DELI BUSINESS

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COVER STORY 22

This growing segment is being driven by new regulations centered on sustainability

COMMENTARIES

<u> </u>
EDITOR'S NOTES
The Deli Dilemma8
PUBLISHER'S INSIGHTS
The Plant-based Deli10
IN EVERY ISSUE
IN EVERY ISSUE DELI WATCH



FEATURE

Gearing Up for Back to School 12
Supermarket delis can load up on appropriate items
to take advantage of back to school shoppers

MERCHANDISING REVIEW

Grab & Go Driving Visible Change28 at the Deli Counter

Convenience, quality and portability are what matter in today's grab and go sections

Food Bars: The Gateway to the Deli......32
The rewards extend to the entire supermarket

PROCUREMENT

Deli Dinners Put the Ring35 in Thanksgiving

This holiday meal provides the opportunity to up the ante for deli prepared food programs



CHEESE CORNER

It's the Right Climate for 39 British Crumblies

A cheese distinguished by its unique texture and taste variations

DELI MEAT

A Guide to Prosciutto: 45 The Cured Pork Delicacy

As today's delis continue diversifying, upscale meats like prosciutto provide a point of differentiation.



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Slow Foods' Cheese Event Is One Of A Kind

Every two years, Cheese takes over the town of Bra, in northwest Italy's Piedmont as well as nearby Pollenzo. This year, the event will be held Sept. 20-23. Here are the components of Cheese 2019:

- The Dairy Chain is an interactive area dedicated to playing and learning. Here, visitors can discover the differences between natural cheeses and industrial productions.
- One of the most visited sections of Cheese, the Presidia Street, hosts producers who are part of the Slow Food network to protect traditional techniques, native breeds, artisanal products and rural landscapes. A few steps away, the CRB Auditorium hosts the Natural is Possible conferences on the



CHEESE CORNER

Feta

Crackers

production of cheese, charcuterie and bread without artificial ferments.

- The last section of Via Marconi contains a new area for 2019, dedicated to producers of natural bread and charcuterie. The debate around naturalness goes beyond dairy products, and Slow Food champions producers and products that represent artisanship and dedication to traditional crafts.
- In Piazzetta Valfrè di Bonzo, the space is dedicated to small-scale and family-run
 companies that produce cheeses without selected starter cultures or with self-produced starters. The Pizza, Bread and Pastry Forge returns, organized in partnership
 with Agugiaro & Figna Molini, dedicated to pizzaioli, pastry chefs and bakers. The
 Scuole Maschili Courtyard also hosts some of the Street Kitchens with gastronomic
 offerings, the Regional Kiosks and the Free Butter House, in partnership with Inalpi.
- The Great Hall of Cheese includes over 100 foreign cheeses from the USA, France, Spain, Portugal, the UK, Ireland and other countries, including cheeses from Slow Food Presidia. Cheese can be paired with more than 600 wine labels available in the Enoteca, as selected by the Wine Bank in Pollenzo and the sommeliers of Fisar.
- Pollenzo is the other main hub of Cheese 2019. Here, Taste Workshops dedicated to pairing cheese and wine are held at the Wine Bank, and the Dinner Dates are held in the Ristorante Garden of the Albergo dell'Agenzia and at the Academic Tables.

COMING NEXT IN OCT/NOV ISSUE

COVER STORY

Specialty Cheese

FEATURE

Hummus Snacks

MERCHANDISING REVIEWS

Fried Chicken Vegetarian

PROCUREMENT STRATEGIES

Cooking Oils

DELI MEATS

Charcuterie Jambon de Bayonne

PREPARED FOODS

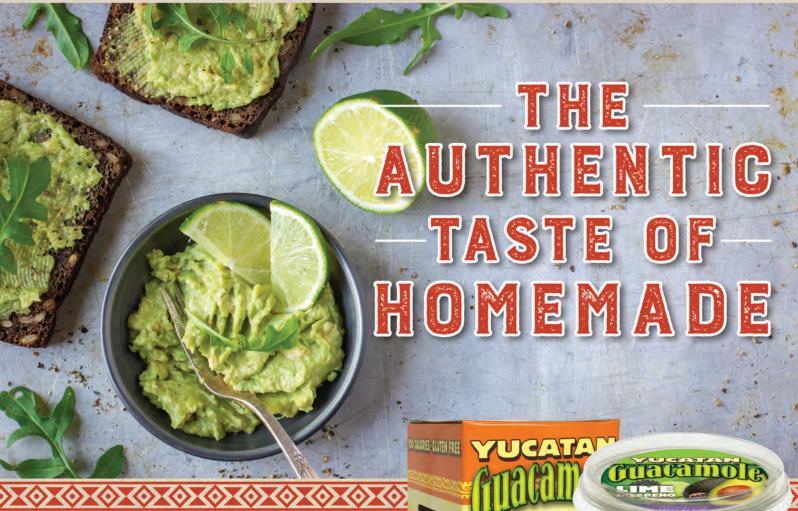
Soup

COMING IN DEC/JAN

DELI BUSINESS will look at Going Green

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ANNOUNCEMENTS



LACTALIS ACQUIRES EHRMANN DAIRY

Group, Lactalis Buffalo. NY, has acquired Ehrmann Commonwealth Dairy, the U.S. yogurt business of Ehrmann AG. the Bavaria, Germany-based dairy company. Established in 2009. Ehrmann Commonwealth Dairy has two manufacturing facilities that employ 250 people in Brattleboro, VT and Casa Grande, AZ and manufactures and distributes vogurt and other dairy products under the Green Mountain Creamery and Liebe brands

www.lactalis.fr/en/



CA MILK ADVISORY ELECTS OFFICERS

The California Milk Advisory Board, Tracy, CA has elected its 2019 officers. These include treasurer David Vander Schaaf of Stockton; member-at-large Renae DeJager of Chowchilla; member-at-large Megan Silva of Escalon; chairman Josh Zonneveld of Laton; secretary Essie Bootsma of Lakeview; member-at-large Kirsten Areias of Los Banos; and vice chairman, Tony Louters of Merced.

www.realcaliforniamilk.com



CIBAO CELEBRATES 50 YEARS

Cibao Meat Products Inc., The Bronx, NY, has announced it is celebrating its 50th year in business. Since 1969, the company has been manufacturing Hispanicstyle meat products. Formerly Cima Meat, it was founded with Salami Campesino, which was the beginning of its sausage products. Founder Siegfried Vieluf began the business in Washington Heights, NY. The Tradition of Quality is not only its slogan, but also its goal.

www.cibaomeat.com



BEAVERTON FOODS WINS AT MUSTARD COMPETITION

Beaverton Foods, Hillsboro, OR, won six awards at the 24th annual World-Wide Mustard Competition. Gold winners included Beaver Brand Chinese Hot Mustard for Classic Hot: Inglehoffer Ghost Pepper Mustard for Pepper Hot and Inglehoffer Horseradish Wasabi Horseradish Wasabi. Taking the bronze was Inglehoffer Original Stone Ground and Sweet Hot as well as Beaver Brand Cranberry mustards

www.beavertonfoods.com

NUESKE'S WINS WISCONSIN FAMILY BUSINESS OF THE YEAR AWARD

Nueske's Applewood Smoked Meats, Wittenberg, WI, has earned the Wisconsin Family Business Special Award, titled "The Smokin' Success Award". Its commitment to the quality of its product and to its community are part of its core values. The third-generation family-owned and operated smokehouse makes Applewood Smoked Bacon and a variety of smoked hams, poultry, sausages and other smoked meats

www.nueskes.com



POINT REYES NAMED SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

Point Reyes Farmstead Cheese Co., San Francisco, has been named 2019 Small Business of the Year by the San Francisco District Office of the U.S. Small Business Administration. Its new production, distribution and warehouse facility in Petaluma represents the realization of a three-year-goal to expand beyond the dairy farm in Point Reyes, in order to make and sell more hand-crafted, artisan cheese, grow its employee base and improve logistics for distributor partners.

www.pointreyescheese.com



SAPUTO WINS AT WI FAIR

Saputo Cheese USA Inc., Lincolnshire, IL, has won a number of awards at the Wisconsin State Fair. These including first in the Blue Veined Cheese category for its Black River Blue Cheese and third for its Stella Blue cheese. In the Natural Goat Milk Cheese category, Montchevre Goat Feta took first and Montchevre Bucheron took third. In the Flavored Goat Milk Cheese category, Montchevre Cranberry Cinnamon Goat Cheese took third place.

www.saputo.com

NEW PRODUCTS --



CRISPY FILLED POTATOES

Swiss Rösti, Portland, OR, has introduced a new three-item line of frozen Crispy Filled Potato products under its Rösti brand. This new product line is an original and authentic cultural food that until now has never been available to the U.S. market. The three flavors include the Melty Swiss Raclette, filled with imported Swiss Raclette cheese; the Zesty Chili Cheese, filled with garbanzo beans, sharp Cheddar cheese, red peppers, poblano peppers and spices; and the Stuffed Baked Potato, filled with sour cream, cream cheese and chives.

www.swissrosti.com

NEW PRODUCTS



ON THE GO SNACKS

Schuman Cheese, Fairfield, NJ, has introduced its Bella Rosa Snacks to Go line in two flavor combinations. Each tray offers all-natural Cheddar cheese, premium sea-salted roasted nuts and juicy dried cranberries. Snacks to Go is offered in 16-count display-ready cases. Suggested retail price for each package is \$1.33.

www.schumancheese.com



NEW GENERATION OF BREAD SNACKS

Bäckerhaus Veit Ontario Canada, has introduced Baguette Bites, a new generation of bread snacks from artisan bread snack brand Sabine's Collections. The new snack alternative, which is available in three flavors-Olive Oil and Rosemary; Jalapeño and Cheddar; and Roasted Garlic and Chives—is vegan certified and Kosher certified. The bites are free of artificial flavors and colors. cholesterol, MSG, ADAs, PHOs, saturated fats and trans fats.

www.backerhausveit.com



ITALIAN-STYLE SLICED SALUMI AND SMALLER HAM DEBUT

Coleman Natural Foods, Golden, CO, now offers an 8-ounce ham steak to complement the larger serving sizes (whole spiral, half and quarter). Each is free from nitrates, nitrites, antibiotics, added hormones, artificial ingredients and animal by-products and raised crate free. Additionally, the company has launched a line of Italian-style sliced salumi in three varieties—Hot Sopressata, Genoa Salame and Pepperoni. The 3-ounce packages offer savory, authentic. Italian flavor.

www.colemannatural.com



CROISSANTS INDIVIDUALLY WRAPPED

St. Pierre, Manchester, England, has introduced full-sized Butter Croissants and Chocolate Croissants. The croissants are individually-wrapped and branded in packs of eight with a suggested retail price of \$4.99. Made in France using high-quality ingredients and classic techniques, the new croissants reflect the brand's commitment to producing authentic European-inspired bakery items.

www.stpierrebakery.com



SUPREME BRIE LAUNCHED

Savencia Cheese USA, Lena, IL, has debuted Supreme Brie, the newest addition to its range of specialty cheese brands. To create the cheese, fresh cream is sourced daily from the farms around the company's creamery, and pasteurized immediately upon arrival for a consistently creamy taste and texture. The result is a buttery and smooth Brie, with a thin white edible rind. The 7-ounce oval shape can be easily cut into slices.



