, not the other way round. With a user-friendly dashboard, Square unlocks a new level of ease for your whole team.

ATTRACTIVE AND CONVENIENT

First impressions count in fine food retail – from your enticingly decorated shop window to the countertop stacked with must-have additions to the basket. A well-designed space is essential and Square's beautiful hardware is made for the countertop, housed in a sleek design that not only looks, but feels good too.

To add to the toolbox, Square launched a free, conversational AI feature last month. This new user-friendly solution allows businesses to make clearer, faster decisions rooted in their own data. Working inside the tools sellers already rely on, Square AI aims to speed up processes even further and put time back into retailers' hands.

Square takes care of the 'Square Stuff' so that you can get back to the thing you built your shop for in the first place. It's no wonder 4.5 million businesses worldwide use Square as part of their day-to-day.

square.com

"Square takes care of the 'Square Stuff' so that you can get back to the thing you built your shop for in the first place"

IFE 2026

Feeding the Future at IFE and IFE Manufacturing 2026

In a food and drink sector shaped by rapid change, competing pressures and rising expectations, the need for clarity has never been greater. From reformulation and responsible sourcing to shifting consumer behaviours, global supply chain volatility and the accelerating role of technology, businesses across retail, wholesale, manufacturing and foodservice are being asked to do more, faster, and with fewer margins for error.

IFE and IFE Manufacturing return in 2026 with a shared theme that reflects both the urgency and the opportunity facing the industry: Feeding the Future. More than a strapline, the theme provides a lens through which to explore how food and drink will be developed, manufactured, marketed and sold in the years ahead - and how the sector can respond collectively to the challenges it faces.

As the homes of new product discovery, IFE and IFE Manufacturing bring together the brands, ingredients, technologies and ideas shaping what ends up on supermarket shelves, hospitality menus and wholesale lists.

Taking place as part of Food, Drink & Hospitality Week at Excel London on 30th March to 1st April, the shows offer a rare opportunity to examine the entire value chain in one place – from early-stage innovation and ingredient development through to finished products, certification, compliance and export opportunities.

Feeding the Future: A theme shaped by pressure and possibility

For 2026, the theme of 'Feeding the Future' reflects the growing responsibility placed on the food and drink industry to deliver products that are not only exciting and commercially viable, but genuinely better for people and planet.

The sector has a serious role to play in the health of the nation and a host of new challenges to tackle, including the rise of GLP-1 use, popular emerging ingredients such as fibre, and ongoing consumer wariness of ultra processed foods.

Changing consumer expectations around health, sustainability and transparency are converging with regulatory pressure, cost inflation and the need for resilient supply chains, forcing businesses to rethink how they innovate and operate.



The theme explores how emerging ingredients, new formats and evolving flavours are responding to these shifts, while also acknowledging the tension many businesses face between ambition and affordability. From national health strategies and reformulation targets to ethical sourcing, environmental impact and digital transformation, Feeding the Future recognises that progress will require collaboration across the supply chain.

Andy Richardson MBE, Chairman of Frive, Partner at EFFP, Government Advisor and IFE Ambassador, sees the theme as a reflection of a sector in transition. He says, "'Feeding the Future' shines a light on the profound shifts and priorities reshaping our food and drink system. From changing consumer expectations for healthy diets, to more resilient, sustainable supply chains, to the need to understand and adopt digital technologies and AI, the industry is entering a period where collaboration and bold thinking are essential.

"IFE provides an important platform for us to come together, share insight and champion the ideas that will drive growth across the sector. I'm hugely looking forward to discussing the future of food at next year's event."

This focus on shared challenge and collective response underpins both IFE and IFE Manufacturing, positioning the shows not simply as marketplaces, but as forums for practical problem-solving and informed debate.

Uncovering the future of food and drink on the Future Food Stage

At the heart of IFE's content programme sits the Future Food Stage, sponsored by Brambles Digital, which brings Feeding the Future to life through a packed schedule of insight-led sessions. Designed for food and drink professionals across retail, wholesale and hospitality, the stage focuses on the trends, behaviours and strategic decisions shaping category growth.

With speakers sharing a wide range of case studies and practical takeaways, the programme is firmly grounded in commercial reality. Sessions will explore how trends are already influencing product development, range decisions and shopper behaviour – and what businesses should be doing now to stay competitive.

Charles Banks, managing director of thefoodpeople, returns to IFE for the sixth time to unpack the key food and beverage trends shaping 2026 and 2027. He comments, "Staying ahead of consumer and cultural change is no longer optional – it's essential. In this session, I'll be unveiling the key food and drink trends shaping 2026 and 2027, and crucially, how they're already influencing the products you'll see at IFE.

"Whether you're in retail, manufacturing, or hospitality, you'll leave with the clarity and inspiration you need to future-proof your offering and lead with confidence in an ever-evolving market."



Sustainability, sourcing and regulation

Sustainability remains a central pillar of Feeding the Future, but the 2026 programme takes a more nuanced view of how responsible sourcing can deliver value in an inflationary environment. Karen Green's panel will examine whether sustainability still has a role to play amid cost-cutting, and how it can support human health, planetary health and company wellbeing simultaneously.

Adding further depth to this conversation, Maggie Fitzherbert, senior responsible sourcing manager at Soil Association, will address the practical realities of navigating increasingly complex regulation.

"I'm on a mission to demystify responsible sourcing of forest risk commodities," she says. "It's such a complex space and lots of companies are held back by uncertainty and concerns about cost, but traceability and robust due diligence has loads of benefits too.

"EUDR is driving significant change already, and I want companies to take advantage of the opportunities it brings, not simply be weighed down by the regulatory burden."

Together, these sessions reflect a broader shift in the sustainability conversation – away from aspiration alone and towards measurable impact, compliance and commercial resilience.

Representation, inclusion and growth in food and drink

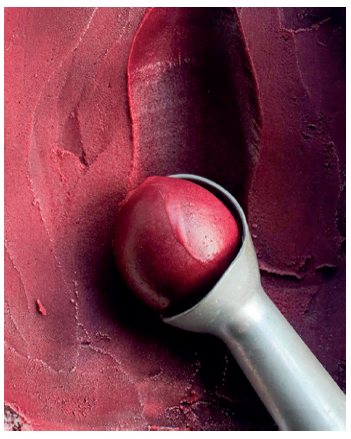
Feeding the Future also places people firmly at the centre of the industry's evolution. On the Future Food Stage, a panel hosted by Raising the Glass will explore how representation within product ranges can drive sales, loyalty and long-term relevance.

Rebecca Oliver-Mooney, Founder of Raising the Glass, explains, "IFE brings together the people who are actively shaping what ends up on shelves, menus and in consumers' hands, and that makes it a powerful place to have meaningful conversations about representation, inclusion and commercial impact.

"This session explores why representation within product ranges isn't just a social priority. It's a commercial one."

Plus, the show's New Products Discovery Theatre, sponsored by TT ICE TEA, will see demos and showcases from brands including Qualiko, Vatsak, FICT (French Charcuterie & Deli Companies and those exhibiting in the Startup Market.





Health, wellbeing and mood-boosting innovation

Health remains a major driver of innovation, but at IFE the conversation moves beyond reformulation alone to explore the emotional, experiential and functional role food and drink can play in people's lives. As consumers increasingly look to products that support both physical and mental wellbeing, brands are being challenged to think more holistically about how health is delivered – not just through ingredients, but through flavour, format, storytelling and occasion.

In a session on mood-boosting nutrition, Mex Ibrahim will examine how these elements can work together to deliver emotional as well as physical benefit. The discussion looks beyond single nutrients or health claims, instead exploring how food experiences can be designed to support wellbeing in more nuanced ways, from comforting flavours and familiar formats to products that feel reassuring, inclusive and relevant to everyday life.

This broader view of health is reflected across the show floor, particularly within IFE's Health, Organic & Natural exhibitors. Brands such as A.Vogel UK & Ireland Ltd, with its long-standing focus on natural health, nutrition and holistic wellbeing, highlight the continued demand for products rooted in trusted ingredients and transparent philosophies.

Functional and better-for-you innovation is also evident in newer formats, from Yogoody's probiotic yoghurt-style drink combining fruit, fibre and live cultures, to superfood-led offerings such as Acai Berry, which tap into sustained interest in gut health, immunity and nutrient-dense foods.

Artisan Food: Provenance, craft and differentiation

A cornerstone of IFE for speciality and independent buyers, the Artisan Food section brings together producers defined by provenance, craft and a clear point of difference. For 2026, the line-up spans both UK makers and international specialists, offering buyers a curated route to premium products with strong stories behind them.

British producers including Blackmore Vale Dairy, Folkington's, Smokin' Brothers, Seagull Spirits, Filey Bay Whisky and Wold Top Brewery showcase the strength of homegrown craft across dairy, drinks and flavour-led condiments. Alongside them, international brands such as VERONI, Igino Mazzola Spa and EUChorizo! reflect continued demand for authentic, high-quality food rooted in heritage and technique.

Together, the section highlights how provenance and premiumisation continue to support differentiation in increasingly crowded categories.

Startup Market: Spotting the next generation of brands

The Startup Market at IFE brings together early-stage food and drink brands, offering buyers the opportunity to discover new products and engage directly with the passionate entrepreneurs behind them. The 2026 lineup spans functional food, beverages, ingredients, pantry staples and nutrition-led formats, reflecting the diversity of propositions entering the market at an early commercial stage.

Functional and health-focused food plays a strong role within the Startup Market. DelicDay will showcase functional sweet snacks positioned as meal alternatives, formulated to be low-carb, sugar-free and grain-free, and sweetened using prebiotic fibre. INTACT, based in France, presents plant-based ingredients derived from pulses, including native and textured proteins and neutral alcohol obtained from by-products, designed to meet industrial requirements such as protein and fibre enrichment, allergen-free formulation and clean-label processing.

International cuisine and ingredient-led products are also represented. Dragon Mama's Kitchen is a family-run business producing Taiwanese food products, with a focus on authenticity, quality and ease of preparation, spanning noodles, sauces and related formats. Emilia's Crafted Pasta offers traditionally made dried pasta produced using high-quality Italian wheat and bronze-die extrusion, packaged in paper and rooted in Italian pasta-making heritage. Mr. Sprinkle brings a range of mixed herbs, seasonings and condiments designed to support everyday cooking, including classic blends and no-onion, no-garlic options.

The beverage category within the Startup Market spans hydration, wellness and functional nutrition. Golden Bar Aqua presents premium bottled water, produced through a purification process focused on clarity, balance and consistency, with sustainability considerations built into sourcing and packaging. NowCoco, from Ireland, produces sparkling coconut water made from real coconut water, lightly carbonated and free from added sugar, sweeteners and concentrates.

SheReal will showcase cold-pressed mocktails made using whole fruits, vegetables, juices and botanicals, formulated to combine flavour with functional positioning around stress, energy and mood. Vitz, a UK-based nutrition brand, showcases vitamin-infused lozenges designed as an alternative to traditional supplements, offering sugar-free, vegan and halal options formulated to support immunity, energy and bone health.

Snacking and indulgence-led formats are represented by Morish



TAJ FOODS

STAND N3932

Taj Foods is the UK & Europe's leading, award-winning frozen World Foods brand, listed across major supermarkets, wholesale depots and thousands of independent stores. Established in 1980, Taj delivers industry-leading rate of sale across street food, breads, snacks and ingredients. At IFE 2026, Taj unveils market-exclusive launches and category-first solutions designed to unlock new usage occasions, drive incremental sales and build high-performing freezers. Buyers are invited to experience brand-led innovation and proven demand – live on the Taj stand.

tajfoods.com



LOVERAW

STAND N3616

LoveRaw's Milk Chocolate Wafer Bar is a plant-based take on a classic favourite, featuring crispy wafer layers wrapped in the brand's iconic vegan milk chocolate. Made without palm oil, it delivers indulgent taste with simple ingredients, offering a nostalgic treat for conscious consumers seeking better-for-you confectionery.

eatloveraw.com



FUTURE FOODS

STAND N1035

Masterfully blended with 21% authentic Italian Parmesan and mature Cheddar, Future Foods's oven-baked cheese thins deliver a rich, multi-layered savoury profile. High in protein, free from gluten, additives, and preservatives, they offer a refined crunch with a clean label. Available in classic Original and indulgent Black Truffle, they are ideal for premium retail and wine pairing.

future-foods.co.uk



Snacks, a British savoury snack brand producing low-carb, high-protein and high-fibre products including seaweed snacks, chicharrónes and air-dried meat, and Kay-kuna, which brings coffee, cacao and chocolate products rooted in Peruvian origin stories, alongside related superfoods and energy-focused formats.

Together, the Startup Market exhibitors highlight the range of product ideas, formats and nutritional approaches being developed by the next generation of food and drink businesses. For buyers, it offers a focused environment to explore new products, assess early-stage propositions and identify brands that may be suited to future ranging, ingredient sourcing or foodservice applications.

A truly international sourcing platform

IFE's international line-up underlines the show's role as a global sourcing platform, with producers, brand owners and trade bodies represented from across Europe, Asia, the Americas, the Middle East and Africa. Visitors can explore country and regional showcases alongside independent international brands, creating opportunities to compare markets, spot emerging trends and open new supplier conversations all within a single hall.

European participation spans both established and emerging food nations, with exhibitors from France, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Poland, Greece, Portugal, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine and Moldova.

National and regional groups including Business France, ICE – Italian Trade Agency, Belgium – Wallonia, PortugalFoods, Enterprise Georgia and the National Support Centre for Agriculture / Poland Tastes Good sit alongside a wide mix of individual companies, reflecting the breadth of Europe's speciality, premium and export-ready offer.



Asia is also strongly represented, with a significant presence from India, Thailand, Taiwan, China, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Vietnam. Exhibitors include a combination of private companies and official bodies such as India's Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), Beijing Center for the Promotion of International Trade, Hualien County Government and Tainan City Government Agriculture Bureau, highlighting IFE's importance as a gateway for Asian producers seeking UK and European retail, wholesale and foodservice routes to market.

The international mix is further broadened by exhibitors from the United States, Mexico, Morocco, Egypt, Israel, and Jordan, alongside dedicated pavilions and multi-stand national representations. Together, this global presence reinforces IFE's appeal for speciality buyers looking to diversify ranges, deepen international sourcing strategies and discover products and partners from beyond the UK market.

IFE Manufacturing: Where products are made, refined and scaled

Taking place alongside IFE, IFE Manufacturing is the go-to event for food and drink product development, bringing together the technologies, ingredients and expertise that underpin successful innovation.

Exhibitors span packaging, processing, manufacturing services, ingredients and technology, supporting brand owners and manufacturers looking to optimise existing ranges or launch new products. The show's Trends & Innovation Platform provides insight into formulation, AI in NPD, women in food leadership and lessons learned from product failures.

Industry insight comes from organisations including Mintel, FMCG Gurus and Forward Fooding, alongside a dedicated day of content delivered by the Institute of Food Science & Technology (IFST) and Campden BRI.

As standards and regulation continue to evolve, IFE Manufacturing's Certification Clinic provides a dedicated space for manufacturers to engage with accreditation and kitemark organisations essential to market access.

Bodies including BRCGS, FSSC, SALSA, the Halal Certification Organisation (HCO), KLBD – Kosher Certification and the Soil Association Organisation will offer guidance on food safety, religious certification, organic standards and sustainability frameworks. The Certification Clinic supports businesses at every stage, from start-ups preparing for their first audit to established manufacturers navigating complex global requirements.

On day one of the event, the Trends & Innovation Platform will host the IFE Manufacturing Ingredients Awards, in association with IFST, alongside FoodBev Media's World Food Innovation Awards in association with IFE. Together, they celebrate the ingredients, technologies and ideas shaping the future of food and drink.

Plus, the show's Business Growth Stage will host a wide range of conversations covering export, international trade, regional marketing, navigating geopolitics, consumer buying behaviours, and what helps global brands succeed in the UK market.

Celebrate with industry peers at Food, Drink & Hospitality Week

Alongside IFE and IFE Manufacturing, Food, Drink & Hospitality Week brings together a wider ecosystem showing how speciality products translate across retail and hospitality. HRC offers insight into the future of hotels, restaurants and catering, while The Pub Show highlights the growing emphasis on quality, local sourcing and distinctive ranges in pubs and bars. Hospitality Tech360 explores how digital tools are streamlining hospitality processes, and International Salon Culinaire showcases culinary skill at the highest level. Together, the co-located events will give speciality buyers and producers a rounded view of how trends move from product innovation to real-world application.

