

DELI BUSINESS

MARKETING MERCHANDISING MANAGEMENT PROCUREMENT
APRIL/MAY 2018 \$14.95



Sandwiches' Transformation

ALSO INSIDE

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DELI BUSINESS IS PUBLISHED BY
PHOENIX MEDIA NETWORK, INC.
P.O. BOX 810425,
BOCA RATON, FL 33481-0425
PHONE: 561-994-1118 FAX: 561-994-1610
www.delibusiness.com
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PUBLICATION AGREEMENT NO. 40047928



Toufayan Bakeries Celebrates 50 Years



Toufayan Bakeries, one of the largest family-owned commercial bakeries in America, is celebrating 50 years in business in the U.S. Based in Ridgefield Park, NJ, with additional manufacturing facilities in Plant City and Orlando, FL, Toufayan, which sells more than 100 varieties of breads and baked goods, is credited with kicking off the pita craze and helping introduce U.S. consumers to ethnic breads.

Founded by Harry Toufayan, who now runs the business with his three adult children, Toufayan Bakeries marks this milestone anniversary with a 50K giveback to the communities in which it does business, a gesture in line with countless charitable contributions that have defined five decades in business.

Harry Toufayan grew up working in his father's bakeries overseas. When the Toufayans immigrated to the America, Toufayan and his father sensed there was room to disrupt the U.S. bread market, which was dominated at the time by mass market white loaf breads. Toufayan opened the first U.S.-based Toufayan Bakery in West New York, NJ in 1968 and quickly concluded that traditional and world-inspired breads could find a home in America.

The Toufayans have focused on giving back into their business and family life. Harry Toufayan is known to load up his car with products to distribute to law enforcement on patrol, the family gladly donates product to community-based institutions and shelters in need and it partners with national organizations, including the Make A Wish Foundation and the Multiple Sclerosis Society in New York, New Jersey and Florida to support efforts to improve the health and well-being of adults and children nationwide. After natural disasters or emergency situations around the country, if there is a need for product, the Toufayans make that a priority, finding a way to deliver truckloads of breads, bagels and pita to survivors in need of assistance and sustenance during recovery.

COMING NEXT IN JUNE/JULY ISSUE

COVER STORY

13th Annual People's Awards

FEATURE STORIES

Mediterranean Foods
Appetizers

MERCHANDISING REVIEWS

Deli Breads
Olives
Cross Merchandising

PROCUREMENT STRATEGIES

Salads

DELI MEATS

Deli Meat Supplement

PREPARED FOODS

Building Breakfast

CHEESE CORNER

Montasio
Pairings

COMING IN AUG/SEPT

DELI BUSINESS will be taking a look at Back to School.

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*Source: SPINs Data 52 week ending 01/28/18 Channel Total Specialty/Gourmet Markets/Natural Products - Crackers & Crispbreads

TRANSITION



BLOUNT PROMOTES BIGELOW

Blount Fine Foods, Fall River, MA, announced William Bigelow has been promoted to chief innovation officer as part of the company's continued investment in product innovation. Since joining the company's newly-formed Research & Development department in 2002, four years into his career, Bigelow has helped grow the company. In his expanded role, Bigelow will serve the customer and sales team by translating national and global trends and consumer insight into opportunities to create valuable new products.

www.blountfinefoods.com



HOOKE'S CHEESE APPOINTS NATIONAL SALES MANAGER

Hook's Cheese Co., Mineral Point, WI, has appointed Sara Hill as its first national sales manager. Hill's career includes previous positions at Olfisco Inc., Classic Provisions and Carr Valley Cheese. Most recently, Hill served as manager of cheese education for the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board. She also has served as a board member of the American Cheese Society and was inducted into the Guild Internationale Des Fromagers in 2013.

www.hookcheese.com

ANNOUNCEMENTS



ATALANTA ACQUIRES ANCO

Atalanta Corp. Elizabeth, NJ, has acquired ANCO Fine Cheese – a business unit from Schratte Foods Inc. The All Nations Cheese Organization (ANCO) is one of the largest and broadest specialty cheese importers in the U.S. Founded in 1945, Atalanta is the largest privately held food importer in the United States.

www.atalantacorp.com



LIPARI FOODS PURCHASES JIM'S CHEESE

Lipari Foods, Warren, MI, announced the acquisition of the cheese cutting and packaging business of Jim's Cheese, LLC. of Waterloo, WI. Jim's Cheese is a supplier of specialty, aged and cut out cheeses and has been supplying Wisconsin cheese since 1955. This acquisition will expand its manufacturing capabilities and operate under the JLM Manufacturing division of Lipari Foods.

www.liparifoods.com



JOSEPH GALLO FARMS HONORED

Joseph Gallo Farms, Atwater, CA, maker of Joseph Farms Cheese, has been honored once again as one of California's finest cheese makers at the 2018 Los Angeles International Dairy Competition. The company received 10 medals for its products, including Gold Medal winners Medium Cheddar, Mild Cheddar, Sharp Cheddar, Marbled Jack, Pepper Jack, and Reduced Fat Monterey Jack. Silver Medal winners include Monterey Jack, Part Skim Mozzarella, and Premium Extra Sharp Cheddar, while our Provolone received Bronze.

www.josephfarms.com



CRAVE CHEESE MAKER RECEIVES KUDOS

Crave Brothers, Waterloo, WI, has announced cheese maker George Crave was inducted into the New World Chapter of The Guild Internationale des Fromagers. The organization was founded in France in 1969. The company also has announced that its marinated fresh Mozzarella took first place in the Flavored Cheese Category and third place in the Fresh Mozzarella category at the 2018 World Cheese Championships. Its Mascarpone also took fifth place in the Soft Cheese category.

www.cravecheese.com



MACKENZIE CREAMERY SCORES WINS AT CHEESE CONTEST

Mackenzie Creamery, Hiram, OH, was honored with both the Best in Class and second place awards at the World Championship Cheese Contest. The awards were in the Flavored Soft Goat's Milk Cheeses with Sweet Condiments category, with Best in Class for its Cognac Fig Chèvre and second place for its Apricot Ginger Chèvre.

www.mackenzie-creamery.com



SAPUTO CHEESE TAKES BEST IN CLASS

Saputo Cheese USA Inc., Lincolnshire, IL, has won a number of awards at the 2018 World Championship Cheese Contest. These include Best of Class, Pepper Flavored Cheeses, Mild Heat: Great Midwest Hatch Pepper Cheddar; Best of Class, Flavored Hard Cheeses: Stella Rosemary Asiago; Best of Class, Cold Pack Cheese Food: Black Creek Sharp Cheddar Spread; and Best of Class- Soft Goat's Milk Cheeses: Woolwich Dairy Chebrie.

www.saputo.com

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ANNOUNCEMENTS



PERDUE RECEIVES HIGH MARKS ON ANIMAL WELFARE

Perdue Farms, Salisbury, MD, achieved the second highest of six levels in its first appearance in the global Business Benchmark on Farm Animal Welfare (BBFAW). This level recognizes companies that made animal welfare integral to their business strategies, and placed Perdue Farms among the top 15 percent of more than 100 global food companies. Perdue was one of only three U.S. poultry or meat companies to achieve Tier 2 or higher.

www.perduefarms.com



3 PECORINI MARKETING CAMPAIGN

The region of Sardinia, in partnership with the Consortiums for the protection of Pecorino Romano, Pecorino Sardo and Fiore Sardo, New York, has launched 3 Pecorini, its first-ever U.S. marketing and trade campaign. Featuring Italy's oldest sheep's milk cheeses, the campaign marks the first large-scale collaboration between the three Consortiums to promote the 3 Sardinian Pecorino DOPs US-wide. The three-year campaign aims to reveal these cheeses' true origin and increase awareness in the United States.

www.usa3pecorini.com

NEW PRODUCTS



TAMPER-RESISTANT RECTANGLES

Sabert Corp., Sayreville, NJ, has introduced SureHinge rectangle disposable food packaging with tamper-resistant rectangles. The packaging has no protruding plastic tabs or plastic waste. A reliable tamper-resistant system cannot be easily bypassed. The line also offers leak resistance and is designed for fresh-cut fruit, salads and snack foods. It features a modern design with smooth walls, chamfered bases and a stylish tab.

www.sabert.com



NEW LOGO, PACKAGING & PRODUCT

Sabra Dipping Co. LLC, White Plains, NY, unveiled a new logo and packaging redesign for its complete product line. The rebranding includes an updated logo, restyled label design and original on-pack photography highlighting the fresh, plant-based ingredients in Sabra products. The new packaging will begin hitting retail shelves later this month. The company also debuted its Mediterranean Bean Dips line, which features bold flavors of the Mediterranean. It can be paired with vegetables as well as tortilla and pita chips.

www.sabra.com



FRESH MOZZARELLA SNACKS DEBUT

Biazzo Dairy Products, Inc., Ridgefield, NJ, has introduced Biazzo Fresh Mozzarella Cheese Snack Sticks in newly-designed branded packaging. Unlike many snack cheeses, including string cheeses, Biazzo Fresh Mozzarella Cheese Snack Sticks can be placed in retailers' deli or dairy cases. The line is available in packages of six, 1-ounce sticks. The cheese has simple ingredients, no growth hormones, is gluten free, vegetarian and kosher.

www.biazzo.com



PREMIUM TURKEY BACON

Butterball Foodservice, Garner, NC, has introduced Premium Turkey Thigh Bacon. This new variety is made with premium thigh meat and has one-third fewer calories and 60 percent less fat than pork bacon, with similar texture and smoky taste. The thick cut makes this product easy to handle and unlikely to overcook, while the dark meat complements all kinds of flavors. As a side dish, topping or ingredient, Butterball's premium turkey bacon can substitute for lardon, pancetta and more.

www.butterball-foodservice.com



THREE FLAVORS TO CHOOSE FROM

Volpi Foods, St. Louis, MO, has introduced its Volpi Roltini Singles made with fresh, natural ingredients, with no gluten, nitrates or nitrites. Three snack varieties include Prosciutto, Pepperoni and Spicy Salame. The snacks are rich in protein and available in individually-wrapped 10-pack pouches.

www.volpifoods.com



SOFT & SALTY

Castella Imports, Hauppauge, NY, offers one of the most popular Greek cheeses, Greek Feta. The soft and salty line has an authentic taste. It is perfect for crumbling over salads, adding to pasta or serving with wine. It also pairs well with lamb, poultry, beans and rice.

www.castella.com

Brave New World Of Omni-Channel Retailing



By
Jim Prevora
Editor-in-Chief

Following Amazon's acquisition of Whole Foods, the attention of the food industry has turned to omni-channel retailing. Add in Walmart's purchase of Jet.com and the fact that virtually every retail chain is now aligning with a delivery service, and it is clear that this focus will continue and intensify.