BLUE CHEESE CRUMBLES DEBUT

Emmi Roth USA, Fitchburg, WI, has introduced Roth Flavor Ups Blue Cheese Crumbles, which offer a convenient way to eat Blue cheese on the go. Available in single cups, three-packs and nine-packs, the line is designed to reduce food waste, while providing efficient meal prep and recipe creation.

www.emmiroth.com



A CRUNCHY SNACK

The Mushroom Benefit, Netanya, Israel, offers Umamis Crunchy Snack, a healthy alternative based on King Oysters and corn. Flavors include Natural, Salt & Pepper, BBQ, and Salt & Vinegar. It has all-natural ingredients and is a good source of Vitamin D and calcium. The snack has no artificial flavoring, colors, preservatives or cholesterol.

www.themushoombenefit.com



NEW CHEESE STICK DEBUTS

Sheecher's Handmade Cheese, Seattle, has launched the Flagship Cheese Stick. Aged for a minimum of 15 months, the Cheddar-Gruyere-style cheese has a robust, nutty flavor and subtle notes of caramel and browned butter. The format packs 5 grams of protein in each serving. The cheese sticks are sold in packs of eight or individually. The cheeses are made with fresh, pure, local milk from Washington, Wisconsin and New York and contain no added rBST.

www.beecherscheese.com

DELI WATCH is a regular feature of Deli Business. Please send information on new products, personnel changes, industry, corporate and personal milestones and available literature, along with a color photo, slide or transparency to: Editor, Deli Business, P.O. Box 810217 • Boca Raton, FL 33481-0217 • Phone: 561-994-1118 • Fax: 561-994-1610 • Email: DeliBusiness@phoenixmedianet.com

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

The Deli Dilemma



By Jim Prevor Editor-in-Chief

n surveys and private conversations, deli directors report the strongest growth in their departments is the prepared foods offering, high service bars and specialty areas. It is exciting and inspiring.

But it may not be sustainable. These labor-intense areas have great appeal, but is the labor going to be available and at an affordable price?

Minimum wages have risen or will rise in many places across the country. Important competitive employers, such as Amazon.com, have raised minimum pay to \$15 an hour, and many large retailers and restaurants have introduced all kinds of inducements to attract and retain employees.

A recent Wall Street Journal piece titled, "Restaurants Sweeten Pay and Perks to Find Scarce Workers," highlighted the lengths restaurant chains are going through to get and retain employees beyond pay increases:

McDonald's Corp. said it is using \$150 million recouped from federal tax-code changes to expand its offering to pay for college scholarships for employees and their families. "That is a huge recruiting piece for us," said Melissa Kersey, McDonald's U.S. chief people officer...

Chipotle Mexican Grill Inc. last month instituted performance bonuses of a week's pay for restaurant workers who help hit quarterly sales targets and other goals. Chipotle also expanded tuition-reimbursement earlier this year and extended some education benefits to employees' family members. Chief People Officer Marissa Andrada said Chipotle has directed managers to discuss career development in their quarterly performance reviews for restaurant workers.

"It's showing an interest in people beyond this hourly job they have," Ms. Andrada said.

Noodles & Co. recently enhanced its parental-leave policies, while Mighty Quinn's BBQ in New York is trying to bolster loyalty in its employees by rewarding top performers with manning the company's food booth at concerts, co-founder Micha Magid said.

"You can go get a paycheck anywhere," said Mr. Magid, who has hired about 25 workers so far this summer, up around 20% from last year.

Dave & Buster's Entertainment Inc., meanwhile, is offering prizes to workers who sell more menu specials or game cards at the video-arcade chain.

And franchisees of chains including Applebee's and Burger King have hired app developer ShiftOne to create an incentive system with the feel of a videogame that gives rewards such as free meals and more scheduling flexibility to employees who receive strong satisfaction scores from customers they serve, the tech company said.

Yet the real risk for deli departments may not be the inability to get labor or even the high cost of labor or the creativity necessary to keep the current generation happy in an age of full employment. These are surmountable obstacles, as the profile of what all the restaurant chains are doing shows.

The real problem may be the unwillingness of retailers to pay the price necessary to attract, train and retain high quality people.

The Street ran a piece that profiled the work of Wolfe Research analysts Scott Mushkin, Michael Otway, Cody Ross and Benedict Shim:

Wolfe's analysts said that they are starting to notice a decline in staff at giant retailers in Houston, including Walmart, Kroger, Target and especially at dollar stores like Dollar General, and the impact it's having on stores is disconcerting.

"Execution across retailers was wanting even for good operators like Kroger," the Wolfe analysts said in the note. "Significant out-of-stocks were evident in the frozen and dry grocery areas at the supermarkets and Target while fresh food was largely the issue at Walmart."

Wolfe's analysts estimated that with the rising cost of wages in the U.S., retailers, even those performing better than most, are cutting labor costs to make a profit. But, the firm warned that "this can compound the sales problems over time."

Nowhere is this truer than in fresh foods and high service departments. But the culture at many retailers is, of course, retail-oriented and focused on cost reduction.

To have departments in which these techniques of driving costs out of the system don't work is alien to the way many retailers think. But to invest in having the people who make service a delight—and a differentiator—may well be the key to success in an age when most retailers will focus on cutting labor.

DB

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The Fresh Food Group (FFG) provides full-service fresh solutions for retail, foodservice, club and convenience stores including merchandising and category support. We are the leading providers of fresh-cut fruit and vegetables, snacking products and home meal replacement solutions.





fresh fruit and vegetable solutions





fresh made meal solutions

The Plant Based Deli



By Lee Smith

he deli department will continue to be infused with all kinds of meat products, from rotisserie and fried chicken, deli meats and salads to cheeses made with animal rennet. However, the supermarket deli is no longer just meat-based and may well progress to a veggie forward department. In the future, meat may not be the big draw or the financial mover and shaker.

For me, who grew up personally and professionally shopping and working in deli departments, this is a big statement. Deli cold cuts were the core component of a good deli, and sales were close to 60 percent of the take. Next were salads, including chicken, ham, tuna and seafood salads. The prepared food driver was rotisserie chicken. In other locations it was fried chicken. In other words—meat.

Prepared foods now lead deli department sales, and consumers are looking for better quality and more variety. Adding vegetarian items to the venue is natural and necessary, and it is no longer just to satisfy outspoken animal advocates.

There are health warnings about over consumption of meat, especially grilled meats. Many animal advocates point to the abusive treatment of animals, but still others are concerned about global resources and global warming.

Consumers also are concerned with the price of food. While we are in a great economy, there are still many people who are food insecure. Moving to a plant-based diet with less meat—or in some cases no meat—saves money. Taking advantage of local, fresh and seasonal ingredients saves even more on costs.

A much more recent trend is the desire for new. Authentic, regional, foreign and new products are intriguing. It's not always a desire for steak and potatoes; it is consumers, especially Millennials, seeking new flavors, textures and cuisines.

The cover story in this month's issue is about the growth of plant-based packaging. Technology has given manufacturers the ability to produce packaging on a par with plastic packaging that degrades easily and is kind to the environment. The sturdier the packaging, such as serving bowls and storage containers, the more needs to be done to compost the material.

Functionality will not be the issue, although

initially cost might. The removal of plastics, especially single use plastics, is becoming a very big issue and one that is likely to be government regulated.

This is only the beginning. There is a move to consuming more vegetarian meals on a regular basis. Often, ethnic foods can be robust, hearty and flavorful. They are also typical of certain cuisines. Fondue, growing in popularity, is a classic dish for mountain climates and was brought to a level of high cuisine by the Swiss. Italian, Indian, Chinese and Mediterranean have popularized vegetarian dishes that are most often viewed as ethnic and not vegetarian.

Why are these trends important to more than restaurants? Because traditional deli departments are no longer traditional, rather they are quickly morphing into prepared food departments.

Cheese has grown into a sub-department and, in some cases, its own department. Considered vegetarian friendly, if it is not made from animal rennet, it is a staple in most vegetarian cooking. Also working with consumers' desires, specialty cheese offers new tastes and new experiences. It is easy to prepare—there is not much easier to make than a grilled cheese sandwich—it is becoming more popular as a "as is" meal.

The rising popularity of cheese plates has created a new culinary application. Forget about mild cheeses and a bunch of grapes; the cheese plate has evolved into wedding cakes made of cheese, tiered platters and complete meals. Cheese boards now have charcuterie and specialty meats, fruit and vegetables, specialty jams, condiments and nuts, crackers, breads, etc.

Last weekend, we had dear friends over for a summer dinner. The first course was a selection of cheese and whatever was in my refrigerator. There was no planning. It was meant as a snack before dinner. Three cheeses (I usually have great cheese around), sweet cherries, sugar plums smaller than a golf ball, crackers and some nuts. We nibbled while imbibing on sweet cinnamon iced tea. It could have been dinner, and it almost was.

Quite frankly, it is an alternative I should think about more often. Right now, I'm thinking about cheeses, stuffed grape leaves, olives, figs, plums and flatbread. Of course, I could add some Prosciutto di San Daniele and fine Italian salumi...

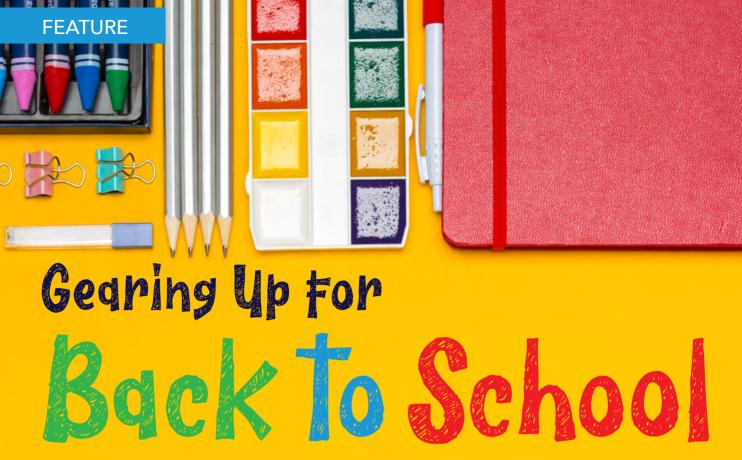
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La Bonne Vie Chanté is a rich, creamy cheese spread made with the freshest ingredients and is imported from France.



Chanté is perfect for mashed and baked potatoes, spread on bagels and crackers, or as an appetizer with sliced prosciutto and dates. For more recipe ideas visit labonneviecheese.com/recipes.

BRAND NEW
Horseradish
flavor!



Supermarket delis can load up on appropriate items to take advantage of the lucrative back to school segment.

BY JEFFREY SPEAR

s summer holidays become fond memories, days get longer, and temperatures begin to drop, we realize that schools will be welcoming students to yet another year of enriching academic experiences. For parents and students alike, this means busier schedules, extracurricular activities, added responsibilities and increased levels of stress. For retailers, this time of year marks the beginning of back to school promotions.

Recognizing that the return to school means shoppers will be craving convenience, easy to prepare meals and nutritional foods that can be eaten on the go, both producers and retailers are making sure they're providing plenty of options that will be sought after and appreciated by customers shopping for weekly groceries in supermarkets.

There is no doubt that better quality, freshly prepared and more nutritious foods are key considerations. For parents, preparing creatively-inspired and satisfying meals at home is especially important, giving them control over the foods their kids consume throughout the day. This being said, there isn't much time to prepare and pack well-rounded, healthful and delicious meals on a daily basis.

Whether it's breakfast, brown bag lunches or afternoon





snacks on snacks on snacks



- Organic Beef Jerky
- Charcuterie Medallions
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- Innovative Marketing, Merchandising, and Packaging Solutions







snacks, producers have recognized and are responding effectively to this dynamic with a remarkable bounty of conveniently-packaged foods that are fully prepared, ready to eat or ready to heat. They have also recognized that flavor and enjoyment must not be sacrificed in pursuit of convenience, and the inclusion of more natural and healthful ingredients, such as grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, are dramatically influencing purchasing decisions.

