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EDITOR'S LETTER



Welcome to the July/August issue of *Speciality Food*. Summer's in full swing, the chilled drinks are flowing, and we're polishing our cheese irons and dusting off our judging coats in preparation for late July's International Cheese Awards. Inspired by this, one of our favourite annual outings, we've put together a whole host of cheesy inspiration for you this issue, from a Cheese Counter Masterclass (p. 22), dedicated product spotlight (p. 20) and our comprehensive look at how the cheese industry stands in 2018 (p. 14) to comprehensive columns from cheese professionals at both ends of the start-up world in Cheese Talk (p. 12) – and, of course, a preview of the event itself on page 18.

We also share food futurologist Morgaine Gaye's views on page 36, take a look at the rising popularity of low- or no-alcohol drinks on page 24, and offer our tips on getting the Christmas season off to a strong start before the panic sets in on page 25. Enjoy!

Holly

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4 ways to keep cool in the garden this Summer



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Calls for more discussion on British food sector in Brexit negotiations

The clock is ticking down for Britain to reach terms on a preferable Brexit outcome, and many in the food industry are voicing concerns that a 'no deal' scenario could prove disastrous. Here, farmers, producers and retailers stress the importance of buying British at a time of political uncertainty

While nobody can predict what will happen after Brexit, the Government's recent announcement that we could find ourselves in a no-deal scenario has prompted predictions that there will be severe food shortages and areas running out of food within days. Industry experts, businesses and spokespeople across the country are speaking out about how the food and drink industry will cope after Britain formally withdraws from the European Union next year, with many calling for more clarity from the decision makers while others are urging the public to buy more British produce.

Numerous industry bodies and experts have stressed the importance of British food and farming and its contribution to society, environment and economy in the midst of Brexit negotiations. Minette Batters, president of the NFU, has recently written to the Prime Minister calling for clarity and consistency across the Government, and for a Brexit that backs British food production.

Minette stated to the Prime Minister the public's desire for "strong safeguards, with legal underpinning, to ensure food imported from overseas is not producer to lower, cheaper standards, which would put our farmers at a competitive disadvantage while also undermining choice and safety for the public".

She continued, "We support a whole economy approach that avoids carving out agri-food products from broader arrangements for trade in goods in a way that threatens to introduce unacceptable and damaging levels of friction in trade with our biggest trading partner. Without firm and clear safeguards, there is a real risk that future trading relationships outside the EU will allow access to our markets for cheap imports produced to lower standards."

"I want British farmers and growers to remain the number one

the moment we rely too heavily on imports when purchasing our weekly shop. We blindly fill our trolleys with imported fruit, veg and meat, and don't really give provenance any consideration. We don't know what the exact implications of Brexit might be, but making changes now and trying to buy British as much as possible could help avoid some of the possible shortages when Britain leaves the EU next year."

Anthony stresses that at the moment farmers are growing quality produce, but it ends up in landfill as

“ We might not have the farming capacity to keep our trolleys stocked as we aren't supporting our own farmers in the lead up to Brexit ”

supplier of choice to the UK market. And I want British people to be able to enjoy more sustainable, quality, affordable British food at a range of different prices that suit all incomes while more great British produce [is sent] abroad."

Anthony Davison, a farmer and founder of local food and drink website Big Barn, states that the best way to ensure a steady stream of food and drink after Brexit is to support UK farmers now, and to shop local as much as possible ahead of any possible changes. He said, "At

"supermarkets can import cheaper produce from abroad". He continues, "This is likely to change significantly after Brexit; imported goods will be more expensive and we will need to rely more heavily on British produce, but we might not have the farming capacity to keep our trolleys stocked as we aren't supporting our farmers in the lead up to Brexit."

"Obviously we can't grow things like bananas and coffee, but we can start looking closer to home for the staples. We all need to change the way we shop and start looking locally.

Find farms or producers in your area and start using them. Buy local eggs, sign up to doorstep milk deliveries or veg box schemes and seek out a local butcher or baker that is sourcing British meat or producing bread in-house."

Simon Baynes, owner of historic York greengrocers Millies York and fruit and vegetable wholesaler Simon Baynes Wholesale echoes Anthony's sentiment, and states that offering fresh and locally-sourced produce is the lifeblood of his businesses. He said, "We're a busy company, but we always make time for our customers who are just as passionate as we are about high-quality ingredients. Getting the right produce is really important – so businesses work with us as an offer top-notch produce."

"Local produce has a lot more nutrients in it, which can be easily lost if the products are imported from far away. I am passionate about championing local growers and suppliers to encourage businesses and the public to explore their local food scene and that's where we come in."

At the other end of the spectrum, British-focused ambient products and gifts are in high demand. Craig Benton, director of The London Deli Co., a company that sells patriotically-themed products emblazoned with the Union Jack, has seen a big increase in demand for British-made produce within the

UK and abroad. He said, "We've seen a massive growth in the UK in sales since the Brexit decision. Where the selling of patriotic products and Union Jack branded items used to be predominantly London-focused, it has now become more national. Places like Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds and York used to be more regionally-focused – you never used to find Union Jack products there – but they have now become a lot more patriotic. We've got I Love London t-shirt shops everywhere now, even in the North. You would never have had that years ago."

Craig locates the main demand for British-made products in the export market, though, with his business experiencing a lot more sales since the EU referendum in June 2016. He said, "Within export we've noticed a massive increase in British-made produce for a number of reasons, one being currency. Because of the exchange rate between us and countries like America and India, we've seen a massive soar. Orders for our seasonal confectionery have gone crazy, which is ironic considering the market trend at the moment is for healthy, free-from or vegan products. I've never seen as much growth in confectionery as I have this year. Last year we developed 58 new lines for the American market, which is a huge increase, and we're also working a lot with airlines, hotel and within hospitality – there's now lots of new avenues open to us."

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JOHN SHEPHERD OF PARTRIDGES



“The rise of shrinkage”

When times are tough for shopkeepers, several aspects of running a business take on a greater significance. Take shrinkage for example.

Shrinkage is a polite word for loss of stock and hence profit. It can be caused by factors like wastage, administrative errors or shoplifting. Shoplifting is itself a polite word for theft and theft is like rain – constantly ever-present but if ignored can ruin the roof.

For management and staff it is a depressing daily reality. One thing I envy about our Saturday market traders is that losses from theft are virtually negligible from a market stall – although they have plenty of other things to worry about. It is difficult to estimate but for us losses of up to 5% of sales, at least, could be the reality. Perhaps more. By some estimates the problem doubled in the UK over the past 12 months with 200 thefts being reported an hour to police. In convenience stores alone theft amounts to nearly £200 million per year, which is about 7p on every transaction. Across the board it is around £12 million a day. The figures are truly staggering.

In our case, newspapers a few customers clearly believe to be an aspect of the National Health Service – free at the point of delivery. Then, of course, there are those “unknown knowns” which we discover at the end of the quarter results. Perhaps 80% of all theft falls into this category.

Shoplifters come in all shapes and sizes but it appears to us that a motivating factor for stealing speciality foods is not economic need. A glance at the items that are stolen would indicate this. Of course anyone reduced to stealing could be considered not in a happy place, and many psychological theories have been put forward, especially when a celebrity is involved. However, overall it seems that shoplifters

themselves genuinely regard it as a victimless crime. It does not occur to them that jobs may be at stake, prices may go up and hostile environments created. Indeed some shops have been known to shut down because of it.

It is a problem that is by no means easy to tackle. We are lucky to have among our staff a redoubtable security officer who regards theft as a personal insult and apprehends shoplifters on a daily basis. It is not an easy job. Some shoplifters become threatening, some return the next day to continue unabashed and some are in total denial that they are doing anything wrong. I remember one memorable incident when the shoplifter put forward the defence of being a member of a Gentleman's Club and did not need to steal. Which was ironic as he had just completed the act of theft. Then there is the alarming prospect that we might get it wrong and misread an incident. We have to be extremely careful to carry out procedures scrupulously otherwise the result could be, at best, a letter of apology to the customer or, at worst, a quick email to our lawyers. The stakes are high and in the past a security officer from a nearby establishment has asked us to detain a shoplifter as his own guidelines prohibited him from doing so. In addition, police resources are severely stretched at present, meaning that unless violence is involved or the amount of stock is extremely large they are reluctant to attend.

Despite the depressing realities of theft, as always, when being a shopkeeper, it is important to keep a balanced view. Speciality food retailing has many positives. There is a big picture that cannot be stolen from us. To run a food shop to be proud of and one that offers a real alternative to other retailers and hence provides a service to the local community is a noble goal. To deal with shoplifting we must be vigilant and we must be proactive but we must never get depressed. Life (and the shop lease) is too short for that.

Entries open for the sixth edition of the Farm Shop & Deli Awards

Entries are now open for the Farm Shop & Deli Awards, a free-to-enter competition that is highly respected in the industry for playing an important role in supporting the UK's independent retail market.

This year's online entry process has been refined to reduce the number of questions retailers need to answer, while also providing tips and advice on how best to approach the answers.

Entrants can benefit from exposure across industry and regional publications, including *Speciality Food*, and their shop will be promoted to over 14,000 visitors to the awards' website and social media pages.

The consumer voting element takes place in September and October. For this stage customers and fans of shortlisted retailers are encouraged to show their appreciation by voting for them to win online.

The awards also offer entrants the opportunity to promote their businesses to industry experts from the world of speciality retail, fine food and food media who form the judging panel. Retailer of the Year winners are invited to join the judging panel to share their retailing insight.

Victoria Robertshaw, owner of Keelham Farm Shop, winner of the 2017 Retailer of the Year accolade and member of the 2018 judging panel said, “At Keelham we have won

over 50 awards – you always know how an awards scheme is recognised in the industry by the comments you receive from your suppliers when you win. We had so many suppliers congratulate us when we won Retailer of the Year in 2017, which is how I know these awards are highly respected within the industry.”

With 12 categories available to enter across nine regions, the 2019 title is set to be a hotly contested competition, which will culminate on Monday 8th April 2019 when winners will be announced at the Farm Shop & Deli Show at the NEC Birmingham.

To enter the awards visit farmshopanddelishow.co.uk



Johns of Appledore celebrates 10 years of trading with store refit

North Devon-based Johns of Appledore recently held a grand launch party after its store, café and deli underwent a complete refit

The launch event hosted an array of local producers showcasing their wares, followed by a ribbon-cutting ceremony performed by local RNLI coxswain Martin Cox.

Johns of Appledore recently

bid for, and won, Leader 5 funding with the help of the Appledore community and used the party to thank them.

Customers feasted on food and drink from producers unique to Johns of Appledore, with products including artisan gin, rum, moonshine, cheeses, flowers, curry and ice cream.

Anthony Johns, owner of Johns of Appledore said, “We have been

a part of the local community in North Devon for over 90 years and are passionate about showcasing the best of Devon's food and drink – from gin to cheeses and items from our own kitchen including everything from granola, pâtés, quiches and divine cakes every day. The party was a real celebration, showcasing the Appledore refit to ensure that the store is here for many more years to come.”

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CHARLES CAMPION



“It's showtime”

The news from the front is heartening. Agricultural shows are enjoying a new lease of life. Long ago, when farmers wore smocks and chewed straws for recreation, the local agricultural show was the perfect place to show off the current on-going discussion of the role of the Minister of Agriculture, and Government paid more than lip service to the importance of Britain growing its own food.

After an enervating period (lying fallow?) today's agricultural shows see the sense in promoting food and drink. At shows like the Balmoral (the one in Northern Ireland rather than the Scottish royal retreat) the Food Northern Ireland Pavilion is set aside for food and drink products and crowds of happy tasters. Every year the emphasis on food and drink grows, building an interested and well-informed customer base. This year in the Balmoral food pavilion you could sample magnificent oysters, potato farls, speciality ice creams, goat meat, amazing butter, artisan chocolates, biltong, ciders, award-winning beef, specialist fruit juices, beer from newly-fledged breweries and a host of gins and Irish whiskies from new distilleries. The market for artisan produce is booming and there were more stands in the Food NI Pavilion than ever before. For anyone interested in food and drink the Pavilion is a godsend – somewhere that you could sample a host of new products and get to

talk to the producers responsible. At the 148th Balmoral Show there were over 100 local producers strutting their stuff and, as well as the 115,000 visitors to the Pavilion, there were 40 international buyers.

This level of interest confirms that Joe Public no longer sees food merely as fuel but rather as a worthwhile and passionate interest – which must come as good news to anyone selling specialist food and drink. The bigger agricultural shows (the Royal Welsh, the Balmoral, the Royal Bath and West and the Royal Three Counties to name just a few) offer an honest snapshot of the food and drink currently being developed in their particular region. Catching up with these artisan producers while they are at the shows fills in the broader picture and having them in the same place at the same time saves a huge amount of travel.

The renaissance of good food and drink in Britain has been a gritty business, a slow burn at best, but at last the agricultural shows are adapting. 20 years ago they were dominated by stalls selling cheap jeans and expensive motor cars; the only food input was the fudge shop and those stalls selling exorbitantly priced “fresh” lemonade. Now the artisan food and drink sections have a firm foothold and are expanding. The market leads and we follow, and thank goodness it seems to be leading us in the right direction. Meanwhile, it is worth wandering through any show's pig lines to see immense porkers sleeping blissfully on their beds of clean straw. What contented dreams they must have – unless you whisper “bacon” in their ears.

Soil Association launches Organic September toolkit for indies

The Soil Association has rolled out a toolkit of materials, both print and digital, to help retailers to take part in and support Organic September.

Organic September encourages consumers to eat and drink organic every September, and aims to demystify the concept of organic.

Organic September Saturday, held on the 15th September, is the day in which hundreds of independent retailers open their doors and showcase organic goods, with shops offering sampling

sessions, cooking demonstrations and discounts in-store.

According to the Soil Association, in conjunction with data collated by Nielsen Scantrack, there are many benefits to business taking part in the scheme, with Organic September 2017 delivering a sales growth of 7.1 per cent in the four weeks to 30th September.

To download a free visual merchandising guide and other point-of-sale material and information, visit soilassociation.org/indies

“Organic September gets bigger each year and last year saw sales increase across the board with more shoppers trying organic thanks to great promotions in stores and an increase in media coverage”

CLARE MCDERMOTT, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR AT SOIL ASSOCIATION CERTIFICATION



Pearce's Farmshop and Café in Buntingford has opened a pizzeria in a converted horsebox located on its on-site meadows. The vintage horsebox has been fitted out with an authentic Italian pizza oven where a chef freshly cooks pizzas to order using ingredients sourced from the farm shop and local producers. Edward Pearce, director of Pearce's Farmshop and Café said, “This is a very exciting step for Pearce's and we're really proud to be offering a fun and complementary eating option to the Café. We've had a fantastic reception so far with customers enjoying the good food from this trendy venue, as well as the opportunity to eat out sitting at benches overlooking our glorious views.”



British farmers “better equipped than anyone” to deliver high quality food, says Michael Gove

The Secretary of State for Food and Environment, Michael Gove, claimed that British farmers are well-equipped to fulfil the national and global demand for high quality food at the recent NFU Summer Reception.

The Secretary of State said he “heard, received and understood” the NFU's call on Government to uphold the high quality produce that he stated was a “hallmark of British agriculture” in post-Brexit trade agreements.

Minette Batters, NFU president, welcomed Gove's comments, stating, “I [have] made clear to MPs that we have a vision of productive, thriving, profitable farming businesses that can farm smarter – producing more food for a burgeoning population with less impact. It's these businesses that can afford to invest in our natural environment.”

“As Michael Gove [has] said, the health of all of us depends on the health of farming. We have an ambition for British farming to have a clean bill of health post-Brexit, ready to provide every citizen, regardless of income, with access to nutrient-dense, high-welfare, quality and affordable British food.”

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Labour criticises government for state of the high street

The high street faces "complete annihilation" due to risks such as business rates, Labour has warned the Government.

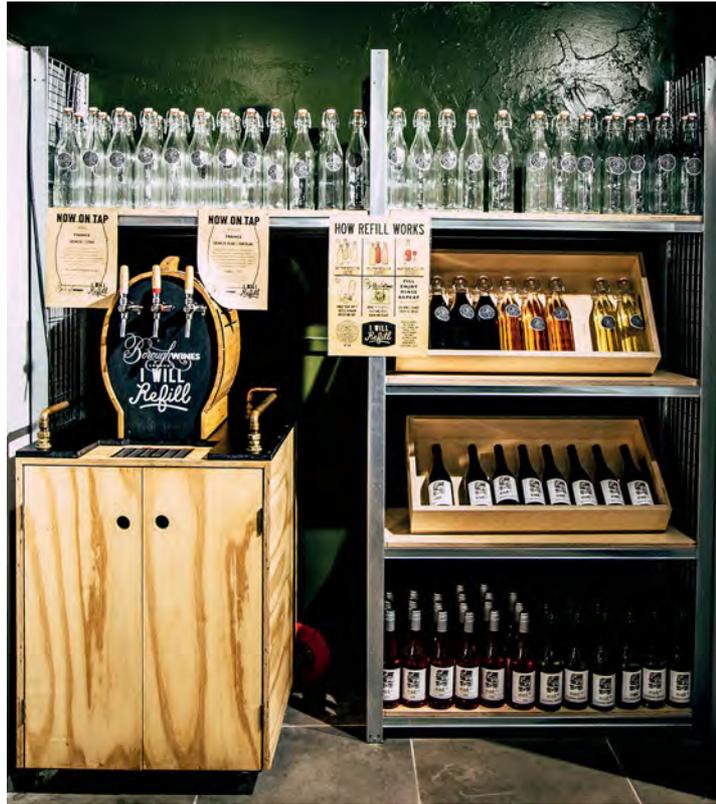
Speaking to the Commons at an Opposition Day debate, Rebecca Long-Bailey, Shadow Business Secretary, criticised the Government for creating the current climate, and stated that it has failed to support retailers among a backdrop of problems.

Long-Bailey noted that 21,000 retail jobs had been put at risk in the first three months of 2018, and that the Government has displayed a cavalier attitude to a review of business rates and the sustaining of wage growth. "This is a recipe for complete high street annihilation," she said.

Businesses like Marks & Spencer – which announced it was closing 100 stores last month – that are "stalwarts of our high street" are disappearing at a rapid rate, the shadow business secretary stated.

In response to Long-Bailey's criticisms, Greg Clark, Business Secretary, said that store closures were not new in British retail.

Clark went on to say that the number of retailers going into administration had dropped in the past five years compared with the five years before. He mentioned Co-op and Aldi as businesses that are currently flourishing, and that the British high street is "a story of constant change".



Eat 17 rolls out refillable eco-friendly wine stations

London-based premium food retailer Eat 17 has installed new refillable wine stations in its stores as part of a sustainable drive.

Customers can buy a refillable bottle and then choose from red, white or rosé options, supplied by London's Borough Wines. The 75cl refillable bottle costs £2.90, and prices start at £6.50 for a wine refill.

James Brundle, co-founder of Eat 17 said, "Eat 17 is all about bringing the finest local produce to our stores. We invite independent local retailers and producers into our

stores and they share the same aisles as Eat 17's own-branded products.

"Our refillable wine stations are supplied by independent London bottle shop, Borough Wines – they are very popular with our customers as they can simply purchase a bottle, fill it with wine and then rise and reuse it. Alongside the refillable wine, we offer refillable food stations for olive oil, detergent, pasta, rice, cereals, nuts and grains – the stations are ideal for customers looking for a convenient, eco-friendly shopping experience."

NEW CALL ON MPS TO URGE FOR BETTER BREAD LABELLING LAWS

The Real Bread Campaign is urging the public to email their local MP to put pressure on Michael Gove, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, to "protect shoppers from incomplete and potentially misleading loaf labelling".

The online action is the latest in the Real Bread Campaign's

call for an Honest Crust Act. This would include legal definitions for descriptions including 'sourdough', 'artisan', 'wholegrain' and 'freshly baked', and the requirement for a full listing of ingredients and artificial additives to be displayed on the packaging of all loaves.

Chris Young, Real Bread Campaign coordinator said, "Britain leaving the EU offers our Government the perfect

opportunity to review and improve loaf laws for the benefit of shoppers, who have the right to know what they're buying."