Online purchases mostly remain a center-store phenomenon. Sure, in those areas with a specialized service, such as Fresh Direct or Amazon Fresh, the perishable numbers are higher, but the role these sales will play in the overall supermarket industry is still a question that needs to be answered.

Many younger consumers are omni-channel customers. Also, as technology changes with automatic ordering systems, Amazon Echo-type devices, etc., the integration of omni-channel retailing into daily life is predetermined.

Indeed, the very nature of retailing will change, as this technology is tied to advanced Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems. Right now, the "advance" is convenience — thinking about something one wants, placing an order and getting it delivered sometimes on the same day. But soon, one will be able to have a thought, such as, "I'd like to do a really nice cheese platter for 25 people. Please select a nice assortment of cheeses and accompaniments and have them delivered Friday."

The role of the deli department is simultaneously made more essential and somewhat threatened by the move away from bricks-and-mortar retailing. On the one hand, the whole deli/foodservice assortment is absolutely crucial in keeping people coming in the door at brick-and-mortar locations. For all the advances of packaging and processing, the deli/foodservice department offers many products that are substantially different when served fresh at the service deli counter. Nobody, for example, has figured out a way to deliver an appetizing rare roast beef, except through a service deli.

Frequently, seemingly identical products have different sodium levels when sold fresh or when packaged. And sometimes people like to shop to see new things and try new tastes. Top-notch operations, which might have a chef on the floor whipping up shrimp scampi as a special, give out samples and thus expose people to new tastes.

So, in one sense, the rise of omni-channel retailing is a great gift to deli/foodservice. This department and, maybe, bakery — with the aromas

and excitement of cooking in store and many unique products that are hard to duplicate when being shipped — is the logical focus for brick-and-mortar locations striving to remain relevant.

When you think about the idea that Amazon will use Whole Foods stores as depots for click-and-collect operations, knowing these stores are not very large, it is easy to envision stores that are click-and-collect operations for most center-store items with the remaining square footage devoted to a giant cafe/restaurant/prepared foods area.

Stores of the future will need more excitement and more "eatertainment" experiences, which one cannot package and ship — and deli/foodservice will be at the heart of this.

There is a flip side, though. It may well be that all the things driving deli/foodservice sales at brick-and-mortar locations will also reduce consumption of these items when ordering online. In other words, if people enjoy that rare roast beef from the service deli counter, they may simply not order roast beef when ordering from a delivery service. They may intend to buy it when they go to the store, but maybe they will go less frequently and so buy less.

Sometimes, the variability of deli/foodservice offerings can discourage consumers from buying these products from unfamiliar vendors. If a family books a cabin at a vacation destination and, instead of making the trek to a local supermarket, they may now order food from an omni-channel retailer to be waiting for their arrival. A consumer can safely order an 88-size Washington Extra-Fancy Red Delicious apple and will get an almost identical product from any vendor. But a consumer can't order tuna salad from the deli and be certain it's the kind their family will enjoy. Certainly, the mere announcement of specials — we are cooking shrimp scampi today — is far less effective than seeing the chef, smelling the aroma, tasting samples — when it comes to boosting sales.

For deli/foodservice, omni-channel retailing is a "tale of two cities." It is the best of times — when deli/foodservice will be the center of brick-and-mortar retailing — and it is the worst of times — when online sales will challenge the distinctiveness of the department, suppress sales of variable items and deny the department its big marketing edge of cooking, sampling and impulse buying.

The future will go to the retailers able to square this circle.

DB

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "James P. Prevora".

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Cheese is the Competitor's Edge



By
Lee Smith
Publisher

The challenges facing brick and mortar retailers are endless. However, supermarkets have faced challenges before and always rallied to deliver on consumers' needs for innovation, quality and convenience.

Right now, the obstacles to success have never been greater. Where once it was head-to-head competition, the playing field is now wide open, especially with the virtual reality of online retailing and home delivery.

Some retailers have responded with their own solutions that range from online options to home delivery. While in the past perishables were not available, that has also changed, and online now includes fresh meal kits, high-quality meats, produce and cheese.

There are areas where brick and mortar retailers have a distinct advantage, experience marketing. We want experiences – stories and meaning to our food. The newest player – a sub department that is getting bigger – in some cases big enough to become its own entity, is the supermarket specialty cheese department.

Specialty cheese sales are growing, and cheese departments are getting more complex. For many retailers, what was once a 20-cheese pre-cut selection has grown to hundreds of cheeses on display. But, what is often missing is the heart of the department – service and cut-to-order cheeses.

Having the option of cutting cheeses to order has many advantages. First, there is someone in the department who is, or should be, a specialist.

When cut to order, pieces are often smaller allowing the option of buying more than one piece. This is especially important if the customer is going to be entertaining and wants some variety.

By interacting with customers, pairing options are a possibility. That jar of special honey or fig spread may just sit on a shelf, but with a pairing suggestion, it becomes a must have – a centerpiece for entertaining.

One of my all-time favorites was a rather

mundane and uncommon cheese – Greek Manouri. It is a mild goat or sheep whey milk cheese. There is nothing very striking about it, but topped with a lavender honey that had lots of filberts in it and decorated with a few flowers, it was a favorite. The honey cost much more than the cheese.

Cheese departments are expanding into other areas. One of the fastest growing parts of a cheese department is a high-quality selection of salami and charcuterie. With someone behind the counter, the combinations and selections become endless – and all are unique and not available online.

A “real” person who will allow a customer to taste the cheese and then cut the piece to the size a customer wants is a huge bonus, especially when some of the best cheeses are very perishable, won't stand up to being encased in plastic and are over \$40 a pound.

But this is only the beginning. Your cheese specialist can make tortes of a small Brie, cut down the middle and filled with pesto. Or small soft-ripened cheeses can be topped with dried fruit and nuts sticky with honey. Individual cheese boards good for two or three people are year-round favorites, but especially nice with a light dinner. A cheese board, small salad and a glass of wine is a perfect summer meal.

Today's customers want food to be fun as well as nutritious. They are interested in local and looking for stories to believe in and share with their friends. Cheese answers. Every cheese has a story and often a long and interesting history.

As for local, cheese is made just about everywhere and highlighting the cheeses that are produced locally and telling their stories, brings people closer to the heritage that is sitting in their own backyards.

Cheese is the new service department. **DB**

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, likely belonging to Lee Smith.

DOROTHY'S

CHEESE WITH REAL CHARACTER
LENA ILLINOIS U.S.A


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Love is at the heart of Dorothy's cheese. As a 1930s farm girl, Dorothy Kolb fell in love with the cows at her grandfather's Illinois creamery. She took that love to Iowa State, where she became the first woman to earn a degree in dairy science. Dorothy met and married a fellow cheese-lover, and together, they forged cheesy love and lovely cheese (and a few kids, too).

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Delishious Sandwiches: Transformation



Trends are key ingredients in creating destinations for today's departments

BY CAROL BAREUTHER

We've come a long way since the 'first' sandwich. This 18th century invention, what food historians described as a piece of salt beef conveniently tucked between two slices of toasted bread, is what John Montagu, the fourth Earl of Sandwich, asked for to sustain him during his long hours either at the gaming table or at his work desk, depending on whose account you believe. Fast forward, and the sandwich has not only crossed the pond, but done so with amazing popularity.

In fact, nearly half of all Americans eat a sandwich on any particular day and many more eat sandwiches several times a week, according to the *2017 Sandwiches Keynote Report*, by Chicago-headquartered Datassential. Americans' abundant appetite for sandwiches bodes well for deli operators who are willing to take a well-placed gamble and act on today's trends.

"What's great about sandwiches is their versatility," says

Jennifer Daskevich, founder of the website Sandwich America, 2013 World Food Championships' World Sandwich Champion, and restaurateur who will opening a new sandwich concept in Tampa, FL, later this year.

"They can be savory or sweet and served for breakfast, lunch, dinner or as a snack. Nearly every restaurant has a sandwich section, from quick-serve to fine-dining. They can be made with everyday staples like ham and cheese on white or upscaled to prosciutto and arugula on a croissant. We're seeing the global cuisine impact of the sandwich grow, too. The Vietnamese bahn mi is trending. There are just so many opportunities."

The basis for an incredible deli sandwich program, one that makes customers think oh-yum rather than ho-hum, lies in the core ingredients of the sandwiches. Case in point is the Reuben served at Zingerman's Delicatessen, in Ann Arbor, MI. The corned beef and sauerkraut is sourced from Michigan producers,



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the Swiss cheese from Switzerland and the rye bread and Russian dressing baked and blended, respectively, in-house daily. It's a combination that received a thumbs up and comment, 'It's killer' from former president Barak Obama when he stopped in for lunch on his way to a speech in 2014.

"The deli was founded on our owner's desire to serve the best corned beef in the Midwest, and now the Reuben makes up 10 percent of our sandwich sales," says Laura Wonch, deli and sandwich line manager. "Sourcing high-quality ingredients isn't something we do just with the Reuben. We do it for all our sandwiches. As a result, they cost more, but quality ingredients make an incredible difference in taste and repeat sales."

Deli sandwich programs have indeed trended to include higher end ingredients and flavors popular to the region's local restaurant scene, according to Jay Holt, vice president of sales for Hayward, CA-based Columbus Craft Meats, makers of whole muscle bulk deli and salame products. "As customers become more open to spending the extra money for quality, operators are happy to use the best quality deli meats and specialty ingredients to make it worth the price."

This sentiment is reinforced with data from Datassential's sandwich report. Specifically, 71 percent of operators who sell sandwiches reported they would be willing to pay more for premium deli meats and cheeses, including those that are GMO- and antibiotic-free. This aligns with the fact more than a quarter of consumers are willing to pay more for ingredients with health halo buzzwords, according to Datassential's 2016-released *The New Healthy Keynote* report.

Healthier Options

"One of the top trends today revolves around healthier-for-you options," says Patrick McBride, director of sales for foodservice at Wild Planet Foods, Inc., a McKinleyville, CA-based provider of sustainably-caught seafood. "We are starting to see a lot of marketing put toward Cage Free eggs, ABF (Anti-Biotic Free) chicken, grass fed beef and sustainable seafood."