The Convenience Factor

According to Dionysios Christou, vice president marketing for Del Monte Fresh Produce, based in Coral Gables, FL, "Consumers continue to focus on healthful habits, especially when planning their children's meals and snacks. Retailers who support healthy eating initiatives are perceived to be responsive and in tune with what is important to their customers, building consumer engagement and loyalty."

When asked about including fruit as part of a nutritious packed lunch, he continues, "Fresh fruit is the ideal snack addition to any lunch. Our Del Monte baby bananas work well for small lunchboxes and brown bag lunches, as they are small, delicious and require no additional packaging. Other great options include our fresh cut apples,

strawberries and other fruit with caramel or chocolate dipping sauce, as these are sure to be a sweet but healthful treat for kids during lunch."

When it comes to nutritionally dense and versatile products, eggs offer tremendous value. Whether included as part of a sandwich assembly in the form of egg salad, fried egg topper or simply hard boiled and offered whole, sliced or in deviled egg formats, this protein-rich food is well suited to the deli counter and lunchbox solutions.

Of course, a discussion of lunchbox favorites would not be complete without mentioning the growing number of brands with ever expanding lines of vitamin and fiber rich hummus and guacamole. No longer just a flavorful and convenient favorite for everyday consumption, parties and tailgating, there are now offerings configured to suit specific mealtimes as well as on-the-go consumption.

Sabra, a White Plains, NY- based maker of fresh refrigerated dips, has introduced both hummus and guacamole in lunch-box-friendly formats as well as single-serve avocado toast designated specifically for the breakfast day part.

Similarly, Tribe Mediterranean Foods, based in Taunton, MA, has combo snack packs that include hummus and

pretzel crisps, while Los Angeles' Yucatan Foods offers its guacamole in convenient, 2-ounce, on-the-go cups.

There are a number of companies offering a variety of unique, nutritious and flavorful sandwich and meal kits. For deli departments that already offer made-to-order sandwiches, prepared salads and other ready-to-eat foods, it's easy to go one step further and offer more comprehensive lunch box solutions.

When organizing these meal solutions, foods should be easy to eat and packaged in easily-opened containers that effectively segregate wet and dry ingredients.

In addition, there are any number of salads, meats and cheeses as well as different types of breads and crackers, such as tortillas, pitas, focaccia and croissants, that can be freely substituted or swapped around to create variety.

Age Appropriate Offerings

It's also important to anticipate the age of the end consumer. While there is increasing demand for global flavors among adults, and food savvy Millennials have demonstrated a clear desire for more authentic, bolder and somewhat esoteric flavors, it is suggested that it takes 10 to 12 introductions before a younger child will accept anything new. For this audience, mayo, mustard and ketchup may be as adventurous as a parent can be.

One of the simplest ways to introduce exciting new culinary experiences is through condiments, dressings and sauces. Foodservice brands such as T. Marzetti in Westerville, OH, offer a variety of intriguing products that are perfect for deli counters and made-to-order meals. Available in bulk as well as convenient single serve pouches and cups, flavors include Hot Bacon Dressing, Raspberry Acai Vinaigrette, Wasabi Sandwich Sauce, and Pineapple Honey Mustard. For shoppers with more adventurous palates, specialty brands such as Brianna's and Corine's Cuisine respond with esoteric sauces, including Lively Lemon Tarragon, Saucy Ginger Mandarin, Spicy Mint Coriander & Coconut Sauce, Ginger Scallion & Fresh Lime Sauce, and Jamaican Curry Hot Pepper Sauce.

With just a touch of any of these inspired and creative condiments, deli counter sandwiches, wraps and salads become signature deli items.

For retailers that cannot produce meal kits internally, brands such as Purple







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FiorucciFoods.com









Carrot, Blue Apron, Martha & Marley meat and cheese combos, may only be schnitzel and meatloaf, assuming they are Spoon and Home Chef are striking up relationships with deli departments around the country, making their healthful sandwich, snack and mealtime kits available in stores without subscriptions or special orders.

Cheese is another versatile product that can be included in a packed lunch as part of a sandwich, salad or after school snack. While some varieties such as Cheddar and Monterey Jack, two of the most popular cheeses in America, may appeal more to younger audiences, cheese of every conceivable style and flavor is a welcome addition to any lunchbox.

The good news about cheese is that it is a source of many essential nutrients, including high-quality protein, and can be a mainstay in healthy, balanced, diets. According to Mari Meriluoto, director of marketing and business development at Finlandia Cheese, based in Parsippany, NJ, "Our products have always been high quality, with simple ingredients, and made with the purest milk. They are already responding to the demand for clean, real and healthy products."

While many varieties of cheese are available in the deli department, there are all sorts of imported, flavorful and somewhat exotic selections that, along with a growing number of snack kits that include

found in other parts of the store. As with fresh fruit or pre-packaged fruit snacks, making these products available in the deli department may require cross merchandising and a little special planning for back to school and brown bag promotions.

Of course, there are other products typically found in the center aisles, including chips, crackers, snack kits, energy bars, sports drinks, candies, squeezable smoothies and fruit gels that are lunchbox friendly and could easily be included in these promotions, as well.

It's important to remember that, for many consumers, they can't get enough of premium, clean-label, better-for-you products. While these products may attract a somewhat higher price, there are plenty of parents who are willing to pay a premium to keep their kids healthy.

Temperature Considerations

Along with the factors mentioned so far, back to school coincides with the change of seasons and cravings for foods that are somewhat more substantial and typically associated with cooler weather and autumnal harvests. As such, based upon statistics recently published by Datassential, a Chicago-based market research firm, sandwiches that include sausage, cheese,

made with healthy ingredients, may be worth considering for back to school promotions as well as seasonal specials.

Nothing completes a packed lunch better, or gets kids more excited about going back to school, than a new, creatively-engineered and attractively-decorated lunch box. Assuming there is room for additional merchandise in, or adjacent to, the deli counter, a selection of well-designed lunch boxes and bags would complete the backto-school shopping experience. Knowing that some of the latest designs are insulated, waterproof and compartmentalized, making these products available also eliminates any concerns parents may have about food safety and unrefrigerated food storage in school lockers.

From a promotional perspective, consumers view the back-to-school season as an opportunity to reset and drive healthy food choices. To effectively cater to these expectations, staff should be trained to promote lunchbox and brown bag solutions, recommending individual products, suggesting pairings with grab and go salads, dips and snacks, and helping customers find ways to maintain healthful eating habits.

By engaging in conversation and making these sorts of suggestions, they are driving sales at the deli counter. From a

longer-term perspective, they are building relationships and enhancing consumers' in-store brand experiences.

Other back to school promotions that will attract and engage shoppers at the deli counter, concurrent with informed staff recommendations, include attractive in-store displays, informative signage and relevant cross merchandising. In addition, incentives, such as BOGO (Buy One, Get One Free), free samples and published recipes that feature back to school lunchbox suggestions are equally effective.

Along with healthful, flavorful and nutritious products, retailers must also acknowledge that parents have limited time to prepare lunchbox meals, let alone shop for them. In this regard, both product offerings and in-store experiences in the deli need to deliver undeniable efficiency and convenience.

Although a greater amount of planning and long-term investment may be required, loyalty and technology-driven programs are also improving the way in which shoppers interact with their local supermarkets and at the point of sale in deli departments.

Knowing that shoppers favor neighboring supermarkets, loyalty programs can be implemented at the deli counter, allowing return customers to earn points that can be redeemed for free items. Whether these benefits are calculated in terms of madeto-order sandwiches, sliced meats and cheeses or prepared foods, retailers including Food Lion, HEB, Albertsons, Giant, Stop & Shop and Kroger have embraced loyalty programs to create a competitive advantage, retain customers and build emotional connections to their brand.

From a technology perspective, added convenience has also been realized through 'click and collect' programs, enabling shoppers to place deli orders online and quickly collect their purchases at a designated time. By using the store's website or smart phone app, waiting time is reduced, a better customer experience is created (especially when pickup is located close to the front of the store) and the store obtains a strategic advantage against others.

In addition to the convenience that click and collect represents, it seems that a sizeable percentage of customers taking advantage of these programs end up making additional purchases when they pick up their orders.

For retailers looking to capitalize even further, data collected online can be evaluated and personalized in a manner that

With limited time for shopping and preparation, consumers are eager to find deli departments and service staff who can help them make informed decisions.

promotes additional purchases. Whether these personalized recommendations are configured as a printout that's attached to the pre-ordered purchase, emailed to customers at a later date or simply communicated verbally by deli staff, this practice of on-selling could significantly improve deli department and overall store performance.

With deli and supermarket managers getting ready for back to school promotions, it is clear that a wide variety be utilized to satisfy the needs and expectations of busy shoppers, enhance in-store

experiences and build brand loyalty. Of course, the selection of products offered, the way they are merchandised and the level of investment earmarked for promotional activity will be critical.

The bottom line is that, with limited time for shopping and preparation, consumers are eager to find deli departments and service staff who can help them make informed decisions.

When deli shopping becomes efficient of products and promotional activities can and stress free, and packed lunches are undeniably nutritious and enjoyable, everyone wins.





With attractive displays and proper merchandising, delis can create a destination for the lucrative tailgating segment.

BY LISA WHITE

or those doubtful about how lucrative the tailgating market can be, the numbers speak for themselves.

One University of Minnesota study estimates that 18 percent of fans tailgate before games, yet there's room for improvement, with more than 17 million attending regular-season NFL games and almost 74 million attending Major League Baseball games. Plus, a recent study by DirecTV estimates that NFL fans spend almost \$200 for each tailgate party.

"In addition to cheering their teams on in person, more sports fans are choosing to watch their favorite teams with friends and family at home, according to offers. com's 2018 Tailgate Spending survey," says Brenda Killingsworth, senior trade marketing manager, Reser's Fine Foods, Beaverton, OR. "This movement towards 'Tablegating' is as food-centric as traditional tailgating, where the food is nearly as important as the game/match/race itself. We are also seeing more Millennials participating in tailgating and tablegating than ever before, as college football is edging out

"In addition to cheering their teams on NFL games as the most popular, according person, more sports fans are choosing to recent surveys."

The Evolution of Tailgating

Tailgating has evolved since it reportedly began in 1869 at the first American football game between Princeton and Rutgers Universities, although Yale University lays claim to the tradition, which it says it began in 1904.

It is not only professional or college games that are involved in this eating/socializing tradition.

"It's kids' sports with parents watch-



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ing, weeknight tailgating for travel and want convenience." high school games and elevated recipes on Sundays," says Kevin Rider, brand manager at Panos Brands, based in Rochelle Parks, NJ. "We're seeing more people 'homegating' or having people over and taking recipes to the next level."

"It's not just hot dogs and burgers on the grill or lunchmeats out of the cooler anvmore," says Tom Orlando, national sales director, Conroy Foods, Pittsburgh, PA.

According to Valerie Liu, marketing manager for Jarlsberg Cheese, distributed by Norseland, located in Darien, CT, supermarket delis' tailgating offerings have evolved tremendously over the years, featuring more displays and ideas, microsites, events and coupons.

"Consumers want convenience food, and supermarket deli items are naturally an important destination for tailgating because of the limited prep time needed for these items," says Liu. "For convenience, people can even forgo the grill and pick up pre-packaged items like fruit salad, deli meats and Jarlsberg cheese wedges and snacks for a quick meal or easy snacking."

Deli trays and salads have become tailgating staples.

"For game day, parties and gatherings, trays come in handy," says Carl H. Cappelli, senior vice president of sales and business development, at Don's Foods, based in Schwenksville, PA. "Millennials want flavor, globally-inspired edgy cool stuff, but they don't want to prepare it; they mainly

Don's Foods offers all-natural traditional deli salads available in bulk and cups for grab and go.

"Delis can sell sides by the pound in the deli case or pair them with meats or entrées, enabling retailers to include these in meal kits and as a part of meal solutions," says Cappelli.