At present, a list of ingredients (and any artificial additives used) does not have to be displayed for loaves sold unwrapped, and loaf manufacturers are not required to declare any so-called 'clean label' processing aids they use even for wrapped loaves.

CLARE DOWNES OF CIRCLE COMMUNICATION

"Coaching in your business"

Coaching is not just reserved for sports men and women. We naturally expect the top performers in sport to have a coach. We all need support to perform at our best. There are times when we would benefit from someone to help us when we 'hit a wall' and cannot see how we can improve; pick us back up after illness, redundancy, a career break, not achieving the promotion that we aimed for – or simply to remain energised and focused after a bad day! Coaching in business is not always clearly understood and can be thought of as a luxury, reserved for those at the top in corporate environments. Everyone in business will need someone to enable them at some point. Increasingly as businesses focus on the well-being of their teams, coaching is finding a place to provide both career and emotional support; home and work are often difficult to separate.

This separation is particularly hard to achieve when you are running your own business. The two worlds merge, to the point that sometimes there is no escape from work – and perspective can be lost when crucial decisions need to be made. What started out as a great idea and perhaps a way to escape the corporate path that you were on, can become the biggest test of resilience and perseverance you have experienced. It can be lonely, as you no longer have the support infrastructure and often do not want to share all of the challenges that you are facing, with your team. You do not want to show your vulnerability and, in some areas, perhaps lack of direct experience. This is where good coaching comes in – it provides you with a trusted outlet that understands you and the context of your working environment but has that needed perspective and is totally confidential.

Coaching also comes into play with growing businesses; through merger, acquisition and/or rapid growth. Owners may not have experienced how to manage more people in new roles – and the requirement to let them do their jobs without constant interference. The structure of a business in growth is not a 'one fits all' template. Again, coaching conversations, underpinned with structural strategic planning, can ensure the right business shape takes form. Business owners may find it difficult to admit that they simply do not have the answers; they have not been here before and are learning too. The real strength in business is to know when to ask for help and from whom. With a coach, thoughts can be articulated and ideas tested, without the risk of feeling exposed. It helps with then going back into the business and delivering with confidence.

It is vital that a coach does not become a prop. Coaches do not have to have experience of your specific business sector. They are not there to mentor in how to do your job. They are there to enable you – not do it for you. When considering a coach for you or your team, think first about how comfortable you feel with the person, what new perspective and value can they add to help you reach personal and professional potential. We all want to be the best that we can be; this does not stop when we leave the school gates. Training courses can add skills, but coaching goes beyond this, to make you think more deeply about you as a person and the relationships within your team – at work and home.

Having a greater understanding of yourself and your capabilities within the context of the team that you work within – can only result in achieving increased potential – individually and collectively.

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BRC calls for two-year business rates freeze

The British Retail Consortium (BRC) has called for a two-year freeze on business rates increases to provide some relief for the retail industry.

At a time when the industry is under significant cost pressure and going through a period of transformation, the BRC claims that the current business rates system is unsustainable.

The BRC states that the industry is dealing with increasing costs, for example Government-backed policies such as the Apprenticeship Levy or National Living Wage, as well as businesses needing to retrain their workforce for the digital economy.

Helen Dickinson, chief executive of the BRC said, "The pressure this is creating on the industry can be seen in the fact that there are nearly

2,500 fewer retail stores in the UK than there were three years ago, and since 2014 there have been over 3,200 retail insolvencies in the UK and a number of high profile CVAs. Industry profitability is also falling with net profit around 2.5%, down from 4% over the previous five years.

"Fundamental reform of the business rates system is needed and must be considered as part of a wholesale modernisation of business taxation. Our proposal for a two-year freeze in rates increases would take some of the cost pressure off retailers, while allowing time for a dialogue between Government and industry to develop a proposal for a modern business taxation system, fit for commerce in the 21st century, which supports business growth and improves productivity."

THE RETAIL INDUSTRY IS THE UK'S LARGEST PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYER, MAKING UP 5% OF THE ECONOMY AND PAYING NEARLY 25% OF THE OVERALL BUSINESS RATES BILL, WHICH IS OVER £7BN PER YEAR

Smithfield Market to celebrate 150 years with giant bash

London's Smithfield Market, the largest wholesale meat market in the UK and the largest of its kind in Europe, is to mark its 150-year anniversary with a two-day free festival that is set to take over the markets and surrounding streets around Farringdon on the August Bank Holiday weekend.

As well as six festival zones and 200 performers and musical acts, the event is set to host food stalls featuring meat from the market, while there will also be a giant barbecue served by the Worshipful Company of Butchers to help feed the 30,000 Londoners expected to be in attendance.

Gregory Lawrence, chairman of the Smithfield Market Tenants Association, which represents the Smithfield Market meat traders, said, "Working at Smithfield is a way of life. Many of us have never known anything else, having started here as sixteen-year-old apprentices. We work through the night to provide meat at affordable prices to London and the South East, as the Market has done since long before the buildings were constructed. We are looking forward to celebrating 150 years of the Victorian Market with our friends and neighbours and the wider community and to showing people what the area has to offer."



Retailers encouraged to use 'Genuine Cornish Pasty' trademark

The Cornish Pasty Association (CPA), the producer group that fought for eight years to gain official recognition for genuine Cornish pasties, has created a new scheme for retailers which wish to sell the foodstuff but do not make their own.

The CPA's new Recognised Retailer scheme is intended to help consumers spot an authentic Cornish pastry and is open to any business that sells Cornish pasties made by a certified producer.

A new online directory will become the official place for

consumers seeking out Cornish Pasties, while retailers who sign up to the scheme will be encouraged to use the CPA's 'Genuine Cornish Pasty' trademark, making it clear that their customers are purchasing the genuine article.

The scheme will also enable more businesses to take part in Cornish Pasty Week. Devised by the CPA, Cornish Pasty Week is a celebration of the product that generates millions for the Cornish economy and accounts for thousands of jobs.

Jason Jobling, chairman of the CPA, said, "Our Association was created to give the much coveted Protected Geographic Indication to the Cornish pasty, which means that only pasties made in the correct way, to the specified recipe and, of course, in Cornwall, can be sold using the Cornish pasty name.

"It's now time for us to evolve, raising awareness of the Cornish pasty's distinctiveness even further and giving pasty businesses more reasons to get involved."

Industry body voices concern over future National Living Wage increases

The Association of Convenience Stores (ACS) has called on the Low Pay Commission (LPC) to ensure that future increases in wage rates do not negatively impact the labour market.

ACS states that evidence from its National Living Wage survey show that the latest increase in the National Living Wage has meant that 75 per cent of retailers

are reducing the number of staff hours in their business, 60 per cent of retailers are increasing the number of hours they work to cover staff shortages and 39 per cent of retailers have had to reduce the number of staff employed in their business.

When asked about the future increases in the National Living Wage, 77 per cent of respondents

believed that the rate should not rise any higher than the rate of inflation.

James Lowman, ACS chief executive said, "It is clear that rises in the National Living Wage are forcing retailers into making difficult decisions to reduce costs in their business by reducing staff hours, working more themselves to make up the shortfall and even having to lay off staff altogether."

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Since the Sugar Levy and other healthy food initiatives have held producers responsible in changing the public's dietary choices, we look at the companies paving the way in forging new approaches to changing nutritional behaviour

Less sugar

6th April 2018: the day the drink industry changed. Put into place to curb the rise in obesity, the Sugar Levy places an extra tax on the price of overly sugary fizzy drinks. Since the announcement of the sugar tax by erstwhile Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne in April 2016, the Treasury has announced figures stating that 50% of manufacturers have reduced the sugar content of their drinks, with major companies like Fanta cutting it by nearly a third and energy drink producer Lucozade by nearly two-thirds. Coca-cola refused to alter the sugar-heavy recipe of its Classic Coke, however, instead pointing consumers in the direction of its Coca-Cola Zero Sugar product.

While it's important to not proclaim all sugars as hazardous, it's primarily refined sugars that are in the spotlight when it comes to the varieties to avoid. Stevia is a natural sweetener and sugar alternative that many producers, like Green Cola, are incorporating into their

beverages. The sweetener is native to South America and has been used for hundreds of years to help promote healthy blood sugar levels. Stevioside, the element in the leaves that contribute to it being 200 times as sweet as sugar, can be come in an array of guises, most notably liquid drops, soluble tablets and baking blends, making it ideal to use in the food manufacturing process.

Another natural sweetener that can now commonly be found in healthier products as a refined sugar substitute is the date. Typically found in nut bars and cakes, dates add sweetness to baking and are full of potassium, copper, manganese, iron, magnesium and vitamin B6, and they are also said to help to reduce LDL cholesterol in the blood.

Tackling unhealthy snacks

Earlier this year, Public Health England (PHE) announced a £4.5m Change4Life campaign focusing on snacking. Aimed at encouraging parents to moderate the snacks

their children are consuming, the initiative's tagline is "look for 100-calorie snacks, two a day max". Research by PHE shows that half of UK children's sugar intake comes from unhealthy snacks and sugar-laden beverages, and on average kids are consuming at least three unhealthy snacks or sugary drinks per day. PHE notes that children's lunch boxes now typically consist of "a collection of unhealthy snacks", and there's a "snackification" problem becoming prevalent. To appease this clarion call, many healthy snack products come housed in packaging with an 'under 100 calories' label.

Free-from frenzy

Not so much a Government-backed initiative but spearheaded by celebrities and the health food movement, gluten-free has seen a phenomenal rise in interest among consumers. 1% of the population suffers from coeliac disease – meaning that they can't digest gluten – while a growing number

of consumers are eschewing the protein out of choice, and opting for foods made from chickpea and coconut flour, instead of traditional wheat-based products. Last year the free-from market value was estimated at £806.1m, according to Kantar Worldpanel. To put that rapid growth into perspective, Mintel noted that the market was worth £470m in 2015, £531m in 2016 and forecasted it to reach £673m by 2020, which seems a rather conservative figure in retrospect.

"The 'health halo' of free-from foods is a key driver of uptake and has resulted in a much larger group of users than the limited number of actual or suspected allergy or intolerance sufferers," said Kiti Soininen, head of UK food, drink and foodservice research at Mintel. "However, this leaves the free-from food category exposed to changes in consumer opinion and media coverage. The importance of health in driving uptake also means that companies need to ensure that nutrition profiles are best in class."

WHAT TO STOCK



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Reducing sugar needn't be hard to swallow.



Farmers' markets are a great way for growers and producers of locally-sourced food to promote their produce and learn about what their end customers really want.

For people who want to support local businesses while enjoying fresh and unique products, a farmers' market is brilliant for discovering new food and drinks and learning the fascinating 'field to fork' stories.

It's a match made in heaven for foodies, growers and producers alike – no wonder farmers' markets have enjoyed such a boom in recent years.

However, those making their first forays into selling directly to customers have some important health and safety concerns to consider. Keeping staff and the public safe must be a priority which is why carrying out a risk assessment, both before and reassessing during the market, is vital.

Transport

If you are transporting staff and produce then you need a vehicle which is well maintained and fit for purpose. Consider whether you require temperature controlled storage and what fuel is required to safely power any refrigeration. Many accidents happen when staff interact with tailgate lifts and flatbed trailers, falls from height are very common so ensure appropriate risk assessment and safe system of work are in place to help prevent twisted ankles, broken legs and worse.

Fire hazards

Before attending a farmers' market you should ask organisers to provide a fire safety briefing for the site so that you and your workers understand the hazards and control measures in place.

Things you can do to reduce the risk of a fire include:

- Ensuring any canopy complies with British Standards
- Reduce the number of potential ignition sources and do not allow smoking
- Keep the stall and immediate area free from rubbish and packaging materials
- Provide a small, dry powder fire extinguisher and ensure that it is in-date



HOW TO: SELL AT FARMERS MARKETS

From Nathan Brew, Technical Manager at
NFU Mutual Risk Management Services Limited

- Have a torch handy if attending markets during winter months
- Ensure any gas cylinders are connected by a competent person using the correct hoses and fixings and that they are kept outside the stall, in a safe protected area while in use
- Store generators a safe distance from the stall and kept clear of combustible materials and flammable liquids
- Store fuel in an approved container and kept in the vehicle when not in use
- Ensure the refrigeration equipment is well maintained and serviced. These units can catch fire and the insulation materials used in chilled vans are often combustible
- Use modern, well maintained extension leads if necessary but limit use

- Try to avoid charging appliances around combustible items and try not leave unattended

Manual handling

There are some simple steps which can help reduce the risk of injuries being caused by manual handling. Where possible, keep the size of any boxes to a minimum and store heavier items at the bottom of the vehicle bed. Better still use two people to lift anything remotely heavy.

If you are moving heavy items, use mechanical handling equipment, such as sack trucks and trolleys, where possible, and ensure workers are trained in good lifting techniques.

Consider whether you need to wear and/or provide protective footwear when moving heavier loads.

Your market stall

Keep your stall and surrounding area clean and free of any clutter – and keep any generators or gas cylinders stored safely with any exhaust venting away from the stall.

If you attend a Christmas market or other winter event, make sure your area is well lit and that you have torches in case the lighting fails. A first aid kit would also be useful if any of your workers sustains a minor injury.

If anything is spilled or smashed on the floor then you must clean it up immediately using suitable gloves where necessary. If your floor space becomes slippery, try and dry the surface rather than only putting out warning signs – cat litter and sand is an excellent absorbent material!

Ensure everything – goods for sale, refrigerated displays and

marketing materials – are stored in a stable and secure manner so there is no chance of them falling or collapsing.

Also, think about hazards from the eye-line of child. Look out for any sharp edges or protruding equipment which could injure a child.

Should anyone suffer an injury or accident, be sure to take names and telephone numbers of any witnesses and take lots of photographs of the scene and suggested/suspected cause. This could be invaluable in helping your Insurer defend claims of negligence.

Food safety

All food outlets must register with their local environmental health department. Food must be labelled with a description, weights and sales-units as well as ingredients and allergens (where applicable).

All food businesses must have a written food safety management system in place. You can produce your own food safety management system but the Food Standards Agency has developed a pack called 'Safer Food, Better Business', which you can complete and use for this purpose.

If you handle open food, for example meat from your livestock or 'home made' food, it is important that you consider the food safety issues in more depth than detailed in this guidance. All staff handling such food should have training in basic food hygiene as a minimum and hand washing facilities must be available. Cleaning products must be provided and these must be stored safely.

Next steps

Download a copy of the NFU Mutual Risk Management Services Limited Farmers' Market safety guide.

The information provided in this guidance is a brief overview of a diverse work activity. This activity may require further assessment and consultancy work completing to ensure statutory compliance.

NFU Mutual Risk Management Services can provide additional support in this area using one of its specialist in-house consultants who are based around the UK. Contact your local NFU Mutual Agent for more information.

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MEET THE CHEESEMAKER

We explore South Caernarfon Creameries, Wales' leading farmer-owned dairy co-operative, which has been providing consumers with delectable cheese for 80 years

South Caernarfon Creameries' quality range of cheese is a testament to collaboration and community. When it was created in 1938, its founder John Owen Roberts had a vision to see dairy farmers working together to enable them to market their own milk, membership stood at 63 producer members. 80 years later, it now totals around 130 members, making it Wales' oldest and largest co-operative.

The membership model means that each dairy farmer owns a share in the company, with each member supplying milk of the highest quality available. This dedication to quality is even reflected in the location of the creamery - it is located in Rhyd-y-gwystl, in the foothills of Snowdonia, and strategically based on the border between Llŷn and Eifionydd, - two areas of North West Wales which are renowned for their quality grass-growing capabilities, an effect of the mild drifts from the gulf streams of the Atlantic.

Proud to be farmer-owned

"We work closely with our members to ensure the milk they supply meets all of our requirements - we have two farm managers travelling around our farms visiting them on a regular basis," explains Alan Wyn Jones, managing director at South Caernarfon Creameries. "Our



member farmers are at the core of everything that we do - we offer sustainable, competitive terms for farmers by focusing on added value sales, supply chain efficiencies and profitability." The milk is of the highest quality and constituents, and is represented by the Red Tractor logo which adorns the packaging of its branded dairy products - a symbol of adhering to assured food standards both on the farm and in the factory.

While being farmer-owned is a principle that underlines the business, it's also a significant



employer of local people, with full-time 125 employees, many of whom have been with the company for many years. The organisation has come a long way since 1938 but keeps to its core principles. "This is a very exciting time for the business," Alan says. "The investment we have made has given us the platform to develop new exciting opportunities and to ensure that we have a robust and sustainable business model that delivers for all of our stakeholders."

A true taste of Wales

Cheese lovers might be more familiar with South Caernarfon Creameries through its Dragon brand, which has just been redesigned. Launched nearly 15 years ago, the portfolio now includes

Welsh Cheddar, ranging from mild to vintage, as well as a Signature Welsh Slate Cavern Aged Cheddar, territorials such as Welsh Caerphilly, flavoured cheeses and butter.

Cheesemaking at South Caernarfon Creameries has retained traditional production methods, with salting still done by hand on open tables. This allows the flexibility to make a range of cheeses which would not be possible if they were using the fully-automated equipment found in many modern creameries around the world. "Dragon is Welsh through and through, and that's still at the heart of our brand," explains Linda Lewis Williams from South Caernarfon Creameries. "Due to our tight supply

chain, we are able to trace a block of cheese back to the cow!"

All of the cheese is made in the same creamery, which helps the product to maintain its consistently premium quality. "Being located in such a beautiful part of Wales has inspired us to produce products of great quality which taste fantastic and are as natural as they can be," she continues. This passion for Welsh produce is something which resonates with the Welsh public, too, with a recent Value of Welshness survey showing that 77% of people in Wales would prefer to buy Welsh cheese, and 84% stating they wanted to support Welsh producers.

This Welsh pride is what inspired South Caernarfon Creameries to collaborate with other Wales-based companies to create unique products with true provenance. Partnerships with the likes of Llechwedd Slate Caverns - mining caverns based 500-feet underground in Blaenau Ffestiniog, where the Welsh Slate Cavern Aged Cheddar is aged to lend it its distinctive taste and texture - help bring truly Welsh products to market, offering retailers products that epitomise passion, quality and skill.

It's this championing of provenance and quality that has made the Dragon brand so popular among foodies, whether they're based in Wales or elsewhere. With the rebranded Dragon range ready to be unveiled to retailers - and set to make its debut at the International Cheese Awards in late July - the future is looking bright for South Caernarfon Creameries. "The plans for the Dragon brand in the forthcoming year are really exciting," says Emma Knight, brand manager, "There are ambitious growth plans and some exciting new products being added to the range."

“ Due to our tight supply chain, we are able to trace a block of cheese back to the cow! ”



Dragon

Proudly owned by our farmers

CAVERN AGED CHEDDAR

Our Welsh Slate Cavern Aged Cheddar is made to a bespoke recipe and matured to a minimum of 11 months before being aged 500ft underground at the Llechwedd Slate Caverns buried deep under the mountains of Snowdonia. This creates rich savoury cheese with a real depth of flavour and a delicious creamy texture.



ANDY SWINSCOE, THE COURTYARD DAIRY



“Setting up new”

New cheesemakers and cheesemongers seem to appear every year. And it is a thing to be celebrated. It improves those of us already out there, it increases knowledge levels throughout the industry, it gives different opinions and it gives all farmhouse and artisan cheese a greater coverage for the general public to be aware of it.

Cheesemongers

For any new cheesemonger I'd think about where you want to set up. Selling cheese is difficult, and with the decline of towns due to parking issues, closures of banks and services and competition from

the convenience of supermarket and online shopping, you are really going to have to think about why people will come to you.

I'd look for somewhere with a shopping food culture already (wine/fishmongers/butchers/bakers), good parking and that does have good footfall.

Cheese range-wise you're going to have to decide where you emphasis wants to be: raw milk, farmhouse, local, or just more convenience/weekly cheese shop – although I'd argue that the supermarkets have that last category tied up pretty well. Whatever it is write it down and stick to it when sourcing your lines; that is what you want to be so

try to make sure it shows through. And then promote it – if it is local shout about it. If it is raw milk/farmhouse then make it clear so the prospective customers know why you're different. I think you don't need many cheeses. As long as you have a good range across the cheese types and they are quality then you can have low numbers. We started with just 15. The key thing is when you don't have what the customer wants don't rush to get it in, try and learn what it is/what they are after and give them a taste of what you do which is similar.