Beyond quality and health, a third major trend driving innovation in supermarket deli sandwich programs is consumer's interest in global cuisines.

"Expanding flavor profiles include more ethnic selections," says Jenni Bonsignore, marketing manager for Valley Lahvosh, in



PHOTO COURTESY OF BELGIOIOSO



PHOTO COURTESY OF ZINGERMAN'S

Frenso, CA. "A lot of the ethnic breads, like our Lahvosh Valley Wraps, mark the boxes by being both a higher end option and offering a more interesting alternative to regular sandwich bread."

The fashion for ethnic flavors is evident in supermarket delis across the nation. For example, signature sandwiches at King's Food Markets, a 27-store chain based in Parsippany, NJ, include the Teriyaki Chicken Lavash Wrap, Panni de Parma Sandwich and Chipotle Chicken & Avocado. South at Publix Supermarkets,

a 1,000-plus store chain headquartered in Lakeland, FL, hot selections alone range from Asian BBQ Pork to Chicken Cordon Bleu. In the Midwest at Zingerman's, the Reubens share menu space with creations such as the bahn mi, made with Vietnamese-style chicken sausage from a Michigan manufacturer. Finally, on the West Coast, the deli catering program at Andronico's, a five-store chain based in San Leandro, CA, offers a sandwich platter called the Italian. Combinations include Mozzarella with tomato and basil dressing,



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salami with Provolone and balsamic dressing and prosciutto with greens and olive oil.

The Fixin's

The three trends – quality, healthy and ethnic flavor – play out in sandwich components themselves, such as protein fillings like meats and seafood, cheese and breads,

Meats & Seafood: The number one global flavor trend is authentic ethnic cuisine as identified by the Washington, D.C.-headquartered National Restaurant Association's *What's Hot 2018 Culinary Forecast*. This is a big factor driving consumer interests in Italian meats, says Alberto Minardi, chief executive of Principe Foods Inc., USA, in Long Beach, CA, the largest importer to the United States of D.O.P. San Daniele Prosciutto.

"Italian meats like prosciutto, mortadella and salami all offer something different for sandwiches than the standard roast beef, ham and turkey. There are subcultural and regional preferences too like the Philadelphia hoagie (salami, capicola and boiled ham) in the Northeastern U.S. and New Orleans' muffuletta (salami, capicola and mortadella)."

Specialty signature sandwiches of different cultures and popular regions have become popular trends in deli sandwich programs, according to Columbus Craft Meats' Holt. "Our Roasted Cured Pork



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Loin and Hams are popular items being used to introduce cultural favorites like Vietnamese banh mi sandwiches and hot-pressed Cubano sandwiches in the supermarket deli. Our authentic slow-aged salame and Italian specialty products are used to upgrade fresh caprese sandwiches. Our 100 percent turkey breast is perfect to add value and home-roasted flavor to any

upscale turkey sandwich, such as a high-end club sandwich."

In terms of seafood, deli sandwich choices have been traditionally limited to tuna, says Wild Planet's McBride. "Our most popular item is our once-cooked Albacore with salt. Unlike most tuna products, it's not packed in water or oil. There are only two ingredients: tuna and sea

DON'T FORGET THE CONDIMENTS



The customary big three condiments ketchup, mustard and mayonnaise, are spread on sandwiches sold at Zingerman's Delicatessen, in Ann Arbor, MI. There's a twist though. The ketchup that goes on hot dogs topped with apple-wood smoked bacon and Cheddar is a spicy house-made variety. The mustard, featured for one on a smoked turkey, pep-

pered ham and Swiss on rye is Brownwood Farms Kream mustard made by a generations-old recipe. The mayonnaise is used not only as itself on a roast beef, Cheddar, horseradish on sourdough, but also as the base to make the Russian dressing that famously makes Zingerman's signature Reuben sandwich.

"In addition to the classic stable of condiments, take advantage of the seasonal offerings to create unique pairings of

sandwich and condiment that differentiates you from the competition," says Tom Orlando, national sales director for Conroy Foods, in Pittsburgh. For example, "Our Cranberry Honey Mustard is a huge seasonal product paired with turkey sandwiches, but deli operators are finding consumers like this sauce year-round on their turkey sandwiches. The same holds true for our Pineapple Honey Mustard and ham sandwiches."

Traditional condiments are far from the only ones offered on Zingerman's deli menus. Others include pesto, roasted red pepper spread and olive tapenade and balsamic vinaigrette. It's certainly a sign of the times because putting a spin on staple condiments with diverse flavor is one of six trends identified in *Condiments and Sauces: U.S. Retail Market Trends & Opportunities*, released on July 25, 2017 by Rockville, MD-headquartered market research firm, Packaged Facts. Citing demand especially by Millennials, the report spotlights new taste twists in condiments such as ketchup with chipotle, sriracha and sun-dried tomato flavors; mustards with garlic, Blue cheese and oregano; and mayonnaise with wasabi, horseradish and ginger. Ethnic condiments, which also include gochujang (Asian red chili paste), zhug (Middle Eastern-style hot sauce), sambal (Indonesian chili

Continues on page 20



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Troy Feist, Founder & Head Sandwich Maker Dude
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salt. As such, it is 100 percent yield (offering delis an opportunity to increase profit), retains all its natural oils (omega-3's), and has no added fillers or un-natural ingredients. In addition, there has been an increased use of pink salmon as a replacement for tuna in the deli. This provides a healthy benefit in terms of omega-3 fat content and general consumer acceptance due to salmon's popularity. We also see a variety of different options/recipes being offered using either tuna or salmon."

The best-selling sliced cheese for sandwiches from BelGioioso is the mild Provolone, created from a traditional recipe, made with special cultures and aged a minimum of 60 days to produce its authentic flavor and aroma. Think outside the traditional salame sub sandwich box, suggests Oscar Villarreal, vice president of marketing for Green Bay, WI-based BelGioioso Cheese Inc.

"Provolone can be offered in a grilled panini, or as a no-gluten sandwich option rolled inside grilled eggplant or zucchini. Or go a step further and encase the cheese with some sausage and herbs inside a loaf of dough, bake this and create a sausage bread sandwich."

The most popular cheeses sold into deli

sandwich programs in the U.S. by Cham, Switzerland-headquartered Lustenberger & Dürst SA are Gruyère AOP and Swiss Peak, as well as Emmentaler AOP and Lustenberger 1862.

"Vegetarian dishes, slow food and healthy meals have become important trends," says Carmen Sanchez, marketing. "In this context, traditional cheese from Switzerland is a very popular ingredient for deli sandwiches. One sandwich idea that features the fruity and tangy taste of Lustenberger 1862 is the Croque Monsieur (grilled ham and cheese). Another is a bagel with this same cheese, made with avocado, cucumber and sprouts on a whole grain bagel. A third suggestion is filling whole grain buns with Lustenberger 1862, cottage cheese, and apple and fresh herbs like green onions, parsley and basil."

Bread choices for sandwiches have followed an ethnic trend with telera (flat bread

rolls), ciabatta and flatbreads in demand, says Valley Lahvosh's Bonsignore. "The choices for sandwich breads are much more varied and provide another way to add to the flavor profile of a sandwich."

Health has influenced this fashion, too, according to Karen Toufayan, vice president of marketing and sales for Toufayan Bakeries, in Ridgefield, NJ. "Gluten-free wraps, all-natural and organic breads and more adventurous breads like naan are growing in popularity. Also 'healthier' breads, like sprouted whole wheat grains in pitas and wraps, have become more mainstream in the sandwich arena. We are about to introduce a Lavash Wrap, which combines the unique taste and texture of a lavash flatbread, with the convenience, flexibility and familiarity of a wrap."

A product that's found popularity in deli sandwich programs is the Greek Lifestyle Flatbread by Kontos Foods, Inc.,

Continued from page 18

sauce) and chimichurri (Argentinean sauce), ranked 19th out of 161 foods and identified as a hot trend by American Culinary Federation chefs surveyed for the What's Hot 2018 Culinary Forecast by the National Restaurant Association, in Washington, D.C.

"Deli operators are using inventive customized sauces that are exclusive to their program. An example capitalizes on the sriracha trend by blending this with mayonnaise and sweet chili sauce to create a distinctive profile that can be used as a condiment, dip or topping," says Orlando.

He also suggests delis need to have a healthy or better-for-you clean condiment offering, too. This ties in with another trend spotlighted in the Packaged Facts report on the \$24 billion U.S. condiment and sauce market. That is, consumer desire for GMO-free, natural and organic products as a push back over health risk fears.

"If you are purchasing a deli lunchmeat that is free from preservatives, why put a condiment that is full of them on the sandwich? Some retailers are creating a 'free-from' or 'does not include' list of ingredients to offer to the consumer and merchandise with signage, which allows the consumer to know the quality and healthier options that are available to them," says Orlando.

A good example of both ethnic flavor and healthy trends is the company's Beano-brand Simple & Saucy sandwich condiment line. Flavors of the five items in this line, which are all gluten-free, range from classics such as the Sub Dressing made with 100 per-

cent olive oil and red wine vinegar to the on-trend fiery Sriracha Mustard Sauce. These products, says Orlando, are ideal for preparing gourmet sandwiches in the deli or at home.

Dips and spreads also make ideal condiments, adding flavor and a moisture barrier for the bread, says Carl Cappelli, senior vice president of sales and business development for Don's Food Products, based in Schwenksville, PA. "Imagine Artichoke and Asiago Cheese Dip spread on a Grilled Chicken Panini with roasted red peppers. Or a tortilla with our Horseradish and Cheddar cream cheese with hot roast beef."

To effectively merchandise condiments in pre-made or made-to-order deli sandwich programs, call out the condiments by name on the menu as well as the meats, cheeses and breads. This is what Zingerman's does on its menu boards in-store. To reach customers who come to the deli to buy sandwich fixings for home, cross merchandise condiments nearby.

"Many retailers have a pre-packed deli area for consumers that don't want to wait in line. These shoppers can grab pre-sliced cheese, ham, maybe turkey and then a selection of condiments positioned right above the grab-and-go case. We also have cardboard shippers with header cards. One, for example, is football themed and enables consumers to pick up a bottle of each of four choices of our Beano's products for their tailgate purchase in the deli. After all, you don't have to wow customers by expensive fixtures, you just need to provide a solution," says Orlando. **DB**



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in Paterson, NJ. "This bread has twice the protein, provided by soy flour and half the carbohydrates of typical white pita. Its healthful connotation is resonating with consumers because it is surpassing sales of white pita," says Warren Stoll, marketing director.