Reser's Killingsworth has noted an increase in ethnic and spicy products geared toward tailgating as well as chicken wings and mac and cheese.

"Deli catering menus have expanded beyond the holidays to target tailgating trays," she says. "Staff dresses up the deli with football-themed point of sale as well as adding suggestions for tailgating on their websites and using social media to reach out to shoppers."

Success is in the Selection

When creating a tailgating section in the deli, it's necessary to think outside the box, as the foods geared for this increasingly popular activity have greatly expanded to become much more diverse.

Manufacturers provide a variety of options. For example, Panos has ramped up its offerings with grab and go Cheddar, Colby Jack and Pepper Jack cheeses in 2-ounce bars for snacking.

"One of our newest items is melting cheese, with ingredients that are very clean and can be used for making tailgating items," says Rider at Panos Brands.

"Tailgaters are bringing crock pots to keep queso hot, using different ingredients and highlighting unique recipes."

The menu of foods for this activity also is contingent upon how the tailgater is equipped. For example, do they have a grill or just a cooler?

Conroy Foods offers a number of items for tailgaters, including Deli and Pineapple Honey Mustards, Original Submarine dressing, All-American sauce, Buffalo and wing sauces and horseradish sauce.

"We have found that consumers love flavorful finger foods that are easy to make and fun to eat," says Liu at Jarlsberg. "Convenience is also important. With its mild, nutty taste and versatility, Jarlsberg cheese is perfect for all types of tailgating recipes, such as cheese boards, burgers, kabobs, nachos or Jarlsberg fondue with chorizo. Now we also have Jarlsberg Cheese Snacks that are easy and portable snack ticks for anytime tailgating."

Jarlsberg recently expanded national distribution of its cheese snacks, portable cheese sticks with a mild, nutty taste. The individually-wrapped cheese sticks are 3/4 ounces and are available in portion-controlled bags.

At Madison, WI-based Placon, the largest trend in tailgating is on the go convenience and expansion of grab and go food options. The company offers their HomeFresh Entrée product line to accommodate hot or cold meal solutions. including entrées or side dishes. These can be microwaved and come with vented or non-vented lid options.

"Being able to add value for customers is key with on the go convenience products," says Derek Skogen, Placon's marketing manager. "Our GoCubes product line offers a value by giving the customer a base to hold main ingredients and an insert option that keeps wet or dry ingredients separate until it's time to mix them together. The GoCube insert tray helps with portion control and to keep ingredients fresher for a longer period."

Don's Foods offers a dip tray that can be assembled on a larger food tray for tailgating displays.

Tailgating trends are mirroring healthy eating trends," says Cappelli at Don's Foods. "There are opportunities for retailers year-round."

Crowd-pleasing foods that are relatively easy to prepare are ideal for a tailgate.

"Hosts who are looking to take it up a notch can serve items that are famil-



iar with a flair by using products in more than one way," says Reser's Killingsworth. "Our Stonemill Kitchens Dips and Baja Cafe Salsas with chips or fresh veggies are a great way to get the party started. Fan favorites, such as our traditional Reser's potato salads, macaroni salads and cole slaw, are the perfect match for burgers, hot dogs or pulled pork sandwiches. Add some rich, creamy mac and cheese to the mix, and the tailgating feast is complete."

Merchandising the Goods

Success in tailgating is dependent on building enticing and applicable displays that draw consumer attention.

"Hot bars, charcuterie and olive bars for entertaining and building premade party platters are great, but I would love to see delis take prepared foods to the next level," says Rider at Panos Brands. "This can include more prepared cold meals, whether mac and cheese, queso dip or bean dip, that consumers can take with them, prep easily and serve."

Conroy Foods offers a tailgate shipper, which has a football-themed header and contains the Submarine, Horseradish, Deli Mustard and Wing sauces to compliment menu items.

"Placement of these shippers in the deli allows for one-stop shopping for events," says Orlando.

As for timing, it depends on the retailer's location. College area stores can start putting out tailgating displays in late August, while other regions can go by the NFL regular season, which starts in September. There is also an opportunity to merchandise tailgating and tablegating products all year long with other popular sports, such as NASCAR, which runs February through November.

"Campaigning early to let the consumer know you are their tailgate headquarters works well, and we have our shippers placed throughout the football season," says Orlando.

Supermarket delis can effectively merchandise foods geared for tailgating by showing how versatile many foods are.

"On our digital platforms, we offer fun recipes, cooking tips and coupons, which would be nice to see more of in stores," says Liu at Jarlsberg Cheese.

There are a number of ways to highlight tailgating that puts supermarket deli items in the spotlight.

"Delis should be smart about approaching this opportunity and not limit it to the



NFL," says Eric LeBlanc, director of marketing at Springdale, AR-based Tyson Foods. "They can dress up the section with the local high school football team's colors on Friday night and then provide colored tortilla chips that match, which adds to the atmosphere. The more things you can do to give customers a reason to walk into your store, the better."

Convenience is Key

Emphasizing the convenience factor for tailgating parties also can lead to more profits in this segment.

"For example, it's easier for shoppers when delis use a container like a bucket for wings and let shoppers know they can pick these up already loaded in the hot case to go," says LeBlanc. "It's an extremely easy solution and convenient for grab and go."

More savvy retailers also include both hot and refrigerated tailgating options.

"The key to making this work is two-fold—remind shoppers this is an option for them, for many it's not their first thought, so it's a communication challenge to get the message out," says LeBlanc. "In addition, when retailers put out buckets or solutions on the hot bar for grab and go occasions, if they don't have an adequate movement of product, you'll have crippling shrink."

For this reason, it's about building awareness and using all communication channels to drive awareness.

"The long approach is to tell no one, put tailgating items out and use signage,"

says LeBlanc. "The communication piece is the more important and difficult part of this. Retailers like Meijer, Safeway and Giant have game day type offerings, but these are consumer packaged goods, not prepared foods in the deli."

To drive awareness, LeBlanc recommends putting together a program preseason to remind customers that items will be available.

"If they activate these channels, they already have eyeballs with direct e-mail, their website and social media," says LeBlanc. "Start with low to medium production, as people get excited and more aware of what's available, then boost production and displays."

Manufacturers can provide assistance in taking tailgating foods to the next level.

"The two things we do for shoppers is give them the idea and make them want to do it," says LeBlanc. "For example, we suggest they take boneless wings and put celery and ranch dressing with it, then put it on sweet rolls to create a tray of sliders."

Bundling all tailgating foods together in the deli so these are in close proximity and easy for shoppers also is effective.

"Convenience continues to be important, so there is opportunity with offering consumers kits or party packs that are ready to assemble once they get to their tablegate or tailgate," says Killingsworth. "Offer curbside pick up or delivery to the tailgate location on-site on game day and get savvy with digital messaging."

Getting the word out is key.



This growing segment is being driven by new regulations centered on sustainability.

BY LISA WHITE

ith sustainability top of mind in the packaging industry, a world where petroleum-based plastics are out of the picture may not be so far off.

"Right now, in the U.S., there are 370 unique bills across 42 states in various levels of consideration banning petroleum-based plastics and single use products," says Mark Marinozzi, vice president of marketing at Petaluma, CA-based World Centric, a producer of plant-based packaging. "There are issues around sustainability

with Styrofoam and rigid plastics. In the next two to three years, these [materials] may go away."

Whereas in the past, these environmentally-friendly initiatives were common in progressive states like California, today they are more widespread.

"The emphasis now from a regulation standpoint is around single-use bags, but increasingly includes green chemistry bans and mandates moving away from petroleum-based plastics," says Marinozzi.

As a result, the global market for sustainable packaging overall is growing, as

customers and businesses become aware of the detrimental effects of plastic on the environment and the lack of landfill space.

"This is being driven by consumer awareness and the government's banning single-use plastics," says Alex Garden, CEO and Chairman of Zume Inc., which is creating a connected technology across the food chain to enhance sustainability. The company has offices in California, Seattle, Connecticut, Boston and India. "This demand is being matched by technological advances in sustainable packaging being made much more frequently."

Atlanta-based Be Green has been a plant-based packaging supplier for 12 years.

"The proliferation of plant-based diets and food has escalated the plant-based packaging market," says Michael Newhouse, Be Green's director of sales. "Opportunities are flying. When the major packaging companies are launching products, you know something is going on."

The Options

What has helped drive the plant-based packaging movement, in addition to the continued focus on sustainability, is the expansion of the paper straw category over the last couple of years.

World Centric's straws are produced from FSC-certified paper. This has been harvested in a responsible manner according to the Forest Stewardship Council, an independent, non-governmental, not-for-profit organization that was established to promote the responsible management of the world's forests.

"These are the toughest paper straws on the market and the only type not using silates," says Marinozzi. "Our ecologically-responsible, rapidly renewable paper is made from sugar cane waste and bamboo, two of the most durable products."

World Centric's molded products are produced from these materials as well as wheat straw waste to create molded fibers. PLA-based (polylactic acid) materials are used for the company's transparent lids and produced from cassava, sugar beets, corn or methane, all rapidly renewable products or sustainably harvested.

"We're also looking at new launches, such as another form of plant-based plastic," says Marinozzi. "All are rapidly renewables or sustainably harvested and can be turned into soil within 180 days."

Zume has built technology that unlocks the potential for this market by significantly speeding up the throughput per package, dropping the cost so that at scale its plantbased packaging is at or below the cost of plastic alternatives.

"While there are different types of plant-based packaging, our packaging is made out of plant-based fibers that are classified as Type 4 Molded Fiber—which is the highest quality classification," says Garden. "Our molded fiber is a mix of agricultural waste from sugarcane bagasse (i.e., the pulp after extraction), bamboo, wood pulp and wheat straw. We're also looking at other agricultural waste products as great sources of fiber for our products."

What has helped drive the plant-based packaging movement in addition to the continued focus on sustainability is the expansion of the paper straw category over the last couple of years.

Zume produces plant-based containers, trays and cups, among other customizable shapes suitable for delis.

"On the performance side of the equation, we can do things that only plastic could before in terms of negative draft angles, smooth feel and strength," says Garden at Zume.

As trends toward take-out and on-demand delivery continue, food companies are actively seeking better packaging solutions and providers to improve food quality, customer experience and cost.

"Delivery is challenging for many food companies, as food typically degrades en route," says Garden. "The average delivery time is approximately 35 minutes, so our customers are looking for packaging that can help maintain an ideal food experience."

In packaging, this is driving growth in the molded fiber solutions that are at the heart of Zume's ongoing work and now its acquisition of compostable packaging provider Pivot Packaging.

"One of the biggest changes in the category is the demand for single-use packaging as a result of on-demand food delivery," says Garden. "As on-demand delivery continues to grow, expected to be about \$90 billion by 2023, so too does the use of packaging. It's critical that we get this right or today's environmental problems associated with packaging will grow multi-fold."

Most packaging for on-demand delivery is made of either plastic, Styrofoam or corrugated paper. All three sources have environmental challenges that can and should be addressed.

Zume uses agricultural waste, which reduces water, energy and carbon emissions associated with the production of plastic, paper and Styrofoam products. With paper, molded fiber from agricultural waste also reduces deforestation.

"Our packaging is also compostable, so after use, it can be used to produce bio-

matter and soil to put back into the food system," says Garden. "In contrast, only 9 percent of plastic is recycled, with the rest going to landfill, polluting our waterways or getting incinerated, where it pollutes the air and releases carbon emissions."

With Be Green's lines, sugar cane extract is the standard formulation.

"We ventured into pine, but moved away from that to utilize a variety of plant sources, depending on the client and product availability," says Newhouse.

Be Green's offering is diverse for a variety of industries, including food. Its products are USDA and FSMA approved.