Don't forget margins are tight in food retail and there isn't a lot to play with once all your overheads are dealt with, so do be clever and get a few crowdpleasing cheese lines in there which you can lead with and make good profit on. They will be your bread and butter.

Cheesemakers

Setting up as a new cheesemaker involves asking lots of questions. What cheese do you want to make? It has to be something you like first and foremost, as it will make the

whole process more enjoyable, and also, does that particular 'make' procedure fit easily into your day?

What equipment is needed for start up, and how long will the cheese need to mature – how much cheese will you need to have in stock and its shelf life once it is ready: can you afford that on your cash flow with no income for that period, and can you sell it fast enough once it's ripe?

Once you start thinking about these I always encourage new cheesemakers to make lots of trial batches at home. Even before you go on a professional cheesemaking course (The School Of Artisan Food is good), the more you can make at home before you go on a course will mean you will get more out of it when you do decide to go on one.

Starting up a new cheese dairy is an investment; the cheapest ready fix nowadays seems to be purpose-built shipping containers. But if you can mitigate this big investment initially and hire out space in someone else's dairy or food production unit that is a great way to reduce the start-up costs.

“ For any new cheesemonger I'd think about where you want to set up. Selling cheese is difficult, and with the decline of towns due to parking issues, closures of banks and services and competition from the convenience of supermarket and online shopping, you are really going to have to think about why people would come to you ”

ANTHONY HEARD, KUPROS DAIRY



“Life as a start-up”

Kupros Dairy came about thanks to a dissatisfaction with food in the UK both ethically and quality-wise, spliced with a desire to take control of my own income. After finishing university during the financial crash circa 2011-2014, good jobs were impossible to find; I was working full-time but couldn't fulfil my potential. I wanted to own my own business where I could use my design skills and love of food which I inherited from the Cypriot part of my family (specifically the female side, of course). I wanted to continue what my great grandmother did for a living, something I could be proud and passionate about, and found the idea very romantic.

From an entrepreneurial point of view we are at a crossroads, as the entry level to business is the highest it's ever been financially, technically, legally and ethically; this is in strong contrast with the fact that obtaining knowledge is the most accessible it's ever been. We find ourselves with a

generation of people empowered by the democratisation of knowledge, but this sits within the disparity of social and financial mobility. I had the desire to find the information and read the dairy science books to support the village recipes, but lacked the resources, support, infrastructure and finances. Business support is almost non-existent, and where it does exist does so as an ethereal non-entity locked up in unattainable EU requirements. “Prove you're saving energy in your business to obtain said grant” – okay, here you go – “that's great, now just buy it up front, OWN it and we'll refund you £3,000.” In other words, start-ups can't even interact with banks as they don't want to know, and yet any help is directed solely at those who already have. Business rates, rent, staff, expectations in comparison to large companies, customer expectations in the context of cheap imports and low domestic wages/standards. It's almost an impossible task in such a hostile environment.

As a start-up my approach was like a tech-startup without the capital, so the initial concept phase was elongated – not because of

demand but due to a lack of industrial properties, finance and overall connections to supporting industries. Established businesses have already benefited from cheap land and properties so they have much lower levels of risk and overheads. My farmer doesn't understand why we need to sell so much to break even; we have to shift a lot of high quality product quickly and compete against commodity cheeses which is nearly impossibly difficult, but we're managing somehow.

The cheese industry is very business orientated which is great, and I've learned a lot from it. It's very cautious – rightly so in this environment – and not hugely open, so you have to really fight your corner to be understood. How do you explain why a sheep's milk PDO cheese from Greece is cheaper than a local cheese? Its likely to have used powdered milk from Eastern Europe whilst using £2/hour staff. We can't and wouldn't want to compete with that, but I find it baffling that this is allowed to happen. As a rule, the best cheese is kept domestically.

I believe food should be sourced and produced as we at Kupros Dairy do. I believe you can make accessible, high welfare, sustainable, handmade and tasty food. We need more people to say this is what it costs to make food this pure; it's not a luxury. There is nothing wrong with industrial, machine-made, low quality food as it means people can eat – and for some people, paying the bills takes priority over quality food. However, I hope

we can get to a point where people are paid enough in their work, that the entry level to business is low enough without a drop in standards, and that the cost of living (not including food) is as accessible as it has been before – otherwise we will see the constant erosion of welfare and standards as we've seen in other industries. We need to rebalance things, to recalibrate the public's perception of food. You can see how the presence of Aldi/Lidl in the market could skew the concept of what food costs – this is extremely damaging as it makes people assume a product like ours is expensive even when we're working to a tiny margin. I'd like to see a more responsible attitude to pricing, and explanations as to why something is being sold cheaply, but I know I'm being idealistic.

The future for British cheese producers is very bright – all the new players and some older ones have got their heads screwed on, and are producing cheese people want to an incredibly high standard. I can confidently say that the UK is producing a big chunk of what we would usually get from the Continent but better, more ethically, more sustainably and making it as tasty if not tastier. We now need the public to get behind British industry, and to understand the true value of what they're eating and buying. As much as I'd like to say we're doing this solely for love and fun, in the end we're operating in a very hostile environment.

Talk Cheese

New retail perspectives from industry experts

News, opinion and comment from dairy insiders

Back-to-back British Cheese Awards success for White Lake Cheese

Somerset-based cheesemaker White Lake Cheese scooped the Supreme Champion award for its Sheep Rustler ewe's milk cheese at this year's British Cheese Awards, one year after its Pave Cobble claimed top prize at last year's competition.

Sheep Rustler is made using thermised ewe's milk, and aged for around three months. The result is a semi-hard cheese with a medium, mellow flavour that is slightly nutty with a hint of caramel.

Roger Longman, co-founder and cheesemaker at White Lake Cheese said, "We were thrilled to win Supreme Champion this year for Sheep Rustler. This award really

reflects on how much this is a team effort. From the cheesemakers, cheese washers and cheese packers, everyone at White Lake Cheese had a part to play. This accolade is testament to all the hard work and dedication we put into the cheeses we make."

As well as Supreme Champion, the Reserve Champion, four Country Awards and eight Main Category Awards, there were also 13 Special Awards given to cheesemakers.

This year's competition attracted over 1,000 entries from 147 makers, with 77 judges reviewing 123 classes of cheese. Cheeses entered came from over 54 countries that

WINNERS

The winners of the British Cheese Awards 2018 were:

● **SUPREME CHAMPION**
White Lake Cheese

● **RESERVE CHAMPION**
J A & E Montgomery Ltd

For the full list of winners visit specialityfoodmagazine.com

covered the length and breadth of the UK and Ireland.

Peter Mitchell, chairman of the British Cheese Awards said, "We're very fortunate in this country to have such a great number of dedicated and skilled cheesemakers that are renowned for their excellence and commitment to quality."

Godminster launches a star-topped cheese cake

Organic cheesemaker Godminster has announced a new Star Celebration Cake addition to its cheese cake range.

The Somerset-based brand has been supplying its range of cheese cakes for several years. Designed for celebrations such as weddings, christenings, Christmas and outdoor events, the cheese cakes weigh around 2.65kg and can serve between 25 and 35 people.

The new Star Celebration Cake features a 200g star-shaped Godminster Vintage Cheddar, stacked on top of a 200g Oak-Smoked Vintage Organic Cheddar, 250g Levin Down Brie from the Goodwood Estate, 1kg Godminster Vintage Organic Cheddar and a 1kg Cornish Country Brie.

Deborah Bradfield, commercial director at Godminster said, "We're always thinking about creative ways for our customers to enjoy our delicious Cheddar, and we're really excited with the response our Star is getting in the marketplace. It's a new product and already it is hugely popular and in great demand.

"We hear from customers that 'Christmas isn't Christmas without Godminster', and having this new cheese cake in our range will be a fantastic way to present cheese, but more than that, it's a stunning centrepiece for a gathering."



NEWS IN BRIEF

GRANT SCHEME GIVES SCOTTISH CHEESEMAKERS A LEG UP

Eleven projects across Scotland have been awarded a share of £3.59m, helping companies to invest in infrastructure, upgrade facilities and purchase new equipment.

● Fife-based The Buffalo Farm is to open a Buffalo Mozzarella processing plant after receiving more than £576,000 from the Food Processing, Marketing and Co-operation grant scheme.

● Soft cheese producer Yester Farm Dairies received £176,000 towards a major upgrade of its facilities in East Lothian. Jackie McCreery, director of Yester Farm said, "Without the support of the Scottish Government, we simply could not have undertaken this necessary step in our company's growth. It will safeguard our existing 30 jobs, will create further employment and will enable us to take on more business, and maybe even move into exporting."

JUSTIN TUNSTALL RETAIL CONSULTANT



"Cold comfort"

Do you have your own fall-out shelter? I've never worked anywhere that believed that me so indispensable to the rebuilding of civilisation that they allocated me a place in a bunker. Nonetheless, a couple of organisations for whom I worked had empty offices in the countryside, kept clean and maintained, with mirrored IT capability, so that we could decamp in case of fire, plague or attack. I won't venture an opinion on whether this was so that we might carry on for the good of the nation, or merely to safeguard market share in a post-apocalyptic world.

While such measures are perhaps rather over-the-top for the average deli or farm shop, I find it essential to have plans in place in case things go wrong. And they do.

Consider the basic essentials to cheese trading – let's say: stock, looking after it, staffing and money handling. What would you do if any of those became unavailable or malfunctioned?

Staffing difficulty is perhaps the easiest to compensate for – if a staff member calls in sick, then the proprietor works an extra shift! Part-timers might do more and retired staff might like to help out for some extra money.

Sourcing stock if the supply chain gets broken is vital. Do you have an alternative supplier for your best-selling lines? How would you cope if your key wholesaler went out of business?

Handling payment can always

return to 'cash only'. We saw this recently when VISA transactions across Europe were unavailable for a day. But do you know if and how your card processing kit can work if the internet goes down? Reminding yourself of the phone authorisation protocol can ensure that takings don't plummet if someone saws through the nearby Openreach cables.

But for me, the most vital part of my operation as a cheesemonger was the array of chillers that kept my valuable stock in tip top condition.

When was your kit last serviced? Did you pay your refrigeration engineer promptly and treat him to coffee/tea when he last visited – if you did, then he's far more likely to drop everything to get your kit back working than that of the moody, late-paying git who called for help at around the same time as you did. And while it's out of action, do you have a plan for where your stock might go? Maybe you are fortunate enough to have spare capacity in-store, or perhaps with neighbouring restaurants?

If the worst has happened and you have had to bin the majority of your chilled stock, do make a list and take a picture of it for the insurers. As soon as you know that you have to jettison stuff, make up an order ready to action the very minute that the chiller is running once more. Pay extra for the quickest delivery that you can arrange – lost turnover is far more costly to bottom line and reputation than a one-off blip on your margin.

Dib dib dib. Be prepared!

“ Consider the basic essentials to cheese trading – let's say: stock, looking after it, staffing and money handling. What would you do if any of those became unavailable or malfunctioned? ”

The natural choice for cheese

PETER'S YARD

THE REPORT: CHEESE 2018

Taste, trends and challenges – Speciality Food looks at what the cheese sector looks like now, and what's to come

INDUSTRY

According to Mintel's Cheese - UK - October 2017 report, over 9 in 10 people buy at least one type of cheese, meaning that the British cheese sector (and beyond) is a vital part of the food industry and well worth paying attention to.

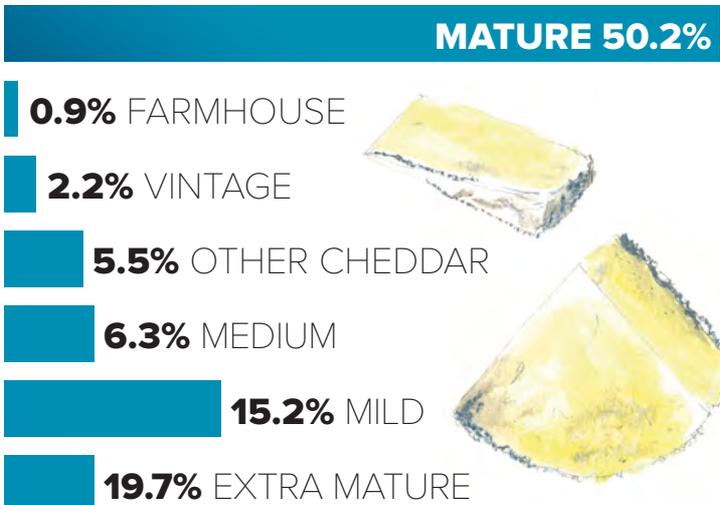
With a greater consumer appreciation for food and drink which offers quality and connection, small-scale cheesemakers and products made from local and hyperlocal ingredients are enjoying their time in the sun – aided by discerning independent retailers and a growing appreciation of this burgeoning market from multiples and larger, more mainstream retailers.

Meanwhile, milk prices have affected the wider dairy industry and seeped into the cheese sector, both in terms of the payment farmers are receiving for their milk and the supermarket battle to drive down the cost of the milk they're selling to the end consumer. One respondent to our wholesaler survey predicted: "For the larger creameries I see homogenization continuing as demand for cheap as possible food continues and supermarkets drive down the cost of milk."

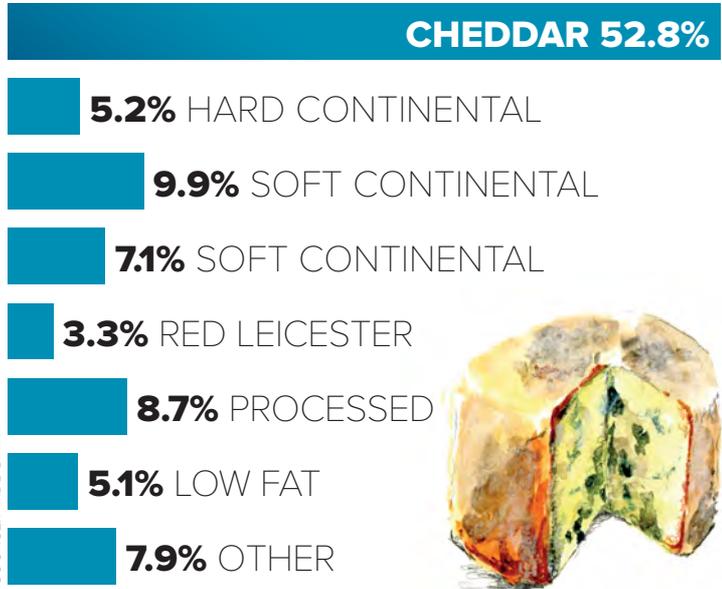
So, the cheese industry is a tale of two parts, with one end of the scale leaning towards increasingly cheap and lower-quality options to cater for the need for affordable food, and the other to satisfy the desire for quality and connections.

Cheddar: King Of The Counter

With Cheddar accounting for almost half of value retail sales and 52% of volume sales, according to Mintel, we decided it was worth a closer look. Here's the breakdown:



What are consumers buying?



BUYER PROFILE

When it comes to sourcing and selling cheese, buyers and retailers are open-minded and eager for more opportunities according to the Mintel report. Sourcing-wise, three in 10 would like to see a wider range of regional cheeses available to them while a quarter would enjoy having access to more cheeses from smaller and independent makers.

Meanwhile, a fifth would like to see an increased number of cheeses with added flavours. Options such as Wensleydale with Cranberries or Apricots are consistently popular year on year, the former proving a particularly strong seller during the

Christmas period, but exciting new flavour options would be welcomed.

Sampling was a hot topic, with 68% stating that they were more likely to buy a cheese if samples had been available.

In terms of selling cheese to shoppers, buyers and retailers are open to ideas. Serving and pairing ideas would be popular, for them to use as selling aids – 28% would like advice on pairing cheese with wine, while 57% of buyers would be interested in recipe suggestions. Speaking of recipe inspiration, buyers are keen to branch out into tastings, live recipe demonstrations and gondola end tastings.

“The UK produces enough cheese, plus we import everything you could wish for, so the latest trend is not about new cheeses, but highlighting the amazing pick and mix of cheese we have in the UK. We like to highlight the best of local and seasonal, with a ‘when it’s gone, it’s gone’ policy. Think goats cheese in the spring or Mont d’Or in autumn”

JEREMY BOWEN, PAXTON & WHITFIELD AND AMBASSADOR FOR SPECIALITY & FINE FOOD FAIR 2018



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RETAILER VIEWPOINT

Cheesemongers, delis, farm shops and indies answer our questions

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE GREATEST OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR INDUSTRY?

- The growing British cheese scene **65%**
- Small-scale cheese **52%**
- Social media **48%**
- The increased value placed on food **43%**
- Other **13%**

WHAT PERSUADES YOU TO STOCK A CHEESE?

- Taste **91%**
- Provenance **57%**
- Other **35%+**
- Trends **30%**
- Price point **22%**

WHAT ARE YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGES AS A CHEESE RETAILER?

- Pricing **52%**
- Cheese care **30%**

- Cheese wastage **30%**
- Other **30%**
- Sourcing **22%**

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST THREATS TO OUR INDUSTRY?

- Cut price multiples offering artisan cheeses **74%**
- Business rates **43%**
- Brexit **35%**
- Other **13%**
- Milk prices **9%**

SOURCE: THE SPECIALITY FOOD CHEESE SURVEY 2018

“16-34 year olds (Millennials) and the AB socio-economic group are more likely to consider themselves cheese connoisseurs, reflecting the typical characteristics of ‘foodies’”

MINTEL

GENERATIONAL DIVIDE

According to research gathered by Mintel, Millennials (consumers aged between 16 and 34) and the AB socio-economic group are more likely than the older generation to think of themselves as cheese connoisseurs, and also more likely to buy a wide range of cheeses – with the exception of Cheddar.

Added flavours and ingredients and convenient formats are popular with younger buyers – however, they see sliced and grated cheese as being lower quality than conventional formats. A wide selection of flavoured cheeses may curry favour with the younger generation of cheese lovers, but a word of warning: according to one wholesaler we spoke to, “there can sometimes be too much choice when it comes to flavoured cheeses, and suppliers with large ranges can struggle to see equal sales across the range.”

Meanwhile, consumers over the age of 45 are more likely to buy Cheddar, blue cheese and regional British cheeses (Mintel’s Yellow Fats and Edible Oils – UK report from September 2017 suggested that the older generation are more likely to find a product more appealing if it states its regional offering), and just slightly more likely to buy cheese in general.

“I consider myself a cheese connoisseur”

Yes
25%

No
68%

I don't know
7%

SOURCE: MINTEL

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BREXIT
According to Mintel's report, while British Cheddar has become more competitive in export markets as a result of the drop in the value of the pound following June 2016's EU referendum, Continental cheeses have become more expensive.

In a statement no doubt echoed across the British cheese sector, a respondent to our wholesaler survey expressed uncertainty about the effect that Brexit will ultimately have. "It is very difficult to know

what potential effect Brexit could have at this point in time until we know more about the changes to be implemented by the Government," they state, going on to say that "it is very much business as usual at the moment!" The practical repercussions of Britain's exit from the EU are a hotly contested topic, but at the forefront of one wholesaler's mind is the potential increased complication when it comes to shipments and tariffs. There seems to be little if any confidence when it comes to what Brexit will ultimately mean for the

industry. How will we be affected? In the words of one respondent: "who knows?"

Our research has found that British wholesalers haven't yet settled on a balance in terms of where they source their stock; while some have made the decision to give their British and Continental ranges equal standing in their offering, moving from either a Continental or British lean, others are upping their Continental range as consumers become increasingly aware and keen on options from other countries – or supporting the growing British cheese sector by supplying larger numbers of cheeses from the UK and promoting their provenance.

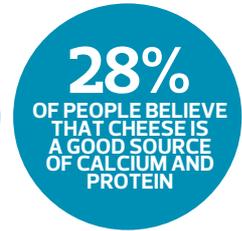
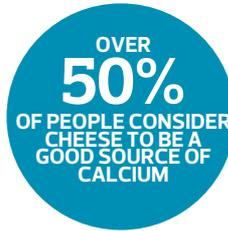
The desire for story, provenance and quality – particularly within the speciality sector – should see British cheesemakers thrive. One wholesaler respondent feels that "British cheese very much has its own identity and drives its own demand to the environment we are in. Cheesemaking has strong local histories in each country when it comes to artisan cheesemaking."