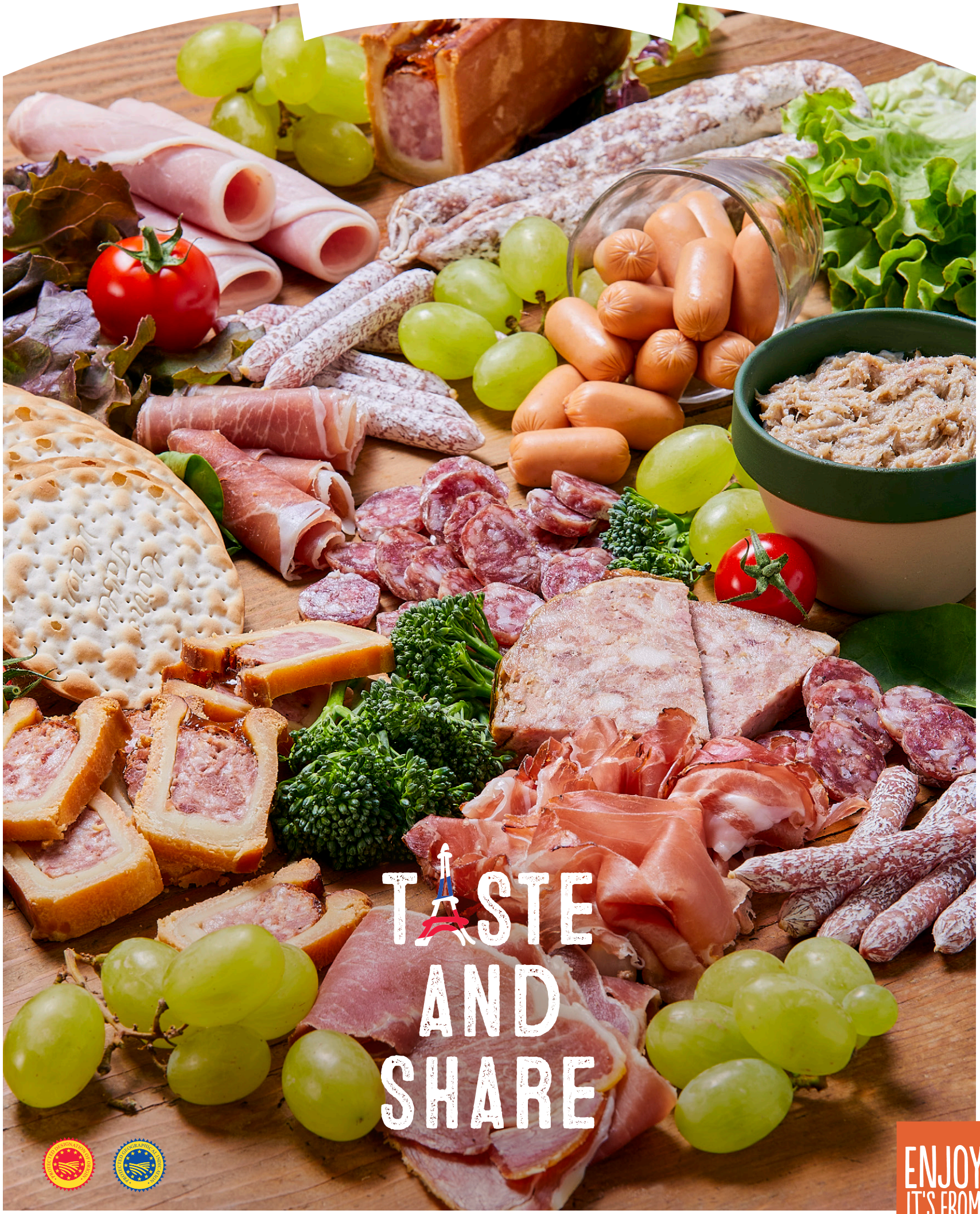
To find out more about everything happening at IFE 2026, and to register for your free trade ticket, visit ife.co.uk.

NEED TO KNOW

WHAT: IFE 2026
WHERE: Excel London
WHEN: 30th March-1st April
WEB: ife.co.uk



Charcuterie from Europe



Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or FranceAgriMer. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

Photo Jean Fondacci - Réalisation Audrey Paradisi

FICT
LES ENTREPRISES FRANÇAISES DE CHARCUTERIE TRAITEUR

CAMPAIGN FINANCED WITH AID FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION

THE EUROPEAN UNION SUPPORTS CAMPAIGNS THAT PROMOTE HIGH QUALITY AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

ENJOY IT'S FROM EUROPE

2026 SPECIALITY FOOD MAGAZINE

STOCK CHECK



LUSCOMBE APPLE & GINGER

This timeless favourite combines crisp organic English apples with Peruvian ginger, creating a perfectly balanced drink.

luscombe.co.uk



FLAWSOME! SWEET & SOUR APPLE JUICE

A naturally cloudy juice crafted from cold-pressed wonky apples. A blend of sweet and sour seasonal varieties.

flawsomedrinks.com



AQUA DE MADRE WATER KEFIR LEMON & GINGER

Fermented lightly sparkling water kefir made from a natural probiotic culture discovered 2000 years ago on the Mexican Opuntia cactus.

aguademadre.co.uk



BELVOIR SPARKLING ELDERFLOWER CAN

Made to a traditional family recipe, blending hand-picked elderflowers with lemon juice and pure spring water for a delicately refreshing taste.

belvoirfarm.co.uk



AVALLEN CALVADOS

A floral, fruity and completely natural Calvados made from 40 varieties of apple.

avallenspirits.com



PENRHOS LONDON DRY GIN

Made using perfectly imperfect blueberries, with subtle flavours of pink pepper, hibiscus and rose petals to create a smooth, fresh and pure gin.

penrhosspirits.co.uk

SPECIALITY FOOD MAGAZINE

DRINKS BUYER 2026
COMING NEXT ISSUE



GET YOUR MUST STOCK DRINKS FEATURED!

For more information contact:
louise.barnes@artichokehq.com 01206 508629



SUSTAINABLE SIPS

In 2026, drinks offer so much more than refreshment. They provide a way to do good, too

As fine food shoppers become increasingly discerning, the variety of factors they use to measure the quality of their food and drink grows more and more varied. Taste has been proven to be the number on selling tool, branding plays a huge role, and provenance holds tangible value in today's fine food and drink landscape. But a new swathe of sustainably-minded drinks brands are holding the baton ever higher – with environmentally-friendly production innovations, considered sourcing and charitable endeavours holding more sway than ever before.

"For us, quality and social responsibility go hand in hand," begins Julian Warowioff, MD of ChariTea. "The drinks have to earn their place on the shelf on taste first, but we also believe that farmers and producer communities should share in the success." For every bottle of Lemonaid and ChariTea – organic and made using fresh Fairtrade ingredients – sold, 5p goes directly to the Lemonaid and ChariTea Foundation, which thus far has raised over £11 million to support social projects in the countries where the ingredients they use are grown.

Vague, inflated claims are no longer making waves in the drinks sphere, says Julian. "Demand is growing, but people are tired of dubious social impact statements. Mission-led brands will only survive if they are willing to be transparent and commercially serious." Taste is a non-negotiable. "Doing good does not excuse uninspiring branding or underwhelming taste anymore. Products need to delivery both on quality and impact. The brands that will win are the ones that can compete with mainstream players on taste, while genuinely challenging the rules of how value is shared."

In 2026, sustainability is a complex, multifaceted concept. "It is often reduced to reducing or offsetting one's carbon footprint and avoiding plastic. Those things matter, but they are only part of the picture," Julian continues. "A drink is only truly sustainable if the people growing the ingredients can build stable and dignified lives on their income, not just survive harvest to harvest.

"Social sustainability is messy, long-term, and much harder to communicate than a recyclable label, which is probably why it is often ignored. For us, funding education, healthcare, and community projects through the Foundation is not a side project. It is as fundamental as the recipe."

The evolution of on-trade

A leading destination within London's premium drinks and hospitality scene, Savage Garden is a prominent voice in the move towards sustainable drinking. "In 2026, sustainability is a central driver of innovation across the UK drinks sector, influencing how venues design menus, source ingredients and communicate with guests. Operators are increasingly focusing on waste reduction, circular use of produce and transparent environmental messaging," explains Alessandro Lintas, head mixologist. "At Savage Garden, this shift is reflected in their strive for zero waste cocktail and food menus, which repurpose commonly discarded ingredients such as citrus, mint, banana and peach into signature drinks and dishes. This approach aligns with wider industry priorities around reducing landfill waste, lowering environmental impact and embedding responsible practices into the guest experience."

Consumers aren't willing to sacrifice their values around sustainability in the name of a good night out; they're seeking out the green credentials held by a venue just as much as those of the brands that fill their fridges and shelves. "Key expectations include reduced waste in production, visible sustainability practices and clear communication around how ingredients are sourced and repurposed," says Alessandro. "Guests increasingly respond to storytelling, such as how surplus produce or trimmings are transformed into signature flavours. At Savage Garden, this transparency is built into both menu design and in-venue signage, helping guests understand the environmental impact of their choices while still enjoying a premium, experiential drinks offering."

At Savage Garden, sustainability extends beyond menus through initiatives such as an on-site herb garden, a living wall that improves air quality, and partnerships with The Drinks Trust, which supports the UK hospitality workforce. "These efforts show how environmental responsibility can enhance guest experience while also contributing to wider industry wellbeing," says Alessandro. "As sustainability becomes an expectation rather than a differentiator, venues that embed it authentically into operations, storytelling and community engagement are likely to shape the future of premium hospitality."

By adopting a holistic approach to sustainability, and embedding it into their operations – including how they choose to stock their drinks shelves – *Speciality Food* readers can have a tangible impact.



"Sustainability is far from niche with consumers actively seeking out brands like Sacred with sustainable credentials such as B Corp or Soil Association certification, proving that quality and responsible production can go hand in hand"

HILARY WHITNEY, SACRED SPIRITS

COMMENTATORS



ALEX SMITH
FUTUREPLUS



REBECCA REILLY
FUTURE PAK



JIM MELLON
AGRONOMICS



MARK TURNBULL
IMPACT RETAIL TRAINING



ASH SINFIELD
TEALS'S



ANDREW GOODACRE
BIRA



TODD REDWOOD
BSI

A GREEN FUTURE

From tech to education, evolution to authenticity, there are plenty of ways *Speciality Food* readers can put sustainability at the core of their operations

Sustainability is a universal issue, one that comes with challenges as well as opportunities, but the good news for delis, farm shops and other businesses within the fine food sector is that they have the opportunity to be at the forefront of change. With their proximity to the land and connections with end consumers, retailers and brands are in a valuable position – able to make in-house changes that can have real time impact on the health of our communities and the planet, and pass messaging from those in-the-know to the public.

It can seem to be an issue with no end in sight, but by fighting for a better future for our surrounding environment, making considered moves towards working within sustainable supply chains and being proactive about making our own operations green, together we can create real change for the better.

Letting tech do the talking

Technology platforms, such as those from FuturePlus, are helping businesses become more responsible, resilient and sustainable by making data consistent and useful. Data that allows companies to see where they are today, and where they want to get to, identifying practical opportunities to improve.

This kind of insight is invaluable, says CEO Alex Smith. "The food and drink sector sits at the crossroads of several urgent global issues," she begins. "At the same time, consumers, retailers, regulation and investors are demanding proof of action, not just promises."



"WE ARE IN A CRITICAL DECADE"



Todd Redwood, managing director, global food and retail at BSI

The food industry has cornered itself in some respects, and as such a critical industry change has to be made. The agricultural practices that we've been implementing over the past century have caused huge issues to the health of the soil and as a result the nutrients within our food, and that's why I worked with futurologists to produce *Food Future 2035: The Critical Decade* – if the food industry has the same approach in 10 years' time as it does today, we're going to be facing disaster.

For example, food waste is an enormous issue. We throw out about a third of the food that we produce, which leads to 8-10% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Ideally businesses would design waste out of their operations rather than learn how to deal with it; it's a strange situation that we've accepted.

The majority of food waste happens in the home, but businesses still have a role to play – through education around labelling such as best before dates, demonstrating that dishes can be made with leftover produce, and avoiding waste in their own operations. We can take inspiration from France, where it's now illegal for retailers to throw food away.

Sovereignty is also an incredibly important part of a sustainable future. I'm not saying businesses shouldn't trade with other countries, but we need to become better at feeding ourselves. It's not within the supermarkets' interests to work within smaller supply chains, but by sourcing locally produced, naturally more nutrient-rich produce, *Speciality Food* readers can make a tangible impact.

At the end of the white paper, we pose three core questions: where will we source food to raise production for a resource-challenged world, how can we stretch the resources we already have to accommodate the growing population, and how do we nourish future generations in a world that's overfed but undernourished?

> "If the food industry has the same approach in 10 years' time as it does today, we're going to be facing disaster"

COTSWOLD FAYRE

Cotswold Fayre is proud to lead the speciality and fine food sector as the sustainable wholesaler focused on making a difference.

We are focused on initiatives such as mentoring our suppliers through the B Corp process, reducing food waste, and becoming carbon neutral with the help of dual temp deliveries, we're helping to drive positive change across our industry.

Scan the QR code to find out more about our ethos and sustainable initiatives on our website!

www.cotswold-fayre.co.uk | sales@cotswold-fayre.co.uk | 03452 606060



RETAILER INSIGHT



Ash Sinfield, co-founder of Somerset-based, B Corp-certified Teals – a food market, restaurant, food-to-go, deli and lifestyle store with sustainability at its heart – explains how the business has integrated sustainability into its operations

We avoid mass food production that travels further and removes taste and instead prioritise local suppliers to reduce food miles and champion seasonal and ethically produced ingredients and products. We do not use any gas on-site. When we built the store we integrated a large amount of solar into the design of the building, making the most of the roof area. Around 80% of the base load of electricity used on site is produced by our own solar panels and the remainder used comes from a renewable supplier.

We have introduced "Positive Impact Cooking" (low waste approach to restaurant and food to go) – by this we mean that as much of the food produced in our kitchen and sold to our customers is done using techniques that produce as little waste as possible. We minimise waste through thoughtful planning, recycling, and composting – splitting out all rubbish produced on site into eight different waste streams (cardboard, glass, food, tin, butchery waste, wood, general and oil) and then they are all collected by different suppliers and where possible recycled. Any oil waste from the kitchen is collected, cleaned then heated, then turned into biodiesel. We work on a circular economy between retail and hospitality. This means that any food sold in the food market that becomes unsaleable in this area (but still fit for cooking) is used in the kitchen rather than disposed of.

Quality, provenance and welfare are at the core of our butchery philosophy. Teals likes to work directly with local farmers who are raising rare and native breeds in an ethical and sustainable way, putting guests and customers back in touch with where real meat comes from. Using a whole carcass approach means the less popular cuts of meat will be used in the kitchen if they aren't sold over the counter.

Our approach is truly holistic. Sustainability at Teals is about people, planet, and purpose. It's not just about eco-friendly packaging or sourcing; it's about creating a business that supports our community, empowers local producers and makers, and reduces our environmental impact at every stage. It shapes how we design our spaces, manage energy use, run our kitchen, and select the products on our shelves. We aim to embed sustainability into the everyday experience of our customers and our team.

We act as a hub for the local community in many ways: We run wellness classes (bootcamp outside, all year round and pilates, four mornings a week) for locals to join. We support a local charity "Help for Homeless" with donations and by renting them a production kitchen. We provide a flexible space in store for locals and travellers to work and spend time free of charge, called The Arc. We have a fenced dog walking field called the "dog jog" that all visitors can come and use whenever they visit. We employ around 60 people from our local community.

Sustainability is no longer an 'optional extra', it is an essential mindset. Consumers are increasingly conscious of the impact their choices have on the environment and on society, and communities benefit when businesses act responsibly. For Teals, embracing sustainability means supporting local economies, reducing our environmental footprint, and demonstrating that commerce can be a force for good.

> "Embracing sustainability means supporting local economies, reducing our environmental footprint, and demonstrating that commerce can be a force for good"

"SUSTAINABILITY IS CENTRAL TO INDEPENDENTS' COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AND FUTURE"



Andrew Goodacre, CEO of Bira

Independent retailers have always been at the forefront of sustainable retail practices, often years ahead of their larger competitors. As we move through 2026 and beyond, this natural advantage is becoming increasingly critical to their survival and success on the high street. The shift towards sustainability isn't just an ethical consideration anymore – it's a commercial imperative. Consumers, particularly younger shoppers, are making purchasing decisions based on environmental credentials. They want to know where products come from, how they're made, and what happens to them at end of life. Independent retailers are uniquely positioned to answer these questions because they have direct relationships with their suppliers and can curate their product ranges accordingly.

What sets independent retailers apart is their inherent local focus. They're embedded in their communities, sourcing locally where possible, reducing transport miles, and supporting other local businesses. Many independents have been operating circular economy principles for decades without labelling it as such – repairing products, taking back packaging, and building long-term relationships with customers rather than pursuing endless consumption.

The challenge for independent retailers is communicating these credentials effectively. While major chains invest millions in sustainability marketing campaigns, independents often lack the resources to shout about what they're already doing well. Yet their actions speak louder than corporate greenwashing ever could. When an independent retailer sources from a local producer, repairs rather than replaces, or minimises packaging, customers can see it happening in front of them.

Looking ahead, sustainability will become even more important as legislation tightens around environmental standards and circular economy requirements. Independent retailers who have already built sustainable practices into their business models will find themselves better prepared for these changes than larger competitors who must retrofit sustainability into complex supply chains.