Kalamazoo, MI-based Fabri-Kal offers a line of plant-based packaging called Greenware that was launched in 2005.

"It is 100 percent U.S. made from plants," says Emily Ewing, senior marketing manager. "We offer drink cups, food containers and small portion cups made out of PLA and clamshells made from wheat straw that's left over after grain is harvested."

Good Natured, based in Vancouver, B.C., Canada, produces a wide range of plant-based products.

"Our 99 percent plant-based consumer packaging products provide over 100 packaging applications," says Andy Phillips, marketing manager. "We strive to produce packaging with no chemicals made from PLA and natural resources, such as corn."

The Benefits

With the way the packaging industry is headed, it has become increasingly important for deli departments to get ahead of what will soon be a regulated industry.

"Otherwise, you will either not be prepared for the regulations and have to rush to get there or it will be a much more extensive product to be rushed to market, rather than a transition to compostable materials," says Marinozzi. "Over time, customers will come on board."

By adopting this sustainable packaging, supermarket delis are putting out the message that the customer and future of the planet are priorities.

"When customers see a container made of renewable fiber with a plant-based lid, there's the message that the deli uses only compostable materials, and they'll be sought out," says Marinozzi. "An increasing number of consumers today are seeking these products."

Becoming the Norm

Whereas the use of high-quality, sustainable packaging used to be perceived as an affluent issue involving those willing to pay a premium, this is changing.

"The importance of using compostables is trickling down into a broader selection of people in the U.S.," says Marinozzi. "Convenience is still the biggest factor. We don't want to start from scratch, but if they know it will end up as litter or can't be recycled or composted or is unsafe with BPA in it, or if they're cutting down a tree, odds are they'll want to change and move into utilizing these products."

concerned with single use products not creating more waste. That's where molded fiber and plant-based packaging that has been sustainably sourced through post consumer waste or certified forests comes into play. The FSC certification verifies that not only are the materials being harvested responsibly, but that they are not imposing on indigenous areas, creating chemical runoffs or displacing natural habitats.

Zume Source Packaging is one of the first to offer compostable molded fiber with the performance characteristics of plastic, but at the same or a lower cost when manufactured at scale.

"Our ability to use technology to drive down costs and also create packaging that feels and performs like plastic is a breakthrough and the holy trinity in packaging—sustainable, cost-effective and high performance," says Garden.

Molded fiber made from agricultural waste or other environmentally-sourced resources has tremendous upstream environmental benefits in the form of water and energy use efficiencies as well as GHG emissions reductions from the man-Businesses also are becoming more ufacturing of petroleum-based inputs,

deforestation and the methane emissions avoidance from rotting agricultural waste.

Be Green's packaging is 100 percent compostable if no lamination is used, and is certified recyclable for areas where there is no composting facility.

"Millennials are driving this market," says Newhouse. "Today, just 10 percent of all trash gets recycled and the rest is going to landfills"

Because the company's plant-based packaging needs shelf life, it is working with companies to add fully-compostable plastics to its products. These perform better in low heat waste management facilities, unlike PLA.

Fabri-Kal's products are 100 percent compostable in industrial facilities.

"What has become increasingly important in foodservice facilities is compostable packaging that can divert waste from landfills," says Ewing. "Plant-based containers can be put in compost bins and are entirely composted, which is increasingly important to the environment and society."

Phillips at Good Natured says the more people who become aware of issues and chemicals, the more who will seek out better alternatives.

"It's a booming market and industry," he says. "We cut across multiple categories for supermarket delis, with a whole section for prepared meals and department items like sandwiches, wraps and sushi."

The Challenges

One of the biggest challenges in the plant-based packaging space is the lack of composting infrastructure.

"Our company started off as a nonprofit advocate for environmental issues, but one of the challenges we have is we're hindered by the lack of compost infrastructure in the U.S. and globally," says Marinozzi. "There has to be a strong desire on the part of communities and politicians as well as the waste management infrastructure [to accomplish this]."

Up until 15 years ago, there wasn't a lot of compostable materials to turn into soil and be properly utilized. Shifting to a different model and infrastructure takes a commitment. As a result, the industry is experiencing grass roots efforts to get commercial composting off the ground.

"People need to see the benefits of turning waste to compost," says Marinozzi. "Many states are getting the ball rolling, but unless consumers are paying attention or educated on it, they won't know all of



the benefits"

Historically, the challenge also has been the cost and performance of plant-based packaging compared to plastic.

"Our molded fiber products are ideal for packaging because it can be made with fully compostable materials and has similar performance qualities as paper and plastic, and can compete the same or better on cost when produced at scale," says Zume's Garden. "That said, there are potential challenges with biomass. One of those challenges is that we must have viable conversion technology to convert any particular biomass into pulp that is malleable and manufacturable through our process."

Sourcing Requirements

Additionally, customers typically have their own unique requirements on where raw materials can be sourced.

"If they have viable agricultural waste from their own food production process, we'll gladly seek to recycle that waste into the packaging," says Garden.

Another issue is sourcing for plant-based packaging materials.

"Domestically, it's hard to find sources for plant-based packaging due to farming, which is not always sustainable," says Newhouse. "In addition, waste management is the challenge, since we have to peel off plastic lining to recycle."

Material cost and availability is not a challenge for Good Natured.

"Our material performs better than petroleum equivalents, but awareness is still a factor," says Phillips. "When we speak to consumers and customers, they're often not aware of all the applications, so one of the biggest challenges for us is awareness of the space."

Newhouse predicts the next generation of plant-based packaging will continue to grow in delis, as composting availability continues expanding.

"There will be new technological advances that will make it faster and more economical to shift to plant-based packaging," says Garden. "These new advances are, in part, a result of the fact that people are becoming increasingly interested in true solutions to replace plastic. There will also be more technological improvements in the manufacturing process of packaging and molded fiber packaging that will not just positively affect the use and experience, but also the cost. In turn, this will enable even more companies to go green without going into the red."





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Convenience, quality and portability are what matter in today's grab and go sections.

BY JEFFREY SPEAR

here are a few enduring truths that impact just about every aspect of food retailing. While packaging and presentation may stimulate trial, it's overall culinary enjoyment and nutritional benefits that will keep buyers coming back for more. Of course, providing value (price and performance combined) is equally important, albeit subjective. There is, however, one still-emerging and highly influential trend that is creating a more level playing field.

Today's consumers are looking for ways

to satisfy their cravings, both at traditional mealtimes as well as for snacking, in ways that are fast, convenient and worry free. In response, food retailers are creating and stocking products that resonate effectively with their key buyers, promise and effectively deliver value, and represent time saving convenience. Commonly known as "grab and go," this latest retail phenomenon is driving visible change, especially at the deli counter.

According to recently published statistics from London-based research firm

Mintel, more than 70 percent of grocery shoppers report they do all of their shopping in-store. Even shoppers aged 18-34, known for their technology-driven preferences, are likely to do most or all of their grocery shopping in-store.

Mintel also reports that on-the-go consumers looking for grab and go mealtime and snacking solutions are expecting higher levels of quality and options that align with their dietary agenda and lifestyles.

The bottom line, repeated by operators across every category and channel, is that



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It's also clear that the growing demand for more exotic and esoteric flavors is influencing the way that grab and go salads and sandwiches are being prepared.

grab and go isn't going away any time soon.

Variety Has It

Knowing that the concept of grab and go is intended to be a time saving and stress free experience, retailers must offer a wide variety of foods catering to a broad spectrum of culinary preferences that are fully prepared, conveniently packaged and ready to go without the need for uncomfortable delays at the service counter or having to stand in time-consuming lines. They must also merchandise these products in a manner that makes them easy to find and quickly understood.

With this in mind, especially since deli departments have been expanding their scope of service to include higher quality and ethnically-inspired prepared foods, there is an undeniable opportunity to engage with, and provide fresh, flavorful and quality-oriented mealtime and snacking solutions to a sizeable audience.

According to Tal Shoshan, CEO at Chattanooga, TN-based Five Star Foods, makers of Simply Fresh salads, snack and meal kits, "Convenience is single-handedly driving growth in the category. Consumers are time-starved and looking for meal solutions that are checking multiple boxes—taste, portion control, value and convenience. In response, we deliver a vertically integrated program from field to fresh grab and go products that meets the needs of the entire family.

When asked about the relatively short shelf life of some grab and go products, Shoshan continues "Managing short shelf life products is always challenging for both retailers and suppliers. It can be a deterrent. We are finding, however, that most retailers have found ways to manage these issues, are embracing our product lines and are increasingly more successful in bringing fresh and innovative grab and go items to their shoppers."

One of the more noticeable grab and go

options gaining popularity is mealtime kits. There are dip kits (hummus and guacamole are increasingly popular in this configuration), snack kits (combinations of sliced cheese, sliced meats, sliced fresh fruit, nuts, dried fruit, crackers, cookies and/or candies) and sandwich kits.

It's also clear that the growing demand for more exotic and esoteric flavors is influencing the way that grab and go salads and sandwiches are being prepared. While long time standards, including ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, Blue cheese, ranch, Caesar, balsamic and coleslaw, still dominate the landscape, flavors that embrace Latino, Mediterranean, Southeast Asian and North African influences, including sriracha, cilantro, ginger, harissa and gochujang, are finding receptive audiences.

For on the go consumers, sandwiches and wraps are in constant demand. That being said, ethnically-inspired hand-held preparations, such as empanadas, burritos, tamales, sushi, spring rolls and summer rolls, have been finding their way into supermarket deli offerings.

An All-day Affair

It's important to keep in mind that grab and go provides convenient meal options for all day parts. As such, preparations that include traditional breakfast ingredients should not be overlooked.

"Buyers can't get enough breakfast items," says Todd Martin, co-founder and executive vice president, customer development, for Arizona's Tucson Tamale. "When it comes to grab and go, we're seeing obvious demand for these items, along with greater variety overall."

Many bakeries are modifying their production to include, not only full-size breads, cakes and pies, but single-serve offerings, as well. One such producer, known for sandwich breads and sweet baked goods, is St. Pierre, based in Manchester, England. Paul Baker, founder of St Pierre

Groupe, explains "We've just launched the St Pierre On the Go range to satisfy the growing demand for grab and go items. We wanted to create a broad range of products to satisfy consumers throughout the day—morning, afternoon or night—with a combination of bestsellers like our Waffles and Crepes as well as new products like the Rocky Road Bar and Chocolate Caramel Shortbread Bar."

There's also a sizeable assortment of single-serve products typically found in center aisles that can be merchandised in the deli department as part of grab and go offerings. Products including chips, pretzels, nuts, crackers, fruit cups and energy bars can all be cross promoted, making it easier for shoppers to organize their purchases without having to traverse the entire store. While enticing buyers into the aisles may generate additional revenue, providing an efficient and convenient shopping experience is paramount.

In order to create a broader range of grab and go offerings in-store, and eliminate waiting time at the service counter, retailers are employing a wider range of packaging configurations, including single-serve snack packs, multi-serve party platters and containers featuring multiple cavities for meal kits, multi-part salads and snack combos.

Hope Ramseyer, marketing communications manager for Display Pack, based in Cedar Springs, MI, explains, "We're working with customers to launch unique, brand-specific items. Our customers are acutely aware that success in the grab and go arena is dependent on catching the consumer's eye on the store shelf and then delivering a positive branded experience.

When asked about untapped opportunity for grab and go products, she continues, "Convenience is the number one growing food industry trend. We're helping brand owners capitalize on this trend with grab and go packaging solutions optimized for their production processes and effective merchandising on store shelves." While the majority of grab and go products are refrigerated, she makes a noteworthy suggestion. "Deli counters that traditionally offer warm food from behind the service counter could benefit from warmed meal kits merchandised on their own."