One wholesaler who took part in our survey highlighted the rise of modern British cheeses which replicate classic Continental styles – an option which satisfies both the consumer interest in international cuisines and the commonly-held desire to support our domestic cheese industry.

It could be that the concept of Buy British could be strengthened by the rising costs of food and drink from elsewhere – consumers may well start to see UK-produced food and drink as better value for money than their imported counterparts.

HEALTH

The health credentials of cheese are mainly recognised by consumers over the age of 45 – according to Mintel, this age group is "significantly more likely" to be aware of these benefits – meaning that more work is to be done to raise awareness of the positive nutritional value of cheese.



SOURCE: MINTEL



SEASONAL

The cheese wholesalers we spoke to stated that non-cow's milk cheeses sell best in the summer – from Feta to Mozzarella and all the goats and ewe's milk options in between.

Cheeses which can be utilised for picnics and antipasti boards are also popular, which covers a range of cheeses from classic blues to Brie, and wax-covered truckles sell well too – potentially due to larger volumes of tourists in the summer months.

In winter, according to the

wholesalers we surveyed, consumers are after cheeses with stronger flavours. Unsurprisingly, the popularity of Stiltons and other blue cheeses reaches its peak over the winter months, and truffle-flavoured options are sought after.

We all know that consumers look to treat themselves over the festive period, so are happy to spend a bit more on a cheese of superior quality – as well as on one which is only seasonally-available, such as Vacherin Mont D'or.

“Scottish and British cheeses have always formed a core part of our offering. Being able to balance a range that provides enough regionality for customers UK-wide with a selection of classic Continental lines underpins what we do”

CHEESE WHOLESALER BASED IN THE UK

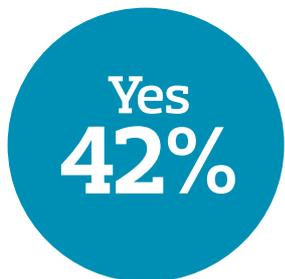
THE FUTURE OF BRITISH CHEESE

While it's more than likely that classic British cheeses – the Stiltons, Farmhouse Cheddars and territorialials of the cheese world – will continue to hold a firm place in the hearts of the UK's buying public, trends from across the food and drink sector are starting to make their way into the cheese industry.

Health and quality is an example of one such conversion, with one wholesaler who took part in our survey stating that "From speaking to customers the conversation turns to the health food trend – where retailers cater for vegan and vegetarians they look for their cheese selection to include high welfare, small batch, organic artisan cheeses. This enables the retailer to have an ethical and environmental framework throughout their retail offering, being vegetarian or not."

In terms of standing out in a busy marketplace, one wholesaler states that "Strong loyalty to local cheesemakers in response to finding a point of difference from the multiples is a key concern." They point out that consumers and retailers are increasingly looking for the following: "Small batch, unique flavoured cheeses, urban dairies and a collaborative approach to sharing methods."

“I would pay more for cheese made by smaller/independent cheesemakers”



SOURCE: MINTEL

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This year's British Cheese Awards at the Royal Bath & West Show saw eight young finalists, all under the age of 30, compete for the coveted title of Young Cheesemonger of the Year. The competition, organised by Anthony Rowcliffe & Son, was won by Nicola Beardmore, a cheesemonger from Brown & Green Deli in Trentham, Staffordshire.

On the day finalists took part in four rounds: round one – Cheeseboard Proposal & Discussion where they discussed their cheeseboard selection; round two – a Cut & Wrap exercise where they had to cut and wrap different weights of cheese from whole cheeses by sight with no use of weighing scales; round three – Identification, where contestants had to taste and identify a number of unmarked cheeses; and round four – 'Masterrind', where each contestant took part in a Mastermind-style quiz and gave responses to questions asked about British cheese.

On taking part in the competition Nicola says: "It was a great experience to be amongst people my own age from the British cheese industry during the competition. We all had time during the day to talk to each other and discuss our roles. Although I was in the lead after round two I didn't think that I'd win and when they called out my name at the winner's presentation I was so surprised. I still can't believe it, it's so surreal, but I'm really pleased and looking forward to getting back to work and developing my career in the world of cheese."

"This prize will be an amazing boost for my career. I was able to judge at the British Cheese Awards the day before the Young Cheesemonger Competition and



BRITAIN'S BEST YOUNG CHEESEMONGER 2018

The winner of this year's Young Cheesemonger of the Year at the British Cheese Awards was Nicola Beardmore, a cheesemonger from Brown & Green Deli in Trentham, Staffordshire

it was an absolute honour to judge with some of the legends from the British cheese world. It was an even bigger honour to be congratulated on my win by some of them the following day."

Nicola started to work at Brown & Green in 2016. Initially she wasn't that interested in cheese and it was only when she started working on the cheese counter, tasting and learning about the ones that they stocked, that she became fascinated by them and so wanted to learn more.

At the beginning her role included learning how to cut cheese from the counter, how to care and present it so that it was looking its best and also how to merchandise the counter so that it was always appealing to customers. Now, as well as this, she looks after the daily ordering and receiving the daily deliveries of fresh cheeses from the cheesemakers.

When asked about what makes a good cheesemonger Nicola says: "Firstly, you've got to have a passion for the product and the industry – it's fascinating. The artisan cheesemakers we work with are an amazing group of people who create these delicious products and all have great stories to tell. I've had

the opportunity to meet some of the local cheesemakers who supply us and it's a fantastic experience being able to talk about their products to customers having visited them.

"Secondly, a palate for understanding how cheeses differ from one another and what influences their final flavour, such as milk variety, heat treatment and bacteria cultures, is important.

Often people don't realise the impact milk from different times of year can have on the taste of the same cheese.

"Finally, an understanding of what customers want and how to serve customers well is vital. Being able to find the perfect cheese for a customer based on one's knowledge is the hallmark of a great cheesemonger. When I first stated on the cheese counter I knew very

NICOLA'S ULTIMATE CHEESEBOARD PICKS

- **Montgomery's Cheddar**, unpasteurised cows' milk, Somerset
- **Guernsleigh Brie**, pasteurised cows' milk, Staffordshire
- **Hartington Stilton**, pasteurised cows' milk, Derbyshire
- **Cornish Kern**, pasteurised cows' milk, Cornwall
- **Oakwood Smoked**, pasteurised cows' milk, Dorset

little about the cheeses in front of me but as I fell in love with this delicious product I started to devour any information I could about them. Now I share this knowledge with the team and our customers."

For Nicola the diversity of cheese production, particularly in the UK, is very exciting. The number of different varieties in production that are either completely new or influenced by more traditional cheeses is great to experience. This year's British Cheese Awards highlighted this to her as she saw producers, both large and small, presenting over 1,000 cheeses to be judged with such care and passion.

Working as a cheesemonger offers Nicola a refreshing balance between working directly with producers and offering top quality customer service. For her, any young person considering a career in the food industry should seriously think about working with cheese; it's an industry that is as challenging as it is rewarding and offers such a wide range of opportunities.

NICOLA'S DESERT ISLAND CHEESE

My favourite cheese at the moment is Montgomery's cheddar, a lovely, mature nutty cheddar cheese produced by Jamie Montgomery to his grandfather's recipe made in North Cadbury, Somerset. Unfortunately I don't think this would hold up for any period of time on an island climate due to its unpasteurised nature, so instead I would have to go for a wheel of Duckett's Caerphilly from Westcombe Dairy. The thick rind would make storage easier and the cheese would provide an excellent addition to a survivor's diet with its crisp clean finish, not to mention great seasoning.



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SHOW PREVIEW: INTERNATIONAL CHEESE AWARDS 2018

The iconic event is back for 2018, hosting the world's best cheeses, industry experts and the famous Trade Day Lunch



IN DETAIL

WHAT: International Cheese Awards 2018

WHERE: Dorford Hall, Nantwich, Cheshire CW5 8LD

WHEN: 24th–25th July 2018

WEB: internationalcheeseawards.co.uk

CONTACT: 01270 780 306

TWITTER: @ICheeseAwards #ICA2017

The International Cheese Awards, held every July in Nantwich, Cheshire, has become a must-attend event for professionals across the cheese industry – and no wonder. Taking place over two days, the world-famous show brings together cheese experts, makers, judges and buyers on the first day, and offers cheese-loving consumers the opportunity to sample the very best cheeses the world has to offer on the second.

Trade Day: 24th July

On the first day of the renowned International Cheese Awards, thousands of top industry professionals come together to develop relationships and witness the judging of thousands of cheeses from around the world. The cheeses will be judged by a team of around 250 cheesemongers and industry professionals, who will be looking at the cheeses' flavour, consistency, texture and colour

before awarding over 200 trophies to the very best entries. The winners will be announced at the now-legendary Trade Day Lunch, where 1,200 cheese industry professionals gather to eat, drink and celebrate the cheese industry across the world.

Public Day: 25th July

On the second day of the International Cheese Awards, the largest one-day agricultural

show in England comes to the marquee and surrounding field: The Nantwich Show. On this day, members of the public will be able to sample and purchase cheeses from the producers exhibiting within the chilled marquee (the biggest in the world) – plus meet renowned chefs including James Martin, Will Holland, Sean Williams and Jonathan Harrison at the annual Cookery School hosted by Le Gruyère AOP.



“ We are pleased with the overall build up to the 2018 show – this year we've embarked on a PR campaign to drive awareness of the show starting with a cheese and wine launch in London to showcase our show with London food writers, press and food bloggers. We want people who have never visited the International Cheese Awards to know about it and learn what it means to win a gold medal at the show. Quite simply we are the place to be if you are in the cheese/dairy industry or are a cheese lover ”

CHRIS CHISNALL, CHAIRMAN, INTERNATIONAL CHEESE AWARDS





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5 MINUTES WITH... CHRIS CHISNALL

Chairman of the International
Cheese Awards 2018

HOW MANY ENTRIES HAVE YOU HAD THIS YEAR?

Entries are still rolling in despite the deadline passing – so not a final number yet but should have over 5,000 entries again this year.

ARE THERE ANY NEW CATEGORIES?

Yes, the show has been expanded this year – we've introduced the Cheese Accompaniment classes

for chutneys, charcuterie and biscuits/crackers, and the most popular one to judge is the wine category. We feel it's important to look at adjacent categories that support the 'cheese occasion' and, the more help and advice we can give to consumers on eating cheese, hopefully the better the cheese experience. We have also changed the retailer classes, bringing in more specific judging

on specific cheese types so a Roquefort will be judged against another Roquefort rather than all blues being put together. We are also hoping to recognise the independent retail trade with Best Deli Independent of the Year and Best Online Deli of the Year.

ARE THERE ANY NEW EXHIBITORS?

Yes our exhibitors list is always changing – we are looking to attract more international exhibitors and also smaller makers.

WHY SHOULD PEOPLE ATTEND?

Quite simply, if you are a cheese lover then this is the place for you. It's your chance to meet and speak to the people who make and sell this fantastic product.



CLASSES

- Farmhouse/Traditional Cheese
- Creamery/Block Cheese**
- Cheddar
- Territorials**
- Modern British Cheese
- Stilton**
- Other Blue
- Cheese with Additives**
- Goats Cheese
- Sheep's Milk Cheese**
- Speciality
- Soft or Cream Cheese**
- Smoked Cheese
- Cheese with Health Benefits**
- Health Drinks
- Specialist Cheesemakers Section**
- Organic Dairy Products
- Vegetarian Cheese**
- Home Internationals
- Best English/Irish/Scottish/Welsh Cheese**
- International Cheeses
- Cheese Cake Class**
- Convenience Cheeses
- Butter**
- Cream
- Quark**
- Yoghurt
- Milk**
- Ice Cream
- Novice Cheesemakers**
- Student Cheesemakers
- Best New Dairy Product**
- Cheese Board
- The DuPont Danisco Cheddar Grand Prix**
- Packaging Classes
- Label Class**
- Past Masters Class
- Catering & Food Service**
- Cheese for Children
- Cheese Snacks**
- Cheese Lover's Trophy
- Cheese Accompaniment**
- ICA Retailer of the Year



“ For me, the most pleasing aspect of last year's show was the all inclusive buzz around the ICA trade day coupled with the impressive scale of the famous lunch, a remarkable industry spectacle. Retailers, small medium and large cheesemakers and dairy processors from all over the globe, as well as suppliers to the industry, all actively engaged with each other in a giant pavilion on one special day – a truly impressive display worthy of the largest cheese competition in the world ”

IAN LUXTON, VICE CHAIRMAN,
INTERNATIONAL CHEESE AWARDS

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beltonfarm.co.uk



2 ELITE IMPORTS MONTAGNOLO AFFINE

A creamy, soft blue cheese which is surface ripened. Its distinctive grey rind is edible and each cheese is tendered by hand. Its flavour and texture is akin to a triple-crème Brie, with a distinctive and slight piquant flavour expected of a blue cheese. Named Supreme Champion at Nantwich in 2012 and World Champion the following year, securing its place in cheese history.
elite-imports-limited.co.uk



3 COTTAGE DELIGHT CHUTNEYS

This Autumn Cottage Delight launches Victoria Plum Chutney, which is lovingly created using British Victoria plums, British Bramley apples, prunes and a blend of warming spices. The recently-launched Smokey Beetroot Chutney is a great all-year-round flavour and a perfect addition to a cheeseboard and served with pâté, and is especially good with fish.
cottagedelight.co.uk





4 SOUTH CAERNARFON CREAMERIES WELSH SLATE CAVERN AGED CHEDDAR

Welsh Slate Cavern Aged Cheddar is made to a bespoke recipe and matured to a minimum of 11 months before being aged 500ft underground at the Llechwedd Slate Caverns buried deep under the mountains of Snowdonia. This creates a rich savoury cheese with a real depth of flavour and a delicious creamy texture. sccwales.co.uk



5 BUTLERS FARMHOUSE CHEESES KIDDERTON ASH

Kidderton Ash goat's cheese looks distinctively elegant on any cheeseboard. It's rolled in ash prior to maturing, which produces a fabulous visual effect when sliced. The contrast of textures can be enjoyed from the soft white coat, the firmer ash layer and then the silky luscious goat's cheese in the centre. Handmade by Butlers Farmhouse Cheeses from their own herd. butlerscheeses.co.uk



6 PETER'S YARD SOURDOUGH CRISPbread

Peter's Yard's award-winning Sourdough Crispbread is the natural choice for cheese. The range includes Original, Spelt & Fig, Seeded Wholegrain, Pink Peppercorn, Charcoal and Caraway. Some lines are exclusive to independent retailers. petersyard.com



7 LE GRUYÈRE AOP

An ever-popular cheese from the western cantons of Switzerland, the award-winning Gruyère AOP has long been revered for its unique and delicious flavour. It is made with raw milk sourced from a small cluster of dairy farmers in the region, which is transformed by master cheesemakers using customs shared throughout the generations. gruyere.com/en





LE GRUYÈRE AOP IS ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST VERSATILE CHEESES. EACH AGE OPTION IS DELICIOUS ON A CHEESEBOARD AND WILL SUIT A RANGE OF CONSUMER PREFERENCES, BUT THERE ARE A MYRIAD OF OTHER USES FOR IT, TOO. ADD TO A SALAD OR PASTA DISH FOR AN EASY FLAVOUR BOOST, OR USE IN A CROQUE MONSIEUR TOASTED SANDWICH OR FRENCH ONION SOUP. POSSIBLY THE MOST FAMOUS WAY TO SERVE LE GRUYÈRE AOP IS IN A TRADITIONAL SWISS FONDUE – SIMPLY MELT TOGETHER WITH GARLIC AND WHITE WINE AND SERVE

DID U KNOW

HOW TO: CARE FOR CHEESE

Andy Swinscoe of Courtyard Dairy offers his practical tips on keeping on top of your cheese care

“Good cheese care is looking at every cheese every day”

For me, cheese care is the skill of a good cheesemonger, that and talking about where your product comes from. If you don't offer these

services, the customer might as well go to one of the multiples – Booths and Waitrose in particular do such a good job and sell quality cheese. As an independent you have to be a step ahead on your product knowledge and care. Good cheese care is

looking at every cheese every day – re-wrapping, ‘cleaning the cheese’ (giving the face a scrape with a knife), overwrapping if too dry, and if it's too moist (slimy/moulding too fast), leaving it unwrapped.

Also, make sure you wrap the cut face with nice tight cling, and only sell it when it tastes spot on – keeping it for longer if necessary. Hard cheeses won't alter much – especially if you have only a fridge.

I'd also leave whole cheeses in the boxes they come in for as long as possible; it'll keep them in little humid micro-environments in your fridge.

“I know it sounds simple, but the easiest way to look after cheese is to buy it in good condition and punt through it as fast as possible”

My advice on cheese care is actually to concentrate on selling your cheese fast and keeping a tight,

well defined range of cheese that can be turned over – not too many different cheeses. I know it sounds simple, but the easiest way to look after cheese is to buy it in good condition and punt through it as fast as possible. Buy less, too; that way you'll have to look after less and clean fewer faces, etc.

You can still make your counter look full with straw, slates and wooden boxes, so don't worry about fewer cheeses meaning that your counter looks empty – there are ways around that.

Most cheese shops don't have the facilities to really improve cheese – that requires different temperatures, rooms and humidities. And constant care. Yes, keep hold of Brie in your fridge until it's ripe (and keep the fridge up the 6-7°C end; it'll stop cheeses drying out and help them mature).

Aside from that, hold less stock and sell it faster. Wholesalers are

so good at delivering nowadays that you can easily top up fast.

If a cheese isn't ripe, don't be afraid not to sell it or split it. Just take it off the counter until it is ready. If anyone asks about it, tell them it's ripening and you'd rather sell them something in good condition than under-ripe, then give them a taste of something similar that you do have ripe and ready.

Most customers will appreciate that service rather than giving them what they asked for if it isn't bob-on!

“The very best cheeses in the world can be wrecked by inadequate care and attention – and you'd do a disservice to the cheesemaker if you sold them”

As we mainly sell cheese (95% of our shop sales come from cheese) that cheese has to be amazing. If it isn't people will go back to the convenience of their weekly shop.



“ There is always more important and more glamorous things to do, but staying on top of the quality of your cheese will help you keep customers appreciating just how good your cheeses are and keep you competitive ”



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The very best cheeses in the world can be wrecked by inadequate care and attention – and you’d do a disservice to the cheesemaker if you sold them; people often blame the cheese rather than the shop. They’d say they disliked that cheese – but it could be because you haven’t looked after it right.

The primary problems of inadequate cheese care are:

- **Cheese drying:** this often means it gets saltier and you start to see fissures on cut cheese and cracks in the rind on whole cheeses.
- **Flavours dulling:** cheeses taste their best when cared for at the right temperature and once split wrapped in wax as much as possible, or if wrapped in cling, frequently cleaned. The flavours start to dull once the cheese has been split so try to turn over every piece of cut cheese every 10 days.
- **Moulding-up:** if the face of your cheese starts to show flecks of white or blue mould you really aren’t selling your cheese fast enough. More frequent cleaning of the face will help but I would also be reviewing those cheeses and looking into why they aren’t selling. Good cheese care will help solve the issue, but the underlying problem is really that sales aren’t fast enough. Is it that the cheese isn’t tasting good enough? Are staff not tasting

WHAT ARE THE DOS AND DON'TS OF CHEESE CARE?

- Don't rely on humidity meters and labels telling you when it'll be ripe
- Do rely on tasting, feeling and looking at each and every bit of cheese. Then react to it

them out? Are they in an awkward position on the counter that nobody goes to? Vacuum packing will prevent this from happening as fast, but it also has other detrimental affects. I would only vacuum pack as a last resort.

“There are always more important and more glamorous things to do, but staying on top of the quality of your cheese will keep you competitive”

Independents really have to shine on all fronts to compete with the convenience of a supermarket and the easiness of online. Cheese care is one of the areas where they can really make themselves stand out – so make sure it is done. There are always more important and more glamorous things to do, but staying on top of the quality of your cheese will help you keep customers appreciating just how good your cheeses are and keep you competitive.