Build A Sandwich Destination

One of the key ways to turn a sandwich program into a deli destination is to capitalize on this food's endless possibilities to customize. In fact, more than two-thirds of all sandwiches bought at restaurants are either completely custom-made or modified from an existing menu selection, according to Datassential's *2017 Sandwiches Keynote Report*. More than a third of consumers surveyed for this same report said they chose sandwiches over other food items because they could be customized.

A good example of this is the in-store Sub Shop located in the prepared foods department at Harris Teeter, a 230-plus store chain headquartered in Matthews, NC and a subsidiary of The Kroger Co. Customers can buy a made-to-order sub by choosing from among 12 fillings, including roast beef, tuna salad, meatballs marinara or grilled vegetables; five cheeses, such as Swiss, Provolone or American; eight toppings like lettuce and tomato or jalapeños, black olives and pickles; five condiments from mustard and mayonnaise to ancho



PHOTO COURTESY OF ZINGERMANS

chipotle spread; and five breads, spanning from rolls to wraps and white to wheat flour. The chain then merchandises its sub program by awarding customers points for each purchase with the offer of a free sub after achieving a certain point total.

"Quick, made-to-order sandwiches like the simple yet delicious and trending Italian

street food, piadina, would create excitement and prove your deli is a destination for shoppers. The piadina is a flatbread that is easily warmed and filled with traditional Crescenza-Stracchino cheese, slices of prosciutto and fresh arugula leaves, folded and served warm. Start with demos to introduce the piadina, then create a menu of different choices of cheeses, meats and vegetables. Also consider serving these sandwiches with a cup of soup and small salad to complete the meal. Or offer the ingredients in a kit for people to grab and go and make at home. Try limited time offerings with assorted specialty cheeses to draw extra attention and encourage weekly trial," suggests Villarreal.

Customers need to be educated about the changing nature of their supermarket's sandwich programs to grow, says Toufayan. "Signage in the stores, weekly fliers and retail websites should call attention to how sandwich programs have changed to reflect the changing consumer needs and products to meet these needs."

Finally, an excellent, on-trend and out-of-the-box way to put a deli's sandwich program on the map fast is to use social media, suggests Columbus Craft Meat's Holt. "Making your sandwiches not only tasty, but social media worthy for pictures is a great way to attract more people to your deli."

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Food Bars Still A Hot (and Cold) Trend

Examining the various opportunities for supermarket deli departments

BY KEITH LORIA

FMI/Nielsen's *Power of Fresh Prepared/Deli 2017* report revealed, in order to lure shoppers to the deli department, grocers need to position the segment like a restaurant, and highlighting and expanding the food bar is the best way to do that.

"We're seeing a greater emphasis on expanding the hot bar in the deli section of a supermarket," says Bob Sewall, executive vice president of sales and marketing

for Blount Fine Foods, located in Fall River, MA. "That means everything from prepared foods to soups to deli meats to side dishes and mac and cheese."

Breana Jones, director of marketing for Hissho Sushi, headquartered in Charlotte, NC, notes today's shoppers have a lot of options from which to choose, and it's hard to differentiate stores based on the center aisles, which is why the perimeter is becoming more important.

"Also, people are looking to delis to

provide them with convenient, yet delicious and on-trend food options," she says. "They can stop in and grab different options depending upon the time of day (lunch vs. dinner) and for different members of the family. It's the chance to satisfy different discerning tastes with one stop."

Melissa Silva, director of marketing for Castella Imports, Hauppauge, NY, says consumers are looking to the perimeter of their grocery stores, versus center aisles of years past, to get their products and seek-





ing fresh foods and prepared foods to take home for meals.

"The segment has grown, and will continue to grow, through the years," she says. "They want fresh food, which is prepared more frequently. In addition, with more and more single-parent households and dual working parents, the need for prepared foods to grab and go to feed a family in the evening is much greater than in years past."

Olive Evolution

Also, olives, which were a grocery item historically, are now being purchased in greater volumes from olive bars, which Silva says is something delis are capitalizing on to increase sales.

Brandon Gross, vice president of marketing for FoodMatch, Inc., based in New York, says food bars are one of the most accessible ways for a shopper to sample new flavors and products, and that's why they should be top of mind for all deli departments.

"As a retailer, keeping the display updated with unique and innovative selections that rotate on a regular basis are vital to sales growth," he says. "Shoppers are craving exciting ingredients and food bars can be the ultimate destination for discovering them."

He says FoodMatch is focused on crafting products that honor tradition, embrace innovation and taste fantastic, whether it's marinating a traditional antipasti selection like a mushroom or artichoke in an exotic sauce like Harissa or spicy ginger or creating ready-to-make Mediterranean quinoa

salads with olives, antipasti and cheese to provide protein-packed sides and snacks.

"Our sourcing and product development teams are embracing consumer demand for the next generation of Mediterranean specialties," says Gross.

Where once food bars contained limited items like rotisserie chickens and subs, today's deli offers a wide variety of ethnic

dairy, fresh vegetables and antibiotic-free chicken in its soups — something the company has been doing since the beginning.

"We've never known any other way to operate," he says. "Now, what we're doing is 'on trend,' but our regular customers have always enjoyed and appreciated what we have done."

Healthy food options — be that vege-

Where once food bars contained limited items, today's deli offers a wide variety of ethnic options.

options, from ramen and pho to tikka masala and street tacos.

"Today's bars offer a space where shoppers can try a variety of different options with relatively low risk in settings that work best for them," says Jones. "It has moved from having just a convenient selection to a wide variety of great tasting, authentic meal solutions."

Society today has made food bars a necessity. People have hectic schedules, many Millennials don't want to cook, and everyone seems to always want to find the quick solution. But where once that meant multiple visits to fast food restaurants, today's consumers want healthy and hot meals. Sewall says that's the catalyst for the rise in food bar sales.

Responding to the trend, Blount Fine Foods uses fresh ingredients, including real

tarian, vegan or just better-for-you dishes, are really picking up steam, and that's something that Sewall notes is probably here to stay.

"The trend we're seeing is all about clean label food and healthier options," he says. "It can be decadent, it can be indulgent, but it has to have minimal ingredients and a clean label. People are much more educated about this now—especially the Millennial consumers."

Castella is constantly reviewing its offerings to ensure it is keeping ahead of industry trends.

"As a company, we are moving to a clean label, with a focus on non-GMO and organic products where possible," says Silva. "Consumers are becoming more educated and raising their awareness on preservatives and additives."

When it comes to container options and packaging innovations, Silva is seeing pouches, individually-wrapped product and re-sealable packages gaining popularity.

Marketing And Merchandising

As for getting the word out about food bars, the best thing retailers can do is remind people that they're there.

"If consumers don't shop that area of the store, they don't know about all of the

innovative items that they're bringing," says Jones. "So, they need to tout they have sushi made by highly trained chefs and talk about the authenticity of the ethnic items. Highlight the convenience factor and sample heavily to encourage trial."

While not every deli has room for a food bar in the store, it's definitely an area most stores, sans a food bar, should be considering. True, it requires equipment, labor and space some stores may not have, but

savvy retailers are finding ways to make it a reality, and successfully highlighting and marketing the hot bars to bring new customers into the stores.

"A food bar offers a beautiful layout of all this food out there, and there's really minimal areas to put signage and calorie counts, and that can be challenging, but a store needs to let its customers know what it has available," says Sewall. "As a food provider in a supermarket chain, we need to figure out a better way to get this information across, whether it's done by phone or signage. We make a concerted effort of providing materials to our retailers to call attention to our food."

Turnover is key for deli items to minimize shelf life concerns; therefore, merchandising the products properly, and ensuring the area is always presentable and clean, will make the deli department a destination, driving sales and product turnover.

"Cleanliness of the food bar and olive bars is a must for consumers shopping; they will shop with their eyes first," says Silva. "Although the labor costs are high to keep the maintenance up, it is recouped with the sales increase."

Cross Merchandising

The food bar is an ideal place for cross merchandising, and Silva notes it's one of the ways delis have been increasing sales in the supermarket.

"There is so much cross merchandising of food bar/olive bar products, it just depends on the products you would like to focus on," she says. "It could be as simple as having chicken wings in your food bar, with a promo on a Blue cheese dressing bottle. It could also be a recipe on how to use olives as a topping for a fish in the seafood department."

Gross says the Mediterranean olive and antipasti bar also offers endless cross merchandising opportunities.

"On the snacking and entertaining side, items like charcuterie, cheese, fig spread and crispbreads all work perfectly to provide the ultimate meze/tapas experience," he says. "On the cooking side, providing the shopper with pre-cooked pasta or grains, along with fresh greens, can allow them to make a healthy, protein-packed salad or side dish in minutes."

The key to a successful food bar is to make the food bars a destination, keeping them clean and utilizing cross merchandising opportunities and promotions to help drive sales.

DB



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The Art Of Artisan Salami

**New ways to celebrate
an ancient food**

BY HANNAH HOWARD

Salami has an ancient, rich and delicious tradition. The name 'salami' comes from the Italian *salare*, which means "to salt." For more than 2000 years, Greeks, Romans and Chinese preserved meats — usually pork — by curing and salting. One of the oldest salami recipes comes from the family of Roman statesman Cato the Elder. It stipulates to let pork dry in salt for five days, then repack it in more salt for another few days, hang it in fresh air for two days, smoke over hardwood, then rub with oil and vinegar. "Neither moths nor worms will attack it," the recipe promises.

People have been preserving their food since the beginning of time. These methods were essential to their survival. Yeast, bacteria and mold thrive in moist environments; drying out a piece of meat protects it from these dangerous microorganisms. Dehydrating meat significantly lengthens its life. By expelling water, food can last longer without growing harmful bacteria or degrading. Salami could last through brutal winters, famines and long voyages at sea.



As sophistication and civilizations advanced, so did methods for keeping foods by smoking, curing, drying, fermenting, salting and packing in fats and oils. What was a matter of necessity also became a means for adding wonderful and nuanced flavors. Smoking can impart excellent savory taste. When done right, drying and curing meat concentrates and develops flavors into something truly extraordinary. Curing creates an environment where beneficial “good” bacteria and mold thrive — these protect the meat and create its enticing fermented flavor. Like so many fermented foods, from yogurt to soy sauce, the living ecosystem makes for a pleasant funk.