Without a doubt, the addition of an attractive self-service case stocked with an assortment of packaged foods and beverages, both hot and cold, can create extra revenue without a lot of dedicated labor or

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operational complexity.

The Packaging Factor

Of course, retailers must anticipate more than just merchandising and display options to create meaningful and productive grab and go experiences. In this regard, Madison, WI-based Placon offers grab and go packaging solutions that come with vented or non-vented lids, anticipate modular stacking, have easy to open tab mechanisms and can be reheated in the microwave.

Recognizing that many grab and go options include both wet and dry ingredients, or aromatic items that could negatively impact other foods in a meal kit, the company has developed packaging solutions that include inserts, internal lids and other such barriers to segregate foods prior to consumption. Going one step further, recognizing the attention that consumers give to environmental impact, many of these containers can be washed and reused. When properly disposed, they are completely recyclable.

Along with decisions relating to specific food offerings and packaging materials associated with them, supermarket deli managers may wish to explore ways to increase their capacity when preparing grab and go offerings in store. Eric Wangler, president and CEO at Jaccard Corp., a Rochester, NY-based company known for innovative product design, suggests, "When you look around today, consumers are pressed for time. Concurrently, our customers struggle to find workers and face escalating labor costs. Anything we can do to increase convenience and minimize labor drives value for both consumers and our customers. This is a major reason why the demand for our automated stacker slicers, and the production efficiencies they provide, is rapidly growing."

Effective grab and go programs are built on a foundation of time-saving convenience. While portion size, packaging and merchandising are important, providing consistently enjoyable and satisfying culinary experiences is essential. Knowing that today's shopper is is also seeking ways to maintain healthier and more active lifestyles, the products being stocked need to cater to these preferences, as well.

There's still tremendous opportunity in the shop and go arena. Whether retailers take advantage of both hot and refrigerated options, a larger number of ethnically-inspired foods or simply greater variety, the alternatives are considerable. **DB**





Food Bars: The Gateway to the Deli

The rewards extend to the entire supermarket

BY BOB JOHNSON

he food bar is a gateway experience that brings consumers back to the deli and supermarket on a regular basis.

When a deli puts together and maintains an inviting display, they attract a loyal clientele of people of all ages and ethnicities who share a desire for convenience and quality.

"The demographic is all over the place but the great thing is the food bar customers come in three or four times a week," says Bob Sewall, executive vice president of sales and marketing at Blount Fine Foods, Fall River, MA. "Their frequency is high, and while they're in the deli or store, they are picking up other things."

Blount Fine Foods offers gourmet foods from sourced fresh ingredients to hand-crafted recipes to foodservice operations, retail, club and convenience store customers. Their emphasis is on clean label sides, soups and sauces.

"There are a lot of reasons to want the hot bar," says Sewall. "Delis want food bars to compete with the restaurant trade and as a way to attract people into the store."

This frequency with which consumers return to the food creates both opportunities and challenges for the deli.

"Because consumers shop these bars weekly, the challenge is keeping a constant rotation of top sellers, while offering

new and unique items to keep the customer inspired and enticed," says Giuliana Pozzuto, marketing director at George E. DeLallo Co., Mt. Pleasant, PA. "This is made even harder by limited space on the bars in stores."

Consumers come to the food bar looking for convenience, and that gives retailers an opportunity to introduce them to new and interesting options.

"Convenience, time and effort are the reasons why food bars are on the rise among consumers," says Kurt Peters, sales representative at Farm Ridge Foods, West Palm Beach, FL. "Retailers can offer a variety of healthy products as well as introduce new items."

Variety Is the Spice of the Bar

One of the attractions of the food bar is that it offers consumers an opportunity to experiment with new foods in a format that is both convenient and portion controlled.

"There are many reasons for the success of food bars," says Pozzuto. "They are loaded with possibilities for consumers, allowing them to select the items and how much [they prefer], they give the consumers customization at their fingertips. Shoppers feel like they are saving time compared to waiting in line at the service counter. In addition, self-service food bars encourage the customer to try new items,

which can only lead to more favorites."

There are, however, a few standard items that consumers expect to find when they travel to the food bar.

"You have your obligatory chicken in every form and fashion," says Sewall. "Most stores are already roasting chicken and frying tenders."

Some producers have earned reputations for their food bar staples.

"Stuffed cabbage and mac and cheese balls are some of the popular items offered at Farm Ridge Foods," says Peters.

The olive and antipasti bar also has the usual suspects that are popular and expected by customers.

"Our core items are still wildly popular—pitted, marinated and stuffed olives, preserved/pickled vegetables, etc.," says Brandon Gross, vice president of marketing at Foodmatch, New York, NY. "We've also seen some new twists really capture consumer interest; items such as our Calabrese antipasti salad with pitted olives, Asiago cheese and Calabrese salami, grilled artichokes or roasted garlic from California."

But while there are olive and antipasti traditional standards, Gross agrees the bars also play a special role in offering customers an opportunity to look over and purchase new and interesting items in small portions.

"Ultimately, I think food bars are popular because it's an opportunity for customization, product trial and portion control," he says. "Looking at the olive and antipasto bar, for example, where else can a shopper get the opportunity to taste so many interesting ingredients at once without having to make a long-term commitment to any single favorite? Additionally, if you're hosting friends or cooking from a recipe, it's a great place to control exact quantities needed. Food bars are a land of opportunity when executed successfully."

One area many consumers are looking to explore is new dishes and flavors from around the world.

"As more global flavors become mainstream, I think product expansion will move to include a lot of new spices from regions such as North Africa, South America, India and more," says Gross.

A variety of Asian foods are coming to play more important roles in the globalized food bar.

"Sushi is becoming one of the more popular bars within the grocery store," says Breana Jones, director of marketing at Hissho Sushi, Charlotte, NC. "It's the ultimate grab and go solution. It's a healthier option with lots of alternatives for everyone. Poke is hot right now. It has existed in Hawaii for years, but is now catching on in the Mainland. We have grab and go poke salads right next to the rolls in our cases. In select locations, we even have Make Your Own Poke bars."

While the food bar has gone global, it also still features many products from its birthplace in the Mediterranean.

"We are seeing continual growth in our olive and antipasti bar programs all around the country," says Pozzuto. "These are gaining more and more popularity, as the trend of good-looking, great-tasting gourmet entertaining continues. Olives and antipasti are exquisite features for such popular presentations as cheese boards, charcuterie trays, wine and cheese pairings, etc."

Olives and antipasti can stand alone, but they can also transform the salad bar into something special.

"Along with the growth of gourmet entertaining opportunities, we've noted customers displaying some select olives and antipasti items at salad/cold bars to upgrade their fresh salads with colorful, crunchy pickled vegetable mixes, marinated peppers and olives," says Pozzuto. "It's an easy way to bring some new life to ordinary offerings, taking salads from basic



to extraordinary."

Another recent trend is toward cleaner label dishes that only have ingredients consumers understand.

"What's more popular these days is to have cleaner label dishes," says Sewall. "We have about 20 hot bar items. They are all clean label – organic, non-GMO, you name it. The smart food bar operator has cleaner, fresher items. Retailers need to do a better job of labeling the food in the hot bar."

While clean label, high quality items rule at the food bar, convenience is a key megatrend driving growth of the category.

"Food kiosks are popular, because people are looking for convenient solutions," says Jones. "With increasingly busy schedules, people are looking for good food options that fit into existing schedules. If they're already at the grocery store, this is a chance for them to pick up something for lunch later in the week or a quick dinner option that can be ready within minutes."

Keep It Stocked and Clean

A successful deli food bar program takes a commitment to keep the display inviting—well stocked with food that looks and is fresh.

"The most difficult thing is how I get it up with less labor than I used to have," says Sewall. "The challenge is getting them set up and kept fresh. We have products in a

While clean label, high quality items rule at the food bar, convenience is a key megatrend drivng growth of the category.

4-pound bag that fills one tray. We also do sauces like Alfredo or scampi."

There is a question of how important the program is in the overall scheme of the deli and of the entire market.

"Retailers face many challenges that aren't just specific to the fresh bar, like maintaining points of differentiation, innovating, servicing customers and labor," says Gross. "These are universal challenges that all retailers face. What's important at the end of the day is identifying what programs the customer considers 'musts."

If the food bar makes the short list of high priority projects, the reward is a high level of customer loyalty.

"Through all our research and data, one thing we know about olive and antipasti bar customers is that they are fiercely loyal about the products we provide in the format of the fresh bar," says Gross. "Our team's job is to provide great product and work with retailers to mitigate their challenges, be it through our merchandising team that can help in-store or our marketing team that can design custom merchandising and in-store graphics."

While food bar customers may generally skew a bit younger, this gateway to the deli has universal appeal.

"We believe the bar is truly ageless; however, it's true that Millennials are very interested in the idea of 'self-serve,' where they get to mix and match their own selections," says Pozzuto. "They are more independent shoppers who like to take their time and not have to engage much with the store associates."

Offering the Options

The growth of food bars comes as some of the deli's competition is also stepping up their game, as well.

"Retailers are faced with an ever expanding list of options," says Jones. "There is no shortage of choices for consumers, from fine dining to QSRs. The challenge is to get shoppers to think of the food within grocery with the same trust and consideration that they have for outside establishments."

Once a successful food bar program is established, it is worth going the extra mile to let consumers throughout the store know what is available.

"The goal should be for stores to be considered a strong option, rather than something that shoppers are settling for," says Jones. "That's why it's important to offer the right options for each location. And it's imperative that they let shoppers know what they have. There are certain people who never go into the delis, so they may not know all the food that's available. Stores shouldn't assume that people will stop by and try things. They need to let shoppers know what's available and encourage them to try something." DB





DELI DINNERS PUT THE RING IN

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This holiday meal provides the opportunity to up the ante for deliprepared food programs

BY CAROL BAREUTHER

ach year, for the past five years that he's held the position of director of foodservice at Roche Bros. Supermarkets, a 17-store chain based in Wellesley, MA, Adam Laliberte has increased his order of turkeys for Thanksgiving. Each year, too, Laliberte wonders if he's over-ordered, only to find the birds are always sold out. This year, he's ordered 3,100 turkeys, all-natural, antibiotic-free in two carved weight sizes: 10 to 12 pounds and 14 to 16 pounds. Laliberte's also added organic turkeys to his 2019 list. Each bird is sold fully cooked. Many will be bundled into a holiday meal deal that includes seasonal deli sides like butternut squash. mashed potatoes and herb stuffing as well as turkey gravy, cranberry sauce, dinner rolls and an apple pie. The meal serves eight to 10 people, for one price, and is ready to re-heat and serve at home.





"We are known for the quality and size of our turkey, and word spreads year after year," says Laliberte at Roche Bros., about the first of three drivers he sees for the growth in sales of the chain's Thanksgiving meal program. "Secondly, people today either don't have time or don't know how to cook. Third, for something like Thanksgiving, you don't want to invite friends and family over and not have the turkey turn out like that perfect bird in a Norman Rockwell painting. Ours are fully cooked and so are all of the sides."

Roche Bros. Supermarket's prepared foods department is far from alone in its offering of store-prepared Thanksgiving dinners. In fact, well over 100 U.S. supermarket chains, from major nationwide retailers like Kroger, Albertsons and Whole Foods Market, to regional players like Wegmans, Publix, H.E.B., Gelson's and Rosauers Supermarkets provide the same or similar, according to the Nov. 22, 2018 released- report, Feature Advertising by U.S. Supermarkets Meat, Poultry, and Shell Eggs – Thanksgiving, by the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, in Washington, D.C.

This type of offering makes good sense. Consider that of the people who planned to eat Thanksgiving dinner at home, one in four said they purchased either the entire meal or prepared dishes from a restaurant or other retail foodservice establishment like a grocery store, according to a 2017 survey by the National Restaurant Association, in Washington, D.C.