The retail landscape is changing rapidly, but independent retailers have something that no amount of corporate investment can replicate: authenticity. Their sustainability credentials aren't marketing strategies; they're fundamental to how they operate. As consumers become increasingly sophisticated in spotting genuine environmental commitment versus tokenistic gestures, this authenticity will prove invaluable.

For independent retailers, the message is clear: sustainability isn't an add-on or a trend to follow. It's central to their competitive advantage and their future on the high street. Those who embrace and communicate their sustainable practices effectively will not only meet customer expectations but exceed them, securing their place in the retail landscape for years to come.

> "Looking ahead, sustainability will become even more important"

Sustainability action, as a result, has had to shift from a peripheral concern to a central business function, with those, Alex adds, failing to be proactive, facing tangible consequences, from lost contracts to eroding stakeholder confidence.

What makes data and insight so powerful within the food and drink sector, is the opportunity to apply it in a responsible, well-targeted way across the entire value chain, from farming and sourcing, through to manufacturing, logistics and retail. "With the right data and digital tools, businesses can reduce waste, cut emissions, improve traceability, protect biodiversity and support more resilient farming communities, all while improving margins and operational efficiency," Alex adds.

A recent example from FuturePlus is its role in an innovative AI-powered food redistribution initiative between Nestle UK&I, Google Cloud, FareShare and logistics partners, piloting a system to optimise the redistribution of surplus food, potentially saving up to 700 tonnes (the equivalent of 1.5 million meals) and preventing up to 1,400 tonnes of CO2 emissions.

Future-proofing packaging

How food is packed for storage, transportation and sale is a hot topic in sustainability conversations. Consumers are demanding better (largely less single-use plastic). Regulations around single-use plastic and recycling are driving change. Retailers are, in turn, looking for brands who've come up with savvy solutions. And these brands are investing more heavily in and being more thoughtful about packaging, right at the NPD stages.

Packaging has, says Future Pak managing director, Rebecca Reilly, moved from being purely functional, to a strategic business decision as retailers and producers face pressure from multiple directions at once.

What makes 'now' different, "is



PRACTICAL WAYS TO MAKE YOUR RETAIL BUSINESS MORE SUSTAINABLE



Mark Turnbull, founder and CEO of Impact Retail Training, shares changes Speciality Food retailers can make to create positive impact

Start small and be honest. Many retailers do great things quietly, but don't explain them well, which limits both customer understanding and commercial benefit.

Rather than trying to do everything, focus on a few changes that fit naturally with your business. Whether that's tightening up local sourcing, reducing waste in one area of the operation, or simplifying packaging where it makes sense - and do them well.

Just as important is communicating those choices clearly. For example, a simple line at point of sale explaining why a product is sourced locally or why packaging has been changed often lands far better with customers than broad sustainability statements.

Most importantly, avoid overcomplicating things. Sustainability tends to work best in independent retail when it supports the wider offer and day-to-day operation, rather than feeling like an extra initiative bolted on.

When sustainability aligns with commercial reality, customer expectations and day-to-day operations, it has a far better chance of sticking. The goal shouldn't be perfection, but progress that's realistic, visible and meaningful.

> "The goal shouldn't be perfection, but progress that's realistic, visible and meaningful"

that packaging directly impacts compliance, reputation and commercial resilience," Rebecca adds. "Poor packaging choices can lead to higher disposal costs, supply disruption, or reputational damage, while well-considered decisions can reduce risk, improve efficiency and support long-term growth."



For food businesses in particular, "packaging is also a highly visible signal of values. It is often the first physical touchpoint a customer has with a brand, quietly communicating whether sustainability is being taken seriously or treated as a touch point."

Evolution within the industry has been transformational, Rebecca continues – reaching beyond early material swaps, and with data-led solutions considering the full lifecycle, from sourcing and manufacturing, to transport efficiency and end-of-life disposal, with a strong shift towards simplifications and standardisation, to help make improvements at scale.

The future of packaging will be defined less by novelty, and more by intelligent design and accountability, thinks Rebecca. "While innovation in materials will continue, equal importance will be placed on integration with waste systems, clearer labelling, and stronger supply chain transparency. One of the most exciting developments is the move towards packaging optimisation – reducing material use altogether,



and designing packaging that works seamlessly within existing recycling and composting infrastructure."

New food solutions

Global food insecurity is no longer a peripheral issue – it's mainstream news. We've all seen the headlines around failed olive, cocoa, coffee and salad crops. Action is imperative worldwide to find solutions, strengthen supply chains and work in more planet-friendly ways.

And there are many folk behind the scenes moving those cogs. One is Agronomics, a venture capitalist firm at the forefront of the clean food sector. Executive chairman, Jim Mellon, says, "Conventional agriculture cannot, and should not, shoulder this burden alone. That's where cultivated foods and precision fermentation present a viable solution to this growing issue. What once seemed impossible is now becoming a reality: meat, fish, eggs, cheese, oils, fats and even cacao and coffee can all be produced in new ways – grown, for example, in bioreactors, rather than in fields."

Jim thinks such innovations could shorten supply chains, reduce emissions, ease pressure on land and water, guard against livestock diseases, and support famers in regenerating soils and restoring ecosystems, all while continuing to meet consumer demand.

"The promise of this sector is fast becoming a reality. But for clean food to have its biggest impact, the sector needs to scale," he adds. "Which means continued education, investment and support from governments and industry. The choice in 2026 is clear: treat food shocks as a new normal, or use them as the catalyst to build a cleaner, smarter, and more secure food system."



PARTNER CONTENT



A FORCE FOR BETTER

A pioneer in sustainable agriculture, The Garlic Farm is on a valuable journey towards a healthier future for us all



B Corp-certified business The Garlic Farm has a vision to create a better, healthier world one step at a time. "Our vision at The Garlic Farm is to deliver health and happiness and restorative land use through garlic in a thriving business," begins Natasha Edwards, managing director at The Garlic Farm. This is no mere box-ticking exercise. Instead, the entire team is passionate about constantly making meaningful, measurable change for the good of the land and the people who rely upon it – "We see ourselves as custodians of the land and business for future generations of our family and our community," she explains.

The Garlic Farm's sustainability efforts are varied and certified; its farmland is certified organic by The Soil Association, while its livestock is certified Pasture for Life. "We invest in land management practices that actively support nature, carbon sequestration, water quality, soil health, biodiversity and animal health," Natasha continues. "As a farming business, we can have significant impact in these areas."

Human health and happiness are as vital to The Garlic Farm's work as environmental causes, she says. "In terms of social impact, our focus has been on team wellbeing, community engagement and support for local causes. We offer paid volunteering opportunities for all team members, support local charities with donations and fundraising events and we have a unique 'buddy scheme' allowing those needing extra help in the workplace the opportunity to be part of our team."

The local community is welcomed into the fold, too – children are educated about their local landscape in an invaluable way. "Providing free access to farmland throughout the year as well as free school visits for Island primary schools and regular work experience for our local special-needs school students helps us to engage young people in nature and farming," explains Natasha.

Further exciting plans are afoot to create new connections between The Garlic Farm's land and its growing community. "This year, we are embarking on a new market garden project next to our restaurant. The market garden will supply the restaurant with organic ingredients as well as providing a unique opportunity for customers, schools and groups to learn about growing healthy food."

As one of only 24 businesses in the UK to have been awarded a 2025 King's Award for Enterprise in Sustainable Development, The Garlic Farm are leading the charge towards a healthier, more connected world.

01983 865378
enquiries@thegarlicfarm.co.uk
thegarlicfarm.co.uk







> "We see ourselves as custodians of the land and business for future generations of our family and our community"

THE FUTURE IS FROZEN

With its quality, sustainability and value credentials, frozen food is more desirable than ever before



CONTRIBUTORS



RUPERT ASHBY
BFFF



JACKIE PHILLIPS
BISTRO CHEF



CHRISTOPHE LACROIX
BISTRO CHEF



MATT WHELAN
FIELDFARE



SAM & ELLIOT DAY
FIELDGOODS

There are plenty of challenges facing the British consumer now, from budget constraints to time crunches and a desire to live more sustainably... while also creating healthy – not to mention delicious – meals for all the family. It's no wonder that they're feeling the pinch. Thankfully, fine food retailers have the solution in the form of frozen food.

"Frozen food fits well with the realities many households are facing," explains Rupert Ashby, CEO of the British Frozen Food Federation (BFFF). "It offers convenience and affordability at a time when budgets are under pressure and time is limited. Importantly, consumers are increasingly aware that frozen locks in nutrients and vitamins so is a fresh as the day it was harvested when used.

"Our research shows that 71 per cent of shoppers feel frozen food helps them manage portions and reduce waste. That is good for household finances and good for the environment. Frozen also allows people to enjoy small, affordable treats at home, delivering quality and comfort without the cost of eating out."

In great news for fine food shoppers and sellers – the days of frozen food being centred around the likes of crinkle cut chips and fish fingers is long gone; these days, renowned chefs are creating restaurant-worthy dishes for discerning customers to enjoy at home, health-driven brands are serving up nutritionally balanced meals for all the family to relish; and shoppers can personalise their purchases thanks to self-serve options that run the gamut from deliciously buttery pastries to meal solutions, fruit and veg to desserts.

Restaurant quality... but convenient

Bath-based chef Christophe Lacroix has built a loyal fanbase in his local town and now beyond thanks to the proven popularity of the convenient fine food meal solutions he's created under the Bistro Chef brand. "With restaurant prices rising, and quality hard to find when eating out, the attraction of premium home dining is evident," says Jackie Phillips, director.

Originally trained in a Michelin-starred restaurant in France before travelling around the world as a private chef and putting various Bath establishments on the map ever since, Lacroix was inspired to create such in-home dining experiences by customers themselves. "His brasserie customers were asking if they could have his dishes as take-home for their dinner party at the weekend," explains Jackie.

Why frozen? "Firstly there is the shelf life which gives flexibility to consumers and keeps waste right down for retailers. But it also means that we can offer a wide range in a small batch kitchen," says Christophe. "We often get asked if freezing affects flavour and quality. It doesn't. We blast freeze our dishes and this maintains maximum integrity of the ingredients, ensuring texture and flavour is maintained. The recipes are also developed specifically for freezing. We test each new product before production starts to ensure that it freezes well and reheats to perfection."

The three 'c's

What makes frozen food such a golden opportunity in 2026? Convenience, consciousness and cost," say Sam and Elliot Day, founders of Fieldgoods. "Convenience will never not be important, and it's growing. People are working more, they care more and they have less money to spend. Frozen answers all three. By having food in the freezer you can have more on hand. It has a longer shelf life so there is less waste and it's therefore better for the environment. No waste also means lower cost, relative to quality."

"Freezing is nature's preservative," agrees Matt Whelan, managing director at Fieldfare. "It locks in freshness and nutrients without the need for artificial additives, giving shoppers reassurance around quality while allowing them more time to use what they buy. At a time when consumers are focusing on what's in their food and how it is made, frozen naturally moves to the forefront."

Frozen food is no longer a compromise, say Sam and Elliot. Shoppers no longer need to choose between variety, health and convenience. "Gone are the days of the freezer aisle just being for chips – a people care about ingredients, additives, stabilisers – and the good news is none are needed in frozen. There is a growing awareness that frozen IS fresh! There's no nutrition lost. Plus, shoppers are looking for easy options that don't compromise from what they'd expect in fresh food: taste, sustainability and quality 'real' ingredients."

For Matt, the magic of frozen food lies in its sustainable credentials. "Sustainability has become much more front of mind, even when cost remains important, and consumers are thinking more carefully about food waste, packaging and value. Our loose frozen proposition naturally supports all three."

EXPERT VIEW

Frozen food is vital

Rupert Ashby, CEO of the British Frozen Food Federation (BFFF)



"Frozen food is a major part of the UK grocery market. Worldpanel data shows total spend reached £8.8 billion in the 12 months to November 2025, up 1.9 per cent year on year.

"However, the real value of frozen food can't be captured in a headline sales figure. At a time when one in five households say they are struggling financially and grocery costs are a growing concern, frozen food plays a vital role in many people's diet.

Our research shows that families could save around £1,100 a year on a healthy 5-a-day diet by choosing frozen fruit and vegetables as part of a balanced diet.

"It is helping households access nutritious food that lasts longer and can be used when it is needed. Our research shows families could save around £1,100 a year on a healthy 5-a-day diet by choosing frozen fruit and vegetables as part of a balanced diet.

"At the same time, frozen food helps reduce food waste, which accounts for up to 10 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions. And, the waste reduction isn't just in households, but also in food service outlets, institutions and right across the supply chain."

HOW TO SELL

Play to frozen food's strengths for optimum selling power:

Quality
Your frozen selection is a far cry from your local supermarket's range, so communicate its quality credentials loud and proud. Are you sourcing from a local supplier? Do your frozen dishes have Michelin star appeal? Make your messaging sing to get your customers as excited about their potential as you are.

Convenience
Few of us have the time to whip up a culinary masterpiece from scratch every night of the week, but with the help of the freezer your customers' family and/or guests don't need to know that... From decadent pastries to nutrient and flavour-packed meals for all the family, demonstrate to your customers that they can consider your freezer aisle a one-stop-shop for quick and easy (and delicious) meal solutions.

Sustainability
By offering low packaging, self-serve options, you can help eliminate food waste and add a touch of desirable personalisation to proceedings.



1 in 3

UK adults report using more frozen food than three years ago, citing sustainability, cost, and convenience as key reasons

Move to -15°C Coalition

"Smaller households value the flexibility frozen offers, whether that's buying single portions, mixing products, or planning meals more efficiently, making a substantial difference to potential food waste.

"In our research, over a third of speciality shoppers say reducing packaging is important to them, and nearly one in four place strong importance on sustainability credentials. When a category meets that desire with very little need for behaviour change, it is enormously attractive."

This makes the frozen category a boon for *Speciality Food* readers. "From a retail perspective, the longer shelf life of frozen helps reduce in-store waste and supports more efficient stock management compared with chilled alternatives. At the same time, loose frozen meets growing consumer demand for portion control, reduced packaging and more sustainable ways of shopping.

"Clear storytelling around quality, provenance and sustainability along with trusted brands like Fieldfare help frozen cement its place as a core part of a premium offer."

Communicate your frozen selection's quality credentials loud and proud

Don't sleep on frozen food

"Frozen should be seen as an opportunity rather than an afterthought," says Rupert Ashby, CEO of the British Frozen Food Federation (BFFF). "For specialist retailers, the focus should be on quality, provenance and a well-curated range that complements their other ranges, something that the younger generations are particularly looking for according to our research." There's no need to bend your rules to add more frozen food to your establishment.

Indeed, "Used well, frozen can extend seasonality, reduce waste and create a destination category that shoppers actively seek out," he continues.

2026 SPECIALITY FOOD MAGAZINE **STOCK CHECK**



FIELDFARE JUMBO COD FISH FINGERS

Supersized prime cod fillet fingers, coated in crispy crumbs with a hint of lemon. These elevate a humble kitchen classic.

field-fare.com



BYRUBY FISH PIE

These pies are generously filled with sustainable smoked haddock, cod and salmon, with leeks in a creamy sauce, topped with buttery mash and Cheddar.

byruby.co.uk



CHAPMAN'S SEAFOODS FISH & KING PRAWN CURRY

Part of Chapman's gourmet ready meal range. A luxurious blend of fish and plump king prawns, bound in a flavoursome Thai-style sauce.

chapmans-seafoods.co.uk



JESS COOKS CARIBBEAN-STYLE CHICKEN CURRY

Milder, sweet flavours of Caribbean curry, adapted for young taste buds. Suffolk chicken breast in an aromatic, coconut milk base. Low in salt and available in single or family portions.

jesscooks.co.uk



WILDLY TASTY MUSHROOM & LENTIL BOLOGNESE

Plant-based and designed with nutrition in mind, this scrummy combination contains three of your five a day. It's available in single or family-sized packs.

wildlytasty.com

SPONSORED BY

PETER'S YARD



FUTURE-PROOFING CHEESE RETAIL

Sustainability in specialist food retail isn't about sweeping change overnight, but thoughtful decisions that add up — from how cheese is wrapped and sourced to how staff and customers are cared for

Thinking about sustainability is no longer a 'nice to have' in retail – it's something everyone should be considering, especially as customers in speciality settings have expectations that things are being done 'the right way' and with purpose.

That doesn't mean, of course, that you have to change everything in one go. Small, incremental, meaningful movements towards sustainability stack up.

However, if you're new to the business, and are reading this as you prepare to begin your journey into cheese, there's an opportunity to start off on a good foot – as Chris Hallam, founder of Chorlton Cheesemongers in Manchester did when opening in 2020.

Working from the ground up gave Chris the opportunity to have a considered approach around the environment right from the start, installing LED lights, insulating parts of the building where it was possible, and supporting the local economy by working with nearby tradespeople.

In terms of operations, right from the start he made the decision not to have any plastic bags, with customers encouraged to bring their own, or use one of the shop's paper bags.

And there's no plastic wrap – it's all paper.

Beyond this, "Very few things are sent to us in plastic now," he says. "We have an arrangement with one of our wholesalers, because we buy so much from them, that they send everything to us in crates that we return to them."