Today, we have refrigerators and grocery stores. Preserving meats is no longer a necessity. We do it because we love the final product. Just think of the heavenly depth of a translucent piece of Prosciutto di Parma or Jamón Ibérico. These are some of the most exquisite culinary creations the world has to offer.

Prosciutto To Pepperoni

The tradition of making salami is, in some ways, a strikingly simple one. The only essential ingredients are meat, salt, air and time. Smoke, herbs and seasonings are extras. Although pork is classic, cured meats can be made with wild boar, beef,

venison, bison, duck and lamb. Salami can be mild and delicate or fiery and intense.

The possibilities are nearly endless. In Italy, salumi refers to cured meats from a whole cut of an animal, like a shoulder or thigh. Prosciutto falls into this category, as does pancetta, speck and bresaola. Of course, Italians do not have a monopoly on cured meat. French charcuterie or German delikatessen are renowned and sought after throughout the world and becoming more prevalent in delis.

When Americans think of salami (salame is the singular in Italian), we usually think of ground meats, studded with fat, encased, cured and dried — including soppressata, finocchiona and the all-American pepperoni (in Italy, the word simply means “pepper”). There are cooked salamis like bologna, and soft, spreadable types like ‘nduja. There is also salsiccia, or sausage, which is ground and encased. It is either raw or cooked slightly before serving. These are usually prepared on a grill or stovetop before serving.

Artisanal vs. Mass Produced

What makes artisan salami different from the regular version typically found in supermarket delis? Much of it comes down to scale — artisan salami means just that, craftsmen and women make it in small batches by hand — rather than by machines in factories.

Dave Brandow, director of corporate sales for Piller’s Fine Foods, based in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, describes its Black Kassel Salamis as authentically made in the old-world tradition of Central Europe, using select pork trim and carefully blended spices. “Our salamis are cold-smoked over select hardwoods for seven to 10 days, then dry-aged for a minimum of 28 days until they reach a mature flavor and texture profile,” adds Brandow. Although the company has grown since its inception in 1957, it uses the same natural aging, curing and hardwood smoking process that it has for generations. The company doesn’t use MSG or chemical additives.

St. Louis-based Volpi Foods has been making Italian-inspired cured meats in the American Midwest since 1902. Deanna Depke, a marketing associate at Volpi, explains, “All of our salame is cold-fermented and air-dried at mild temperatures over an extended period of time in order to develop flavor slowly. We do not use any shortcuts in our process, allowing for

a cleaner, more robust taste in each product we make.”

When comparing salami, retailers should look for clear visual definition between the deep red muscle and white fat. Traditional dry-cured salamis will have this line, while semi-cooked alternatives that take shortcuts in the production process will not. At the end of the day, the highest quality cured meats will taste the best. They’ll have a deep, meaty flavor, a satisfying texture and a depth that balances meat and salt with spices that taste fresh and bright.

Merchandising That Works

When it comes to salami, creating a destination for consumers can spark interest and excitement.

Salami is most often shelf stable, which makes for excellent cross merchandising opportunities. “Even though our items have relatively long shelf lives, we focus on providing solutions for our customers that will turn through their system and deliver predictable sources of revenue,” says Depke. Wine and cheese departments are natural homes for shippers or displays of cured meats. Piller’s Fine Foods has created a food and beverage pairing guide for each variety of its salami, which gives customers ideas for how best to enjoy its offerings.

“Whether it be our chopped pancetta next to the fresh pasta selections or our shelf-stable pre-sliced prosciutto next to cantaloupe in the summertime, our products are easy to pair across departments,” says Depke. “We provide consumers with guidance, from ideas to recipes.”

There are myriad tempting ways to enjoy artisanal salami. Pancetta or Genoa salami lends richness to pasta dishes, like carbonara or linguine with littleneck clams. Salami is a welcome addition to pizza, flatbread and frittatas. It’s an elegant, crowd-pleasing appetizer served with cheese, olives, marcona almonds and cornichons — or alone with crusty bread, crackers, breadsticks or homemade toasts rubbed with garlic and olive oil. A spreadable chutney or jam adds a lovely sweet component to the fatty, salty meat. And salami makes for a satisfying lunch sandwiched between two slices of toast. It’s a perfect pairing with Prosecco, crisp Albariño or fruity Beaujolais.

What’s New And Exciting

The Specialty Food Association reported the category of jerky and meat

Salami is most often shelf stable, which makes for excellent cross merchandising opportunities.



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snacks has grown by more than 16 percent in the last year. The good news is cured meat exports to the United States have grown since the 40-year ban of short-maturation products, such as salami, pancetta and coppa from Northern Italian areas, was removed in 2013.

Customers are looking for the convenience of pre-sliced products. “We have seen great success with our snacking and pre-sliced lines over the last year and will continue to drive growth in the grab-and-go market,” says Depke. “We will be expanding our flavor combinations and snacking formats in 2018 to better serve our consumers’ evolving tastes.”

Packaging that promises ease of opening and eating is increasingly effective.

Black Kassel has recently launched its most popular salami flavors, Old Forest Salami and Picante Salami, in two unique formats: Black Kassel Salami Whips and Salami Chips. These shelf-stable, snackable products have added portability into a line of salamis that values tradition and quality. “The initial response has sent our product development team to find more shelf-stable snack options, including new bold flavors,” says Brandow. “We’re also looking to offer more products that address consumers’ need for single portion and snacking products.” New single-serve and shareable package formats of Black Kassel salamis

Since American consumers care more than ever about healthy and natural foods, cured meats with no added nitrates and reduced sodium perform well.

paired with select European cheeses fulfill that goal.

Black Kassel salamis are known for signature shapes, including Old Forest Salami and Picante Salami (flower shapes), Mustard Seed Salami (square) and D’Amour Salami (heart shape), which stand out on charcuterie platters and catch consumers’ eyes and imaginations. The visual appeal of these products provides instant recognition and merchandising options in deli departments.

Since American consumers care more than ever about healthy and natural foods, cured meats with no added nitrates and reduced sodium perform well. Salami flavored with beloved Italian foods like Parmigiano Reggiano and black truffle attracts consumers with the idea of sophisticated tastes ready for happy hour.

“We will be expanding our flavor combinations and snacking formats in 2018 to better serve our consumers’ evolving tastes,” says Volpi’s Depke. “We have also worked directly with family farms throughout Missouri to introduce heritage breed options on our more classic offerings, like Traditional Prosciutto.”

Salami is perfect for the consumer who wants to know where their meat is coming from. Brands emphasize the use of grass-fed, sustainably-raised, local and heritage meat in their products. They boast their pork is free of added antibiotics and hormones, and there are no artificial ingredients included.

“Specialty foods will continue to be a differentiator amongst retailers. Providing unique assortments is no longer an option, but a necessity,” says Depke. **DB**





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MAKING

FOOD SAFETY

TOP PRIORITY

Going above and beyond to ensure proper practices are followed is key

BY CAROL BAREUTHER



Shoppers are drawn into the deli by the delicious assortment of foods. It's poor food safety standards that can send them right back out.

Case in point, one-third of adults have ended a supermarket visit due to store messiness, yet nearly four in 10 said they would spend more time in departments that implemented sound food safety procedures, according to the *High Stakes of Food Safety in Dairy, Deli, Bakery & Prepared Foods*, prepared by Phil Lempert Supermarket Guru and published by the Madison, WI-headquartered International Dairy-Deli-Bakery Association (IDDBA).

What's more, there's no fooling today's shoppers when it comes to food safety practices. In fact, when researchers of a study published last year in the *Journal of Food Protection* showed a series of photos taken at retail, these subjects recognized the risky practices more than half of the time. Foremost among these and specific to the deli were cross contamination during meat slicing (72 percent) and serving utensils in the deli case (62 percent), bare-handed contact of ready-to eat food (67 percent) and incorrect product storage

temperatures (51 percent).

"In recent years, many store environments have moved to open design layouts," says Chris Boyles, vice president of the Charlotte, NC-based The Steritech Institute, operated by Steritech, a provider of food safety and operational assessments to sectors, such as grocery stores and supermarkets. "In this way, many deli areas have now become a theater where consumers can watch what's happening in real time. But it also means they can see any errors or personal hygiene issues, such as staff neglecting to wear gloves. While this may not increase actual food safety risks, it does increase consumer visibility to risk."

The recently instituted Food Safety Modernization Act strengthens how food is grown and processed, thus increasing the likelihood of its safety when it arrives at the deli. Yet at the same time, the Atlanta-headquartered Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates 48 million Americans get sick, 128,000 are hospitalized and 3,000 die from foodborne diseases annually.

"For food retailers, ensuring the safety of all food products is the top priority," says Hilary Thesmar, chief food and

produce safety officer and senior vice president of food safety programs at the Food Marketing Institute (FMI), in Arlington, VA. "While a significant amount of energy and resources are allocated to constantly improving food safety practices, it is a rapidly changing industry.

Cross Contamination

One of the biggest challenges for the deli is the potential for cross contamination within the department when dealing with raw foods and ready-to-eat foods, according to the Refrigerated Foods Association, based in Marietta, GA.

Beyond this, *Listeria* (*Listeria monocytogenes*) is a big concern in the deli environment and can be spread through cross contamination. Aside from causing illness, *Listeria* can make headlines by forcing recalls.

"*Listeria* can grow in many areas of an operation. However, one deli-specific challenge due to the risk of meat products is the need to wash, rinse and sanitize meat slicers every four hours to prevent cross contamination. This cleaning process involves disassembling the machine

The background of the top half of the flyer is a photograph of the Columbus, Ohio skyline. The prominent Leaning Tower of Columbus is on the left. Other skyscrapers are visible in the background. A bridge is in the foreground. Overlaid on the center of the image is a dark blue oval containing the 'ReFRIGERATED FOODS' logo. The word 'ReFRIGERATED' is in a small, white, sans-serif font. 'FOODS' is in a large, white, serif font with a stylized 'R' that loops around it. Below 'FOODS' is the word 'ASSOCIATION' in a small, white, sans-serif font.

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and carefully cleaning the parts on a regular basis. It's one that must be carefully scheduled around busy times," according to Steritech's Boyles.

Deli slicer sanitation is crucial. In fact, half of nearly 300 retail delis sampled did not fully clean their slicers as often as the FDA recommends, according to a study published in 2016 by the CDC.