"Many shoppers don't think of the deli as a place where they can pick up a fully-cooked turkey or holiday dinner," says Holly LaVallie, director of marketing, deli solutions, for the Jennie-O Turkey Store, in Willmar, MN. "Therefore, there is a huge opportunity to communicate this message and make the deli's catering or prepared foods department a destination for all or part of their Thanksgiving meal."

Turkey & More

Turkey is the star of most Thanksgiving dinners. While uncooked turkeys are part the meat department and loss leader in sales, it's cooked turkeys that bring customers to the supermarket deli. The cooked turkey can either come from the deli partnering with a commissary to prepare the birds and then ship to store-level, a scenario that happens at Roche Bros. Supermarkets, or the turkey can come in pre-cooked from the manufacturer.

"We offer two fully-cooked turkey items for the retail supermarket deli that are perfect to bundle in meal kits for Thanksgiving celebrations: a frozen fully cooked smoked turkey and a frozen fully cooked baked turkey," says Adam Grant, associate brand manager for retail deli at Butterball LLC, headquartered in Garner, NC. "Both are hassle-free turkey options that offer easy preparation, less mess, rich flavor and a short heating time, making them a convenient centerpiece on any Thanksgiving table."

One size doesn't fit all when it comes to Thanksgiving turkey. For example, Roche Bros. also offers a boneless roast turkey breast. This is sold as a bundled holiday meal with the same sides, albeit smaller servings to feed four to six people.

To meet this customer's needs, Butterball recently launched its Herb Roasted Thanksgiving Style Deli Turkey Breast line as part of its premium slice-toorder offerings.

"This product can be used as a convenient heat-and-eat Thanksgiving turkey option," says Grant.

It's not just turkey with a seat at the table for Thanksgiving. Spiral hams and prime rib of beef also figure prominently among the supermarkets across the country that offer store-prepared holiday dinners. For example, Roche Bros. offers a choice of Glazed Half Spiral Sliced Ham or a Flame-Glazed Honey Ham as alternatives to its turkey.

"While we plan to do new research during the upcoming Thanksgiving season, we know that turkey, beef, chicken and pork have all seen strong year-over-year growth in the prepared entrée/meals category," says Tammy Shaw, director retail marketing for Cargill Protein – North America, in Wichita, KS.

Cured hams in particular offer a flavorful contrast to comparably blander turkey.

"Buying our cooked Virginia Hams by the pound is a trend," says Sam Edwards, owner of Edwards Virginia Smokehouse, in Surry, VA. "Cooking a ham just before Thanksgiving dinner may provide the best flavor and a lot of leftovers for ham sandwiches but most folks don't know or want to cook a whole ham. Buying the ham sliced in the deli or our pre-sliced cooked VA Ham in one-pound packages provides just the ham needed for the big dinner."

Seasonal Sides

What is driving sales of retail packs of deli sides for Thanksgiving, according to

It's not just turkey with a seat at the table for Thanksgiving. Spiral hams and prime rib of beef also figure prominently among the supermarkets across the country that offer store-prepared holiday dinners.

Jim Gawronski, director of sales and marketing for Garden-Fresh Foods, Inc., in Milwaukee, WI, "are those who take pride in roasting the bird at home, but either don't want or have time to make all the sides, and Millennials who share the meal with just a few friends and want something convenient yet cravable."

"The most popular seasonal product for us is our Baked Sage Dressing. We offer this in 1- and 2.5-pound sizes, each is high pressure pasteurized for a 45-day shelf life. Many delis will bring this in early in November and carry it right through Christmas," says Gawronski.

New this year, the company will introduce a 20-ounce size of Cheddar Macaroni and Cheese.

Potatoes are big-sellers and Garden-Fresh offers Au Gratin Potatoes, a Baked Potato Casserole and Old-Fashioned Whipped Potatoes.

"Mashed potatoes are always a perennial favorite year-round," says John McCarthy, Jr., senior brand marketing manager for Reser's Fine Foods, in Beaverton, OR. "However, we find that our Baked Scalloped Potatoes are so popular for Thanksgiving that operators sell it pre-packed in the cold case and hot ready-to-serve in the service case."

Supermarket delis looking for a potato side to differentiate themselves may find it in a newly- launched, crispy, filled potato product manufactured and marketed by Swiss Rösti, a family-operated start-up company headquartered in Portland, OR. The 2.5-ounce balls currently come in three flavors: Melty Swiss Raclette, filled with imported Swiss Raclette cheese; the Stuffed Baked Potato, filled with sour cream, cream cheese and chives; and the Zesty Chili Cheese, filled with garbanzo beans, sharp Cheddar cheese, red peppers,

poblano peppers and spices.

"We sell these four in a grab-and-go box in the frozen foods section of the supermarket," says Steve Caldwell, president and founder. "Plus, we offer a 96-count foodservice pack that delis can bake off and serve out of the hot case. The beauty is the rosti's versatility. They can be served hot topped with turkey gravy as part of a Thanksgiving meal or as a base for an eggs benedict or side to scrambled eggs for a holiday breakfast or topped with guacamole or chili cheese as an appetizer or snack while watching the game."

The company will introduce a vegan Curry Lentil rosti this fall. Ingredients include sweet potatoes, coconut milk, peas and carrots and turmeric.

Beyond this, mashed sweet potatoes and green bean casserole are other Thanksgiving best-sellers, according to McCarthy. "There are some differences by region. For example, in the West they are more interested in butternut squash than sweet potatoes. Some customers now look for a hybrid dish that is both traditional and either more healthful or trendy. Examples are green bean almondine instead of green bean casserole and a quinoa rather than bread stuffing."

These twists are evident on the Thanksgiving Menu at Roche Bros. Wild Rice & Kale Stuffing, Roasted Brussel Sprouts, Herb Roasted Root Vegetables and Roasted Balsamic Pearl Onions are among the selections.

Dinner Is Served

There are three reasons why customers come to the deli for Thanksgiving, according to Reser's McCarthy. "First, are those who want a complete meal ready to take home and serve. The second like the flexibility of customizing their whole meal or

part of their meal by buying a la carte. The third are running through the store looking for something to take with them to contribute to the holiday meal. To maximize sales during this biggest food holiday of the year, supermarket deli operators need to be prepared for all three."

The best time to prepare and promote is prior to the holiday.

"Our Thanksgiving menus arrive in stores four to six weeks in advance. Customers can order any time up until the Monday before the holiday, either via an in-store menu, or we have a catering website where they can order their Thanksgiving dinner online. We can't cook all these turkeys in-store, so we work with a third-party commissary that cooks the birds, adds the sides and packs the dinner kits. The day before Thanksgiving, they distribute early to our stores and customer pick up takes place all that day," explains Laliberte at Roche Bros..

Pre-order programs, signage, flyers and danglers in store as well as social media and website information are good ways to let customers know what's available in the deli for Thanksgiving.

Pre-order programs, signage, flyers and danglers in store as well as social media and website information are good ways to let customers know what's available in the deli for Thanksgiving.

choices, recommends Edwards Virginia Smokehouse's Edwards. "One with appetizers to desert for two to 10 servings and another version that provides just the main course to keep the costs down."

with the convenience or single price point of a bundled Thanksgiving dinner, provide creative inspiration instead, says Jennie-O's LaVallie. "For example, offer the turkey at one price and a choice of a certain number of sides at a discounted price, buy one get one free offer or line priced. Merchandise these sides all in one place in a seasonal set

For pre-bundled dinners, offer two so customers can see all of their choices at once. This could be in the cold grab-and-go case, hot to go in the service case or in both places. This is a good way to build the basket ring.

Finally, the inclusive nature of For customers that aren't as concerned Thanksgiving should extend to the entire supermarket, as well.

"Our stores really have knock-out merchandising in every department, not just in the deli and not only a few decorations here and there. When they walk in, they instantly know it's Thanksgiving. This is vitally important to the success of holiday sales," says Laliberte.



It's the Right Climate for British Crumblies

A cheese distinguished by its unique texture and taste variations

BY EMMA YOUNG

o fully appreciate one of Britain's finest treasures, it helps to have an education on its background and history.

British Crumblies refer to a subsection of British Territorial Cheeses. In brief, these are cheeses, which are named after the county or area in which they are from. This group of cheeses

have been coined the term 'crumblies' due to their texture, which distinguishes them from the harder cheeses within the territorials.

In the cheesemaking process of crumblies, their drainage is a slower procedure and, in turn, decalcifies the cheeses more, making their texture more crumbly than the quicker draining Cheddar recipe.

It's interesting to note that all cheese recipes would have been slow like these before commercial starters were introduced. The distinction lies in the fact that the Cheddar recipe, which produces a more robust curd, can be modified for industrial scale without completely losing its identity, whereas the same can't be said of the Crumblies. They need more



delicate handling to preserve the final texture, as this comes from allowing the milk to do what it does naturally.

The Lancashire recipe is unlike the more acidic Cheshire, Wensleydale or Caerphilly, as it uses very small quantities of starter and its acidity comes from allowing curd to keep developing for an extra day or two before salting. Its crumble also owes much to breaking up the curd several times once it has been removed from the vat to a draining table.

The Crumblies mainly originate from the North of England and Wales. Nowadays, however, these historical cheeses on an industrial scale have migrated slightly, and their borders have become a little less defined.

The term typically refers to four main cheeses, which are Cheshire, Wensleydale, Lancashire and Caerphilly. To fully understand Crumblies, it helps to be familiar with each type.

Cheshire

Cheshire is Britain's oldest named cheese, being mentioned in the Domesday Book. It was made originally in the northwest of England in Cheshire and its surrounding areas. From the 16th century, this area would have included Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and parts of Clwyd in North Wales.

Cheshire is well-known for its 'terroir', many believing that its distinct flavor is due to this.

In 1900, there were more than 2,000 farms making Cheshire; by 1939, there were just over 400. World War II brought it down to 40. There are still a number of farmhouse Cheshire producers, however only the Appleby family makes a raw milk cheese today. Now, most Cheshire is made in creameries, which are designed to manufacture many types of English territorial cheeses and are not area specific.

In flavor and aroma, Cheshire is clean, mild, acidic and fresh. Its texture is firm with an open, crumbly paste. It should be bright white in color, unless it is intentionally colored like Appleby's Cheshire. In this instance, annatto is used. Cheshire is sold and best eaten at around the three-month mark. It is traditionally eaten alone or it can be served with fruitcake, figs or dates that have a sweetness complemented by the tart acidity of the cheese.

Wensleydale

Wensleydale also is an incredibly







old recipe dating back to the Norman Conquest of England. From this, monasteries were built for Cistercian monks in the Yorkshire Dales, and they brought over their cheesemaking skills. The local animals of the area at the time were sheep. so Wensleydale was initially a sheep's milk cheese. It was also naturally blue owing to its open texture.

The dissolution of the monasteries in the 16th century led to the cheesemaking being passed down to local farmers who evolved it on its path within the UK. In Wensleydale, this process was continued in the same manner until the 17th century, when cow's milk started to replace sheep's milk in the area.

The bright white, clean looking Wensleydale as we know it today was only introduced in the mid 20th century and a large amount of the industrial version is made outside of Yorkshire. However, the Wensleydale Creamery now owns a PGI of 'Yorkshire Wensleydale', which you can see on your pre-packed cheese guarantee- of Lancashire in the northwest of England, ing that it is from Yorkshire.

Many modern flavor-added Wensleydales also have been cre-

The dissolution of the monasteries in the 16th century led to the cheesemaking being passed down to local farmers who evolved it on its path within the UK.

include the more popular Wensleydale Cranberries. Raspberry Prosecco. Wensleydale should be clean, mildly acidic and fairly dry with a flaky texture.