Sustainable sourcing

How can cheese retailers up their game when it comes to the sustainability of their stock? For Chris, this looks like favouring cheesemakers who are actively making changes to work in more environmentally sound ways. And that doesn't always mean sourcing locally – quality, story and integrity trump all else.

This is an approach that chimes with Emmanuelle Metz, owner of Metz Cheesemonger in Farsley. "The smaller the production, the better for me. Even if something is local, it doesn't mean it's sustainable," she says. "And I think it's easy for customers to confuse these two things. Local, to me, is British cheese. Scottish cheese. Welsh cheese."

Sourcing from makers who work in a slower, more intentional way, is at the core of Emmanuelle's ethos – with her citing Cashel Blue, Stonebeck and Summer Field as favourite examples. "I look at all the ingredients and how things are made, and I'm quite strict," she adds.

For Chris, a key buying factor is whether a maker is producing their own milk or at least has a dairy on or very close to the farm, so there is direct knowledge of the milk.

"It's about working with the farmer to produce the best milk, ensuring land management and herd management is great," Chris says. "That's our starting point. People like Fen Farm are amazing at what they do. Westcombe Dairy I think are gods with what they're doing. And then you have people like Appleby's Dairy who are working to put their farm back to the pre-70s way of doing things, with small fields and hedges. This way of working really appeals to us. It's taking farming and cheesemaking back to a more sustainable, ethical way of producing food."

Sustaining customers

Part of the job (a huge part) says Emmanuelle is taking customers on a journey of discovery. Helping them to understand artisan cheese, and how it might be healthier than mass-produced versions (especially those with additives) from supermarkets, is often eye-opening. "They will say, 'my goodness, I have no idea about all this stuff'," she says. "We have to do that job for them, learning ourselves, and teaching them, so I think sustainability is also for customers. It's a matter of heritage and sharing the art of food. We've got a beautiful library of cheese history in the UK, but not too many people know about it."

With concerns around UPFs, more customers are looking to specialist cheesemongers to satisfy their dairy cravings, and that can only be a good thing. "I feel like we are the last generation – those who are 50, 70, 80 or above – who know what food was like before all the madness and processing. With processed food, some people are like a leaf in the wind. They are blown away by these products, and we have got to grab their hand and say, 'slow down, get back to your roots'."

> People are blown away by these products, and we have got to grab their hand and say, 'slow down, get back to your roots

Sustaining staff

Slowing down is another facet of Emmanuelle's approach to sustainability – especially when it comes to her staff and their wellbeing – and she's made changes in the weeks since Christmas to switch up the shop and the way the team work.

"Wellbeing is so important," she says. "At Christmas I was observing, and everything at that time gets pushed to the extreme! I wanted to think of how we can make the shop a better environment. For example, we have quite a big staff at that time of year, and I noticed the place was not at the optimum when it was packed, so we decided to change the display of the shop to make the working space even better and safer and less stressful."

Us Brits aren't the best at taking a break, but this is important for wellbeing and the care of staff too, thinks Emmanuelle. Rested, looked after team members will interact better with customers.

"We used to have a really short break but, to me, 30 minutes is nothing – not enough time to do anything. I make sure they have one hour so they can breathe, get lunch... there are some amazing places here where we are they could go, like the art gallery. I want them to have a great time out of work, and slow down, almost like a meditation. When you come back after that you are refreshed and can be really efficient."

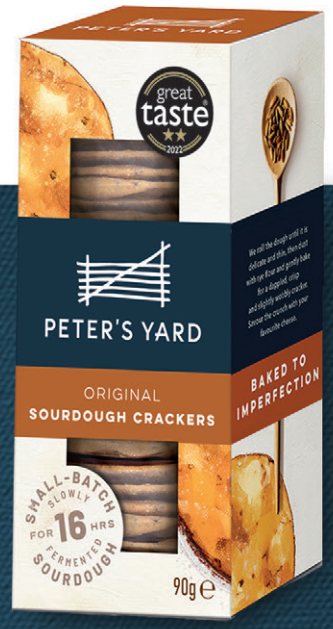
This holistic approach, thinking about staff, customers, suppliers, and even the grass the cows feed on is an ongoing movement within cheese retail, and those taking steps towards change could be helping to futureproof themselves as Gen-Z, and Gen-Alpha after them become more clued up and discerning about food.



PETER'S YARD

IT ALL RESTS ON A GREAT CRACKER

At Peter's Yard, we know good things take time. Our sourdough crackers are made from a 45-year-old sourdough starter, fermented for 16 hours before each batch is baked. Crafted without shortcuts or artificial ingredients for award-winning flavour and crunch.



HOW OUR **COMMITMENT EVERY DAY** PAYS OFF

PARMIGIANO REGGIANO

The secret ingredient for outstanding Parmigiano Reggiano is commitment, especially with **animal welfare**. This is why we make our Parmigiano Reggiano in our mountain cheese factories, using a **transparent**, **controlled supply chain**. From selecting the raw materials to packaging, our focus on sustainability is constantly evolving and supports every phase of the production process.



DalterFood Group

Best Italian Cheese Solutions

Find out more at dalterfood.com

CHEESE TALK

‘Cow with calf farming isn’t a gimmick – it’s working’



David Finlay, co-founder of The Ethical Dairy in the West of Scotland, shares his view on an unconventional farming practice that’s paying dividends for his staff and animals

We love coming to work here. It’s true. We’re happy, the animals are happy. It’s nice and calm. It’s such a great environment. And we got here after quite a long, holistic journey. From feeling our way in something not a lot of people have been doing – essentially writing the book as we went, learning from experience, bitter or otherwise.

We first started looking at alternative ways of working, moving away from an industrial model, more than 30 years ago when we were an ice cream maker. And we were coming into contact with people who were talking a totally different language to us. It was all ‘biodiversity loss’ and ‘animal welfare’ and ‘pollution’. This was a bit ‘out there’ for conventional farmers at the time.

> “We started to think about everything else we were doing on the farm to make it better”

But slowly slowly we started to experiment with organic, even though converting wasn’t easy. On the back of that mindset change, we started to think about everything else we were doing on the farm and how to make it better.

Around that time, we were finding loads of people wanted to do farm tours with us and the only negative comment we got back was being asked why we separated the cows from the calves. It really upset people and they were clearly shocked. My late wife, Wilma, found that emotional. For me, it was a marketing opportunity. How could we crack this nut? Nobody in the UK was doing cow with calf farming at the time, so off we went to Europe, visiting farms there to see what they were up to. We came back thinking, ‘we can do this’.

It wasn’t, let’s say, smooth sailing. We thought the cows would thank us for leaving their calves with them. They’d be relaxed. The opposite happened! The cows got really stressed. We got stressed. They were getting their calves back every day after milking and were so upset, we couldn’t understand it. They wouldn’t come into the parlour, and we abandoned it after five months in 2012.

The thing we realised later was cows are sentient beings. They knew what the rules were; they’d go into the parlour to get milked and the calf would be gone. But in our new system, the calf was still there. They hated that. I’ve never seen anything like it.

When we came back to it in 2016. We needed to get the routine right and be consistent about it. We changed the layout of the building and cracked the management side of things, increasing the number of feed stands for calves to feed themselves with our sileage during overnight separation, and putting in rotary brushes for them, which they love. They’re with their mothers in the day, and in their own space overnight.

Once we got into the rhythm of it, something strange happened, and honestly, other people didn’t think it was possible. What we found was in the traditional set up, with 100% pasture fed cows, we were getting 4,500 litres of milk per cow, of which 500 litres was taken by the calf, leaving us with 4,000 litres. But when we went to cow with calf, a handful of cows gave us 4,000 litres while raising a calf. We thought they must be stealing milk; there’s no way a cow could be feeding a five-month-old calf , which can drink 2,000 litres easily. It would mean we were producing 6,000 litres of milk from forage and that’s unheard of!

It’s incredible. We know that with selective breeding we can get a herd giving us 4,000 litres per cow while raising a calf. And the calves are growing more than twice as fast and maturing for finishing or breeding much earlier. That allows us to move them on, releasing them from eating forage. It means we can increase our cow numbers by 20-25%, having 25% more cows, giving 25% more milk per cow, and 25% more cattle to sell.

It’s not a gimmick. It’s not crazy. It’s a very efficient farming system, but so counter-intuitive when you first look at it.

There’s now over 200 farms doing cow with calf in Europe, including more than 30 of us in the UK. It’s not going away, it’s going placing and growing, even though it’s still small. Now we’ve just got to convince the industry it’s not a joke. This is something worthwhile.

Sheep farm set to produce cheese year-round



Set up in the summer of 2023, Dizzy Dairy in Bude, North Cornwall, has been so popular that it’s invested to be able to sell its sheep’s milk cheeses all-year-round from 2026, lambing at the beginning of the year, and again in the summer.

It will also, said founder Katie Farnell, be introducing sheep’s milk vending machines due to customer demand. “From what they’re saying, there’s quite a few people who are lactose intolerant. Others want it because they say they prefer it or think it’s got more health benefits. Every time we go to markets we’re asked for milk.”

The sheep – East Friesians, Zwartbles and Blue-Faced Leicesters, “live on a cliff looking at the sea – they have a lovely view,” said Katie. “We just bring them in for lambing.”

Within the range, which is just about to go into production, are soft cheese Dizzy Maid, semi-soft Dizzy Crumble, Manchego-style Dizzy Ewe, six month matured Proper Dizzy, and Dizzy Blue. “With that one you can’t see the blue, but it tastes blue,” added Katie. “It’s one of our best-sellers.”





Chaddar hits the market

Brinkworth Dairy recently unveiled its newest creation, Chaddar, a slow-crafted Cheddar-style cheese developed in honour of the farm’s co-founder, Chad.

Made using milk from the farm’s century-old closed Friesian herd and produced using regenerative and high-welfare practices, Cheddar draws on classic West Country Cheddar techniques, from stacking the curds, to hand cheddaring and cloth binding.

Early batches are revealing aromas of warm hay and toasted grain, reflecting the pasture-rich diet of the herd, savoury notes of caramelised butter, and a firm, yet supple paste.

“Chaddar is very much a tribute,” said Chad’s wife and business partner Ceri Cryer. “It honours the work, the character, and the resilience that have shaped our farm. But it’s also a gift to the people who love authentic British cheese.”



Young chefs explore new ways with Stilton

Crumbled over ruby-red poached pears, stirred into soup with broccoli or encased in buttery pastry with tender, slow-cooked beef – everyone knows the classic ways to cook with Blue Stilton PDO.

Finding new recipe ideas, and different ways to present Clawson Farms' famous cheese, was the challenge set to catering students from Capital City College, London in a Creative Cook Off at the end of January.

Budding chefs and future front of house stars were tasked with putting a fresh spin on Clawson Farms' Blue Stilton, marking the 30th year of its PDO status. Creative takes included twice-baked Stilton and chilli soufflé, and roast pumpkin soup topped with Stilton-infused foam.

Judges – including Clawson Farms' managing director, Bill Mathieson, and the college's chef lecturer, Tom Egerton – awarded first place to Aritz Valtuena Repes for his starter, Stilton and beetroot asparagus cannelloni with black Chinese Stilton bread.

"We liked the innovation Aritz brought to this dish," said Clawson Farms' farm liaison director, Kim Kettle, who was also on the panel. "Stilton remained the hero throughout the different techniques used."



Front of house ideas included 'Fonblue' – melted Stilton served with pastry twists, truffle honey and crudités – and a coffee cocktail with a Stilton-infused chocolate powder.

All finalists will be hosted on a visit to Clawson Farms in Long Clawson, Leicestershire, with a dairy tour, cheese tasting and overview of the co-operative's commitment to sustainability.



Midlands cheesemaker brings a global first to the market

Hot on the heels of reviving Derby Cheese and introducing Red Derby to the industry, Derbyshire's Hartington Creamery has just launched a series of truckles featuring these base cheeses – the first Derby Cheese truckles in the world.

The project has been spearheaded by Simon Spurrell, formerly of The Cheshire Cheese Co, working with Hartington Creamery owner Robert Gosling.

"It's a particularly poignant project for me," said Simon, "as my daughter and her partner run the farm used by Hartington Creamery for dairy. I've also known Robert for a long time."

Traditional Derby Cheese was revived by the duo at the end of last year, following more than two decades of obscurity. It was originally made in Britain's first ever purpose-built cheese factory in Longford, Derbyshire, with Hartington being the last remaining producer of traditional Derby Cheese until production closed in 2009.

When the new Hartington Creamery rose from the ashes in 2012, it benefited from the experience of old staff, who helped to revive its recipes, such as the original Stilton, and more recently Derby Cheese. "We're so lucky to have people like Alan Salt around," said Simon. "He has 50 years' experience in cheesemaking for Hartington, and remembers making Derby back in the day, and the cultures used. We would pretty much been lost without that knowledge."

Derby's curds are scalded (increasing the ageing potential of the cheese), before being cut, turned, salted, milled and layered in mould with cheese cloth. They're pre-pressed and pressed overnight, then trimmed by hand and sent for maturing, ready from three months onwards, but with the ability to be taken on for 12 months or more.

Simon said the texture is similar to Cheddar, "but a bit firmer, with a unique flavour. It doesn't taste like Cheddar. In fact, it doesn't taste like anything else – but in a good way."

Red Derby uses a slightly different culture, coloured with annatto, and has a punchier flavour.

The duo, alongside Hartington's white Stilton (Peakland) and Cheddar, feature across the new Heart of Hartington truckle brand which is, added Simon, "quite different", and matched with three chutneys made by Fruits of the Forage, and crackers from Popti.

Available now, the range has eight varieties, including flagship extra mature Cheddar Squadron, Chilli Derby, Smoked Derby, and Peakland White with Tomato and Garlic.









CLAWSON FARMS: SETTING NEW STANDARDS IN SUSTAINABILITY

For this special co-operative of farms in the Leicestershire countryside, as much thought, care and effort go into creating a more sustainable future as into crafting exceptional cheeses

Fields stretch for miles into the distance, interrupted only by wiggly country lanes and the dark stripes of hedgerows.

It's a bucolic scene, and one that reveals a deeper purpose. From the abundance of greenery to the chattering birds, contented moos and swishing tails that melt into a serene soundtrack, everything here is testament to Clawson Farms' commitment to sustainability.

The co-operative has always been something of a pioneer, from its establishment as a farmer-owned business in 1912 to the award-winning artisan cheeses it produces today. Its renowned Blue Stilton PDO has been lovingly crafted here since the dairy was founded, with expertise and care poured into every stage of the process.

Its sustainability efforts are no different; across its 30 farms, all within a 30-mile radius of the dairy in Long Clawson, Leicestershire, plans are in progress for a greener, more ethical and more responsible approach to farming.

Farm liaison and sustainability manager Ruth Grice works with each of the farmers to help them to boost biodiversity, improve animal welfare and reduce carbon emissions.

"Sustainability is really important to us at Clawson Farms," says Ruth, who also runs Yard Farm – a co-operative member, just four miles from Clawson Farms' Dairy – with her parents. "It is at the heart of what we do."



Cheeses with conscience

Muddy wellies that leave the lightest of footprints – that's the idea. In many ways, it goes beyond leaving no trace. It's also about rooting in saplings to benefit the environment, digging ponds to create homes for wildlife, and adopting innovative, cleaner practices every day.

The aim? To reduce carbon emissions by 30% by 2032. Ruth believes they're on track to achieve that, but it's not just about the numbers. It's about a different approach to farming.

"My role at Clawson Farms is to work alongside our farmers on their sustainability journeys," she explains. "Part of that is co-designing a personalised plan.

"They look at how our farms are reducing their carbon emissions, protecting and increasing homes for wildlife on their farms and how they are looking after water courses."

All that greenery plays an important role, too. In total, the farms have around 5,000 trees and 290 miles of hedgerows – enough to stretch from Long Clawson all the way up to Glasgow. "We love to see how our farmers are encouraging nature on to their farms, creating wild habitats that have allowed birds, small mammals and essential pollinators to flourish and thrive," adds Ruth.

Other steps taken include minimising soil disturbance and working with the Environment Agency and Catchment Sensitive Farming teams to help improve water quality on the farms.

The happiest cows

At Clawson Farms, the herds are more than livestock – they're part of the family. Animal welfare is a key part of each farm's approach to more sustainable and ethical farming – and, says Ruth, you can taste the results.

At Yard Farm, each of the family's 350 pedigree Holsteins has their own name (though, Ruth admits, she struggles to remember all of them).

"To achieve excellence in cheesemaking, you need the very best milk – which means happy cows," she says. "Our cows are a very important part of our extended Clawson family.

"Our farmers share a genuine passion in caring for their animals, keeping them well-nourished and healthy."

On average, Clawson Farms' cows graze outside for 180 days of the year. When the cows are indoors, our farmers feed them as much home-grown produce as possible, such as fermented grass, known as silage. As well as being economical, home-grown feedstuffs tend to have the lowest carbon emissions."

When our farmers buy in extra feed, to supplement what they grow themselves, they opt for carbon friendly options such as Brewer's Grains, a by-product of the brewing industry. Feedstuffs with known high embedded emissions, such as soya from deforested areas of South America, are avoided.