Newer, less timely yet still highly efficient methods of sanitizing deli slicers as well as choppers, mixers, band saws and other meat processing equipment, are on the horizon, according to Robert Powitz, forensic sanitarian and owner of R.W. Powitz & Associates, Inc., in Old Saybrook, CT. "One example is portable dry steam units. Steam is a chemical-free approach to cleaning that is effective against *Listeria*."

Time & Temperature

Several supermarkets have moved aggressively to differentiate themselves from their competitors and to address changing consumer expectations by expanding menu choices and complexity, according to Michael Ames, certified food safety professional and senior account manager of retail food services for the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF), based in Ann Arbor, MI. "This includes foods that pass several times through the temperature danger zone and foods that are involved in high-risk processes, such as sous-vide and vacuum packaging. High turnover in supermarket delis has always been a challenge, and the move to more sophisticated offerings makes this challenge even greater."

From delivery, through preparation,

until purchase, deli employees need to continuously monitor and document the temperature of food products, recommends FMI's Thesmar. "This includes checking temperatures of delivery vehicles and of products upon arrival, ensuring coolers and freezers are operating properly at the correct temperatures, foods prepared are cooked to the appropriate internal temperature and following preparation, ensuring prepared foods are marked with the proper date label prior to display."

However, monitoring food temperature no longer stops at the store-level.

"There's what I call the Amazon Factor, which has been a game-changer in the last year," says Tom Ford, the corporate vice president of food safety at Ecolab, Inc., headquartered in Minneapolis. "Many supermarkets have online ordering and delis are a part of this. This means the end point, especially in terms of temperature control, quality and safety, is no longer the shopper's cart but is at the point of consumption."

The Human Factor

Food workers' hands account for 89 percent of the estimated 48 million cases of foodborne illnesses that happen each year, according to the CDC. In response, the

IDDBA launched its Safe Food Matters! Focus on Handwashing campaign last year.

"Washing hands is one thing, doing it properly is another," says Eric Richard, the IDDBA's education coordinator. "Proper handwashing calls for washing with soap and water; lathering, rubbing and rinsing for a total of 20 seconds; and drying with an air dryer or disposable towel."

High-tech methods can assist with handwashing and other employee-related food safety practices. For example, Ecolab's Ford tells of the quick-serve restaurant chain where employees are reminded by a sound command at regular and frequent intervals to wash their hands. "Technology that can monitor something simple like handwashing, see who is doing it or not, in what department of the store and in what region a chain operates, can not only shape corrective actions, but also help with predictive modeling. No longer do you have to wait for the health inspector's visit to learn what's wrong, but instead use this type of big data to take action and formulate preventative measures. The food safety landscape is changing in many ways and technology will help lead the way forward." **DB**

CLEAN LABELS & FOOD SAFETY

Interest in 'clean labels' even though there is no legal definition, is big. In fact, nearly all (93 percent) of U.S. households have purchased a clean label product at grocery stores and half of all shopping trips now include the purchase of a clean label product, according to the report, *It's Clear: Transparency Is Winning in the U.S. Retail Market*, released by the New York-headquartered Nielsen Co. in August 2017. Since one of the key connotations for clean labels is it's free from artificial preservatives, what does this mean to the safety of a food when preservatives have been added in the first place to prevent bacterial growth and prolong shelf life? It means food manufacturers are seeking out more recognizable ingredients that can do the same job and still be considered clean label.

"Food manufacturers are not only concerned with ingredients that will appear within their ingredient deck, they are also looking for ways to increase their presence in the market and differentiate themselves," says Courtney Schwartz, senior marketing communications manager for global ingredient company, Kemin Industries, Inc., based in Des Moines, IA. "To do this, they are increasing the number of claims they are making on the front of the package – nitrate, nitrite free, preservative free, natural, organic and non-GMO, to name a few. As a result, we have seen a significant increase in the use of buffered vinegar in deli meats and deli salads."

As Americans continue to seek healthier fare, the clean label movement will evolve in delis. Being prepared is key. **DB**

PACKAGING GETS INNOVATIVE

Packaging is evolving to meet the growing demands of consumers

BY KEITH LORIA

A journey through supermarket delis today paints a picture all department heads should pay attention to. What it reveals is the most important trends in packaging for takeout products, prepared food and other items including convenient grab-and-go options, snack-sized packaging and home meal replacement packaging solutions.

"Consumers want freshly-prepared grab-and-go food that can easily replace a meal they would prepare at home and are also looking for compartmental packaging and portion control for quick and convenient snacks between meals," says Ben Brummerhop, sales manager for Placon, based in Madison, WI.

The most important qualities in deli packaging continue to be clarity, safety, protection and sustainability.

"Clarity continues to be the most important design element in packaging deli foods," says Brummerhop. "Product visibility highlights the appearance of the food to lead the consumer to a purchase. People purchase with their eyes. A premium-looking container conveys a high-quality food product is inside the container. Consumers can visually see the product, verify the freshness and how it has been handled and cared for throughout the prepping process."

Consumers also expect protection from packaging, including properties like secure seals, tight fitting lids and a leak-resistant design, ensuring no messes or spills during handling. Tamper-resistant packaging also increases shelf-life, keeping the product safe and fresh for longer.

Laura Murphy, vice president of sales and marketing for Direct Pack Inc., headquartered in Bloomfield, NJ, says



shoppers are looking for smaller packaging when in the deli as well as smaller portion control so they can have more options to buy multiple items.

"So, instead of getting a side of coleslaw for 6 ounces, they are looking more for 3 ounces and then they can add something else," she says.

Over the last year, the company has been seeing an increase in custom packaging orders that relate to these trends.

"We're developing packaging that's consumer friendly — larger tabs to open things easier, improved stackability so people can maximize their space in refrigeration and a bowl that has something of an angle that is easier for the consumer to pick up and look at, so it showcases better in the deli."

What's New

Marilyn Stapleton, director of marketing for Anchor Packaging, Inc., based in Ballwin, MO, has recently introduced MicroRaves black bases from 12 to 32 ounces with two compartments, plus clear, anti-fog lids for hot or cold displays.

"These ergonomically-designed bases in two footprints with interchangeable lids are leak-resistant and offer table-ready presentations that keep food looking fresh and appealing to drive impulse sales," she says. "Cold, no-fog lids are also available in the

Gourmet Classics line of hinged containers with tear-away, clear lids for salads and sides in 6-, 7.5- and 9-inch sizes."

Additionally, the company's Safe Pinch tamper-evident hinged packages with consumer preferred intuitive one-step opening design protects the retailer, as the large separation of the hinge signals tampering, enabling the staff to remove these packages.

"The wide, clear panels increase food visibility, drive impulse sales and provide leak-resistance that maintains freshness," says Stapleton. "They are available in a sandwich wedge and rectangles from 8 to 32 ounces. Additional items in square and round hinged designs will be available in early 2018."

Brummerhop notes Placon has always focused on a full line of standard food pack-

aging solutions for family serving, catering and round deli containers.

"Recently, our focus has shifted to address the newest trends and innovations in the deli market. We've diversified our offerings to meet the needs of the grab-and-go and freshly prepared foods market," he says. "We now focus on single serve product line offerings to provide better options for freshly-prepared foods for the individual on the go."

Specifically, the company's Fresh 'N Clear GoCubes and Crystal Seal reFresh and Tamper Evident packaging solutions offer merchandising options for on-the go convenience and translate successfully in grab-and-go outlets.

"The more popular items include salads with toppings, freshly-cut fruit and vegetables, various entrées, fresh-prepared meals, dry-packed foods, such as nuts, snack mixes and candy, etc.," says Brummerhop. "Our food packaging containers give the merchandiser or chef unlimited options to create exciting, delicious and nourishing snacks, light fare or hearty meals for consumers and families with time-crunched schedules."

Placon has also focused on adding multi-compartment units to provide additional versatility for multiple kinds and combinations of food for portion control.

"Packaging with multiple compartments ensures ingredients are safely kept separate with consistent portion sizing, separating and highlighting specific ingredients while keeping food looking better and tasting fresher for longer," says Brummerhop. "In addition, Placon has added tamper-evident options to provide further food safety and additional security."

In spring 2017, Placon launched a new hot food product line, HomeFresh Entrée. The new containers, made from microwave-friendly polypropylene, easily go from the supermarket deli to the kitchen table without re-plating.

Due to growth in the snack-sized cat-

"We've diversified our offerings to meet the needs of the grab-and-go and freshly prepared foods market."

— Ben Brummerhop, sales manager for Placon



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egory, Placon will be launching a new snack-sized packaging line to its stock food offerings in spring 2018. The new packaging will include four different configurations and ounce capacities for easy customization. This provides supermarket delis with even more options.

Material Matters

Anchor Packaging uses only polypropylene (PP) and polyethylene terephthalate (PETE) for its packaging products.

Stapleton explains PP offers high-temperature performance to 230 degrees F in the microwave, in a hot display or under heat lamps, and the material is durable, cut-resistant and dishwasher-safe as well as consumer reusable multiple times and eligible for curbside recycling.

"All new PP products have a natural mineral additive to reduce petroleum-based resin by 40 percent, while maintaining all of the performance characteristics," she says.

Meanwhile, crystal-clear PETE is used in all cold food applications to offer maximum food visibility and durable packages. All products Anchor manufactures contain a minimum of 10 percent FDA-approved post-consumer recycled content and are eligible for curbside recycling.

The materials Placon utilizes most often include PET and polypropylene as Brummerhop explains PET and rPET provide the exceptional clarity needed for today's supermarket deli packaging solutions, while the polypropylene is microwavable and useful to the end user.

Direct Pack Inc. uses recycled plastic and works with the state of California to

use recycled water bottles for the packaging, and on every package, it lists the amount of water bottles used to create it. For example, an 8x8 container would use four 16-ounce water bottles.

Sustainability Is Important

Today's customers care more than ever about sustainability — especially an increasing Millennial shopping base.

"Consumers want to be able to choose their food in a package that maintains freshness, does not leak or open during transit, can be heated in the microwave and is used to store leftovers," says Stapleton. "Then they want to reuse the package, place it in the dishwasher and recycle it curbside to avoid going to a landfill. While some markets prefer paper or molded fiber, these products do not provide the food protection or display features found in plastic."

As consumers continue to gain a better understanding of recyclability and sustainability, environmentally-conscious packaging continues to be a top priority for today's shoppers.

"Consumers would prefer to buy food in earth-conscious packaging that can be reused for other purposes and eventually recycled," says Brummerhop. "They think it is their social responsibility to minimize waste and make a difference through their purchasing decisions."