Lancashire

Lancashire is originally from the County close to Manchester. Lancashire is traditionally an incredibly long and laborious process. The cheese differs from others in ated to appeal to a new market. These that its make historically consists of more

than one day's worth of milking.

Now this process is seen as definitive of the farmhouse Lancashire cheese recipe, but these steps actually came to fruition because the majority of cheesemakers would have only owned a small amount of cows and, therefore, not produced enough milk in one day to make a whole cheese. Some farms would use up to three days worth of curds because of this. The curd was scooped into cloth-lined tubs, pressed and cut, broken up and recut several times. It would then have the previous





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days' curd added to it or, if at the beginning of the process, it would be left and stored to be mixed with the following day's curd. Those two (or three in some cases) days of curd would be salted and milled together to become the finished cheeses.

Over the course of the 20th century, the cheese has been adapted for factory production and is now made on a range of scales from farmhouse to industrial.

When industrializing, as became the fate of many English cheeses, this long process was changed for ease, so recipe modifications were made and the process was sped up. This, in turn, created a different cheese, which most knew and still know as Lancashire with so many still not even knowing or having tasted the farmhouse version.

This cheese, which is eaten at a younger age, is known as 'Crumbly' Lancashire, whereas the more aged, traditional cheeses are known as 'Creamy/ Tasty' Lancashire. Graham Kirkham is now the only cheesemaker making unpasteurized Lancashire cheese at his Beeslev Farm in Goosnargh, Lancashire.

from four to nine months and, in some cases, up to a year. It has a smooth and buttery texture, a friable paste with yogurt age and, therefore, turn over. As with all

Caerphilly came to life as a cheese due to the excess of milk on the dairy farm, the same way many cheeses were created.

notes and a distinct aroma of lemon.

Caerphilly

Caerphilly originated in Caerphilly, north of Cardiff in Wales. It is a newer cheese than the above three, dating back to the early 19th century.

Caerphilly came to life as a cheese due to the excess of milk on the dairy farm, the same way many cheeses were created. It soon became popular and, by 1830, the demand was so high that farmers were actively keeping aside milk for its production instead of just using their surplus.

The recipe spread to Somerset, where Tasty Lancashire is aged anywhere farmers started to make it as an alternative to Cheddar. Its appeal lav in the fact that it took a lot less time to make,

three cheeses above, traditional Caerphilly was hit by industrialization, and those making farmhouse cheeses declined rapidly. In 1939, Caerphilly was banned like many others and only the hard, 'National Cheese' could be made. By the 1950s only one farm, Ducketts in Wedmore, was making farmhouse Caerphilly.

Chris Duckett moved to Westcombe farm in Somerset, passed on the recipe, and it is still made there today. Duckett also passed his knowledge on to Todd Trethowan, who started Gorwydd Caerphilly in Wales. Their family moved in 2014 to Somerset, which mirrors the historical migration of the cheese. Caerphilly should be clean, milk and acidic, with citric lemony notes and fresh milky flavors.



A Guide to Prosciutto: The Cured Pork Delicacy

As today's delis continue diversifying, upscale meats like prosciutto provide a point of differentiation

BY HANNAH HOWARD

elicate, yet bursting with rich flavor, prosciutto is one of those foods that is becoming more well-known due to widespread appeal. Wrapped around melon, spread atop pizza or consumed on its own, the dry-cured ham delivers a salty sophistication and depth of flavor that offers wide-ranging pairing and cross merchandising options.

The word "prosciutto" is Italian for ham, but is usually used to describe the seasoned, cured, air-dried ham that comes in thin slices. The original prosciutto hails from Italy, but quality versions are now made elsewhere; quality American prosciutto is not too difficult to find. "Prosciutto cotto" refers to the cooked product, and "prosciutto crudo" is technically raw, but it's been cured for a year and sometimes longer, so it's safe to eat and doesn't quite look



"With over 2000 years of history behind it, prosciutto is like a bottle of Champagne,' says Alberto Minardi, CEO of Principe Foods, based in Long Beach, CA. "Each piece is unique. It is a live product and a natural product, made with only salt and pork. Prosciutto is one of the best protein sources that anyone, an elder person or child or athlete, can have."

"Prosciutto's popularity in the U.S. has shown a steady climb. In fact, it is Prosciutto di Parma's number one export market," according to Jason Stemm, vice president of Minneapolis-based Padilla, which is the marketing agency for the Consorzio del Prosciutto di Parma, an organization of producers in Italy for this geographically protected (PDO) product. "In research conducted in 2018, the Consorzio found that prosciutto was the fourth most consumed specialty meat after pepperoni, bologna and salami, with more than three out of five adult Americans having purchased or eaten prosciutto in the so that an animal slaughtered in autumn

previous 12 months."

Yet there is still significant room for growth. Just 37 percent of Americans purchased prosciutto in the past year, and of those, less than half purchased it regularly (more than four times in a year), according to the Consorzio.

Alchemy of Pork and Salt

Prosciutto dates back to pre-Roman times, and it's been a staple of Italian cuisine since then. The first mention of the meat was in 100 BCE from Cato the "Censor," who wrote about the extraordinary taste of the cured ham made near the town of Parma, Italy.

Prosciutto starts out as the hind pig leg, just like speck or Spanish jamón. It is then trimmed, salted, hung and allowed to dry for several months or even years. The technique of salt-curing and air-drying pork was born of necessity rather than luxury; it was a way to preserve meat from going bad,

could last throughout a long winter. Over the years, the once rustic techniques have been perfected and modernized, although the process hasn't fundamentally changed. Since prosciutto is just pork and salt, the many nuances in flavor, texture and marbling stem from the hog's breeding and raising, climate, technique and the duration of aging.

Here's how the magic happens: the meat is covered in salt and allowed to rest for a few weeks or even months. The salt draws out moisture, which prevents bacteria from growing harmful bacteria and concentrates its flavor. After salting, the pork legs are washed and seasoned, often with a secret family recipe involving black pepper, juniper, garlic or rosemary for a unique and fragrant flavor. They're then left to dry-age in a carefully temperature- and humidity-controlled environment for a year or more. The longer prosciutto is aged, the more complex it will taste. Pork, salt, air and time combine to create something more delicious than the sum of their parts.

The Many Faces of Prosciutto

Prosciutto di Parma DOP is a variety of cured pork made in Parma, a town in the heart of Emilia-Romagna, according to ageold tradition and specific regulations. It's considered the crown jewel of prosciutto, and its production is closely monitored by the Consorzio di Prosciutto di Parma. No additives of any kind can be used-iust local pork, sea salt, air and time—at least 20 months of aging are required, during which time it develops its melt-in-yourmouth texture.

Before heading out for sale, an inspector pierces the ham with a thin needle to test for flaws. If the prosciutto passes the test, it is branded with the Prosciutto di Parma seal—a five-point crown with the word "Parma" written inside—to let buyers know the product is the real deal. "This fully traceable system is guaranteed by the Parma Crown that is branded on every certified leg and pre-sliced package of Prosciutto di Parma," says Stemm.

Like Prosciutto di Parma, Prosciutto di San Daniele DOP is crafted from high-quality pork legs and sea salt. It's made from start to finish in San Daniele, a small village in Italy's northern region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, and the pork ages in air fresh from the mountains and the Adriatic Sea. After salting, the meat is pressed for two to three days, a unique step in producing Prosciutto di San Daniele. The pressing allows the salt





to more deeply penetrate the meat and forms the prosciutto into its signature guitar shape.

"Principe Prosciutto di Parma and San Daniele are some of the top-quality prosciutto produced in Italy," says Minardi, which he attributes to "the care, the knowledge of our people, and the absolute maniacal way of looking at each individual detail involved from the beginning to the end of the process."

Increasingly, American producers are crafting and selling prosciutto. Columbus Salame, founded in San Francisco in 1917, uses Italian recipes to make cured meats in Hayward, CA. Their hand-trimmed prosciutto is leaner than most and slow aged for at least 90 days.

Niman Ranch hams are rubbed with just sea salt and lard and cured without added nitrites or nitrates in New Providence, RI.

La Quercia in Norwalk, IA, prides itself

Increasingly, American producers are on its sustainable and humane practices and selling prosciutto. Columbus and makes silky and sweet prosciutto from lame, founded in San Francisco in 1917, heritage breed Berkshire pork.

Merchandising & Marketing

Interestingly, the prosciutto consumer cuts across all age and income levels. Stemm explains, "They sometimes refer to prosciutto as 'fancy ham' and consider it for special occasions and celebrations." But while many consumers still consider prosciutto and other specialty meats a special occasion purchase, there is no reason prosciutto cannot be enjoyed on any day.

"Whether you are a small coop, an independent regional store or a large supermarket chain, the key is education," says Minardi.

"Beyond handling, being able to talk about the product, its history and provenance are all key in growing sales," Stemm agrees.

Shoppers' top three sources for determining which specialty meats to buy are in-store display, in-store experiences and word of mouth. "Successful retailers often offer different ages of Prosciutto di Parma and are active in sampling to customers," says Stemm. "It should be prominent in the display case. Including some description of where it is from and how long it is aged can help romance the prosciutto. If you are slicing for an order, consider offering a few tastes to others waiting at the counter." Promoting it in signage, store ads and through digital and social channels can bring awareness to foods that are less frequent purchases.

Staff training is very important (the Consorzio has tools for retailers at Parmacrown.com). It is crucial that slicers know how to properly carve the meat; it's one of the few meats in the deli case that has skin on it, and a nice border of fat around the outside is important to the eating experience.

Prosciutto is a versatile meat for pairing with other foods, such as sweet, ripe melon or layered on a baguette with Mozzarella. Top crostini with prosciutto, cherry tomatoes, a sliver of Parmigiano Reggiano, and a drizzle of balsamic vinegar. Prosciutto makes a flavor-packed and elegant topping for flatbreads and pizza, and is great in a salad with arugula and peas, or watercress and figs. It adds a different dimension to a grilled cheese sandwich with tomato.

Prosciutto's well-rounded combination of salt, sweet and fat make it a good food for pairing with wine and beverages. **DB**



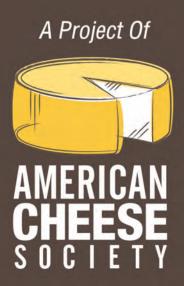


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Cibao's Growth & Evolution



In 1969, a visionary man named Siegfried Vieluf created Cima Meat Products, a company that manufactured sausages, in New York City. Later, the company changed its name to Cibao Meat Products, Inc. Its first product was Salami Campesino, which became very popular within the Dominican community. The nostalgia of the Dominicans abroad was the reason that, in the '80s, the Induveca, Sosua and Checo brands were introduced.

In August 1994, Cibao Meat Products relocated from Amsterdam

Ave. to a new plant in the Bronx and was equipped with new and modern machinery.

The company created Pavolami, a low fat, low sodium salami made with 100 percent turkey, along with the Ver-Mex line, including Mexican Chorizos, Cecina, Enchilada, Mexican Longaniza and Salami Salapeño.

In 1999, the company celebrated its 30th Anniversary and for that occasion the Jamonada Don Pedro line was launched.

Ten years later, honoring the company's founding father, Cibao created the Don Filo products line.

Again, Cibao products demanded a relocation and purchased a new 74,000-square-foot, 4-acre site located in Rockaway NJ that opened Nov. 1, 2018. This allowed the company to install new and modern equipment and triple its production capacity. The new location also could accommodate future expansion.

It was in 2014 that Cibao Meat celebrated its 45th Anniversary.

Cibao Meat is conscious that its many years of experience are not the only source of knowledge it should have. The company is constantly investigating, studying, trying and developing new sausage formulas to introduce. Thanks to this, Cibao Meat has improved the quality of its products and has maintained its leadership among the Hispanic market.

DB

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