"Our co-operative farms are all members of the Red Tractor Assurance scheme, enhanced by our own Farm Assurance Standard Clawson Care 365 programme, setting a standard in our industry for welfare, the environment, food safety and hygiene."

A small group of farmers updates Clawson Care 365 every one to two years, most recently increasing the number of standards around calf rearing – something that's important to both the farmers and their customers.

Putting people first

This deep-rooted sense of responsibility also extends to the cheesemaking process itself. Clawson Farms' cheeses are lauded for a reason, from the world-famous Blue Stilton PDO to Rutland Red, a traditional Red Leicester imbued with subtly sweet and nutty caramel notes..

Unrivalled taste is balanced by care over nutrition, working with approved bodies to provide nutritional advice and, wherever possible, reducing the amount of salt needed as a preservative and to prevent unfriendly bacteria.

Then there are the people who make it all happen: the farmers, cheesemakers, strategists and specialists who work at Clawson Farms.

"We see our farms and dairy as essential to supporting our local rural communities, employing more than 400 wonderful, cheese-loving folk," says Ruth. "Each of them is an integral part of what we do and for them, cheesemaking is not a job, it's a vocation."

She adds: "We are a community of dairy farmers who really care about sustainability. We want to have as light a footprint on the planet as we possibly can do."

> "It's about rooting in saplings to benefit the environment, digging ponds to create homes for wildlife, and adopting innovative, cleaner practices every day"
>
> RUTH GRICE, FARM LIAISON AND SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER

CLAWSON
19 FARMS 12
MASTER CHEESEMAKERS

CRAFTING CHEESE WITH CARE

At Clawson Farms, sustainability is at the heart of everything we do. Our award-winning cheeses are crafted with a deep respect for the land, animals, and people behind every stage of production.

Our We Care plan sets out a long-term commitment to responsible cheesemaking, supporting our partner farmers with high animal-welfare standards, personalised carbon-reduction plans and investment in biodiversity and soil health. Alongside this, we're actively reducing environmental impact across our operations, from water and energy efficiency to cutting plastic and food waste. As well as exceptional cheese, Clawson Farms offers a transparent, trusted partnership to retailers and food manufacturers, helping to create a more resilient food system for the future.



www.clawsonfarms.co.uk

COMMENTATORS



PHILIP RAYNER
GLEBE FARM FOODS



ROBERT STRATHERN
FAIRFIELDS FARM



ELLIOT WEBB
URBAN FARM PRODUCE



NICO TEGUER
THE CULPEPER FAMILY



MICHAEL KENNEDY
ROEBUCK ESTATES



SANDY BOOTH
NEW FOREST FRUIT COMPANY

ROOTED IN RESILIENCE

The UK's farmers are rethinking how food is grown, processed and protected. Across land, sea and city, innovation, circular thinking and a renewed relationship with nature are shaping a more secure future for British food



Despite the challenges modern farmers face, with changes to inheritance tax rules, and fewer grants available to transform their businesses, Britain's growers remain resilient.

It's a great testament that many of them continue to work and innovate in the farming industry, determined to provide food for the nation now and in the future, whatever the weather, and whatever the government might throw at them.

A circular approach

Looking inwards to look ahead is very much part and parcel of farming in 2026 and beyond. Farmers are thinking about ways they can maximise resources, regenerate, and recirculate to make their practices even more environmentally friendly.

It's a necessity to make changes now, says Philip Rayner, co-founder and MD of Glebe Farm Foods. "UK farmers now face unprecedented disruptions from rainfall and the erratic seasons of 2024 (which produced the second worst harvest on record) to frequent droughts like the one witnessed last summer. These aren't isolated incidents anymore. They're becoming the new normal."

Glebe Farm has already put a number of measures in place to futureproof its operations, including incorporating regenerative farming techniques, such as dual cropping, natural reed bed filtration, and using cover crops and crop rotation.

The milling machines used to process their oats are powered by carbon neutral biomass boilers fuelled by steam generated from oak husk residue, mitigating food waste, and creating a circular manufacturing process.

"Equally ground-breaking," adds Philip, "is our upcycling of oat milk by-products into a high-protein, high-fibre bran ingredient. Typically these co-products are lost to anaerobic digestors within hours due to rapid fermentation, rendering them unusable for food or feed. Glebe has innovated a new, hygienic, food-safe drying system to stabilise and convert this material into long-life rusk. This can be milled into flour, or used directly in baked goods."

With fibre (and lack of it in British diets) a top concern, this is a step in the right direction for the business, and a bold and unique way of handling and recycling food waste – the kind of project, he thinks, that should be acknowledged by the government, which must recognise the value and capabilities of British farmers, providing them the means to innovate in these ways, putting more homegrown food on British plates. "The UK government claims to import half of British food already, although some analysts suggest the true figure may be closer to 80%. Either way, the level of foreign dependence is staggering. Relying more heavily on imports will drive up domestic food prices, intensify the cost-of-living crisis, and leave Britain dangerously vulnerable to supply chain disruptors."

Another business thinking in similarly circular, and ever-evolving ways, is Fairfields Farm Crisps in Essex, where co-founder and owner Robert Strathern says one of their core values is to leave the land in better shape than they found it, ensuring the potatoes grown and crisps cooked on the farm have as little impact on the environment as possible. To this end, the brand is proud to be carbon neutral, with much of the off-setting activity taking place on-farm, and with a goal to be net zero by 2033.

Growing, processing and packaging their product on-site plays a big part in Fairfield Farm's sustainability journey. They have control over the raw ingredient (making them less vulnerable to produce market fluctuations), use regenerative techniques including no-plough methods and covering crops to capture carbon (meaning healthier spuds), and have invested in reservoirs, closed-loop water systems and an anaerobic digestor to reduce energy and water use.

The benefits, Robert says, have been tangible, especially when it comes to soil structure and health, which is contributing to robust yields. Tracking and using data have become integral in the farm's journey to net zero. "We're tracking energy and carbon savings closely in partnership with Green Growth Ltd, and results show a marked reduction in our on-site emissions and resource use per product produced. It's not just good for the planet, it's good for business too, with demonstrable energy savings."

> "We see being sustainability-driven as an integral part of being a modern farmer"
>
> ROBERT STRATHERN, CO-FOUNDER, FAIRFIELDS FARM

This all feeds into being a responsible steward of the land, he feels. "We see being sustainability-driven as an integral part of being a modern farmer."

Blue sky thinking

As we've already said, there's an enormous amount of innovation











happening on farms across the UK. From greater reliance on hydroponic cropping to wild seaweed farms, there's more to growing today than ever before.

At the forefront of vertical growing is Urban Farm Produce (formerly Urban Farm-It) founded by Elliot Webb in 2019 as a direct response to years working in fish farming.

He became acutely aware of the environmental impact and food quality challenges the industry is facing, and wanted to find practical, inclusive solutions.

Elliot did this by launching a grow-your-own brand, but has now expanded to become a producer, specialising predominantly in growing organically-produced Lion's Mane mushrooms in a vertical system – choosing the fungi because they're nutrient-dense, sustainable and require minimal energy, land and water to grow.

His vertical growing approach uses an anaerobic digestor for spent mushroom substrate, turning it into energy, while creating a product that can be used by other, local farms, as a soil improver. Thanks to the business's newly opened solar powered farm, it can also operate entirely off grid during the day.

Being organic is a big thing for Elliot, and a huge part of the draw towards growing mushrooms. "Lion's Mane mushrooms themselves are inherently sustainable," he says. "They require no pesticides, use minimal water, and have a low energy footprint. We continually refine our processes to reduce waste further, increase efficiency, and strengthen our contribution to the communities we operate in."



It's certainly paying dividends, with the system using 15,000 less litres per kilogram than meat production, with a 99% smaller carbon footprint.

Elliot thinks the vertical farming model is not only achievable, but a more sustainable way of securing the future of the industry, as traditional methods of growing become more and more vulnerable.

"For British farmers, thinking outside the box isn't just an opportunity, it's become a necessity. Diversifying into innovative, resource-efficient systems like mushroom cultivation can help strengthen food security, reduce environmental impact, and build a more future-proof industry."

Tiptree Farm in Essex (growing fruit to fill the nation's – and world's – jam pots with its Wilkin & Sons products) has spent many years perfecting its own modern farming systems and, like Urban Farm Produce, considers new ways of working as utterly essential. Co-director, Chris Newenham, says it's their responsibility to think greener.

The Tiptree sustainability journey has its roots in water. Fruits need a lot of it, but their site is scarce, with no ground water abstraction available. To address this and ensure future water resilience, they invested in a groundbreaking and UK-first (in 2017) NGS system for strawberries, which has improved yields, reduced input requirements, and created better working conditions for staff.

In the oscillating system, alternating rows are raised or lowered so pickers and growers can tend to the plants either side of them. Recycled coir keeps the plants in place. And the system collects water, which is then filtered and used to irrigate the crops.

The closed system saves 10% on picking costs compared to tabletop growing, and 40% compared to growing berries in the ground. Crops are available earlier and later into the season. Mildew has been reduced. Insects are kept out through fine mesh. And the overall land footprint required is lower. It's been a win-win, and revolutionises how strawberries could be grown across Britain.

A fresh look at hospitality

As we've already established, vertical farming could play a big part in the future of food security. But what about looking up – or out – into more unusual locations for growing? This is exactly what The Culpeper Family group of gastropubs in London has done, demonstrating what small-scale farming and growing within hospitality could look like.

The group's first pub, The Culpeper in Spitalfields, has its own rooftop garden, producing vegetables and herbs, while further investment has taken place in the form of a small urban farm in Deptford, which enables chefs to get more hands on with ingredients while shortening supply chains.

Co-founder, Nico Teguer, says they have a lot of fun varying the plantings while improving biodiversity, and grew more than 200kg of produce in 2025, from tomatoes to edible flowers.

"We are very aware that we will always need the farms in the countryside to feed the people, and that urban food growing is only part of the puzzle, but who does not want to live in a more natural environment with shorter distance covered from field to fork?"

As well as inspiring the team, they hope it can be a catalyst for change, Nico adds. "We continue



> “For British farmers, thinking outside the box isn’t just an opportunity, it’s become a necessity”
>
> **ELLIOT WEBB, FOUNDER, URBAN FARM PRODUCE**

to believe in a network of small urban growing spaces to surround ourselves further with nature. We are really passionate about the role that business and hospitality as an industry can play in society to reconnect people with nature, and we want The Culpeper Family to lead the way to show it is possible to have a great business, respectful of the land for now and future generations.”

To this end, the group has set up its own not-for-profit organisation, Ethical Land CIC, aimed at supporting urban growing and organic and regenerative farming in the UK, while promoting wild natural environmental conservation.

They’re open to speaking to other hospitality venues about how they can make urban farming work, and Nico says it would be great to see others adapt to grow even a small amount of products themselves, but change, “can simply be to use shorter supply chains, purchasing from local growers who work organically with nature. More local and more tasty, with less money going in the wrong pockets. It’s a genuine win for all.”

Working with nature

Being nature-friendly, rather than using methods which actively push back against the environmental order of things, is how we would have farmed in the past. Increasingly farmers are looking back to look forwards, reintegrating sound, time-honoured traditions into their practices alongside the latest tech.

Winemaking is on the up across Northern Europe, but especially England, as warmer climates increase yields and produce sweeter fruits. This growing market has the opportunity to learn from the successes and mistakes of established peers, particularly when it comes to sustainability – not something the industry is widely known for.

Roebuck Estates in West Sussex recognises the challenges, and has made it its mission to be as supportive of nature as possible, even employing an ecologist.

Everything they do, says CEO Michael Kennedy, is with an eye on producing the best quality fruit for winemaking, while managing the vineyards in a way that’s as healthy as possible.

“One of the biggest decisions we took was going herbicide-free at the beginning of 2023, so we’re now going into our third year. It was very much with the view to reduce the use of chemicals and manage the soil more naturally. That was quite a big deal for us, and it’s been a learning process.”

It may sound counter-productive, but one benefit of taking herbicides out of the system has been reduced vigour in the vines, meaning they don’t have to strip the canopy so much, saving time and energy.

Tracking across the estate shows there are more earthworms in the soil – an indicator of health, and something the Soil Association has praised the business for.

Bringing in ecologist Matt seemed like an natural step for the winemakers, who were encouraged not to focus on attracting one species, but instead to think holistically about their site. The changes made, including extending hedgerows, adding wildflower meadows and installing bat and bird boxes and a pond, have increased the bee population to around 1 million across the vineyards, and seen an influx of bats, which has been a revelation for Michael. “Matt’s been very keen to encourage them. They’ll eat 1-2kg of insects a night, which really helps us in terms of pest control.

“We’re also doing things to encourage slow worms and grass snakes. And we put trail cameras in to track a number of species. One thing we noticed last year was someone saw a weasel in the vineyard for the first time – now we’ve had a dozen sightings. They’ve helped with the rabbit population.”

Grazing 800 sheep across the vineyards in winter provides natural organic fertiliser. Chemicals are further being reduced by breaking the vineyards into ‘blocks’ and using data to track is spraying is required. “It’s really working,” Michael says.

Rethinking waste

Food waste, as we know, is a massive part of the conversation in sustainability. According to the Food Foundation, around 2.7 million tonnes of it is thrown out by producers, businesses and householders every year. Globally, it’s thought a jaw-dropping third of all food produced is wasted.

In farming, could modern freeze-drying techniques be the saviour of so-called ‘wonky’ produce that’s otherwise rejected by many larger retailers, or used as a way to preserve an overly abundant yield?

Very possibly. The latest food tech is helping Hampshire’s New Forest Fruit Company to not only grow its strawberries more sustainably, but turn them into snacks in a canny way that paves the way for others.

The idea, to make crispy strawberry snacks, is as much a commercial decision as a way to deal with waste, says owner Sandy Booth. “We are a strawberry producer,” he says. “That is our bread and butter, but that is a seasonal business. We grow strawberries shall we say, nine months of the year, and that other ‘dead time’ eats at money. You have to have some other form of income coming in. Ten per cent of our strawberry yield on average is classed as waste due to being too big or too small or the wrong shape, wonky as some put it. That would usually go to jamming or, in the past, to the bin. Since launching New Forest Fruit Snacks, 5% is going into the snacking business and the rest into jamming.”



No preservatives are added. It’s just the pure taste of berries, thanks to the clever pulse and freeze-drying technique used at the farm. Strawberries are picked and their tops removed before they’re pulsed and bagged then frozen until they go on to be freeze dried. This keeps the flavour and structural integrity of the berries intact.

“Pulsing allows us to leave the nutrition in and get the water out,” Sandy explains. “Otherwise, when they get freeze dried the cells can crush. When you open the pack you get a lovely aroma, as if they’ve just been picked.”

Other very interesting deployments on the farm include robotic UV light systems, which has reduced mildew on-farm (and is to be expanded due to success from 1 hectare to 60 hectares this year), with hopes this will help the business take chemicals out of the system; and the coir used to grow the strawberries is recycled to grow pesticide-free asparagus on-site, which crops much earlier than anywhere else in the UK, and with higher sugar levels, giving the vegetables an unparalleled flavour favoured by some of nation’s top chefs.

This same coir, as well as recycled strawberry tunnels, is being used in the company’s winemaking business, B58 Winery, enabling them to grow sweet, succulent grapes not usually associated with English wine, such as Merlot, Shiraz and Grenache. Already these are turning heads at awards.

One thing’s for certain. Britain’s farmers, through necessity, are leading the way in their interpretation of how the industry will look in the next five, 10 or even 15 years, and with support, their efforts could be very fruitful indeed.





SUSTAINABLE CHAMPIONS 2026

We profile the businesses putting sustainability at the heart of their mission this year



Meet the gamechangers

We are all familiar with the language around sustainability, and if you read our recently published *Ultimate Guide to Sustainable Supply* – available to download via the *Speciality Food* website – you'll have heard from multiple experts why it is so vital that we act now to save the health of our planet and the people who rely on it.

You'll find yet more valuable insights within these pages and in our report on page 25, as well as inspiring stories from the businesses and food and drink brands who are making it their mission to build a better future for us all. From operational innovations to planet-first philosophies, the businesses profiled on the following pages are truly moving the needle when it comes to sustaining the food industry and beyond for future generations.

In the fine food industry, we have the luxury of being connected to both the grass roots of the food we work with and the end consumer who enjoys them, and those connections are invaluable. Nobody likes to be preached to, but by educating ourselves around the value of working more sustainably, being inspired by businesses such as those featured in the following pages, and making active change to be more supportive of people and planet, we can hold our heads up high as champions of a sustainable future.

HOLLY SHACKLETON | EDITOR



www.islandbakery.scot

BIONA

"We continually reinvest in spreading our mission"



"First and foremost, the whole ethos behind the Biona brand is centred around the belief that organic food has a positive impact for the environment, for wildlife and for those that eat it," says Carmen Ferguson, brand manager at Biona's parent company Windmill Organics. "We are a family-run business led by Noel and Donata, who live and breathe the sustainable lifestyle and ensure our delicious products will never come at the expense of our values, so despite the tough economic climate we have remained 100% organic and haven't introduced any conventional lines which have higher environmental impacts."