Placon's food containers geared for deli use are made with its EcoStar-branded, FDA-approved, food grade recycled PET material, which is recycled PET made from curbside plastic bottles and thermoforms that otherwise would have ended up in a

landfill. After use, the food containers are 100 percent recyclable.

Murphy says paper materials don't often do well in the deli because many of the products have liquid bases, so rigid plastics are recommended. Customers appreciate the sustainability aspects.

Packaging For Chicken

Stapleton says the highest volume item in the deli is chicken, and each chain decides size and quality of whole rotisserie birds, so the company's Nature's Best roasters have expanded to allow different sizes of birds but also other items, such as pork roast and turkey for delis.

"The stores that want to highlight their free-range or specialty birds can obtain a natural white base to differentiate these from the traditional black base," she says. "Both have the same clear, anti-fog, leak-resistant lids. Keeping the birds visible and fresh drives impulse sales."

Since fried chicken is also a supermarket deli favorite, Anchor Packaging's Crisp Food Technologies containers allow the retailer to pack up to eight pieces in a grab-and-go display.

"These containers use a unique, patented cross-flow ventilation design to relieve moisture and condensation, while maintaining product temperature," says Stapleton. "Through-the-closure ventilation, along with raised airflow channels in the base of the container, combined with venting in the anti-fog lid, ensures fried foods remain crispy."

Retailers will periodically try to reduce supply costs by using less expensive packages, such as bags; however, they eventually see sales decline because performance and food quality are not as good without rigid packages.

"To pass on savings to our customers, Anchor Packaging has invested millions of dollars in new equipment and tooling, replacing older designs with new technology and updated features and benefits," says Stapleton.

Deli packaging is elevating the profile of food offerings through quality, variety, customization and meal inspiration to meet consumer needs. Consumers are now turning to supermarket delis to generate ideas to feed themselves and their families. Delis now offer on-trend foods through flavors, ingredients and personalization. Packaging helps to elevate these offerings and allows delis to compete with local restaurants and other foodservice options.

DB

The Many *Artisanal American* Cheese Options

**As deli selections become more refined,
upscale American offerings are on the rise**

HANNAH HOWARD

Cheese has been part of humanity's diet since before written history. By the time the Pilgrims set sail for the New World in 1620, cheese had become ubiquitous in Europe. The sailors even packed cheese on the Mayflower for their trip across the Atlantic.

In 1851, America's first cheese factory was built in New York. By 1880, 4,000 dairy factories produced about 216 million pounds of cheese each year. In the early 1900's, our nation was comprised of many diversified family farms. But large-scale farming and industrial production

rose steadily throughout the following century. As Americans embraced convenience and standardization in food, we were introduced to some of the mass-produced cheese products we still know well — Polly-O string cheese, Kraft Singles and even Cheese Whiz.

But in the last few decades, we've seen another big shift. With books like *Fast Food Nation* and *Omnivore's Dilemma*, consumers began to care more about where their food comes from. The rise of The Food Network and foodie-ism means Americans are more tuned in to food trends and culinary mastery than ever before. "Local"

and "sustainable" are more than buzz words, they're values. Organic food, clean food and real food matter to shoppers. It's in this welcoming, increasingly discerning and food-attuned environment that artisanal American cheese is seeing a huge ascent in production and popularity.

More And Better Than Ever

The Denver-based American Cheese Society (ACS) reported there were 900 artisan, farmstead and specialty cheese-makers in the United States in 2016, more than double the number only 10 years before. According to *The Atlantic*, sales in





the natural and specialty cheese markets are expected to reach a whopping \$19 billion in the next year.

"American cheesemakers are not bound to traditions, limited to recipes strictly defined by the AOC, etc.," says Max McCalman, Maître Fromager and author of "Mastering Cheese". That freedom to innovate has resulted in some extraordinary cheese. A lack of set regulations "frees the American cheese producers to develop new recipes and create new and unique

cheeses," explains McCalman. "This is where the excitement is occurring in the cheese world today, right here within our American shores."

Goat cheese has been prevalent for makers and popular with consumers — the ACS reported 44 percent of artisan cheesemakers used goat milk to craft their cheeses. Brands like Vermont Creamery, Chavrie, Coach Farm, Cypress Grove and Vermont Butter and Cheese Co. are just some examples of these providers.

Cheddar is incredibly celebrated, too. "American cheeses are equal or above many of the European inspirations they came from. Their quality has led to success for the entire industry," says Kelly Giller, herd manager at Vermont Farmstead Cheese Co., located in Windsor.

There are many more artisan American cheeses than can possibly be listed here. There is the nutty, smooth Pleasant Ridge Reserve from Uplands Cheese Co. in Dodgeville, WI. Rogue Valley Creamery's Smokey Blue, made in Oregon and cold smoked for 16 hours over local hazelnut shells, has a unique and distinctive flavor. The clothbound Cheddars aged at the Greensboro Bend, VT-based Cellars at Jasper Hill rival the renown wheels from England. Cowgirl Creamery's Red Hawk, made in picturesque Point Reyes, CA, is pungent and meaty under its burnished washed rind. Kunik, a buttery triple creme from Nettle Meadow in New York's Adirondacks, is crafted from 75 percent goat milk and 25 percent Jersey cow cream. And this is just the very tip of the iceberg.

Challenges For Small Cheesemakers

Consider Bardwell Farm, 300 acres nestled in the rolling hills of Vermont's Champlain Valley, was the first cheese-making co-op in Vermont, founded in 1864 by Consider Stebbins Bardwell. A century later, Angela Miller and Russell Glover revived the farm and started making cheese with milk from their own herd of Oberhasli goats and cow's milk from two





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Consider Bardwell has won plenty of awards and acclaim for its handmade cheese made from the fresh milk of their grass-fed herds. The challenges they face are typical of small cheesemakers in a massive marketplace. “Most cheeses are limited in production,” explains Miller. “Consider Bardwell is mid-level. We make about 120,000 pounds. We never have an unlimited supply of our cheeses, so it is a challenge for someone as small as us to get into a bigger chain of grocery stores.”

Consider Bardwell’s cheeses, including Dorset, Pawlet and Rupert, are available in specialty shops like Murray’s Cheese, at farmers markets throughout the Northeast, and at regional Whole Foods markets. Besides supply, Miller details other challenges to making its cheeses available for wider national distribution. “We don’t wrap in plastic,” she says. “Many times, people who go into supermarket delis need to Cryovac.”

Another roadblock is that larger stores and chains look for consistency in a product — they expect August’s wheels to resemble February’s cheese. “In the summer, our animals are on pasture, and in

winter, they’re eating dry hay,” notes Miller. These dietary differences reflect in the milk and then ultimately in the cheese. Cheese aficionados may appreciate the subtle differences in flavor and texture throughout the seasons (“we think it’s wonderful,” exclaims Miller), while other consumers may be disappointed that a product is not exactly what they had expected.

Price is yet another major hurdle. Producing small-batch cheese is often a staggeringly expensive undertaking, so the wheels do not come cheap. “Price is the biggest impediment,” according to Miller. “People don’t go to the grocery store to spend \$26 a pound on cheese” which is a completely normal retail cost for an arti-

Cheesemakers are usually thrilled to do tastings and events to get the word out about their cheeses.

san selection. The best solution for this is to educate the customer. When they understand the time, care, hard work and high quality they are paying for, the value becomes clear.”

Tell The Story

There are so many superb artisanal cheeses, but oftentimes their stories are really what set them apart. From family farms, quirky cheesemakers, underground cellars and cute animals — cheeses capture the imagination. Giller advises that stores “invest in the people to tell the story, and help customers understand the products.”

When it comes to shelf life, “aged cheeses can last just as long or longer as big brands as long as they are stored properly,” explains Giller.

Cheesemakers are usually thrilled to do tastings and events to get the word out about their cheeses. “Through social media, farm visits and demos, we are able to tell the story of our cheese, from the cows milked that day to the cheesemakers’ long days in the creamery,” says Giller.

Small cheese companies can be extremely creative with collaborations. Vermont Farmstead Cheese Co. has worked with 30 breweries throughout the country to make their signature Alehouse Cheddar with curds that are soaked in beer. “We can then create custom cheeses for breweries,” says Giller. “We join forces with many local companies to create new and exciting lines.”

Along with the compelling stories, tastes, demos and cross merchandising are successful tools in introducing customers to new cheeses. Pairings with fresh bread, crackers, fresh and dried fruit, jam and chutney, cured meats, olives and nuts give shoppers welcome ideas for how to serve and enjoy these cheeses. A few bites of something truly unique and delicious can be memorable and persuasive. When in doubt, let the cheese tell the story. **DB**



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Chicken wings flying high with pork ribs in hot pursuit

BY BOB JOHNSON

On the weekend of the Super Bowl alone, Americans consume 1.35 billion chicken wings, enough that they would circle the earth three times if laid end to end.

This is big business, and only getting larger, as deli chicken wings have reached \$590 million, according to National Chicken Council statistics, and the number of restaurants with “wings” in the name has gone up 18 percent just since 2014.

Deli prepared chicken wings were up 5.6 percent, to nearly \$600 million, in the 52 weeks ending this past November 25, according to Nielsen. Chicken wing sales in the meat department climbed 4.6 percent over the same period, to reach more than \$880 million.

But ribs are trending, too, and pork is

not going away any time soon.

“With pork production continuing to increase, ribs will be in good supply and offer more competition to wings,” says Tom Super, senior vice president of communications for the National Chicken Council, Washington, D.C.

The question for the deli is whether to highlight ribs or wings, and the answer, of course, is both.

There are a growing number of consumers interested in trying new and interesting flavors, but ribs and wings programs both begin with doing traditional standards well.

“Buffalo wings are the main line, always have Buffalo wings, but have a hot and a not-so-hot option,” says Ken Meyers, president of Panorama Foods, Braintree, MA. “It is a function of heat – I would have a

mild and a hot Buffalo wing and rotate through the others to see what sticks with my customers.”

Panorama Foods produces sauces, crackers, biscuits and soups.

“I haven’t seen any flavors I would call really new,” says Meyers. “The standards are Buffalo, teriyaki, everybody has played around with sriracha the last few years, and we have a garlic Parmesan that has become popular.”

There are also traditional standards that define the category when it comes to ribs.

“Two ribs are standard – baby back and St. Louis are what people are looking for,” says Zach Shepard, chef for culinary innovation at Sugar Creek Packing, Cincinnati. “They are increasing in sales; pork is the number one protein in the world.”