MEET THE RETAILER...

The Courtyard Dairy has become one of the best-known independents in the UK – and is putting North Yorkshire on the foodie map

The Courtyard Dairy is a cheese shop, cheese museum and cheese café based in Settle, North Yorkshire. We specialise in raw-milk farmhouse cheese and set up in 2012 as a husband and wife team with just a tiny little shop. We now employ 16 people and sell about 20 tonnes of raw milk cheese a year. Prior to setting up The Courtyard Dairy I worked for The Fine Cheese Co Bath, and did a cheese-maturing apprenticeship in France for six months with Mons Fromages.



RATHER THAN BUYING CHEESES YOUNG AND MATURING THEM YOURSELF – AT A COST TO SPACE AND MONETARY RESOURCES – IT COULD BE POSSIBLE TO HAVE THEM MATURED TO PERFECTION BY THE CHEESEMAKER'S OWN AGEING EXPERTS BEFORE THEY REACH YOU. FOR EXAMPLE, **LE GRUYÈRE AOP** WORKS WITH AFFINEURS WHO AGE THEIR CHEESE WITHIN THE LOCAL AREA, AND ONLY SEND THEM OUT WHEN THEY'RE AT THEIR BEST

A Family Recipe for 900 Years



Le Gruyère AOP Switzerland - a centuries-old tradition of artisanal cheesemaking.

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Never mind Bloody Mary minus vodka or sparkling water with lime, a revolution is taking place in soft drinks. Sales of no- and low-alcohol beers have gone up 20%. Mixologists at city wine bars are shaking up mocktails, and Seedlip, the creators of two non-alcoholic spirits, Spice 94 and Garden 108, will bring a third to market this month. Drinks companies can't launch no- and low-alcohol drinks fast enough; the latest data from the Office for National Statistics suggest one in five adults is teetotal. This rises to one in three 16-24 year olds.

HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THIS TREND?

Dry January – started five years ago by the charity Alcohol Concern – has done an excellent job of raising awareness. On New Year's Day 2018, over three million people – most aged 35-54 – vowed to stay booze-free for 31 days. The fact a third fell off the wagon isn't the point. In changing their habits, they raised demand for chic and tasty alternatives. Other influences are sports nutrition, clean eating and the wellness trend. Gym bunnies want nutritional benefits, not empty calories and a hangover.

SO WHERE ARE THESE CHIC AND TASTY ALTERNATIVES?

Bring on mocktails. At The Stafford Hotel, St James, London, there's an alcohol-free cocktail called The Scoop, consisting of Seedlip non-alcoholic spirit, coconut water, aloe-vera, cucumber and mint. Have you heard of herb-infused water? Launched in 2017, and sold by Waitrose, Ocado and Harvey Nichols, No 1 Rosemary Water may even improve the drinker's memory – and not just by keeping them sober. It's a Marmite product which customers will love or hate so offer samplings. Birch, Maple and Bamboo waters (made by Sibberi and Tapped) will appeal to affluent fashionistas and anyone who likes coconut water.

I ENJOY SPIRITS. IS THERE ANYTHING THAT TASTES LIKE GIN OR WHISKY?

No, though there are several products on the market which give consumers the illusion they are getting a proper drink. Seedlip can't legally call their non-alcoholic spirits gin, because they don't



LOW/NO ALCOHOL

Designated drivers can ditch the tomato juice says Sally-Jayne Wright. Living tea, herb-infused water, Cuba Libre and rose bubbly are just a few of the treats awaiting teetotalers

contain juniper and many gin drinkers crave that juniper hit. The nearest thing is Teetotal G'n'T in bottles, as made and beautifully packaged by the Temperance Spirit Company and sold at Harvey Nichols. Their latest product is a Teetotal Cuba Libre (rum and cola mix). Ironically, the explosion of gins onto the market has led to the appearance of countless new mixers including Fentimans Pink Grapefruit Tonic and Fever-Tree Cucumber Tonic Water. Most taste adult on their own, unlike many colas and flavoured waters.

“Drinks companies can't launch no- and low-alcohol drinks fast enough; the latest data from the Office for National Statistics suggest one in five adults is teetotal”

YES, WHY ARE SO MANY SOFT DRINKS TOO SWEET?

The secret is to replace the alcohol with a kick, whether it comes from caffeine, ginger, chilli or a sharp, bitter note. ChariTea mate is a sparkling, iced tea with one Great Taste star and a “long-lasting caffeine fix”. The tonic drink, Pimento, delivers both chilli and ginger. Punch is the reason James Whites' Zinger shots work so well; they contain ginger, chilli, caffeine or turmeric. And if you're looking for a tang, you'll enjoy kombucha, a fermented, living tea with a slight fizz and many of the

benefits of live yoghurt. We especially liked Equinox Original Kombucha, which scored two Great Taste Award stars in 2016.

MY CUSTOMERS LIKE THE HERBAL TASTE OF CAMPARI AND APEROL SPRITZ.

So copy Antonio Delicatessen in Lewisham and stock the non-alcoholic aperitifs, Crodino and SanBitter. Tell customers they can make a Crodino Fizz mocktail by adding soda.

I'VE FOUND LOW- AND NO-ALCOHOL BEERS MORE DRINKABLE THAN BOOZE-FREE WINES. DO YOU AGREE?

Yes. Trend Watch knows a man who happily downed four Becks Blue beers at a barbecue before the host told him they were low-alcohol. Brewdog Nanny State ale works well, too. If you prefer to support artisan brands, there's a new brewery, Nirvana, based in Leyton, East London. Their range of no- and low-alcohol bottled craft beers have hippyish names such as Tantra, Karma and Kosmic, and are on the shelves at E17, the deli in London's Walthamstow, as well as Whole Foods Market.

CAN YOU RECOMMEND ANYTHING FOR CELEBRATIONS?

Luscombe's Damascene Rose Bubbly. While we were quaffing full-fat champers, we served this to our designated driver, 33, in a crystal champagne flute. She loved it. It looks festive, has a delicate nose and blush colour and was voted 'outstanding' at the 2017 Great Taste Awards.

HOW CAN WE MAKE THE MOST OF THE TEETOTAL TREND?

Ask customers whom they are buying for: themselves, someone healthy, fashion-conscious or younger with a sweet tooth. Be generous with samplings. Even if customers find kombucha delicious, the idea of fermented, living tea will be unfamiliar. Remind them not to drink the jelly-like residue at the bottom of the bottle.

IS THIS TREND HERE TO STAY?

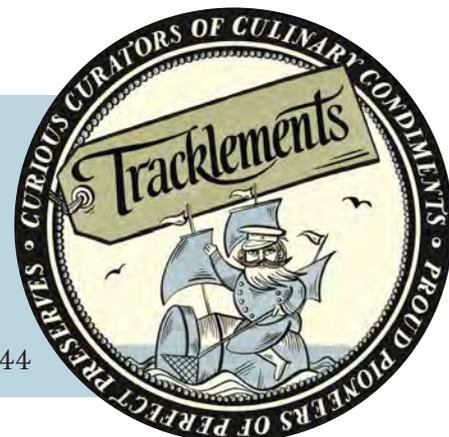
Absolutely, and the arrival of more imaginative soft drinks is overdue. That said, novelty is not enough. Drinks succeed only if we build them into our drinking repertoire, so trust your taste buds and listen to feedback. Bottoms up!



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HOW TO: PREP FOR CHRISTMAS

Although you're a long way off decking the halls with boughs of holly, ensure your business is well poised with this festive retailing advice

It's that time of the year again. It's time to open up the storage and evaluate whether you're going to invest in new festive decorations or use last year's again, to take a look at what products fared well last Yuletide and to research what new lines you want to stock for this year's big event. And with a huge proportion of a retailer's yearly turnover generated from the busy Christmas period, it's crucial that your business is well prepped and raring to go.

To put the magnitude of Christmas into perspective, it has been noted that consumers spent £1bn extra on festive groceries in 2017, as concerns about the economy were sidelined. A late food shopping rush meant that shoppers spent £747m on 22nd December, according to research by Kantar Worldpanel, cementing the theory that the Friday before Christmas is officially busiest food shopping day in the calendar year.

While the vast majority of this data will represent sales from supermarkets, with shoppers urgently stocking up last minute on Brussels sprouts and bubbly, your premium offering will appeal to the many at this time of the year as consumers will be on the lookout for the very best festive fare to make the occasion one to remember. Continue reading to discover how prestigious retailers go about preparing for this prodigious retailing event, and get to know the must-stock products of 2018 with the help of the fine food industry's foremost experts.

WHOLESALE PERSPECTIVE

Cotswold Fayre

Paul Hargreaves, chief executive at Cotswold Fayre, has noticed a number of trends emerging, and believes that consumers are looking for products that are genuinely seasonal and offer something different from the norm. "When Christmas shopping – particularly for a gift – customers don't want to pick up something that they could have bought anytime in the year, nor do they believe that adding a bit of holly to the packaging makes it a gift," says Paul. His must-stock festive items include:



● **The Daily Chocolate's Chocolate Teapot:** This product has really caught our customers' imaginations this year.

Fine Italian chocolate offering a range of fun, but tasty, gift options.

● **Ministers of Taste:** Includes some of the nation's best-known and well-loved food and drink gifting products including biscuits, preserves, chutney, teas, confectionery and cake. Customers have absolutely loved this collection, placing large orders right across the range.

● **Classic Wheels:** Based on a retro principle, this range includes a number of classic car-themed gifts. With delicious Belgian chocolate bars, thins



and truffles on offer, it's proven to be a popular choice for men's gifting.

● **Dean's Steven Brown Collector's Edition:** Featuring iconic Steven Brown art imagery, this Christmas Dean's has launched a range of beautifully presented gift tins containing melt-in-the-mouth all-butter shortbread. It's great for creating eye-catching in-store displays, and these tins may become collector's items, too!

● **La Giardiniera di Morgan:** The ideal accompaniment this Christmas, this range of crunchy, brightly coloured and flavoursome pickled vegetables look spectacular and create a good centrepiece for a retailer's display.



PERTZBORN



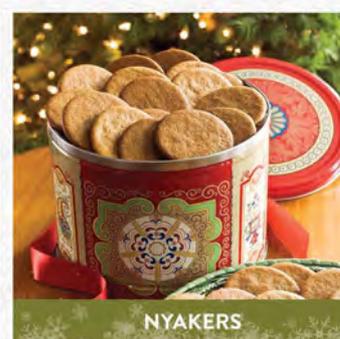
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“WE HAVE TO BE READY TO CAPITALISE AS EARLY AS OCTOBER OR NOVEMBER TIME”

Sue Johns, co-owner of Johns of Instow and Appledore, runs us through Christmas preparations at her renowned West Country delis:

STAY ONE STEP AHEAD

Our Christmas preparations start all the way in December the year before, when we start booking local producers at our annual festive food and gift extravaganza – if we don't book them early then we miss that opportunity. Fast-forward to the following June and July and we're typically sourcing products which we think our customers will want to purchase for Christmas presents, for the festive table and for entertaining – we typically tie in Christmas and New Year together. This is when we'll be looking through the different catalogues that we receive, contacting people we may have met at trade shows and researching products we have spotted on social media. There are certain producers we won't have introduced yet but we'll know that we want their products in for Christmas. We have to be ready to capitalise as early as October or November time, as some people shop as early as possible to spread the cost of Christmas.

POINT OF DIFFERENCE IS PARAMOUNT

We've seen some fantastic chocolate and gin products that we can't wait to introduce this year – we're fortunate as we've got some great new gins and rums from our area. There's also a huge gifting market for Christmas – so we obviously look to tap into that. We do a lot of hampers, and we find that people like to come and choose their own carrier – whether it's a box, basket or bag – and then select their own products. That's why there's a fair bit of pressure to stock a range of quality bits and pieces to complement the demand for forming a great hamper gift. The real challenge for retailers like us is that some indie producers are so big and popular

that they naturally want to sell their products across the length of the UK, which just means that a recognised brand isn't going to be unique enough if someone wants that special present.

TEMPT WITH CHRISTMAS CHEESES

We have a huge cheese counter – it gives us the opportunity to offer something fresh. Everyone obviously wants Stilton or our local Devon Blue for Christmas, so we offer a more traditional cheeseboard, but we curate cheeseboards that offer something a little different, too. We like to provide expert personal service, including tastings, to help the customer decide. My husband, Anthony, was fortunate enough to be a World Cheese Awards judge a couple of years ago, so he's in his element manning the cheese counter during Christmas!

PROVIDE UNIQUE SERVICES AND EVENTS

We offer a personal Christmas ordering service – it's something that goes back through our history as a family grocers. Customers fill in an order form and hand it to us and we collect all of the goods – from turkeys through to sprouts – for them. Customers simply come in and collect it all. It's a lot of work, and with supermarkets offering similar services it's something that's dwindled a bit, but it's still a service that's very worthwhile offering. It's still a substantive part of our Christmas and I can't imagine it not being offered. We also host plenty of events in-store and tasting evenings. We're fortunate to have cafés in both of our stores, so we can host ticketed events and have people sit down and enjoy fare promoted for the festive season.

RETAILER SPOTLIGHT... CROOTS FARM SHOP

Croots Farm Shop in Derbyshire is set to celebrate its eleventh Christmas this year. Anthony Poole, retail manager, tells us how they make it a success:

Our Christmas preparation starts on 1st January. With Christmas being such an important part of our year, it's something that's always on my mind and I'm always looking for things to improve on each year and push our sales and customer experience to the next level. My first Christmas meeting with suppliers this year was in February. It's not something that can be left until later in the year as you will miss out on key lines.

Turkey is obviously a big seller at Christmas, but the team always look at new products they can bring in to improve our range and availability. We've also seen a big shift towards turkey breast fillets and locally reared beef joints as an alternative to a traditional turkey whole bird. Christmas means a lot of long days for the butchery – often working seven days a week in the build up to ensure we are as prepared as we can be.

Cheese is somewhat of a luxury these days and long gone are the days of people holding regular dinner parties with cheeseboards to impress friends, so Christmas is vital for our cheese department. Fortunately, everyone still loves a bit of cheese after Christmas dinner



and throughout the festive period. Key lines include Snowdonia Black Bomber and the local favourite Hartington Stilton. Mrs Bell's Blue has proven popular despite being a relatively expensive cheese – people can taste the quality and know it's worth paying the extra for such a treat.

I think visual merchandising is everything when it comes to the busy part of the year. It's my favourite aspect of working in retail and my knowledge in this area is something I have tried to bring to Croots and pass onto the team. The key display last year was our alcohol spirits range – it looked fantastic and the sales showed the customers thought so, too.

All of our Made at Croots range is exclusive to us and it's a big factor in our success as people love the products we make here – it sets us apart from everyone else. Our homemade mince pies are our best-selling lines and incredibly

we sold 2,658 individual mince pies in December last year alone! Production is increased across our entire homemade range through November and December as we get busier. Other key seasonal lines include our Christmas Dinner pork pie and our chocolate and orange cheesecake.

We have a wide range of hampers to suit all budgets and tastes, from pre-made ones, such as the Croots Favourites hamper, which includes all of our favourite and best-selling lines, to a Gin & Tonic hampers. We also have pick-your-own hampers to give customers choice.

Alcohol looks set to be a big seller again this year, and I think Shining Cliff Gin by White Peak Distillery in Derbyshire will be our best seller overall. The team at White Peak have come up with an amazing gin and everyone from staff to customers have really got behind supporting another great local business.

“ My first Christmas meeting with suppliers this year was in February – it's not something that can be left until later in the year as you will miss out on key lines ”

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Stock up your shelves with *Speciality Food's* pick of some of the best food and drink products available on the market right now. From oatcakes and shortbread to chocolate, storecupboard essentials and hot and cold drinks, on these pages you'll find over 30 products to tempt your customers, expand your food and drink offering and add excitement to your displays



Original Candy Co

Chocca Mocca Chocolates are delighted to announce, after months of working hard, tweaking and looking at various colour palettes, the arrival of our new range with a look you will not recognise.

The new Chocca Mocca range consists of six delicious and enticing flavours: Espressos in Dark Chocolate, Ginger in Dark Chocolate, Strawberries & Cream in White Chocolate, Blueberries in Blueberry Flavoured Chocolate, Orange Peel in Dark Chocolate and Hazelnuts in Milk Chocolate.

Available from 1st September.

01628 520 927 enquiries@originalcandyco.com
originalcandyco.com



SugaVida

Traditionally known as golden milk, this delicious Ayurvedic blend promotes an incredible feeling of wellness. SugaVida Turmeric Latte pairs 'wonder spice' turmeric with the precise quantity of organic black pepper needed to boost the absorption of this active compound. You can really feel this warming drink doing you good! Made with our nutritious palmyra blossom nectar SugaVida, there's no need to add any substandard sugars or sweeteners.

SugaVida Turmeric Latte is available in three delicious flavours; Original, Spicy Ginger and Great Taste Award-winning Cardamom, and is an ideal alternative to coffee or as an after dinner drink.
0845 233 5000 info@sugavida.co.uk sugavida.co.uk

Stockan's Oatcakes

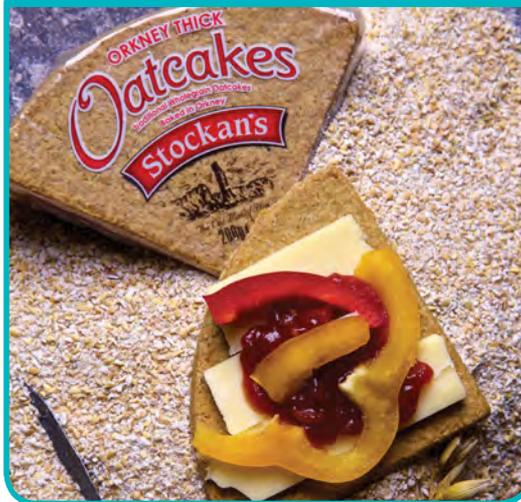
Stockan's is famous for baking traditional Scottish oatcakes that are packed full of the benefits of wholegrain oats, are high in fibre and low on the glycaemic index. The range includes various flavours of triangle-shaped oatcakes, including the award-winning Orkney Beremeal Oatcakes.

Our mini round oatcakes, re-launched earlier this year, are now in 150g pack sizes and are available in Original, Cheese and Cracked Black Pepper variants. Look out for the puffin design on the packaging, a reference to the 'Tammy Norrie', as the popular seabird is affectionately known.

We are a family business that has been baking on the Orkney Islands for over 100 years. Our oatcakes are a perfect addition to any cheeseboard, can be sprinkled with sweet or savoury toppings or eaten on their own as a healthy snack.

All of Stockan's Oatcakes are suitable for vegetarians and contain no artificial additives, preservatives or flavourings.

01315 564 518 moira.cairns@stockans.com
stockans.com



Holdsworth Chocolates

Luxury British brand Holdsworth Chocolates is launching a range of cocktail and alcohol-inspired truffles for Autumn 2018.

Based on much-loved drinks, the decadent range is set to delight tastebuds nationwide.

The Espresso Martini Cocktail Truffles (£8 for 115g) are a luxurious assortment of milk, white and dark ganache truffles, combined with the finest aromatic coffee, a dash of martini and topped with gold-dusted coffee beans.

The Sir Robin of Locksley Assorted Gin Truffles (£8.00 for 100g) are a real triumph, as the Peak District brand has teamed up with an artisan gin company from over the the hill in Sheffield. The chocolatiers' finest ganache truffles are infused with the delicious gin and a blend of traditional botanicals with delicate infusions of elderflower, dandelion and pink grapefruit.

Finally, the premium brand is introducing a beautiful little box of Pink Prosecco Truffles (£5 for 55g). The gorgeous pastel-pink chocolates are flavoured with Prosecco for a fabulous treat.