The health of people and planet is at the heart of Biona's values. "Our mission remains to make it easy for people to choose food that's good for them and great for the planet, so all our products are grown on organic land to the highest welfare and environmental standards," Carmen continues. "This means Biona's customers know that they're investing in all the benefits organic brings to the environment, from reduced greenhouse gas emissions to greater biodiversity and soil healthy enough to feed the world for generations to come."

"But our sustainability credentials are not just around our product range. We focus on sustainable sourcing so, for example, all our soy comes from deforestation-free sources, we use only a very small amount of palm oil (all of which is RSPO certified), and where possible we only use plastic-free packaging across our portfolio, such as in our pasta range which is sold in paper bags. Despite an extensive catalogue of over 400 products, we never use air freight and also optimise transportation and logistics to reduce the number of shipments we're bringing in and only work with third parties who are moving towards EV's. In 2025, we measured our full carbon footprint for the first time which confirmed very low Scope 1 and 2 emissions of greenhouse gasses, largely due to our environmentally conscious office which is run on clean energy. Finally, in 2025 we donated 9,553kg of short-dated stock (around 24,000 portions of food) to City Harvest to reduce food waste and support local communities."

The future looks green for Biona. "The brand will continue to put its money where its mouth is, so as Biona grows, the company continually reinvests in spreading our mission to convert farmland to organic land across the world, to the benefit of everyone."



LEE HOLDSTOCK

HEAD OF REGULATORY AND TRADE AFFAIRS AT SOIL ASSOCIATION

"Quality and dietary needs are driving more frequent purchases of organic food and drink across all income

Awareness is definitely growing around the dangers of pesticides and PFAs ("forever chemicals" – which are often found in the artificially derived pesticides that are not permitted in organic farming) and consumers are seeking to reduce their chemical load. Organic offers a trusted alternative which is demonstrated in this year's organic market report, showing a continued growth in the market.

Soil Association Certification is continuously committed to raising awareness of the benefits of organic with campaigns like Wake up to Organic, Organic Open Farm Sunday and Organic September, which we would love to see independent retailers get involved with.

Availability of organic food continues to be a barrier for many people. We know that demand for organic food remains high with the latest figures showing that there has been 7% growth of sales of organic in major retail over the last 12 months (*Organic Market Report*, Soil Association Certification, 2026).

While some consumers may see price as a barrier to eating more organic food, some of the latest research actually shows that it is lower- and middle-income shoppers who are now the most frequent buyers of organic food and drink, whereas the highest income bracket are "Deal-seekers", buying organic less frequently when offers mean the price is more comparative to conventional. The research shows consumers are seeking a balance between cost and value and health, quality and dietary needs are driving more frequent purchases of organic food and drink across all income brackets.

DARK WOODS COFFEE

"The Dark Woods Foundation is our way of giving back"



A passion for doing good through great coffee drives the Dark Woods team, and is evident throughout the business. At the heart of its mission is the triple bottom line business model, which demonstrates that carefully balancing social and environmental responsibility with financial performance not only sustains the business itself but also a healthy future for the global coffee industry.

In 2020 Dark Woods became a certified B Corp and have gone on to become one of the world's leading B Corp businesses through a combination of social and environmental practices. "These take many forms within Darkwoods," begins Damian Blackburn, director. For example, the Dark Woods Foundation was set up to promote and support domestic and global sustainable development. "The Foundation is our way of giving back to the communities and producers we rely on, locally and around the world," explains Damian. "It will have the resources and capability to support innovative programmes that contribute to the global sustainability goals that we have signed up to."

Dark Woods gives back to the communities it works with in Ethiopia, Peru and Panama, not only by making donations and providing support to community groups and charities but also by maintaining longstanding relationships with its suppliers. "These are mutually beneficial partnerships; 99% of our coffee buying is agreed through forward-contracts, providing the certainty and trust that enables our partners to invest in their farms and communities, and secures us the quality and supply security for our customers," explains Damian.

The business has embraced circular economy principles, including using home-compostable material to house the excellent coffee in its food service and retail range and rethinking delivery and on-site waste. Plus, the team is dedicated to supporting both local and international communities. "We donate at least 2% of our annual turnover to charities and community groups," says Damian, "and run a local community grants program, providing support to small grass-roots charities and groups in and around our local town of Huddersfield while funding the running of a childrens home and orphanage in southern Ethiopia, in partnership with Ardent Coffee."

EMILIA'S CRAFTED PASTA

"Sustainability isn't a trend for us"



"Sustainability has been at the heart of Emilia's since we opened our first restaurant nine years ago, and our retail pasta carries forward the same values," begins Becky Gill, national account manager at Emilia's Crafted Pasta. "One of our strongest sustainability credentials is our 100% recyclable paper packaging – designed to offer an environmentally responsible alternative in a retail market where mixed-material, hard-to-recycle packs are still the norm."

As well as being visually appealing, the range's packaging ticks a lot of sustainable boxes. "Our packaging has no plastic windows, no laminates and no hidden films, ensuring it can be recycled in standard household paper streams.

66% OF PEOPLE AGREE THE **FOOD SECTOR** SHOULD PRIORITIZE **CIRCULAR PRACTICES**, SUCH AS **COMPOSTING** AND **REDUCING FOOD WASTE**

FOOD FUTURE 2035: THE CRITICAL DECADE, BSI GROUP



COLIN MASON

BVM&S BSC CERT CHP MRCVS, VET-CONSULTANT, RUMINANT REVIVAL

"Provenance has traditionally meant knowing where your food comes from – the farm, the region, the breed. That remains important, but it's no longer enough"

Retailers and consumers are now asking deeper questions about how food is produced, not just where it is produced.

For meat and dairy, this means looking beyond the label to understand how animals are kept healthy. What systems are in place to prevent disease? What advice is the farmer receiving, and from who? These questions matter because they directly shape the product's health and welfare credentials, nutritional quality, and sustainability.

Consumers expect transparency about medicine use, what terms like 'organic', 'sustainable', or 'regenerative' actually mean, and whether welfare claims stand up to scrutiny. Provenance is evolving to encompass these concerns. It's becoming less about geography and more about the whole system behind the product.

Retailers and producers are closer to what happens on farm than they might realise. The choices they make about sourcing, the questions they ask of suppliers, and the standards they set all influence how animals are reared and kept healthy.

When retailers demand credible evidence of low medicine use or robust welfare standards, they create incentives for farmers to adopt better practices. When they ask how health problems are prevented rather than just treated, they encourage a shift towards proactive management. This ripples back through the supply chain.

The good news is that there's more information available than ever before, and asking the right questions doesn't require deep technical knowledge. Retailers and producers can start by asking suppliers questions like: How do you keep your animals healthy? What's your approach to preventing disease rather than just treating it? Is the advice you receive independent of commercial interests? These aren't confrontational questions. They're the same questions progressive farmers are asking themselves. UK farm antibiotic sales have fallen by 55% since 2014, largely because vets and farmers have shifted towards prevention. That's a story retailers should want to tell.

Empowerment comes from understanding that these conversations benefit everyone in the chain. Healthy, well-managed farms produce higher-quality products more reliably with fewer inputs. That means a more secure supply chain and better margins for retailers. It also gives them a meaningful way to communicate with customers who ask about the origins of their food.

Research consistently shows growing demand for transparency around medicine use, animal welfare, and what 'sustainable' actually means in practice. Generic claims no longer cut it. People want to know specifics, and they're increasingly sceptical of labels that can't be backed up. At the same time, the farming sector has changed significantly. The 55% reduction in antibiotic use isn't just a headline figure; it reflects a genuine shift in how progressive farms operate, with vets leading proactive health programmes rather than simply responding to problems. Retailers who understand this shift can source more confidently and communicate more credibly.

Understanding this shift and seeking suppliers' advice is a good place for retailers to start. It connects the dots between what happens on farm and what ends up on the counter.

THE GARLIC FARM

"We believe that business can be a force for good"

With a vision to develop health and happiness for people and planet, The Garlic Farm is thriving in its mission to promote sustainable farming and production to food lovers across the UK and beyond.

"We are a family business which aims to protect and restore the land we rely on for the long term," explains Natasha Edwards, managing director. "We see ourselves as custodians of the land and business for future generations of our family and our community, and aim to create net positive social and environmental impacts through a series of measurements ensuring constant improvement."

A raft of certifications, from Organic to Pasture for Life and B Corp – not to mention a 2025 King's Award for Enterprise in Sustainable Development – help The Garlic Farm to communicate their values as well as inform their farming and business practices.

"We believe that business can be a force for good, creating positive outcomes for people and planet, while maintaining commercial viability, ie a profitable business. If we focused solely on profit, we would miss the core long-term reasons that our business can thrive; our community, our natural environment and a healthy, motivated team."

The business invests in land management practices that actively support nature, including carbon sequestration, water quality, soil health, biodiversity and animal health. "As a farming business, we



can have significant impact in these areas," says Natasha. "Our adaptive multipaddock grazing, WETland wastewater treatment system and agroforestry projects all make significant contributions to these sustainability measures."

"In terms of social impact, our focus has been on team wellbeing, community engagement and support for local causes," she continues. "We offer paid volunteering opportunities for all team members, support local charities with donations and fundraising events and we have a unique 'buddy scheme' allowing those needing extra help in the workplace the opportunity to be part of our team. Providing free access to farmland throughout the year as well as free school visits for Island primary schools and regular work experience for our local special-needs school students helps us to engage young people in nature and farming."

The paper itself comes from responsibly managed forests, and the design uses minimal material and low-coverage printing to reduce waste and environmental impact."

The pasta inside reflects the same care. It is crafted in Gragnano using traditional bronze dies, which maintain quality without industrial shortcuts; slow-dried at low temperatures, avoiding the high-energy, high-heat cycles used in many industrial pasta plants; made with Italian durum wheat sourced from growers who prioritise soil health, responsible fertilisation, and sustainable farming practices; and produced by a facility committed to minimising waste, recycling offcuts and continually reducing energy usage.

"The result is a retail pasta that mirrors the values we've upheld in our restaurants for almost a decade: minimal waste, simple high-quality ingredients, responsible sourcing, and respect for tradition," says Becky.

Emilia's sustainability philosophy is built on the same three pillars that have guided the restaurants since day one – and now shape the retail pasta too: simplicity is inherently sustainable; transparency and integrity across the supply chain; and long-term thinking over quick wins.

"In short: sustainability isn't a trend for us," says Becky. "It's a continuation of the standards we set nine years ago, now reaching even further as we continue to grow our retail business."

> "Emilia's Crafted Pasta is a retail pasta that mirrors the values we've upheld in our restaurants for almost a decade: minimal waste, simple high quality ingredients, responsible sourcing, and respect for tradition"

EMMI

"Emmi plays a pioneering role in the circular economy"



Emmi's sustainability credentials are deeply rooted in its Swiss heritage and long-standing partnerships with milk suppliers. Since its founding in 1907, the company has worked closely with small and medium-sized family farms, creating long-term value in rural regions while treating people, animals, and nature with respect. Almost all of Emmi's milk is sourced in Switzerland, where some of the world's strictest environmental and animal-welfare standards apply.

Animal welfare is a core priority within Emmi's value chain, explains Amanda Burningham, Emmi Cheese brand lead. "Around 98% of Swiss dairy farms meet the Ecological Performance Certificate (OLN) requirements, production is largely grass-based, and approximately 80% of agricultural land is permanent grassland. About 90% of animal feed is sourced locally, and 89% of cows spend at least 26 days per month outdoors during the grazing season. These conditions not only support animal wellbeing but also directly influence the quality of Emmi's cheeses, such as Kaltbach Emmentaler and Kaltbach Gruyère, where flavour, texture, and character are closely linked to grass-based feeding and regional origin."

Alongside sustainable sourcing, Emmi has made significant progress in reducing the environmental footprint of its own operations. Since 2014, the company has reduced its direct greenhouse gas emissions by around 25% and increasingly relies on renewable energy. "Waste reduction, circular packaging solutions, and the reuse of by-products - such as whey from cheese production – are firmly embedded in daily operations", explains Amanda. Plus, sustainability is anchored in Emmi's governance and corporate strategy, supported by partnerships and aligned with broader goals including climate action and responsible production.

"Emmi stands out by taking a whole value-chain approach to sustainability, combining regional sourcing, innovation, and measurable impact," says Amanda. "It relies on Swiss farms with grass-based grazing systems that support biodiversity, enhance CO capture, and ensure high-quality dairy production, while helping farmers reduce emissions through long-term partnerships."

Beyond sourcing, Emmi plays a pioneering role in the circular economy as a founding member of RecyPac, actively helping to build Switzerland's first nationwide recycling system for plastic packaging and beverage cartons.



FAIRFIELDS FARM

"We're always looking at ways we can progress"



"Fairfields Farm makes thick-cut, skin-on potato crisps that don't just taste delicious – they're vegan, gluten free, carbon neutral and made from potatoes we grow ourselves," begins Robert Strathern, co-founder. They're free from major allergens too, which means there's something for everyone to enjoy.

"From our fields to our factory, we're focused on making practical, meaningful changes that help reduce our environmental impact and protect the land we care so much about. "Water plays a huge role in growing great potatoes, so we manage it carefully. Our reservoirs and closed-loop underground piping network are designed to minimise energy use as much as possible. We also grow maize and rye to feed the on-site anaerobic digestion (AD) plant which produces a handy byproduct called 'digestate' that's used to fertilise the soil."

Fairfields Farm are always looking for smarter ways to use energy, too – from transitioning to an electric forklift fleet, to using solar panels to help power our office operations. "Even our cooking oil used to make our crisps has a second life – it's collected and repurposed into biodiesel," says Robert.

Over the last few years 2,800 trees were planted in collaboration with volunteers supporting carbon sequestration and enhancing local biodiversity, bringing the community together, and the team engages with schools to share the farming process, from planting to harvesting potatoes to spark a passion for farming in their community.

"We're always looking at ways we can progress, with a goal to achieve on-farm net zero by 2033, building on the regenerative farming techniques we already use, such as no-plough practices and cover cropping," says Robert. "Plus, plans for adding extra solar panels and improving efficiency in our factory are just a few ways we are moving a step closer to our goals."

> "We're always looking at ways we can progress, with a goal to achieve on-farm net zero by 2033"

TRACKLEMENTS

"We have only used renewable energy for a decade"

As one of the few B Corp accredited food manufacturers in the UK, Tracklements, makers of best-tasting, best-quality condiments, take a holistic approach to sustainability – making good food, whilst doing things the 'right way'. Manufacturing businesses are typically associated with having a higher social and environmental impact and Tracklements have been actively tackling this perception head-on for over 50 years, working to an ethos of 'putting more back in than they take out', all so that retailers can sell, and shoppers can eat, Tracklements with a righteous glow.

"From the big things like sourcing ingredients from farmers and growers in Britian where possible and achieving zero waste to landfill, through to the daily habits like getting milk delivered in glass bottles so they can be recycled, we are on a journey to being better every day," says Liz Cuff, marketing director.

Tracklements source best-quality, happily wonky, ingredients from the UK where possible, to reduce food transport and support British farmers, growers and suppliers, whether it's 40,000kg of fresh horseradish from East Anglia or 170,000L of Cider Vinegar from Aspall in Suffolk. "We extend their high sourcing standards through to materials too," she continues. "For example, we get our glass jars (made from 30% recycled glass) from a British glass manufacturer to avoid transporting empty glass around the world."

As pioneers in the ESG (Environment, Social and Governance) space, when building their purpose-built HQ in Wiltshire back in 2008, Tracklements happily bucked the trend by installing windows throughout the factory – despite the advice of building industry experts, keen to stick to the 'norm' of food factory standards – to ensure Tracklementeers had daylight throughout the factory whilst working, creating better working environment, simply because it was the right thing to do.

"At HQ, Tracklements have used only renewable electricity for the last decade, part derived from 10,000 square feet of solar panels



(with a 150kW capacity), and with the exciting development of extra warehousing space at HQ, we will soon be incorporating more solar panels to generate a further 210kW of green electricity, and adding an additional 10 electric car charging points taking their total up to 14 and facilitating electric car usage for their 70 employees."

Tracklements' commitment to sustainability is always at the forefront as the business continues to grow from strength to strength.

FOOD PRODUCTION IS RESPONSIBLE FOR AROUND **26%** OF **GLOBAL** GREENHOUSE GAS **EMISSIONS** AND USES **70%** OF GLOBAL **FRESHWATER** WITHDRAWALS

OUR WORLD IN DATA



ANNA MANN

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS AT FAIRTRADE FOUNDATION

The value of Fairtrade in today's marketplace

True sustainability extends beyond environmental protection to address social issues such as fair wages, safe working conditions, gender equality, and community development. It must empower farmers with stable incomes, support democratic cooperatives, and enable producers to invest in their communities and futures through improved education, healthcare, and local infrastructure.

Fairtrade offers a practical framework that puts those social dimensions of sustainability into action. It takes the principles of fair wages, safe conditions, gender equality, community investment, and turns them into enforceable standards within global supply chains.