Sugar Creek Packing specializes in protein delivered raw, fully cooked, as appetizers and in a sous vide format.

"We only sell a little ribs with the traditional barbecue sauce on it, so I don't think I'm the expert," says Craig Wood, vice president of Brookwood Farms, Siler City, NC. "I read there are a number of different sauces out there, but I think the traditional lends itself to selling more ribs."

Three-fourths of delis offer pre packaged or grab-and-go ribs, according to *What's in Store 2017*, while only 11 percent do not offer ribs.

"Using ingredients like wheat protein, wheat gluten and beets, plant butchers have concocted alternatives to popular meat dishes, such as barbecue ribs, bacon, pot roast, steaks and pastrami," accord-

probably more than any other chicken cut," says Super. "Wing purveyors should be pushing the edge to find the next option for their products."

In order to avoid confusion within the category, a flavor of the week or month can be displayed next to the standards.

"For variety you can rotate the other flavors," says Panorama Foods' Meyers. "We offer five flavors of wings. I think a deli program should offer three flavors. If you have too many, you can have waste. If you have too few, you can lose some sales."

If you have three flavors of wings, according to Meyers, two could be mild and hot Buffalo and the third alternating.

Ribs, too, can take many forms by using any one of a number of popular sauces.

"With ribs you can add a sauce to make

dressing, according to a new National Chicken Council poll conducted online in January 2017 by Harris Poll," according to Super. "The survey asked which dipping sauces or snacks chicken wing eaters typically like to eat with their wings. They could choose more than one option."

Buffalo or hot sauce and barbecue came close to ranch, followed by honey mustard, Blue cheese, teriyaki and sriracha.

One producer says politics among supermarket departments are such that deli managers are not interested in helping promote center of the store products, which can limit cross merchandising.

But even within the deli there are promotion opportunities to encourage larger volume frequent fliers.

"Catering can set a minimum dollar threshold to receive a bonus of extras," says Super. "You can have rewards programs — after seven caterings of minimum amount, the eighth is half-price."

The prevalence of larger chickens may be having the benefit of increasing opportunities to offer meal deals that include the plumper wings.

"Boneless wings provide a broader reach and help make a bundle affordable," says Super. "Wing size has been increasing."

Location of the display within the deli can greatly influence sales of ribs and wings and their ability to prompt secondary sales.

"You can retail ribs hot or cold," says Shepard. "You can put them out like Kroger or Costco do with rotisserie chicken, or you can also have them refrigerated or frozen."

Wings can be displayed in a number of places, but some products hold up better than others under the heat.

"With wings, if you have a bone in and a boneless, you can add sauce," says Shepard. "Wings are prominent in both the cold case or hot. Bone in do a little better in the hot case because they hold moisture."

According to the Harris survey, consumers prefer bone in wings over boneless 60 to 40 percent.

Wherever they are displayed, ribs and wings both deserve a little constant attention to make sure they look inviting, rather than messy or dry.

"The prepared foods are stuck behind the cold case unless you've got pre-packed tubs of wings," says Meyers. "Pre-packs sitting out in the cold case are the most visible. The most appealing trays should be turned periodically, and be kept looking fresh and moist."

DB

Wings can be displayed in a number of places, but some products hold up better than others under the heat.

ing to the International Dairy Deli Bakery Association's *What's In Store 2017*.

More than 80 percent of retail delis offer pre packaged or grab-and-go wings or tenders, according to *What's In Store 2017*, and nearly 40 percent make them available in the service deli.

Only 15 percent of delis do not offer wings or tenders, according to the FMI/Technomic statistics cited in *What's In Store 2017*, as wings are in the top three prepared chicken products in the deli.

"At \$881 million, chicken wings are the third highest grossing cut in the fresh meat chicken category, according to Nielsen FreshFacts, which is up 4.6 percent from a year ago," says National Chicken Council's Super. "The two highest grossing cuts were chicken breasts and chicken thighs, respectively. Although rotisserie chicken rules the roost in the deli prepared chicken category, wings came in a strong third at \$590 million, up 5.6 percent from a year ago, according to the same data. Fried chicken was number two."

In addition to the traditional flavors, there is also room to generate interest by offering something a little different.

"Consumers are receptive to more exotic flavors and seasonings for wings,

Kansas City, Texas, Memphis or Carolina versions," says Shepard.

Multiply The Ring

While the cash value of wings and ribs sold in the deli are enough to warrant attention, they can also generate significant other sales.

"Your sauce is your best merchandising opportunity," says Shepard. "Or you can offer a dollar off on a side or salad."

Sauce is a good candidate for cross merchandising promotions with both ribs and wings programs.

"If you sell an extra bottle of sauce, Blue cheese or ranch dressing, and the deli can get credit for it, the manager would be all over it," says Meyers. "If a store has dressings and sauces with their own label, there are great opportunities to cross merchandise in the deli. If you are producing vegetable platters, there is a great opportunity to promote wings."

If you are selling dressings or sauces next to the wings, consumer surveys indicate it is important to include ranch among the selections.

"More than half, 59 percent, of U.S. adults who eat chicken wings say they typically like to eat their wings with ranch

UNTAPPED OPPORTUNITY



By
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The service counter at your local supermarket deli has gone through a lot of changes over the last couple of decades. Once limited to a narrow selection of sliced lunchmeats and cheeses, it has expanded its offerings considerably, giving customers plenty of choice when it comes to meal planning and convenience. Once you realize, however, that customers are idly standing by while their deli orders are being processed, it becomes apparent there are untapped opportunities to increase the quality and impact of their deli-based experience.

It certainly wouldn't hurt to showcase products that would be considered "go-withs" to any standard purchase.

After all, the notion of on-selling, the practice of offering an additional item to go along with the initial order, is a tried-and-true sales tool. McDonalds consumers are asked, "Would you like fries with that?" and postal employees inquire, "Do you need extra stamps today?" Even in the deli department, the common refrain to any sliced meat purchase has become "Would you like cheese with that?"

While helpful, these questions are limited in impact, do not prompt conversations about meal planning, fail to raise awareness of new products, and lack the sincerity necessary to build meaningful relationships.

When asked about untapped opportunity, Jason Burke, founder and chief executive of The New Primal states, "In today's go, go, go world, it's important for retailers to use every bit of real estate available to add incremental sales."

Tim Urban, chief commercial officer for St. Louis-based Volpi Foods, adds another perspective, "Retailing relies on experiential marketing. So, what is the experience you are providing at the deli counter? It's important to know what the consumers are getting whenever they visit."

If you look around, there tends to be a fair amount of wasted space on counter tops, in front of display cases and on walls behind the serving area. Whether this space is used for cross merchandising of regularly stocked items from other sections of the store, informative and compelling point of sale displays that champion emerging trends and lifestyle preferences, or specially-ordered impulse items, why not give your customer as many touch points as possible to engage and delight their senses. After all, each of these could increase the percentage of sales attributed to the deli department.

These days, and with so many producers offering single serve and snack sized options, whether it's meat snacks, hard boiled eggs, hummus, nutritionally-dense plant-based snacks or cheese sticks, there are lots of products that could be offered as "go-withs" or "something for later" that would display quite nicely in and around the service counter and enhance shopper engagement.

There's no doubt consumers are looking for "better for you" products, cleaner ingredients lists and significantly more healthful food experiences. According to Eric Le, who handles marketing at Austin, TX-based EPIC, "Lots of folks are hoping to find a salty snack to accompany sandwiches, but they want better options than the typical bag of chips or pretzels."

If you want to introduce new ideas and are willing to engage with your customers, there are lots of producers making snack-sized and single-serve portions that would pair well with traditional deli offerings. Whether it's somewhat esoteric meat snacks made with wild boar, grass-fed venison or wild-caught salmon from EPIC, bite-sized salami morsels (Salaminis) from Olli Salumeria, Volpi Foods' Roltini Singles (rolled meat and cheese combos) or New Primal's meat snacks formulated especially for children, there's plenty of choice among producers who cater to healthier lifestyles.

Sadly, many of these ideas are considered risky on the part of supermarkets. That being said, and according to a recent article in *Chain Store Age*, "More than half of shoppers (56 percent) said if grocers don't enter the modern age, people will look for other ways to get their food."

In addition, and according to Pete Lescoe — chief executive at Plant Snacks, "Pioneering happens with the smaller stores that have to differentiate themselves by selling items that can't be found elsewhere.

But clearly mainstream supermarkets are participating in new food and ingredient trends much faster today than they did five years ago."

For savvy retailers, recognizing that consumers are changing their shopping habits, straying away from supermarkets that cannot, or will not, keep up with market dynamics is essential.

The good news is that, when you provide unique and engaging experiences at the deli counter, these encounters provoke customer engagement, increase brand loyalty and influence supermarket preference.

DB

Chewys' Colorful History



Ahmad Paksima, the founder of San Diego-based Chewy's Rugulach and Hamantashen, learned to make his rugulach from a Long Island, NY Polish-Jewish baker.

Born in Bombay, India, to a royal Indian Moslem family, Paksima was one of 14 siblings. His father, who influenced his career, operated one of India's first coffeehouses, then moved to Pakistan and opened a chocolate factory. He eventually landed in Iran, starting a bakery and restaurant.

Paksima first came to America in 1962, where he met his wife and received a sociology degree at Idaho State University. He then moved back to Iran, worked with the National Iranian Oil Co., then joined his brothers in their international shipping business.

When the shah was deposed and the shipping business ended, Paksima and his brothers were literally chased out of the country, eventually landing back in America, where he took over a bakery his brothers had acquired.

Paksima sought to perfect the rugulach recipe passed down from the bakery's Polish-Jewish baker Eddie. He then opened a modest cinnamon roll shop in San Diego called Chewys, where his rugulach became renown.

His sister, brothers, daughters, sons and nieces all joined the company to help Paksima keep up with orders, which were coming in as fast as he could produce the pastries.

Today, Chewys ships more than 1,000 pounds of rugulach weekly all over the country. From apricot-currant to boysenberry, from chocolate to cinnamon-walnut, the flavors run the gamut, keeping pace with consumer demand.

The company does not compromise when it comes to the quality. There is nothing artificial in its products: no fillers, additives, artificial flavors or colors or GMO products, and its lines are OU certified. Product is still made the old school way, by hand with pure ingredients. Because the company invests its profits right back into the company, the rugulach tastes the same today as it did 33 years ago.

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