01629 813 573
info@holdsworthchocolates.co.uk
holdsworthchocolates.co.uk

Hawkshead Relish

Whole garlic bulbs are cooked in a low heat for up to 45 days to become black, sticky and naturally sweet; we then blend ingredients such as onions, tomatoes, balsamic vinegar, herbs and spices to create a rich, savoury ketchup with a sweetness that is perfect to serve alongside an aged steak or BBQ meats such as sausages and burgers. It also makes a delicious marinade for chicken, and is ideal to spread on fish such as a cod steak and even just to dip chips in! The uses are endless, and it is a great kitchen essential to have to add to stocks, sauces and dishes such as a tasty cottage pie or roasted vegetables.

"A little goes a long way and rarely have I seen the Radio 2 Drivetime team silenced by a condiment! You've done the Lake District proud and your shop in Hawkshead should be a culinary destination for all," says Nigel Barden, food writer.

01539 436 614 info@hawksheadrelish.com
hawksheadrelish.com



Booja-Booja

Turn your fridge into an artisan chocolate shop with multi award-winning chocolatier Booja-Booja. The Norfolk company has launched eight new Six Truffle Packs including Great Taste Award winners Hazelnut Crunch and Almond Salted Caramel alongside exciting new flavours Toffee Strudel and Honeycomb Caramel. Designed for 'eat now' enjoyment, the new packs feature easy-peel film and follow a fully chilled distribution chain to ensure maximum freshness and flavour. The packaging is largely recyclable and the chocolates inside are dairy-free, gluten-free, soya-free and vegan.

01508 558 888 welcome@boojabooja.com
boojabooja.com



Walkers Nonsuch

The delicious and creamy Toffee Twin, made by family company Walker's Nonsuch, is a perfect novelty gift or stocking filler at Christmas time. Made with whole milk and butter, the toffee taste and chew is second to none and it's free from artificial colours, preservatives, hydrogenated vegetable oil and gluten, too. The pack contains two Original Creamy bars with a toffee hammer and instructions on how to break this unique treat.

Walker's makes 50g and 100g toffee bars, 150g bags in nine varieties, bulk bags for pick and mix/repacking, and other unique gifts.
01782 321 525 sales@walkers-nonsuch.co.uk
walkers-nonsuch.co.uk



Dean's

Dean's first started baking their melt in the mouth shortbread in the 1970s, when company founder Helen Dean started baking in her Aberdeenshire kitchen to raise funds for the local pipe band. Today the family-owned business still bakes its shortbread to Helen's exacting standards, and the Dean's brand has grown to become a household name across Scotland and beyond.

Aimed at the gift market, Dean's are about to launch a striking new range of shortbread tins featuring iconic Steven Brown Art designs. Ayrshire based artist Steven Brown is currently enjoying huge success with his unique style of art featuring brightly coloured Highland cows.

Siobhan Ingram, brand manager at Dean's said, "We are very excited to be working with Steven Brown Art on our new gift range. His designs are bright and colourful, and will add a contemporary dimension to the traditional Scottish shortbread tin."

Available from October.

01466 792 086 deans.co.uk



field fare

A stunning new range of seven luxury, hand-prepared desserts from field fare. Made with only the finest ingredients and selectively sized for an average family (a notable gap in the market).

From roulades and gluten-free cheesecakes to a vegan, gluten-free chocolate torte, the ever-inclusive field fare has ensured that there is something for everyone. Impactful branding with food photography is available for in-store freezers which creates an eye-catching display for the desserts range. field fare can supply a retailer with all their frozen food needs – keeping the buying process simple and efficient with one order, one invoice and environmentally-friendly delivery.

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



ManiLife

Peanut butter sales are growing by over 12.8% per year. No wonder that new brands are popping up all over the place.

ManiLife is different. Our unique award-winning taste comes through sourcing the finest hi-oleic peanuts direct from a single estate in South America, batch roasting them to perfection in London before blending them into thick, creamy peanut butter heaven.

Three distinct blends are available. The 'must have' is our Deep Roast peanut butter – voted the tastiest in the UK, perfect on toast, in porridge, or as an ingredient. ManiLife is a strong repeat seller.

Our delicious selection includes Deep Roast Crunch, Original Crunch and Creamy, available in retail (295g), monster (1kg), mega (5kg) and now our new mini pots (30g).

Available now from Hider, Diverse, Samways, Marigold, CLF and Stores Supply.

07794 573692 orders@mani-life.com mani-life.com

Fin & Olly's

Their extended range has been winning hearts and minds (not to mention multiple taste awards) on this year's foodie festival scene. Fin & Olly's bring va-va-voom and BIG natural flavours to the wonderful world of condiments, and they like to do it differently too.

Their beautifully crafted products contain absolutely nothing artificial and are sweetened with agave plant nectar (100% refined sugar free). What's more they're free from wheat, gluten, dairy, lactose, and soy. Oh, and they're absolutely delicious!

It all began with a condiment obsession and a strange dream (following Olly watching Charlie & The Chocolate Factory with his seven year old son Fin), and now their range consists of the Amazing Mustardy Tomato Ketchup, Amazing Mustardy Mayo, and Amazing Gourmet Pouring Mustard.

Essential selections for the seasons ahead - and available now through Cotswold Fayre or Tree Of Life.

0845 555 2747 hello@finandollys.com

finandollys.com



Kikkoman

If you're looking to stock soy sauce then it should be the world's number one brand – a winner of coveted stars from both Great Taste and Good Housekeeping – which comes in its instantly recognisable, iconic dispenser bottle.

In a survey at the Good Food Show Summer 2017, over 80% of visitors surveyed said they knew the difference between Kikkoman Naturally Brewed Soy Sauce and other soy sauce brands, reinforcing Kikkoman's key selling points as the only soy option for discerning foodies, which include being:

- Made from just four ingredients: soybeans, wheat, salt and water, with no artificial additives
- Naturally brewed to be rich in umami, bringing out the taste of food
- Created from a traditional and authentic recipe dating back more than 300 years

Also available in this award-winning range are Great Taste Awards star winners Kikkoman Teriyaki Marinade and Kikkoman Tamari Gluten Free Soy Sauce, as well as Kikkoman Less Salt Soy Sauce.

01494 530 200 customerservices@rhamar.com rhamar.com



Mutti

Italy's number one tomato brand is now wowing shoppers throughout the UK with a range that is made from 100% Italian tomatoes harvested and processed in the Parma region of northern Italy at the height of summer to ensure that only tomatoes offering the best taste, colour and texture are used.

Working with trusted farmers – who each year compete for Mutti's prestigious Pomodorino D'Oro award for the best producers – all Mutti products are also non-GMO, are grown only in 'open air' fields, and are processed within hours of picking.

Heading up the Mutti range are Great Taste Awards star winners Polpa Finely Chopped Tomatoes, which stands out for its unique fresh flavour and aroma, and Mutti Passata, which has a brilliant red colour and a velvety consistency that makes it perfect for making many quick dishes, including sauces for stuffed pasta and as a base for thin crust pizzas.

Also in the range are Double Concentrate Tomato Purée and Peeled Tomatoes, whilst Mutti's new highly flavoured San Marzano Tomatoes are perfect for slow cook recipes.

01494 530 200 customerservices@rhamar.com rhamar.com



Taylor's of Harrogate

Taylor's of Harrogate makes coffees with extraordinary flavour, sourced from the world's best growers and roasted in their traditional drum roaster in Harrogate. Warming and indulgent, this limited edition Christmas Blend coffee is a real cracker. Coffee remains a staple product for consumers but fine food retailers can add a festive twist to their shelves with blends that are ideal for frosty mornings. Taylor's of Harrogate's Christmas Blend (cases of 6 x 227g) is a rich, indulgent coffee, generously slow-roasted to give you smooth, velvety flavours of milk chocolate and hazelnuts. It is perfect to enjoy with mince pies and a roaring fire.

01423 814 006 taylorsoftharrogate.co.uk



Campbeltown Creamery

Rugged, bold and full of flavour, Smoked Mull of Kintyre Cheddar is crafted at Campbeltown Creamery and naturally smoked with oak chips for a deep, intense flavour. The cheese is made with milk from local dairy farms on the Kintyre Peninsula, whose cows graze the lush coastal pastures filled with flora and fauna. This sumptuous Cheddar won gold at the 2018 British Cheese Awards and overall Best Scottish Cheese in Show, so it's sure to be the highlight of any cheeseboard! The strong, mature flavour profile makes it perfect in a cheese sauce or melted over a burger. Available in 1.25kg deli block, 200g retail pack and 200g waxed truckle.

0845 850 8070 foodservice@firstmilk.co.uk firstmilk.co.uk



Gruyère AOP

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

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

gruyere.com

Pasta Garofalo

Garofalo, premium Italian pasta makers, produces many different shapes – 72 at the last count – all available in the UK for you to offer your customers; from the well known Fusilli and Macaroni through to the less well known Lumaconi and Orecchiette. We only use high quality durum wheat semolina meeting strictly controlled criteria, and the result is a consistent, premium pasta that is always a pleasure to eat every time, whichever shape you choose!

Garofalo traditional pasta, organic pasta and whole wheat pasta, made with high quality durum wheat semolina and formed using a bronze die for a rough and porous surface soaking up any sauce.

Garofalo gluten-free pasta is made with corn flour, brown rice flour and quinoa – the result is gluten-free pasta for all to enjoy, and not just those on a gluten-free diet.

New to the range is Garofalo Gluten Free pasta made with legumes and ancient grains. Rich in protein and fibre. Garofalo pasta is suitable for vegetarians and vegans. All our pasta is stocked in the UK for immediate delivery through wholesaler distributors – please contact the Garofalo UK office for more information on pasta shapes, the ranges we do and wholesalers stocking Garofalo pasta. **01438 813 444** info@garofalo.co.uk pastagarofalo.it



Summerdown

Inspired by the notable success of its award-winning peppermint chocolates, Summerdown has a new addition to its range – these luxurious, milk chocolate centred peppermint truffles, encased in rich 55% dark chocolate and lightly dusted in icing sugar.

With a delicious creamy consistency, they melt in the mouth to release the cool, lingering taste of Summerdown's distinctive, single estate English peppermint oil.

They're perfect with coffee after dinner, with Summerdown peppermint tea – or to indulge in on their own.

Over the last 20 years, Summerdown has reintroduced traditional Black Mitcham peppermint to this country, relearning lost farming skills from America and combining them with the latest technology at our farm in the foothills of the Hampshire downs. The oil, which is distilled on the farm, has a consistent quality and a soft lingering taste. It is a very different from the harsher, blended, imported peppermint of the past 60 years.

01256 780 252 sales@summerdownmint.com summerdownmint.com



The Garlic Farm

After many years of very successful sales of our Oak Smoked Garlic Butter, this additional recipe has become an instant classic. A good garlic butter is an essential in any kitchen (both consumer and professional) so it is no surprise that this product has become one of our best-selling lines since launch. It took us 17 variations to get the flavour profile just right. A creamy base, with piquant garlicky kick, rounded with herb and spice. Totally addictive, presented in a premium card wrap for great visual punch in the chiller. Available direct or through Cotswold Fayre.

01983 865 378 thegarlicfarm.co.uk

Dean's

Dean's first started baking their melt in the mouth shortbread in the 1970s, when company founder Helen Dean started baking in her Aberdeenshire kitchen to raise funds for the local pipe band. Today the family-owned business still bakes its

shortbread to Helen's exacting standards, and the Dean's brand has grown to become a household name across Scotland and beyond.

Dean's latest product range offers something quite different, combining all butter shortbread with a variety of innovative flavours. Packaged in stylish and eye-catching tube tins, these latest products are aimed at the gift market. "Combining flavours such as gin, lime and juniper, as well as strawberry and pink peppercorn with shortbread creates something really delicious that will appeal to the discerning consumer. The flavours are bang up to date and the stylish tin design communicates this," commented Dean's brand manager Siobhan Ingram.

Available from September. **01466 792 086** deans.co.uk



Jelly Belly

Demand for BeanBoozled, the Russian roulette of candy, has just moved up 10 notches. Jelly Belly Candy Company has teamed up with the Illumination and Universal Pictures' Despicable Me franchise to launch a special line of BeanBoozled Minion Edition jelly beans featuring two new flavour pairings guaranteed to have kids clamouring and parents gagging. Is it Ba-Na-Na or Pencil Shavings? Green Apple or Minion Fart? The only way to find out is to chow down! There are eight other despicable and delicious look-alike pairs, all guaranteed to make BeanBoozled Minion Edition a festive top seller. Terrific stocking fillers and the most fun on Christmas day! **01727 829 010** uksales@bestimports.co.uk jellybelly.co.uk



Taylors of Harrogate

Warming and citrusy, this limited edition black tea is a delicious festive blend and must-stock product during the Christmas period. It combines warming spices and a lively touch of citrus with light and delicate teas from Indonesia and high-altitude teas from the Blue Mountains in southern India, making a deeply flavoured and luxurious winter tea. Spiced Christmas Tea comes in two formats: tea bags which are great for cafés, delis or even hampers (cases of 6 x 20) and loose tea caddies which are perfect Christmas gift items (cases of 6 x 125g). Taylors have had a deep fascination with flavour for 130 years – and we think you can taste the difference. **01423 814 006** taylorsoutofhome.co.uk

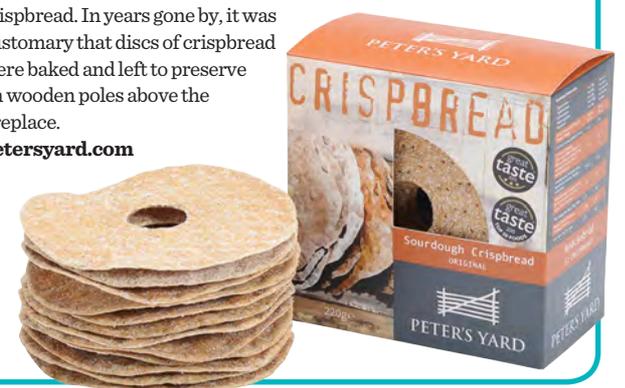
Peter's Yard

Peter's Yard use natural, high quality ingredients to produce an award-winning range of sourdough crispbread. Naturally fermenting sourdough, organic fresh milk, organic flour, salt and honey are used to create irresistibly crisp, thin crispbread.

The sourdough used in every batch is allowed to ferment for 16 hours, resulting in a light texture, dimpled appearance and subtle flavour. This results in crispbreads which are as versatile as artisan bread and the natural choice for cheese.

The unusual shape of this crispbread makes a show-stopping centrepiece when serving a selection of fine cheeses or sharing plate of charcuterie. The characteristic hole in the centre is reminiscent of traditional life in Sweden, the home of crispbread. In years gone by, it was customary that discs of crispbread were baked and left to preserve on wooden poles above the fireplace.

petersyard.com





Bumble Zest

Our favourite BumbleZest Health Shots are a Battersea-based husband and wife team offering a range of all-natural, tasty, low sugar/calcs health shots. The little 90ml glass bottles are packed with eight to nine superfoods and other interesting, functional ingredients and taste great. They are small to take up less space and have a very friendly shelf life. Since launching in June 2017 there has been a buzz surrounding them in press and on social media, and they are already stocked in over 250+ stockists. They are currently available from Tree of Life, The Health Store, Goodness Foods, JD's Food & Drink, Aquamore, Independent Irish Health Foods and Whole Foods Ireland, or you can order from them direct.

07748 387165 orders@bumblezest.co.uk
bumblezest.co.uk

Jelly Belly

Always a huge best-seller, the Jelly Belly Advent Calendar is famously the tastiest way to celebrate the family countdown to Christmas.

This year Mr Jelly Belly is featured decorating his tree surrounded by piles of presents, a roaring fire and Fido the dog. It is the ultimate and idyllic seasonal scene

Behind each numbered day are Pyramid Bags of popular Jelly Belly jelly bean flavours – with an extra special surprise behind the Christmas Eve window. A delightfully delicious treat for all ages.

Generously proportioned (w28cm x H36cm x 5.5cm), the box accommodates 24 x 10g Pyramid bags. (RRP £16). The festive fun is extended to a beautifully embossed Jelly Belly Christmas Gable Box. The perfect gift. (RRP £5)

01727 829 010
uksales@bestimports.co.uk
jellybelly.co.uk



Gordon Rhodes

Gourmet Saucy Meatball Kits are brand new to the award-winning Gordon Rhodes range of Jolly Fine Foods. Launching in September, the kits have been lovingly crafted with busy households in mind.

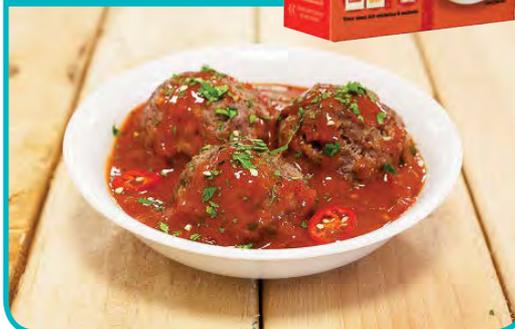
Available in three delicious flavours:

- **SWEDISH MEATBALLS:** A juicy meatball with notes of white pepper and sage, in a rich and creamy garlic and bay sauce.
- **ITALIAN MEATBALLS:** A garlic and basil meatball in a tangy tomato, onion and oregano sauce.
- **MEXICAN MEATBALLS:** A paprika and coriander flavoured meatball, served in a rich smoky tomato sauce with a hint of cocoa and spicy chilli kick.

Designed to make 24 small or 12 large meatballs, the kits contain a sachet of seasoning for the meatballs and a sachet to help create the perfect sauce.

With minimal extra ingredients these kits are the perfect way to help the time challenged cook create Great tasting family meals – and by the way, they are gluten-free, too!

01274 758 007
ask@gordonrhodes.co.uk
gordonrhodes.co.uk



ChicP

ChicP creates a variety of unique and natural sustainable houmous from wonky fruit and vegetables.

The London-based brand is passionate about reducing food waste – it is committed to ensuring that 20-25% of its raw ingredients come from surplus over the course of every year, in effect supporting farmers (whose 'wonky' vegetables are rejected by supermarkets) as well as promoting food sustainability.

As well as being good for the planet, ChicP's products are high in protein and free from added sugar, dairy and gluten. Not only that, but they're made primarily from raw vegetables – one of the healthiest food options available.

Our flavours include Beetroot & Horseradish; Carrot, Ginger & Turmeric and Herby, each of which has a shelf life of 24 days. We will also be bringing out a limited edition line later this year.

07788 474803 hannah@chicp.co.uk
chicp.co.uk



Ballancourt Fine Foods

Ballancourt Fine Foods is a family-run company that specialises in quality French products. Our extensive range of ambient, long life pâtés, terrines and rillettes is second to none, with a variety of jar sizes to suit all needs. The range doesn't end there, we also offer a fantastic range of mustards, soups, vinegars and gourmet cooked meals including all the French classics such as Beef Bourguignon, Coq au Vin and Cassoulet.

Our main strength, apart from the high-quality products we sell, is the bespoke own-labels we can produce, completely free of charge. To help our customers we have no case sizes and small minimum orders, so customers can order what they need to fill their shelves.

Wild boar is our best-selling line, with its high meat content and fantastic flavour it provides a perfect accompaniment to any picnic just served with a crusty baguette, and a great addition to any Christmas hamper.

01604 891 573 sales@ballancourt.co.uk
ballancourt.co.uk

Buiteman

Making savoury biscuits, straws and twists with love since 1958, Buiteman puts the popularity of its products down to a unique combination of high quality raw materials, family recipes, traditional preparation methods and the latest baking techniques.

The Buiteman Baked With Love range is a selection of the top-selling, favourite recipes that are ideal for every occasion, and its hero product is Baked with Love Cheddar bites, which uses only English Cheddar originating from Somerset that is matured for at least 12 months to deliver a strong and full-bodied, spicy and slightly earthy flavour.

Buiteman also offers an extensive range of biscuits in exciting flavours using the best authentic cheeses from around Europe – Gouda from Holland, Parmigiano Reggiano from Italy and Gruyère from Switzerland – all of which are worked through the dough and used as toppings to deliver full flavour.

Every biscuit and twist tastes like it was homemade, so if you fancy some – go on, have a bite!

01494 530 200 customerservices@rhamar.com
rhamar.com



Sodiaal

Sodiaal is proud to offer a versatile cheese range including 15 PDO options available in both deli counter and retail formats to suit both retailers and foodservice professionals.