Fairtrade also has an important role to play in advocating with businesses and government for changes to the trading system to make it fairer so that the lives of farmers and workers are improved. Fairtrade is currently campaigning for the UK Government to introduce a single responsible business law that will ensure that human rights are respected and the environment is protected. Mandatory Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence (HREDD) would require companies to identify, prevent, mitigate, and take responsibility for human rights abuses such as unfair pay and environmental harm within their operations. We believe this legislation would not only be good for farmers and workers, it will also bring benefits for consumers and for businesses. A single law would simplify the regulatory framework for UK companies and keeps the UK competitive and avoids trade barriers.

Effective HREDD requires companies to move beyond minimum wage compliance and address the gap between minimum wages and living wages. A core area of HREDD is evaluating how a company's own purchasing practices (e.g., low prices, last-minute changes) contribute to poor wages and overtime at the supplier level. Companies are expected to engage with suppliers to ensure fair wages, social security, and formal contracts, as seen in Fairtrade Standards. Poverty and inequality are the main causes of many risks in global supply chains, that's why it's important that there is a collaboration between suppliers, buyers, governments and civil society. In order that farmers can invest in strong due diligence measures, they need to be able to achieve better prices, longer lasting business relationships, and co-investment among all supply chain actors.

Independent fine food retailers can get involved by sourcing Fairtrade products, learning about Fairtrade standards, asking suppliers to source Fairtrade products and staying informed through Fairtrade Foundation resources. They can educate customers with clear in-store information, staff training, and small events that highlight Fairtrade products. They can also use our online resources and publicly back campaigns like HREDD, use social media to raise awareness, and expand their Fairtrade product range to show real commitment to ethical trade. We urge any company, big or small, to reach out to us and start a conversation.

FIELDFARE

"Our model empowers shoppers"

"At Fieldfare, sustainability has always been about helping shoppers make smarter choices with their food," says Matt Whelan, MD. Frozen is naturally aligned with the needs of the environmentally conscious shopper (numbers of which are increasing), because it gives households more time to enjoy what they buy, without it going to waste. "Nearly five decades on since Fieldfare began, our loose frozen model continues to empower shoppers to take exactly what they need, whether that is a single portion, meal makers for a smaller household meal or enough for a bigger family, making it easier to plan, store and enjoy food fully."

Food waste remains one of the biggest environmental challenges. In the UK, half of all food wasted each year is residential [Numan]. "I firmly believe that in the food industry we have a responsibility to help address that and support our consumers to live more sustainably," says Matt. "Scoop-your-own is a format that works well in frozen, allowing retailers to manage stock more efficiently in store and of course giving the consumer incredible



flexibility, which they love, while reducing potential food waste they might have incurred when shopping in other categories."

Like most producers Fieldfare are on a journey to do more. "While most of our range is packaging free, we are committed to further reducing unnecessary packaging," says Matt. "Currently 92% of our range is sold loose and we only launch new products in an unpackaged format.

"In 2026 I would love to see more fine food and speciality retailers consider how loose frozen ticks so many boxes for their consumer, while making a tangible difference to their environmental impact.

> "At Fieldfare, sustainability has always been about helping shoppers make smarter choices with their food. Nearly five decades on, our frozen model continues to empower shoppers"

FEN FARM DAIRY

"We respect and nurture our ecosystem"



"Our mission at Fen Farm Dairy is to nourish land, animals and people, so running a sustainable farm and business is core to that," begins Jonny Crickmore, owner of Fen Farm Dairy. "Green farming isn't easy, but we work tirelessly to make positive, incremental changes in our every day operations – to give back more than we consume."

The past few years have seen some sizeable changes on the farm. Solar panels on the cows' winter barns, creating a cow poo-powered heat exchange system, and introducing a biomass straw burner – all of which provide valuable resources for the farm – are helping the team to achieve their goal. A new silage bunker and reservoir have been established in the past 12 months.

In terms of our day to day farming practices, says Jonny, "we truly believe that dairy and meat production and consumption can be good for the planet – and is actually a part of the solution when done right. Here at Fen Farm, we put back what we take – and we respect and nurture our ecosystem."

One example is trying to grow all of the necessary winter feed on their own land, immediately surrounding the farm. This is a mixture of herbal ley, grass and whole crop silage. "That way, we can be self-sufficient and have full control over the quality of our cows' winter feed – plus we drastically reduce the need to import feed from across the globe," Jonny explains. The herbal leys and grasses grown for winter feed can occupy a field for several years in a row, greatly reducing the need for ploughing and soil disturbance. This allows healthy root structures and mycorrhizal communities to become established, contributing to improved soil health, reduced runoff and greater carbon storage potential.

MATTHEWS COTSWOLD FLOUR

"We are working towards a regenerative farming model"



Bertie Matthews is the 8th generation MD of Matthews Cotswold Flour. "We have long advocated for regenerative farming practices, which prioritise soil health, biodiversity and carbon capture," he begins. "Through our Cotswold Grain Partnership, we work closely with local farmers to ensure they adopt practices that protect the environment. We also help identify specialty grains and diversification options that allow farmers and soil systems to thrive. We are working alongside them to move all our grains to a regenerative farming model by 2030. These are long term partnerships that will benefit the soil, the farmers and our customers for generations to come."

Matthews Cotswold Flour has just added five new regenerative flours to its premium quality, award-winning range: Regenerative Plain, Self-Raising, Artisan T65 Bread Flour, Wholemeal and Fine Cake flours. Each of the new flours is milled from grains farmed in a way that improves soil health and will enable trade customers and consumers to create delicious, nutritious, planet-friendly bakes. The new products, available in 1.5kg bags and 16kg sacks, have been added to the brand's regenerative range which already includes All Purpose, Light and Dark Spelt and Strong Bread Flour.

Bertie adds, "Our regenerative journey started back in 2019 when we sat down with local farmers to see if they could grow grain that's good for the land, the farmer, and the baker. Since then, we've developed our own audit process and standards that help farms rebuild soil health, boost biodiversity and restore balance to our food system. Through our Cotswold Grain Partnership, we are helping farmers grow grains that bring life back to the soil and flavour back to the loaf. We are delighted to be able to share these new flours with our customers to help them on their regenerative journey too."

> We have long advocated for regenerative farming practices



JOHNNY WAKE

MANAGING PARTNER, COURTEENHALL ESTATE

Building a sustainable legacy

With a 350-year heritage, sustainability at Courteenhall is multifaceted and constantly evolving. There must be reasons which motivate a business to be more sustainable, and for us, that reason is leaving a legacy to be proud of. Sustainability is not just an end in itself.

From my perspective that's all about taking a long-term view and considering sustainability holistically. Financial and environmental sustainability are obviously key in the decisions we make. But alongside this, it's important not to lose sight of role of sustainable communities. It is often the aspect that gets overlooked.

If food and farming are managed in isolation, then it becomes a bit like a piece of flesh without a blood supply. Just as limbs die without blood flow connecting them to the body, farming initiatives fail without community engagement. This poses a real threat by undermining the resilience of both the land and the people it supports.

As a former GP, I remain committed to the idea that healthy, nutritious food should be accessible to all. High quality, locally sourced fresh produce should be obtainable for everyone, as a good diet is a cornerstone for every community's wellbeing, and a society that flourishes.

Making this a reality is a dynamic process, driven by collaboration and education to help bridge the gap between the growing rural / urban divide.

Giving people opportunities to engage with farming, the natural environment and encouraging a stronger connection with food production builds greater understanding of the importance of local, seasonal, balanced natural systems.

In practical terms, Courteenhall has a long and proud history of supporting our neighbours. For us, sustainability means providing food that is good for people, the planet, and the community.

It's a responsibility that many in the sector take seriously. Initiatives such as LEAF's Open Farm Sunday and our own New Leaf Learning Programme are turning good intentions into measurable results. We are all accountable for showcasing a route forward in promoting and facilitating social cohesion.

Sustainability can only truly succeed when we build relationships that last – whether with customers, local suppliers, or future generations.

Building sustainable food systems and resilient communities isn't easy, but it's a goal worth striving for. Creating a legacy that we're proud of, depends on leaving the land and the people who live on it in a better place than when we started.

THERE HAS BEEN **7% GROWTH** OF SALES OF **ORGANIC** IN MAJOR **RETAIL** OVER THE LAST **12 MONTHS**

ORGANIC MARKET REPORT, SOIL ASSOCIATION CERTIFICATION, 2026



GODMINSTER

"Our commitment to organic is at the heart of our motto"



Godminster's waxed cheeses are proudly organic and have been for over 25 years now. "Our commitment to organic is at the heart of our motto 'nature repays those who treat her kindly', which sums up our ethos of looking after the British countryside," begins Jessica Kimber-Holloway, commercial and operations director.

Organic dairy farming is one of the highest welfare standards in the UK. Plus, organic farms are more resilient to climate change and have healthier soils, and are 25% more effective at storing carbon. "This isn't fake news or greenwashing; the good that organic farming does for the environment is demonstrably backed by scientific studies and has been for years," says Jessica.

"What's more, organic farming is legally bound to uphold their commitment to preserving the environment.

"In 2025 we completed the first step in a major carbon measurement project," she continues. By measuring their carbon footprint and setting reduction targets, Godminster is supporting the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, a blueprint for creating a healthier planet and a net-zero carbon future.

Godminster's next step is to use the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) framework to set measurable goals for cutting down emissions.

"In October 2025 we took a big step forward in our sustainability journey. For the first time, we measured the carbon footprint of our operations – a piece of work that took months of data collection and calculations done by the science team at Planet Mark, who work with businesses to establish scientific frameworks for their carbon measurement," Sarah explains. "This year, we're widening our scopes to include even more facets of our organisation – as well as working on reducing those scary carbon numbers, of course!"

> In October 2025 we took a big step forward in our sustainability journey by measuring the carbon footprint of our operations. This year, we're widening our scopes to include even more facets of our organisation

SEGGIANO

"We want sustainability to show up in the everyday decisions customers can feel"

Seggiano's approach to sustainability starts with how it sources. "We work with small, specialist producers across Italy and build long-term relationships that prioritise quality, traceability, and responsible farming and production practices," says Winette Winston, president and managing director. In practical terms, that means ingredients with integrity (often organic where it makes sense for the product and region), careful provenance, and simple recipes that avoid unnecessary additives and over-processing. Where Seggiano stands out is that sustainability isn't treated as a bolt-on claim – it's built into the way the team chooses partners and develop ranges. "We focus on craftsmanship and seasonality, and we look for producers who protect the character of their landscapes and raw materials (soil health, biodiversity, water stewardship and low-intervention methods, where applicable)," says Winette. That commitment to slower, more considered production helps keep supply chains transparent and supports rural communities and traditional food-making skills.

In 2026, Seggiano's focus is on measurable improvements and "less-but-better" choices. Key initiatives include: packaging optimisation (light-weighting where possible, reducing plastic components, and improving recyclability across formats); supply-chain visibility (deepening supplier data capture around farming practices, certifications, and continuous improvement targets); and logistics efficiency (further consolidation and planning to reduce avoidable freight emissions).

"Ultimately," says Winette, "we want sustainability to show up in the everyday decisions customers can feel: authentic ingredients, fewer compromises, and a supply chain that respects the people and places behind the food."



> "We want sustainability to show up in the everyday decisions customers can feel: authentic ingredients, fewer compromises, and a supply chain that respects the people and places behind the food"

ISLAND BAKERY

"We have always been as environmentally conscious as possible"

"From the very beginning of our biscuit-baking business in 2001 we set out to operate in as environmentally conscious way as we possibly could," begins Dawn Reade, director. "Some of the things we do, such as being an organic producer, we were able to do at the outset, but others have followed incrementally, such as when we built our new bakery in 2012 to be powered by sustainable, local renewable energy from wood and from wind and water electric turbines operated by our family at Isle of Mull Cheese on their farm next door to us."

Over the years Island Bakery has replaced plastic trays inside the biscuit packs with paper ones and eliminated palm oil from their recipes. "We are a certified organic producer demonstrating high animal welfare and full traceability, and use no artificial fertilisers, preservatives, or colours in our range. This leads to more nutrients in the product and healthier farm ecosystems."

Island Bakery's product range is also palm oil-free, meaning there is "no uncertainty about environmental impacts on endangered species' habitats," says Dawn. They also only use essential plastic packaging. "We still use a plastic film to give an airtight seal to our products and keep them fresh for the duration of their shelf life," she explains. "So-called compostable films do not yet perform adequately for this and the colossal amounts of energy used to produce them may outweigh the benefit of their use."

Island Bakery is powered by renewable energy, generated locally, and its ovens are heated with locally grown wood chip while electricity is locally generated by wind and water. "We are currently investigating the installation of solar panels at the bakery," says Dawn. "This was something we had hoped to do at the time we built the new bakery in 2012, but our budget just didn't allow it at that time. The cost of solar panels relative to their power output has fallen significantly since then and we hope we can make this a further addition to our sources of renewable energy in the coming year."



NEARLY **70%** OF CONSUMERS **ACTIVELY VERIFY** SUSTAINABILITY CLAIMS BEFORE **TRUSTING** A BRAND

2026 BUSINESS AND SUSTAINABILITY TRENDS REPORT, POSITIVE PLANET

SMURFIT WESTROCK

"Sustainability is a shared purpose that motivates our people"



Smurfit Westrock is a global leader in sustainable packaging, combining renewable materials, circular design, and low-carbon operations to help brands perform better today while preparing for tomorrow. In 2024, the company issued over US $2 billion in green bonds to accelerate its environmental goals and contracted nearly 700,000 MWh of renewable electricity to power its operations worldwide.

Its commitment to innovation and impact was recognised with 106 awards, including Innovation of the Year and Sustainability Award of the Year at the North America Paperboard Packaging Competition for developing sustainable alternatives in the multipack beverage segment. Prior to merging, together, Smurfit Kappa and WestRock have earned some of the industry's most respected awards, recognising their leadership in sustainability, innovation and responsible business.

These accolades reflect real customer value. Smurfit Westrock partners closely with customers to solve complex packaging challenges, combining proven innovation, technical expertise and sustainability insight to deliver regulation-ready, rigorously tested solutions that protect products, reduce environmental impact and perform across demanding supply chains.

"Sustainability at Smurfit Westrock is a shared purpose that motivates our people," says Suzy Gedney, UK marketing manager. "Our global teams design circular, lower-impact packaging, invest in renewables and communities, and continually improve through collaboration, creativity and care."

This people-led approach is powered by advanced platforms including Design2Market and SupplySmart, helping customers optimise packaging performance, improve efficiency and reduce carbon. As regulations such as EPR and carbon reporting tighten, Smurfit Westrock supports compliance, risk reduction and measurable progress without compromising performance or brand impact.

"Our commitment to collaboration is reflected in award-winning partnerships with retailers, manufacturers, and communities, driving scalable change and shared value," says Suzy. "Together, we're shaping a more sustainable future – one box, one innovation, one partnership at a time."

> "Together, we're shaping a more sustainable future – one box, one innovation, one partnership at a time"



PHILIP WYNN

CHAIR, LEAF

Driving supply chain change for a sustainable future

The changing fundamentals across farming and food production are clear for all to see. What makes this so significant is not just the fact that change is happening, but the sheer scale and pace of it. Across policy, genetics, technology, environmental pressures and increasing competition for land use, the sector is being reshaped in ways we couldn't have imagined even a decade ago.

To put that scale into context, the global food system is worth $14 trillion, generating around one-fifth of global GDP. One in three people on the planet works in agriculture – yet the sector typically contributes just 4% to national economies (in the UK that figure is as low as 0.56%). No other industry operates at this scale, with this level of complexity, or with this degree of imbalance.

For me, the solutions for a more stable, secure future lie in collaboration. The challenges are too extreme to be tackled in isolation. We need to work together, pooling knowledge and resources to create a truly sustainable food system.

One exciting prospect is the availability of more granular AI-driven data to improve decision-making, strengthen resilience and enhance productivity, while helping us reduce our carbon footprint. This information has the power to enhance both financial and environmental outcomes for producers across the UK and beyond.

What we grow, how we grow it and how it's processed now sits at the heart of every major environmental challenge we face.

At LEAF, we are focused on supporting the farm-to-market value chain to navigate this transformation through collaboration, knowledge exchange, and innovation. Whether this is through LEAF Marque global assurance; new technologies; ensuring the delivery of land-based college courses that equip the next generation with right skills; or initiatives such as Open Farm Sunday that engages directly with consumers.

While farmers are at the heart of this revolution, the responsibility doesn't stop there. The entire supply chain is crucial. Speciality food brands and retailers all hold the power to influence consumer choices and contribute to a shift in our food culture.

By championing sustainable sourcing, supporting regenerative practices and promoting transparency, every player can create stronger connections between farmers and consumers, building trust and understanding around the true value of food.

TWO FARMERS

"We've embraced innovation"

At Two Farmers, sustainability is more than a goal, it's woven into every part of what they do. The team have built a closed loop model to show how crisp production can operate responsibly, efficiently, and in harmony with nature.

"Our crisp facility in Herefordshire is powered entirely by renewable energy generated on site using solar panels coupled with anaerobic digestion (AD). Thanks to this integration, we are able to operate as a carbon-neutral producer, with our verified annual carbon footprint (around 350 tonnes CO e) fully offset through our renewable systems," explain Sean Mason and Mark Green, co-founders.

"All the potatoes we use are grown on our own farms adjacent to the factory," they continue. This proximity minimises transport emissions, ensures full traceability, and supports a truly local supply chain.

"In packaging, we've embraced innovation: our crisp packets are made from compostable, plant-based materials, printed with biodegradable inks and glues. After use, they can be collected, shredded, and fed into our AD process, breaking down fully to generate both renewable electricity for our operations and nutrient-rich digestate. That digestate is returned to our fields to nourish the next crop of potatoes, completing the loop from soil to packaging and back to soil."

But Two Farmers' commitment extends beyond operations, say Mark and Sean. "In partnership with the Herefordshire Wildlife Trust, we are actively restoring natural ecosystems through tree and hedge planting, regenerative soil practices, cover cropping, and organic soil amendments. These practices enhance soil health, support biodiversity, and contribute to natural carbon sequestration over time."

The Two Farmers approach proves that you can combine business



success with environmental responsibility. "Our closed loop solution is a replicable, future-ready model, one that helps organisations align with net-zero ambitions, reduce supply chain emissions, and demonstrate genuine sustainability across every stage of food production."

> "Our closed loop solution is a replicable, future-ready model, one that jelps organisations align with net-zero ambitions, reduce supply chain emissions, and demonstrate genuine sustainability across every stage of food production"

THE HIDDEN **SOCIAL** AND **ENVIRONMENTAL** COSTS OF **FOOD** AND **LAND** USE IS **ESTIMATED** BETWEEN **$10–19 TRILLION** ANNUALLY

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM





ZAC GOODALL

HEAD OF SUSTAINABILITY AT RIVERFORD

"Riverford's goal is to be the best example of 'agroecology'"

Riverford founder Guy Singh-Watson started farming organically at Riverford back in 1986, and this year we celebrate 40 years of staying true to our organic roots. The principles behind organic farming are woven into Riverford's ethos.

Riverford's goal is to be the best example of 'agroecology' – creating a landscape with: rich biodiversity; strong resilience to climate change; high levels of sequestered carbon; healthy soils; restored water quality. All while producing nutritious food for our customers. Working with our farmer friends, we want to set the blueprint for how the UK should farm in the future, for the future. Organic sets the bar high, but we need to go above and beyond.

We have successfully complete R & D trials in Peat Free Media (to reduce horticultural peat usage) successfully creating a peat free recipe to take to an industrialisation phase of the project, which we are now seeking funding for to realise its implementation across the commercial horticulture industry.

We have several agroforestry projects happening now, including silvo-horticultural planting and a collaborative project between three neighbouring farms (Riverford's Wash farm and 2 local suppliers) to plant several hectares of wood pasture and woodland systems, integrating woodland planting and livestock grazing. This is helping to build climate resilient farming systems.

Biodiversity Action Plans at Riverford Farms – from 2023 to 2025 included planting hundreds of meters of new hedgerow, digging multiple wildlife ponds, and altered hedgerow cutting regimes to increase the height, width and wildlife value of the hedgerow network.

SUMA

"Everything we do is done through a sustainability lens"

Suma has had sustainability at its core since it began in 1977. It has been vegetarian since day one, promoting a cruelty-free lifestyle which the Vegetarian Society claims generates 2.5 less carbon emissions than a carnivore diet. "We were founded on selling bulk products too, reducing plastic waste and promoting refills before they became the trend! Everything we do is done through a sustainability lens, from our packaging to our trucks, even the food waste from our canteen is sent to anaerobic digestions," says Rebecca Kinnard, marketing and brand product development co-operative member. Last year this total amounted to 7.55 tonnes of food.

In 2023 Suma launched their Sustainability Strategy. "Key highlights so far include completing our Scope 3 assessment," begins Rebecca. "We partner with Carbon Footprint Ltd to collect and analyse our data, and were able to establish a baseline for our carbon footprint, and set reduction targets.

"We are very proud our absolute emissions are falling from our direct operations. Our Scope 1 + 2 emissions reduced by 3.7% (62 tCO2e) last year 23/24 compared to the previous year 22/23. We have two biogas trucks now, which emit 84% fewer emissions than diesel trucks.

Packaging is a huge area for Suma. "We're proud of our partnership with Prevented Ocean Plastic™. This brilliant organisation collects plastic waste found close to rivers and oceans



that would otherwise be destined to pollute waterways. Instead, the waste is recycled and made into new products. Suma has been able to move over to using Prevented Ocean Plastic™ in many of our Ecoleaf and ALTER/NATIVE bottles."

The business also promotes bulk buying, refills and plastic reduction across our Suma brand, and last year launched its own range of bamboo kitchen utensils, as zero waste plastic-free alternatives.

"Our co-operative credentials allow us to stand out from other brands; being an equal-pay worker co-op is pretty unique for an organisation our size," Rebecca explains. "We've been recognised for this too. Ethical Consumer ranked Suma joint top of their supermarket category, and a huge range of our own brand products now carry the Ethical Consumer Best Buy logo, and the list is growing."



FINAL CALL

As you will have read in this issue, sustainability is no longer a 'nice to have' in the food and drink sectors.

It's a key consideration throughout the chain. Brands and manufacturers recognise that being more environmentally astute (particularly when it comes to waste management and circularity) is a not only good for business, but for the bottom line too.

Credentials (such as being B Corp, or using home compostable, fully recyclable materials, or shortening ingredient supply chains) put them in good stead with speciality retailers, who are finding their customers increasingly drawn to on-pack, online and social media sustainability claims – particularly climate conscious Gen-Z.

As with anything in life, you don't need to go 'all out' from the outset of your sustainability journey in order to make a difference. Small, incremental changes can add up to a big difference, and every little adjustment you can make will have an impact. For example...

How many of your customers bring their own bags so they don't rely on single-use paper or plastic? Can you reiterate the message across socials that they can help the planet by shopping with a reusable bag? Do you have boxes from deliveries (which might otherwise be thrown in the recycling bin) you can leave in a safe, visible place for customers to use?

Speak to your suppliers about alternative packaging/delivery methods. Do any of them offer circular systems you can integrate, or can they deliver in unwrapped crates or small pallets rather than in boxes (which they then take away) to minimise the amount of recycling you have to handle on site?

Scrutinise new lines more closely before putting them on the shelves, in the knowledge that shoppers in speciality retail are trusting you to do the thinking for them in relation to the environment. You should be questioning the recyclability of packaging, where ingredients are from, and how products are made in greater detail, looking beyond 'bright and shiny' packaging that will catch the eye. Today's consumers are studying labels more than ever before

We love hearing from our readers. Do you have a story to share or expertise to pass on? Please get in touch with charlotte.smith-jarvis@artichokehq.com

5 MINUTES WITH

MARIE VOIRIN, BELLAMIE



WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING IF YOU WEREN'T IN THE FOOD AND DRINK INDUSTRY?
I would love to work in luxury experiences - for example with Belmond, on their trains like the Orient Express or their beautiful river boats that go through Champagne.

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST JOB?
I worked at Wine Lister (now part of Figaro Vin) as a research and marketing intern.

WHAT INSPIRES YOU?
I'm inspired by beauty – whether in architecture, nature, art, or even in the presentation of food on a plate.

WHAT'S THE WORST JOB YOU'VE DONE?
One of my first internships was with an event production company where I spent my days sawing through metal pipes and standing for hours in a warehouse on an industrial estate.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF YOUR JOB?
Developing the product was one of the highlights, creating something from scratch exactly how I want it was really special.

AND YOUR LEAST FAVOURITE?
When I first launched Bellamie, I absolutely dreaded doing cold sales, visiting restaurants and bars and trying to sell my product.

HOW ABOUT THE FOOD INDUSTRY?
Whether mixologists, chefs, wine makers, everyone in the food industry shares a desire to make people feel pleasure and joy, and create memorable experiences.

WHAT WOULD BE YOUR LAST SUPPER?
At the risk of sounding like a French cliché, it would have to be a good old steak frites at L'entrecôte (Le relais de Venise). Their simple green salad with walnuts, perfectly cooked steak with that addictive secret sauce, endless frites that keep coming until you say stop, and a bottle of red wine.

WHAT'S YOUR MOTTO?
Enjoy life's simple pleasures.

WHAT'S THE WEIRDEST THING YOU'VE EVER EATEN?
The first time I went to Greece with my Greek husband, I was informed that the rite of passage for each new guest that joins the celebrations is to eat the lamb's testicles (considered a delicacy).

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE BOOK?
There are two French books that have made a huge impact on me: *Bel-Ami* by Maupassant, which actually inspired my brand name Bellamie, and *Perfume* by Patrick Suskind.

SWEET OR SAVOURY?
Savoury 100%. My vice is the salty stuff like charcuterie, olives or truffle crisps.

SPECIALITY FOOD MAGAZINE

Inside the next issue of Speciality Food

- Farm Shop & Deli Show Preview
- Nostalgic Classics
- Premium Condiments
- Fresh Produce: Meat, Bread, Fish
- Catering for Pets
- Rise in Technology
- Storecupboard centrespread

FARM SHOP & DELI SHOW



BE CONNECTED



@SpecialityFood

linkedin.com/company/speciality-food

specialityfoodmagazine

FOLLOW SPECIALITY FOOD ON SOCIAL MEDIA TO HEAR MORE FROM FOOD AND DRINK INDUSTRY VOICES

DRINKS BUYER 2026
COMING NEXT ISSUE





For more information contact:
louise.barnes@artichokehq.com 01206 508629

CONTENT

Editor
Holly Shackleton, 01206 505110
holly.shackleton@artichokehq.com

Content Creator
Charlotte Smith-Jarvis, 01206 505981
charlotte.smith-jarvis@artichokehq.com

Art Director
Lee Whiteford
lee.whiteford@artichokehq.com

Published by
Artichoke Media Ltd,
Global House, Global Park,
Moorside, Colchester
Essex, CO1 2TJ

COMMERCIAL

Senior Account Manager
Jessica Brett 01206 505901
jessica.brett@artichokehq.com

Senior Account Manager
Louise Barnes 01206 508629
louise.barnes@artichokehq.com

Accounts
artichokemedialtd@integral2.com

Publisher
Sam Reubin 01206 505936
sam.reubin@artichokehq.com

artichoke

TRIED & TESTED



SPRAGA POMEGRANATE KOMBUCHA

As someone who makes their own (decidedly punchy) kombucha at home, I tend to veer away from mass-produced options with the fear that they'll be oversweet and a bit lacking in the goodness department. Thankfully, Spraga's Pomegranate offering is nothing of the sort. Subtly fruity without being overly sweet, it has an authentic fermented tang which is incredibly refreshing. Naturally fermented and unpasteurised, it has all the benefits of my homemade booch (without the wincing).

spraga.com

MESSYFACE SESAME, HAZELNUT & FRUIT SPREAD

I am forever on a mission to consume fewer nasties and more natural, whole foods, but sometimes my self-imposed menu can seem a little drab. So I was chuffed to encounter Messy Face, a fun, flavour-packed sauce made simply from nuts, seeds and grapes (and absolutely no nonsense), and most importantly utterly delicious. Think nutty salted caramel AKA the perfect partner for toast/porridge/pancakes/fruit and you're there. A delightful discovery.



messyface.com



FLAWSOME SWEET & SOUR APPLE JUICE

On the subject of tang, I present Flawsome's apple juice as the perfect balance – in my estimation – of sugar and sharpness. All too often, apple juice (and fruit juice in general) can be overly sweet, in some cases tasting like toffee apple for reasons I'm keen not to look too deeply into, but this drink is a revelation. Cold-pressed for extra virtue and containing just 100% wonky apples which vary seasonally, it's as delicious served solo as it is as a taste-full ingredient in sweet and savoury dishes.

flawsomedrinks.com

THE INDEPENDENT SHOPPER

Thomas Frake, The Silks



The Silks is a proper village pub. We offer food, beer and wine for local folks. Whilst exposure through MasterChef has certainly seen a welcome increase in guests from further afield, my ethos has always been to serve honest food in a classic pub environment. We aren't fine dining, and we aren't a gastropub either. We are 'just a pub' serving delicious British grub from the local area.

Therefore, sourcing as locally as possible isn't necessarily a philosophy, more a pragmatic reality. With classic British flavours our focus, sourcing locally comes naturally. As a rural pub with a small team and unpredictable footfall, sourcing locally affords us a reliable supply chain with very quick turnaround. With pubs struggling financially across the country, sourcing locally and working closely with suppliers keeps the costs down.

Originally from London, I am grateful to now find myself in the Wiltshire countryside. The Silks is located in Ogbourne St Andrew, a village just over a mile from the market town of Marlborough. Establishing myself for the first time in Wiltshire meant hastily finding local suppliers, and I am incredibly fortunate to have discovered such excellent ones.

Setting up my first pub in 2023, and needing a reliable meat supplier, I walked into Sumbler Brother's butchers in Marlborough and met Steve. We've been working together ever since. 'Sumbler's' is an unpretentious, superior quality butchers. The beef is selected from either Devon Ruby or Dexter cattle, and is supplied from farms across the South West. All of the pork is sourced in Wiltshire, and the sausages are all made to specification on-site at Sumblers. Steve delivers to us, without fail, every day of the week.

Jerry comes in throughout the year, but over the warmer months he swaps a couple of pints of bitter for an abundance of his allotment fruit and vegetables. His tomatoes, cucumbers, beans, beetroot, carrots, apples, and quince have been a staple of the menu for months. His produce is unlike anything else I can source; their flavour and texture unsurpassed. Last summer there was a huge glut, so the bountiful quince became jelly for cheese, and the baskets of tomatoes became chutney. And frankly, the superior quality and taste isn't the only reason for sourcing this way: I had months of premium ingredients for the cost of a good-few pints, which is a huge benefit when food costs are high and margins are tight.

Our beers are produced – from 'plough to pint' – at Ramsbury Brewery & Distillery situated less than two miles away. They grow their own wheat, filter their own water, and even generate their own heat, to produce incredibly popular – and cost effective – local ales, bitters, lagers and stouts. They also distil award-winning gins from their own winter wheat at the farm. And finally, one of the most remarkable drinks we serve is All Angels sparkling wine from my good friends Mark, Christine and Kay. From three vineyards in Enborne they produce superior, vintage wines without compromise; wines that are – in my humble opinion – far beyond the quality of many Champagnes.

PARTNER CONTENT

Garofalo



AN APPETITE FOR PULSES

Bean mania has hit the UK, but Italians have been relishing pulses for generations

Once deemed by Brits a bit too 'worthy' to be delicious, pulses are increasingly popular. Social media accounts (here's looking at you, Instagram) have been buzzing with bean-fuelled recipes for months now, and it's not only Gen Z consumers who are hungry to bring pulses into their culinary repertoire.

Full of protein – ideal for those following vegetarian or vegan diets – and fibre, and hugely convenient, they have obvious benefits for food lovers looking to boost their health. Fine food retailers should give beans another look, too. Tinned or dried, they are ambient, relatively low cost and versatile; the perfect base for recipe suggestions whether on cards in-store or digitally published online.

Beans on toast has well and truly had a revamp – you'll found hundreds, if not more, variations across countless accounts and books – and it's not only tweaks on classic British grub that are getting UK-based appetites rumbling. Recipes inspired by international foods, bolstered by seasonings and served in creative ways, are the order of the day, and Italian food is a clear source of inspiration for budding bean cooks.

You don't have to delve far into the annals of Italian food to find copious mentions of beans. From the internationally-savoured minestrone to Fagioli all'uccelletto, a tomato-y, pork-y hunk of a dish, or served oil and herb-flecked with small pasta, beans have been adding creamy bolster to Italian dishes for generations.

There's plenty of variety with which to wow your bean-hunting customers. Cannellini and borlotti beans are particularly cherished in Italy, but black beans, butter beans... whatever else you can lay your discerning hands on will only add to the attractiveness of your store cupboard display.

For bonus points, avoid additional ingredients – look for just water and perhaps salt on the back of the can – and opt for sustainable sourcing and formats where possible.

A top trend that has been hiding in plain sight for years... It's time for beans to shine.

Garofalo
Contact the Garofalo UK team
Email: info@garofalouk.com
or Call: 01438 813444 / 07970 295806
www.pasta-garofalo.com

From the most traditional shapes to the most creative ones, discover the Pasta Garofalo ORGANIC lines.

order here



International Food & Drink Event

30 March - 01 April 2026 Excel London







Immerse yourself in food & drink product discovery at the UK's largest gathering of global brands

25,000	1,500	10,000	13
Verified Attendees	Exhibitors	Products	Event Sections

Scan the QR code to secure your FREE trade pass

www.ife.co.uk



SAVE THE DATE: 30 March - 01 April 2026

IFE Manufacturing | IFE | HRC | The PUB Show | HT 360 | International Salon Culinaire London

PART OF

Food Drink & Hospitality Week

30 March - 01 April 2026 Excel London