All the partners of our farmer-owned cooperative pride themselves on producing cheeses following strict traditions to ensure that the quality is always as its highest standard.

Cheese such as Abondance from Savoie, filled unpasteurized Brie, or blue cheese from Auvergne will brighten up any festive cheeseboard.

0203 865 2372 info@sodiaal.co.uk
sodiaal.co.uk



Cooks & Co

Boasting a comprehensive line up of highest quality ingredients and antipasti, Cooks & Co offers a host of exciting products that are perfect for speciality and fine food retailers, including a flavoursome range of retail and foodservice olives and a line-up of storecupboard favourites covering everything from the finest green frenk chillies and hearts of palm to stuffed vine leaves, speciality oils and dried mushrooms.

One of the most popular offerings in the range among discerning food lovers is two-star Great Taste Awards winner Roasted Red Peppers, which are grown under the Mediterranean sun until perfectly ripe. They are deliciously succulent, with an intense, sweet flavour and can be used instead of fresh peppers in salads, sandwiches, pasta dishes, quiches, casseroles, and on pizzas – or simply served as part of an antipasti or mezze platter.

01494 530 200 customerservices@rhamar.com
cooksandco.co.uk



THE INBETWEENERS

Ellen Manning explores the new generation of ethically-minded producers and consumers

It's no secret that we're becoming more ethically-minded when it comes to our food. The number of British people identifying as vegan is now more than 3.5 million, according to comparethemarket.com, while a report by ReportLinker showed that people in the UK are eating half the beef and veal they did in 1975. Ethical, environmental and sustainability concerns are turning many people off meat. But while some see veganism as the answer, what about the 'inbetweeners' – those conscious of the ramifications of their love of a rare steak or soft

cheese but don't want to give it up. Thankfully, a growing number of producers are working to ensure they can enjoy meat, cheese and dairy products but keep a relatively clear conscience.



"We don't want to have to choose between doing what's right and staying in business"

They include David and Wilma Finlay, who have just launched The Ethical Dairy in Dumfries and Galloway after a decade of working to find a new approach to dairy farming. Amid increasing criticism of the dairy industry, they have chosen to keep calves with their mothers to suckle, taking less milk as a result. The couple, founders of luxury ice cream brand Cream o' Galloway, had already switched to organic farming 20 years ago but wanted to go one step further. For Wilma, taking calves from their mothers within a few hours of birth never sat comfortably. "We wanted to find a way to keep calves with the cows and still have a financially viable farm. We don't want to have to choose between doing what's right and staying in business."



but we're seeing real benefits from this approach," says David. "Longer living, healthier cows, less antibiotic use, faster growing calves and less purchased feed."

It hasn't been an easy journey, David admits. "Many people in the farming industry think we're completely crazy. Financially it's been extremely challenging, but the cows and calves just love it." He says they've given themselves three years to break even but 18 months in are already seeing some daylight, plus the cows are living twice as long as those on intensive dairy farms and the calves are growing almost twice as quickly. The Finlays are starting with a focus on artisan cheese, selling

They first tried leaving calves with their mothers in 2005 but the experiment proved a financial disaster. Now, over a decade later they've found a way to do it that leaves calves to suckle with their mothers but removed for short periods to allow the couple to still take milk from the cows. "It means we take less milk from each cow

“ Ethical production will take some redesigning and reimagining of the system. And all of that will be driven by consumers ”

their Ethical Dairy brand through independent retailers, specialist cheese outlets and direct through their own website.

The 'inbetweeners', who will no doubt make up a large part of their customer base, are people Wilma understands. "I almost fall into the description of the inbetweeners," she says. "If I go out to a restaurant and don't know how that meat is produced I'm more likely to choose a vegetarian option. I want to know how my meat is produced. We've already had quite a few people saying to us, 'I have been waiting for so long for this to happen – I wanted something that will allow me to eat dairy conscience-free.'"



"We hope to demonstrate that food from the dairy industry can be produced with compassion for our animals"

The Finlays aren't alone in trying to change the way dairy cows and calves are farmed, with a new website launched last month (cowcalfdairies.co.uk) listing another seven farms who have adopted the




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same approach. While David says he has no intention of “demonising” farmers, he wants to “revolutionise the dairy industry” by persuading other farmers of the benefits. “If all goes to plan we hope to demonstrate that food from the dairy industry can be produced with compassion for our animals, for our people and for our environment. We also hope to show that far from being expensive, food produced this way can actually cost us less.”

These cost benefits are something that Jacob Sykes, co-owner of Leicestershire-based Fosse Meadows Farm, can point out. Fosse Meadows Farm grow free-range birds slowly and traditionally at their Leicestershire farm – nearly seven weeks longer than standard commercially-reared birds. The birds have longer legs allowing them to roam further and forage on rich, wildflower pasture that makes for darker, richer meat, and even their bones are stronger. “I think people recognise that one of our chickens will go a lot further than a cheaper

chicken in a supermarket because there’s more meat-to-bone ratio,” says Jacob. “So although it appears more expensive, you’re getting more value.”

As people become more focused on the provenance of their food – including its ethical credentials – Jacob says Fosse Meadows Farm, which recently appeared in this year’s 6th annual Observer Food Monthly TOP 50, has seen its customer base grow. “People remember chicken how it used to be before the industrialisation of it.” And while younger generations may not have the same memories of chicken ‘pre-industrialisation’, the desire to know where food comes from and that it doesn’t come served with accompanying guilt is commonplace. “Our customers are into knowing where their chicken has come from and it’s done properly,” says Jacob. That includes the ‘inbetweeners’ who want to eat chicken without the guilt that comes from worrying about the conditions those birds have been kept in before they make

product – all concerns highlighted as the negative side of eating meat. Among them is Rosewood Farm in Yorkshire, which offers UK-wide meat box delivery selling grassfed Dexter beef, lamb and mutton. The farm’s motto is: “Food as a by-product of conservation” and rather than limit descriptions of what it does to ‘organic’ and ‘grassfed’, it lists an array of ethical promises guaranteed to appeal to the growing market of inbetweeners. They include keeping their lambs longer than the usual four to six months, and not de-tailing them, as well as promising never to feed animals on what could have been eaten by humans. The farm doesn’t produce slurry and has vowed never to buy or use pesticides, fungicides or herbicides, and when it comes to the environment, it sources energy from renewables as well as experimenting with alternatives to drive down fuel usage.

“There’s no question that the tide has turned – I don’t think you can start a food business now without an ethical slant to it”

While some producers are changing processes to cater for inbetweeners, others have done something even more unexpected. Chef James Whetlor founded Cabrito – Spanish for ‘young goat’ – after keeping a few goats to solve a land management problem. He was cooking at River Cottage at the time and a few of the goats ended up on the menu. In Whetlor’s mind, it was a way to ending the slaughter of 40,000 male goats in the UK every year. While female goats can be used for their milk, their male counterparts are euthanised shortly after birth. It’s an animal welfare and food waste issue that Whetlor saw as eminently fixable. “I just thought this is so dumb. Why are these perfectly good animals being euthanised when they can be raised up for meat and put in the food chain. Every time I go through it in my head even after six years I just

it to our plates. “We also have people who are vegetarian or vegan and are thinking of eating meat,” says Jacob. “They want to make sure the meat they try is high welfare. And then there are mothers who don’t eat meat themselves but think it’s important their children have meat. They want to feed them meat that’s antibiotic-free and high welfare so they come to us.”



“Food as a by-product of conservation”

It’s not just dairy or chicken farms catering for the inbetweeners.

Around the country, fellow producers are putting more emphasis on the welfare of their animals, the effect of their farming on the environment, and the sustainability of their

think it’s so stupid.”

Using his experience as a chef and knowledge of the London food market, Whetlor sold Cabrito’s first kids to Soho’s Quo Vadis in March 2012 and has since grown to supply restaurants, butchers and catering suppliers nationwide using a network of farms. He has even won the support of major dairy Delamere, which invested in Cabrito after seeing its inroads in turning a previously wasted resource into meat people want to eat. “Over the last 30 years British food culture has changed hugely,” says Whetlor. “There’s an awful lot in the zeitgeist about food waste. Hugh [Fearnley-Whittingstall] had ploughed the road of being able to change people’s shopping habits in a really positive way.” It’s people’s shopping and eating habits that are as much to blame as the dairy industry, says Whetlor. “No one in the dairy industry wanted to euthanise the billy goat. The dairy industry thought, ‘these animals are unwanted, we can’t guarantee that if we sell them on they will have a good life’. They wanted a solution but there wasn’t a market for it.”

Now there is a market, and many of those are people who understand that we shouldn’t be wasting perfectly edible meat. “There’s no question that the tide has turned” says Whetlor. “I don’t think you can start a food business now without an ethical slant to it.” But despite that, he admits it won’t be easy to feed nine billion people worldwide without the ‘efficient’ food production practices that have been used for decades. In his view that requires effort from consumers as well as producers. “The reason so many supply chains have questionable practices in them is because they were efficient. I’m not saying there has to be a balance between ethical production but it will take some redesigning and reimagining of the system. And all of that will be driven by consumers.”

“ Food from the dairy industry can be produced with compassion for our animals, for our people and for our environment. We hope to show that far from being expensive, food produced this way can actually cost us less ”



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GENERATION NEXT

Sick of turmeric? Skeptical about nut milks? The last five years has seen an explosion in kooky innovations, but it's time to take notice, discovers Anna Blewett

Over the last few years there have been rumblings among the ancient cheeses, the barrel-aged balsamics and heritage veg. These venerable, time-honoured products, made for centuries to traditional recipes from feted food cultures, are being subjected to something of a 'youthquake'. Innovative new products previously considered seriously niche or even 'novel' (the official term for any foodstuff not widely consumed in the EU prior to 1997) are stealing market share and jostling for listings in our most mainstream retail channels.

Exhibit A: jackfruit, the tropical fruit whose starchy flesh has made its way into Sainsbury's own-brand

chilled range in the form of a pulled pork-style meat alternative. In fact, market analysts at Mintel report a 257% rise in the use of vegan claims in global food and drink launches. Claims of 'natural' are up by more than 10% on last year. Exhibit B: milk kefir, the microbe-rich fermented dairy now populating chillers in Morrisons, Tesco and any other switched-on multiple. Exhibit C: turmeric – once buried deep in the mix of spiced savouries, now front and centre in oat milks, teas, honeys, blends, soups, slaws, and any other product you can think of. Mintel identifies this highly-pigmented spice, along with matcha and activated charcoal, as a real winner

of the visually-led food culture that's being fuelled by Instagram and other platforms. All (currently) sit below the sales radar of the big market monitors but look set to burst onto the bar charts as sales figures from the last six to 12 months are consolidated into published data.

These Johnny-come-latelys are riding on a wave of interest generated by the consumer desire to be surprised by new sensations, and nourished by ingredients that can fix their diet. Forget the graceful trajectory of salted caramel, this new wave has made its mark in a remarkably short period. "I can't think of a better example than fermented foods," says Nicola Peters, creator of Turmeric & White Miso Kimchi (recently listed by Ocado) and founder of The Cultured Collective. "These products weren't popular when I started out two years ago. At that point the term 'fermented' was easily the least attractive word, the hardest thing to sell. If I used it a look of disgust would appear on people's faces, so I'd say something like 'cultured' instead. But with all the publicity around the importance of gut health and the benefit of fermented foods, it's now a word that I can actively use to promote my products. People are more health conscious so they have an additional reason to buy into something 'kooky' other than me just saying it tastes nice."

Flavour follows function

So people are trying new foods despite the taste, braving some challenging new flavours to bag a health benefit? "I think there's a conversion process," says Nicola.



"There's nothing quite akin to a live ferment but people are very familiar with yoghurt – a soured milk – so it's not a completely alien taste. And in the case of kimchi? Most of us have grown up in a cosmopolitan world so we're accustomed to a wide range of flavours. I'd never want people to eat my products just for the health benefits. I started with taste – and things have to be delicious – and fortunately it has all these health benefits too."

So could palates be changing to accept, and even seek out, flavours we would once have found challenging? "Yes, absolutely," says Vhari Russell of Food Marketing Expert. "We're all holidaying further and further away so there is an appetite to have the kinds of food we tried in other countries. Bigger brands are spending a lot of money on food research to get ahead of those trends. The great thing about smaller and artisanal brands is

they can react far quicker."

Vhari should know. Her agency helps small producers, the kind whose wares fill your shelves, hone their product and nail their brand message. And as you'd expect, she has to think practically about the value of every trend that comes along. "The question in our minds is whether [being very reactive] is a benefit or a disadvantage. There are lots of conversations about jackfruit, for example, but how long will it be around for? Most people have no idea what to do with it and it's not necessarily going to become part of anyone's weekly shop. So there's a balance between riding on a trends and not having a product that's flash-in-the-pan. Smaller brands are much quicker-turning machines than the supermarkets' own brands which take forever, relatively speaking."

You don't have to know your Anna Jones from your Aine Carlin

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“You won't see all these products in supermarkets; it's really the consumer demand that is driving this and the indies have been the ones that have responded”



“The big trend is a solid building of interest in these products that were once considered niche”

to realise that jackfruit is becoming a staple of the vegan pantry. And however unfamiliar such products are in circles used to discussing ‘affinage’ and ‘terroir’, they’ve been gaining traction in the UK market for some time. “We’ve known about jackfruit for years,” says Carol Dunning, event director or ExCeL’s Natural & Organic Products Europe. “But the journey I’ve seen is products becoming tastier. We see gourmet healthy lifestyle foods, like raw nut butters with spice infusions, or crisp seaweed strips that properly mirror the diversity and deliciousness of sea vegetables. Yes, they’re healthy alternatives to something more established, but the makers are really upping their game to get to that gourmet level. Maybe delis wouldn’t previously have considered these kind of products as being tasty, or their kind of market’, but now there are so many truly good products in the natural and organic world they could fill a deli themselves.”

Not convinced? “The thing that really struck me at the show was the sheer number – and quality – of vegan cheeses,” says Allison Jacobs, deputy editor of *Natural Health* magazine. “In previous years they’ve been a very small part but this time around the dairy-alternative cheeses were out in force. I sampled a Camembert-style cheese which had the unmistakable mushroomy flavour and that gooey, warm Camembert consistency. It was made from cashews!”

“Smaller brands are much quicker-turning machines than the supermarkets’ own brands which take forever, relatively speaking”



THE INDIE BUYER'S VIEW



Candice Fonseca, owner and buyer for Delifonseca on Liverpool's Brunswick Dock, shares her perspective on...

...CHANGING TRENDS

We've definitely noticed an increase in vegan sales. Jackfruit? No. I'd say products at the extremes are a good talking point but there's not enough demand for the sales to be there. Ferments? People were interested but live products are a bit temperamental and we had leaks. Our wholesaler delisted it so we struggle with supply chain. Raw chocolate is a big thing at the moment, though, and apple cider vinegar. People will buy two or three bottles at a time.

...THE NORTH/SOUTH DIVIDE

I'd say the pricing of some of these products are difficult, from a geographic perspective. In London

you could sell anything for any price, but that's not the case here. Liverpool has a reasonably small middle class, so we have to attract people who will eat in our restaurant and then browse. Converting diners means catering to different ends of the market, and we use our deli counter to do that.

...USING TRENDY PRODUCTS AS EYE CANDY

Drinks are definitely an interesting category. Cold brew coffee was a big thing but we struggled to sell it. Before that it was birch water. Again, there was an initial interest but it turned out to be a hiccup. We have kombucha in the fridge but I know it's selling really slowly. Matcha too, but I stock them

because I know it'll make people look. Actually our biggest drinks sales are San Pellegrino and Diet Coke!

...GRABBING GYM BUNNY SPEND

We have two big gyms near us and several personal trainers, so we get customers from them who are looking for protein, organic products. Taste isn't the primary goal for them – they're looking for results – so beetroot shots.

...CATERING TO VEGANS

Locally we're seen as a food authority, so we get a fair bit of business from people who say “My granddaughter's a vegan now and we've got no idea what to feed her.” We have a butcher's counter selling meat from local farms that's been slaughtered in a small local abattoir. Some vegans find that offensive, but others understand that it's from high welfare farms that do things properly. People ask if I stock vegan cheese and the answer is no. For me a product has to taste really good.

Over and out

Carol has overseen the show for 13 years, but notes that 2018 was the year “the bigwigs” from the major supermarkets showed up. Buyers from Sainsbury's and Waitrose rubbed shoulders with seasoned visitors, proving that the mainstream mults see this marketplace as increasingly overlapping with their territory. So what does Carl see on the horizon for retail? “Lots of amazing kombucha, making drinks out of apple cider vinegars is coming back, really ingenious seaweed products: crisps, powders for bread making. Turmeric is still holding. You won't see all these products in supermarkets; it's really the consumer demand that is driving this and the indies have been the ones that have responded.”

As in all market places, one strong creative move will convert some early adopters, who'll influence their own audiences and gradually everyone jumps in with two feet. So where, besides Instagram, should trend seekers look? “We look at a really wide range of sources, but that includes organisations like The Food People,” says Vhari. And in retail? “Historically Marks & Spencer has always been the market leader in terms of innovation,” says Vhari. “When I worked in confectionery, the category where I started out in NPd [new product development], we were always benchmarking our range against M&S. To a degree it's still true – they were the first to do coconut water in a coconut, cauliflower steaks and stoneless avocado.”

Getting out of a trend cleanly, with minimum stock left in the bargain bin, is every retailer's dream. And of course casualties of the march forward are fall by the wayside all the time. “I remember the days when goji berries were all the rage,” says Carol. “At this year's show I didn't see a single one. But although we do still see trends like that sweep through, you'd have to say that the big trend is a solid building of interest in these products that were once considered niche. I don't see that going away.”

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VIEWPOINT: MORGAINE GAYE

The food futurologist talks politics, fads and the power of DNA



The food industry doesn't exist in a vacuum. Although I work as a futurologist within the food sphere, it's imperative that I look at everything in order to forecast trends correctly; flavours and textures play a part, but also bio-behaviour, geopolitics, economics... everything informs what I do. Everything is so interlinked that as well as food and ingredient producers, I consult for clothing and luxury brands.

There's so much going on in the world right now – we're in a really disruptive phase, so everything we think we know and hold to be good and true is going to shift. We've seen issues like the Weinstein scandal and the recent Facebook data debacle sink their teeth into public consciousness, and the goings on around Russia and Brexit have long-term repercussions, too. This is all disruptive in ways people may not realise, and the next few years are going to be a real 'shake it up' time. While the political world is in flux, we're also realising that the environmental issues which were once just concepts are now having very real effects, and recognising the part that marketing plays in our lives – we can't rest on our laurels any more.

Environmental issues affect absolutely everything. No business can escape making changes to improve the impact of what they do, and if they try to, they will be exposed. We're talking about packaging, hydroponics, organic, what we're absorbing from pollutants and the dyes in clothing – 80% of what we put on our skin is absorbed into our bloodstream – and we're beginning to connect the dots. Up until now we've been thinking about the environment as being outdoors, the farmer's field, but actually it's everything around us – in our homes, our cars, our offices. It's all connected.

The need for transparency has only just begun, and any slight vagary or non-disclosure is going to come to the fore – it's becoming harder for brands to sell things which aren't healthy, even if they're perceived as being healthy. Dairy milk is a good example of this; the industry is using funded research to support itself and avoid losing sales as a result of the rise in popularity of non-dairy milks. Up until now, consumers would see funded research and assume that as it was produced by scientists it must be true, but they're now becoming wise to the reality of vested interests. A lot of the information we're given these days is provided by funded research – for example, following the rise of nut milks and other dairy milk alternatives the dairy industry has been campaigning big. I've had lots of calls from dairy-based companies because this is big business which is hanging in the balance, and they're afraid.

There's already talk about the excess of packaging for Easter eggs, and this is an interesting conundrum: as an entertainment rather than functional food product, Easter eggs rely on branding and packaging, but how can brands sell their product successfully while still satisfying the consumer demand for lessened packaging? Consumers still want to have fun and enjoy themselves while consuming 'entertainment' products, but they don't want to feel bad about themselves for creating waste. We're going to be thinking more about compostability rather than biodegradable

(as these materials take five years to decompose in landfill), and how things are seeping into our water supply and therefore our food. Speaking of water, which until now has flowed under the radar, people are starting to ask questions: where is our water coming from, what is being put into it, and how is its packaging affecting the planet?

Smaller-scale brands are very good at adapting to momentary fads, but really what they need to be doing to have a real grip on things and be ahead of the curve is to look ahead. It takes a long time to create a product, get it packaged, marketed and out into the world, so businesses can't just be looking ahead to next year – they need to be looking around three years into the future. They need to be investing in compostable packaging; in the next three years there'll be more talk of the difference between biodegradable and compostable, and it's important that businesses are ready with their product when consumers start to make decisions based on this.

TALKING POINTS

PERFECTLY IMPERFECT...

We're coming away from the one-stop-shop supermarket style of retail, where people can buy clothes, flowers and laundry detergent from one place, towards specialists. People will increasingly look to buy products from people who really know what they're talking about, who sell seasonal produce and are able to advise on how to cook and eat it. People want experience, connection and relationship – they're connecting with realness and trust imperfection more than perfection. As we come out of the EU, we'll lose the regulation which requires our fruit and vegetables to be uniform, so the concept of 'wonky fruit' will become more prevalent. Producers will start to create industrially imperfect things; biscuit makers will use different moulds to create variation in packets of biscuits, so they look home-baked rather than factory-made.

FADS VS TRENDS...

Fads and trends are two very different things. Fads are what I'm asked about every November or December, when journalists call to ask me about trends for the following year – avocado on toast, matcha lattes (charcoal lattes are next) – but although these are forever-changing, they're still informed by the wider issues at play in the world at that time. We've had the 'green phase' which involved green smoothies, kale and growing walls, plus a lot of students even dyed their hair green during this period; there were a lot of conversations being had about the natural world. We're now moving into the 'black phase' with charcoal pizza bases and foods containing black sesame – people are sensing a darkness, an underlying deception in the world right now, and are also trying to reconnect with the earth. In terms of what we're putting in our bodies, we're stepping away from seeing white as purity and goodness, and towards darkness being earthy and wholesome.

“ Food is something very close to our hearts; it is part of our heritage and it connects us to culture, race, religion and celebration ”

THE BIG PICTURE

As a culture, we're searching for meaning. We've gone from loads of money in the eighties to suffocation – nothing was enough – and the rise of mental health issues. It's about finding meaning and connectedness in the wider scheme of things, wanting to give

something back and to share. This will continue to be championed by 20 to 30 year olds – this is the generation of sharing – they don't feel strong as an individual unit, they need group support, so for them it's a natural thing to create belonging.

This generation is reading the labels of the food they're eating more than ever before, and they're the first

generation to really get into the idea of 'balance': eating a pack of sweets and 'balancing' that with a salad. The next generation, the children who are 12 years old now, are a completely different kettle of fish to today's risk-averse 25 year olds – we're yet to see how the world will change for them.

Right now the understanding we

have of food and its value is only the tip of the iceberg. So far it has informed the trend for health and wellness, but in the next three to five years we'll have levels of knowledge we've never had before and will really see the power in that. For example, we'll experience the power of personalisation; this has moved on from simply having your name on a

can of Coca Cola to finding out who we are, what's right at the core or our DNA. Diets are being developed which are based on our microbiome and genetics. People will have devices to scan themselves with, which will tell them the nutrients they need that day. This all may seem far-fetched, but it will be our reality sooner rather than later.



FINE FOOD USA

The gourmet burger boom and the rise in quality confectionery has strengthened US food's footing in the UK. We explore the epicurean trends crossing the Atlantic

Think of American food and drink, and your mind no doubt conjures up images of quality barbecue products, bright and fun-looking confectionery, craft beers and a whole raft of other toothsome fare. It can't be denied that American food and drink products have the ability to captivate due to the diverse, eclectic and exciting options available. And it's catching on over here, too, with consumers looking past the unhealthy tag that American cuisine is often branded with. The burger craze and craft beer revolution are all influenced by movements from stateside – with consumers hotly anticipating the next trend from the US to hit our shores.

Tom Styman-Heighton is the development chef at Funnybones Foodservice, an operation that boasts a vast American foods offering – his job is to keep tabs on the emerging trends from the US, which dictate the creation of his products. The next big food trend to hit the UK? Charcoal, Tom predicts. “The use of charcoal as an addition to foods as diverse as ice cream and hot dogs has migrated from across the Atlantic from New York, where fashionable foodies are expounding its reputed health benefits,” he tells us. “With glamorous food looks, black foods are very popular with Instagrammers and add instant drama to the plate.”

Tom notes that the interminable rise of the gourmet burger isn't set to stop, and puts it down to consumers moving away from fine dining and gravitating towards the casual sector. “The burger has become the flagship for the premium quality, relaxed dining style that has become the most fashionable and prolific part of the restaurant industry,” he states. “Going gourmet? Choose a burger. Going vegan? Choose a burger. Going spicy? Choose a burger. Whatever style of meal you're looking for you will find a burger to match your mood. Although our meat burgers

are best-sellers, we've noticed the vegetarian choices are definitely on the up.”

Funnybones also specialises in Tex-Mex options, a style that's huge in the US, and Tom notes that the business has needed to accommodate the rise of different dietary habits within the category. “With the growing pressure to make healthier, lighter choices, we've gone back to the home of tortillas to source authentic wraps made to traditional recipes from corn rather than wheat,” he explains.

“Non-wheat wraps are common fare in South America, and the health benefits of corn-based wraps are beginning to be recognised in this country. Blue corn varieties are native to South West America and Central and South America, and are essentially the same species as white and yellow corn, however, the blue version contains less starch, has 20% more protein and a lower glycemic index than white corn. It also contains anthocyanins, which are said to have an antioxidant activity and are also found in other healthy purple foods.”

American authenticity

With esteemed brands like French's, Stubb's and Briannas

in its portfolio, Empire Bespoke Foods has a reputation for sourcing and distributing specialist food products from all around the world, particularly the US. Selecting the finest branded foods since 1997, the team keep a collective eye on emerging US-hailing trends that are making their mark on UK gourmet culture.

“The most popular products in the UK are the most authentic American brands,” explains Marion Lebreton, brand manager at Empire Bespoke Foods. “In fact, shoppers want to find the brands they recognise – ones they either tried on their holidays or saw in the movies. They want to experience the real authenticity of the products. At Empire Bespoke Foods we make a point of bringing products that are authentically made in the USA and are leaders in the category.” This is why the company's portfolio consists of well-known brands like Tootsie Roll, Mike & Ike and Stubb's.

While brands with authentic US provenance and heritage can go a long way in swinging a consumer's purchasing decision, point of difference through innovative products can go even further in piquing customers' attentions. “We always aim to bring a global solution

HOW WE SELL: AMERICAN FOOD

John Warren, systems coordinator at fine food retailer Partridges, talks food from over the pond:

Sales of American grocery products account for approximately 5% of total sales at Partridges. There's a sizeable American ex-pat community in the local area who rely on Partridges for our large range of American-branded goods, which are not readily

available elsewhere. We have long-standing relationships with some of the UK's biggest importers of American food and drink. Lengthy lead times and frequent supply shortages mean that maintaining these relationships is crucial to keep our shelves stocked.

5 MINUTES WITH... ADRIAN BEALE

Owner of Buckley & Beale



WHAT AMERICAN FOOD AND DRINK TRENDS ARE PROVING POPULAR IN THE UK MARKET?

Twists on old American classics have been appearing on menus across the country over the last 12 months or so. Dishes such as mac 'n' cheese and even the humble hot dog have seen a renaissance in bars and restaurants. Despite numerous healthy food options and trends, it would appear we are still very much in love with comfort food. Alongside this there are some interesting fusions of American foods, with Far Eastern cuisines such as Korean and also Latin American proving popular – particularly in the case of street food such as tacos and burritos. The overall trends seems to be towards foods that deliver on flavour, especially those not commonly found in British cuisine. I think the key message is that consumers simply want 'different'; with all the negativity and bad news in the media, food is a great mechanism to forget about the day-to-day humdrum and enjoy something new.

WHAT AMERICAN BRANDS SHOULD INDIE RETAILERS BE STOCKING?

Key products within our range include McClure's Pickles, Koeze Cream Nut Peanut Butter and the fruit syrups from Blackberry Patch in Georgia. Retailers should stock them as it's all about giving customers choice. We expect

delis and farm shops to support local producers, so we're simply offering retailers something a bit different so they can offer the customers a mix of local and world foods.

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR IN AMERICAN BRANDS?

It's a balance between commercial potential and product USPs. We look for differences in packaging, flavour and backstory so that we're not listing just another 'me too' product. Taking the McClure's Pickles as an example, they have a flavour and crunch we hadn't – and still haven't – experienced with other pickles, and their packaging is beautifully clean and simple. To date it's still pretty much the most expensive thing we sell on a per unit basis, but every deli owner out there knows that people will pay for quality – and they know it when they see it.

WHAT HAVE BEEN YOUR LATEST EXCITING AMERICAN FINE FOOD DISCOVERIES?

To say we discovered ancient grains would be pushing things a bit, but we came across the trend for sprouted flours using centuries' old grains such as amaranth and purple corn while in the US last year, and now use these in our Sprouted Genius crackers. They recently won Best Artisan Product 2018 at the World Food Innovation Awards, so it was good to see that trend resonate here in the UK. We also came across some really nice all-natural food colouring kits and egg dyes which sold well, so place your orders early for next Easter!

“ Shoppers want to find the brands they recognise – ones they either tried on their holidays or saw in the movies ”

to our customers with a wide range of products,” she says. “We recently brought Chocolate Orchard to the UK market, a range of delicious pretzels covered in milk chocolate and yoghurt. In the drinks category we are increasing our successful Virgil's range with a new variant called Butterscotch Beer.

We've also added two new Chicken and Pork marinades to the Stubb's range – they're top sellers in the USA. Snacks-wise, we recommend Beanfields – a healthy and crispy bean-based chip company

that come in White Bean, Sea Salt and Black Bean flavours. They're a great source of protein, high in fibre and the company is B Corp-certified.”

A well stocked array of American items is all well and good, but Marion states that appealing merchandising is of equal importance. She says, “Shoppers need to identify easily that the fixture features US products. Visitors are also looking for experience, so that is why it's important to bring theatre to fine food stores.”

When it comes to American trends making their way to the UK, we've noticed an emphasis on free-from and no added sugar products, as well as American craft beer, salt beef sandwiches and also South American cuisine.

Our top-sellers are Pepperidge Farm Cheddar Goldfish, A & W Root Beer, Mott's Clamato Juice, Libby's Pumpkin, Twinkies, Twizzlers and Reese's Peanut Butter Cups. These products do not have many direct comparables in the European



market, and Partridges supplies them at a reasonable retail price. American customers are also particularly brand conscious and loyal to the iconic brands they trust.

The final word
on fine food

THE INDEPENDENT SHOPPER

Michelin-awarded TV chef Shaun Rankin discusses his passion for the fresh produce of the Channel Islands

Because the Channel Islands are so small, I have the advantage of having everything at my fingertips. From fabulous dairy, to vegetables, seafood and cider, there are so many local independent heroes I would recommend to anyone. One of the greatest things about the Channel Islands are the honesty boxes – or ‘hedge veg’ as the locals call them. They are essentially stalls on the side of the road, usually outside the farm gates, selling the absolute best of what’s in season. It’s a tradition based on islander’s honesty, and people pay into the pot when they



take their produce. I use these as much as possible because I know exactly where my vegetables have come from. It’s so important for chefs to support local farmers and growers, and I can’t recommend it enough. Not only are you getting high quality

produce but it’s also fantastic for the local economy.

A favourite independent of mine is the Classic Herd Farm Shop – Jersey’s only independent dairy farm which milks and makes their products fresh on site. From their herd of 60 milking Jerseys, they produce an outstanding milk and a delicious cream which I use when making the butter at Ormer Mayfair.

The Fresh Fish Company in St Helier is where I visit to get my fish

and shellfish from local fishermen who bring in their day’s catch to sell. Whether making a sweet Jersey lobster ravioli or delicate Dover sole, it’s important that my seafood is as fresh as it can be, and I can always rely on them to provide me with the best possible ingredients for this.

I would also recommend Fenella Maddison and her Fort Grey cheese made with full cream from The Guernsey Dairy. She hand-crafts everything in a tiny cheese room which is attached to her house, but never fails to deliver on exceptional taste and quality. For good lamb, I visit sheep farmer, David Scott, on the island of Sark – he sells excellent quality lamb which is all sold locally.

Finally, Colin Roche is the island’s only commercial watercress grower. Not only is he a one-man operation, he also picks his crop by hand. His very unusual ‘farm’ is tucked away in St Martin and boasts clear underground springs with a constant temperature of 10°C – ideal for cress growing conditions, producing its signature peppery taste.

“It’s so important for chefs to support local farmers and growers, and I can’t recommend it enough”

TWITTER POLL

Has your shop made a concerted effort to cater to the growing vegan market?

Yes
47%

No
41%

We're planning to start
12%

SPECIALITY FOOD MAGAZINE

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TALKING SHOP

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At the time of writing, Waitrose has announced it's adding 50-plus vegan lines – as well as signposted 'vegan' sections to its stores –, Holland & Barrett is set to bolster its offering with over 500 new vegan lines to its 800 outlets based in the UK and Ireland, and Sainsbury's is planning to stock meat alternative products in its meat aisles. While your shop is going to want to offer genuine point-of-different to the ubiquitous multiples cluttering the high street, are you looking to up your plant-based or meat-free product selection? Or have you been providing vegan products to your customers already?

A quick glance at the supermarket lines shows that they're mainly catering to demographics looking for convenience, with Waitrose's trademark plant-based offering being The Happy Pear's range of ready meals, which include

the likes of Chickpea Curry and Shepherdless Pie. The launch of Tesco's Wicked Kitchen meals was met with a thoroughly positive reception, with sales skyrocketing to 2.5 million meals sold since it unveiled the range of vegan ready meals across the country in early January. Although, perhaps unsurprisingly, The Food Standards Agency has launched a full investigation after tests allegedly found pork DNA in Sainsbury's meat-free meatballs and traces of turkey in Wicked Kitchen's Vegan Macaroni. It doesn't seem to have made a dent in the insatiable demand for the products, though, judging by the

consistently impressive sales figures being circulated.

While those phenomenally popular plant-based lines revolve around on-the-go options, it would be remiss to not make a concerted effort to stock quality products that will directly cater to the growing vegan market. With mainstream retailers having the plant-based convenience offerings all tied up, this means the time is ripe to offer a smattering of artisanal, exciting products that consumers can use in their cooking. Getting the basics

right is essential, so ensure you're stocking premium humous, well-sourced quinoa, quality olives and other products that can be enjoyed as a stand-alone treat or in a meze. And as usual, offer the weird and wonderful – it's one of the reasons shoppers purvey your store, after all. Although I'm aware that the likes of Tesco and Sainsbury's sell jackfruit products and faux-kebab meat products these days, I was recently knocked for six by the other innovative meat-free products in The Acorn Veggie

Deli in Essex. I must admit that I'm rarely surprised by the diverse meat-free foodstuffs out there now – I used to work for a magazine aimed towards vegetarians so I'm fairly well versed in the world of seitan and tofu – but I was very intrigued by The Black Pudding Company's Vegan Black Pudding and Sgaia's Gourmet Vegan Charcuterie – I walked away buying both on this occasion. The staff also recommended some other interesting products, and we had a good old natter about the influx of flexitarians visiting the shop. In my eyes, the multiples can keep their meat-free ready meals – they won't be able to offer that kind of shopping experience, for vegans and meat eaters alike.

james.fell@aceville.co.uk

“ Offer the weird and wonderful – it's one of the reasons shoppers purvey your store ”

5 MINUTES WITH... JUMANA KAPADIA

Founder of Lotus Bites



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

I'd be a tour guide in London

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST JOB?

Student ambassador at my university

WHAT INSPIRES YOU?

My mum's desire to live every moment to the fullest!

WHAT'S THE WORST JOB YOU'VE DONE?

No job is bad – it's your approach towards a particular task that counts

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF YOUR JOB?

I love being creative and thinking outside of the box!

AND YOUR LEAST FAVOURITE?

The admin tasks you have to undertake as a start-up

TEA OR COFFEE?

No, thanks – just some warm water with a splash of turmeric for me!

HOW ABOUT THE FOOD INDUSTRY – IS THERE ANYTHING YOU'D CHANGE?

Deliberately vague and misleading labels

WHAT WOULD BE YOUR LAST SUPPER?

Tapioca and organic potato cakes accompanied with a mint and yoghurt dip

WHAT'S YOUR MOTTO?

'What goes around comes around' and 'live every moment to the fullest!'

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

Snails – they're so slimy and I almost choked on them!

WHAT'S YOUR ALL-TIME FAVOURITE BOOK?

Charlie and The Chocolate Factory. I loved the power of imagination as a child, and even more today as an adult!

SWEET OR SAVOURY?

Somewhere in-between

DIARY DATES

July

17th–19th SPECIALITY & FINE FOOD ASIA
Suntec, Singapore
speciality-asia.com

24th–25th INTERNATIONAL CHEESE AWARDS
Nantwich
internationalcheeseawards.co.uk

27th–29th THE GAME FAIR
Hatfield House, Hatfield
thegamefair.org

28th MINDFUL DRINKING FESTIVAL
Spitalfields Market, London
mindfuldrinkingfestival.com

September

2nd–4th SPECIALITY & FINE FOOD FAIR
Olympia, London
specialityandfinefoodfairs.co.uk

8th GLOBAL CHEESE AWARDS
Frome, Somerset
globalcheeseawards.com

9th–11th TOP DRAWER AUTUMN
Olympia, London
topdrawer.co.uk

10th–12th GLEE
NEC, Birmingham
gleebirmingham.com

20th–21st LUNCH!
ExCel, London
lunchshow.co.uk

October

5th–7th WELCOME ITALIA
The Royal Horticultural Halls, London
welcome-italia.co.uk

specialityfoodmagazine.com

TRIED & TESTED



JAMES, DEPUTY EDITOR

PELAGONIA HOT AIVAR

I'm a long-time fan of the Pelagonia range, especially its classic Aivar. The sweet roasted pepper and aubergine meze is the

best-selling product of the company's 17-strong range, so with that dedicated fan base it's easy to see why founder Philip Evans has decided to give it a spicy twist. It pairs phenomenally with cheese – I enjoyed it with a strong Keens Cheddar, with the spicy red pepper adding an extra bit of pizzazz.

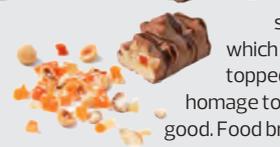
pelagonia.co.uk



GLORIOUS COCONUT HOCUS POCUS THE GROWN UP CHOCOLATE COMPANY



I'm gobsmacked that this company's simple – yet highly effective – concept of re-imagining chocolate bars from yesteryear was never rolled out before. Or maybe it was, but it wasn't pulled off to this standard. The latest milk chocolate bar,



which features creamy coconut ganache topped with fruit and nut – a slightly tweaked homage to a Bounty, I assume? – is sensationally good. Food brands should never take themselves too seriously, and this company is very good fun indeed –

I'm excited to see what they create next.

thegrownupchocolatecompany.co.uk

LOBROS KOMBUCHA

The fine food sector is currently awash with kombucha – it feels like there's no glass ceiling as far as these gut health-boosting fermented drinks are concerned. A brand that has genuinely piqued my interest and risen above the rest has got to be Australia's Lo Bros. The range includes some interesting flavours, but my personal favourites have got to be Ginger & Lemon and Raspberry & Lemon. Really refreshing, flavoursome and effervescent, they're a godsend on a hot summer's day.

lobros.com.au



HOLLY, EDITOR

SPROUTED GENIUS CRACKERS

Tapping into the ancient grain trend is Sprouted Genius' sprouted flour crackers. I'm all about

variety when it comes to crackers on a cheeseboard, and these would make a delightful new addition to my selection. Coming in three flavours – Amaranth, Amaranth & Beetroot and Purple Corn, Sea Salt & Black Pepper – and stunning colours, they're a great option to serve with a soft summer cheese.

sproutedgenius.co.uk



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