

# DELI BUSINESS

MARKETING MERCHANDISING MANAGEMENT PROCUREMENT

OCT/NOV 2019 \$14.95

## WARM UP TO SOUPS THIS FALL

### ALSO INSIDE

SPECIALTY CHEESE: TARIFFS  
HUMMUS  
CRACKERS  
VEGETARIAN  
CHARCUTERIE  
JAMBON DE BAYONNE  
GRAB 'N GO



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# The Specialty Food Association Rebrands



The Specialty Food Association (SFA), based in New York City, recently announced the association's complete rebranding effort.

SFA's new vision to 'Shape the Future of Food' will serve as an umbrella to an array of educational, networking and research offerings designed to better serve the needs of its growing membership.

The newly redesigned SFA logo, an imperfect circle, captures the constantly shifting and evolving industry and the limitless effects that food and drink have on culture and everyday lives.

The logo also represents the association's 360-degree approach to nurturing and introducing new specialty food products and companies into the marketplace.

Founded in 1952, the SFA's earliest days were at a time of burgeoning American demand for international goods and global flavors.

Since then, and through the Fancy Food Shows, countless domestic and international brands have launched in the U.S. market under the auspices of the SFA.

Throughout its 67-year history, the association has acted as a catalyst for many of today's iconic food entrepreneurs and tastemakers, propelling countless brands into the U.S. marketplace and helping take American companies global.

Now, with plans to build a membership of not only food producers but buyers, distributors and affiliated businesses, the SFA is leveraging its strengths to convene a vital, modern community of food.

## COMING NEXT IN DEC/JAN ISSUE

**COVER STORY**

Going Green

**PROCUREMENT STRATEGIES**

Sourcing Local

**CHEESE CORNER**Cheese Fairs  
France**FEATURE**Ethnic Marketing  
Flatbreads**DELI MEATS**

Trends

**MERCHANDISING REVIEWS**Fermented Foods  
Dips & Spreads**PREPARED FOODS**

Entrees

**COMING IN FEB/MAR**

DELI BUSINESS will look at Prepared Foods

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# Rockin' around the charcuterie

Savory snacking with curated charcuterie offerings to drive sales featuring Dietz & Watson Premium Italian Specialties and Cheeses through multifaceted programs

- Premium Food Service Offerings available for both Natural Cheeses & No Antibiotics Ever Salami
- Premier Merchandising & Demo Solutions to show product versatility in-store
- Secondary Displays & Cross Merchandising Pairings Pre-Assembled Packaged Specialty
- Cheese & Salami boards perfectly packaged for quick sales & quicker consumption!





## TRANSITION ..... ANNOUNCEMENTS



### ACS HIRES MEMBERSHIP AND COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

The American Cheese Society (ACS), Denver, has announced Kristina Bobrowski will serve as membership and communications manager. She will oversee all aspects of the ACS association membership program and execute communications across its digital and print channels. Bobrowski has more than 10 years of communications, marketing, project management and event experience across a variety of industries. [www.cheesesociety.org](http://www.cheesesociety.org)



### BELGIOIOSO CHEESE WINS AT ACS

BelGioioso, Green Bay, WI, won seven medals at the annual American Cheese Society (ACS) Contest judging in Richmond, VA recently. BelGioioso Stracciatella took first place; Burrata with Black Truffle, Ricotta con Latte Platinum and La Bottega di BelGioioso Cow & Sheep's Milk Gorgonzola took second; and Burrata, Ricotta con Latte Whole Milk and Sharp Provolone Mandarinini took third. [www.belgioioso.com](http://www.belgioioso.com)

### VAN HOLTEN'S

### VAN HOLTEN'S BECOMES SQF CERTIFIED

Van Holten's, Waterloo, WI, has achieved the Safe Quality Food Program (SQF) Level 2 certification for maintaining stringent food safety standards. SQF is a rigorous and credible food safety and quality program that is recognized by retailers, brand owners and foodservice providers worldwide. Its family of food safety and quality codes are designed to meet industry, customer and regulatory requirements for all sectors of the food supply chain, from farm to retail. [www.vanholtenpickles.com](http://www.vanholtenpickles.com)



### WORLD CENTRIC RECEIVES NEXTY AWARD

World Centric, Petaluma, CA, was honored with a top industry accolade for excellence as a recipient of the 2019 Best Environmentally Responsible Packaging NEXTY Award. The award recognizes progressive, innovative, inspiring and trustworthy products in the natural products industry. For this award, a panel of judges chooses one stand-out product from thousands of entries across 22 categories. [www.worldcentric.org](http://www.worldcentric.org)



### GRAFTON VILLAGE WINS NINE BIG E GOLD MEDAL AWARDS

Grafton Village Cheese, Grafton, VT, was awarded nine medals at the 11th annual 2019 BIG E Gold Medal Cheese Competition. This included Bear Hill, an Alpine style washed rind cheese made with sheep's milk and cave-aged for a minimum of five months; Shepsog, which combines local sheep and cow's milk and is then cave-aged for at least five months; and Traditional Clothbound Cheddar Reserve, a cave-aged bandage-wrapped cheddar aged over 12 months. [graftonvillagecheese.com](http://graftonvillagecheese.com)



### PRÉSIDENT BRAND CHEESE WINS BIG

Lactalis American Group, New York, has announced five of its Président brand cheeses won medals at the World Dairy Expo Championship Dairy Product Contest. This includes gold medals for 8-ounce Feta Chunk and 7-ounce Unsalted Butter; a silver medal for Triple Crème Brie; and a bronze medal for 8-ounce Brie and Wee Brie. [www.presidentcheese.com](http://www.presidentcheese.com)



### IDDBA WINS THE 2019 TSNN BEST OF SUSTAINABILITY AWARD

The International Dairy Deli Bakery Association (IDDBA), Madison, WI, has been honored with the Trade Show News Network (TSNN) Best of Sustainability Award. The IDDBA focused on reducing its CO2 emissions by running refrigerated and frozen trailers off of 208 volt, 60 amp, 3 phase electricity. The result created a diversion of approximately 326-389 tons of CO2. Its sustainable efforts included food donations to the Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida. [www.iddba.com](http://www.iddba.com)



### LAURA CHENEL WINS FIRST PLACE AT ACS

Laura Chenel, Sonoma, CA, has announced its Original Medallion has won first place in the fresh goat cheese medallion category at the 2019 American Cheese Society Judging & Competition. Laura Chenel also won second place in the aged goat cheese category for Laura Chenel Crottin, an aged cheese made with a geotrichum rind, and third place for a flavored fresh goat cheese log with its newest flavor, Garlic & Chive. [www.laurachenel.com](http://www.laurachenel.com)



## ANNOUNCEMENT ..... NEW PRODUCTS



### VICTORY FOR CAPUTO CHEESE AT ACS

Caputo Cheese, Chicago, won a number of awards at the American Cheese Society (ACS) Conference. The company won first place for its hand-dipped Ricotta, first place for its Burratini and second place for its Nodini in the cheeses' respective categories.

[www.caputocheese-market.com](http://www.caputocheese-market.com)



### A BOWL OF CONVENIENCE

Green Giant, Parsippany, NJ, has introduced a line of fresh vegetable vegan meal bowls. The six distinct world flavors can be microwaved in the bowl and ready in minutes. Varieties include Buddha; Burrito; Fried Rice; Pad Thai; Ramen Bowl; and Rancheros Bowls. Each is comprised of different value-added vegetable products and comes with sauces and/or seasoning packets.

[www.greengiant.com](http://www.greengiant.com)



### SINGLE SERVING OPTIONS

LaClare Family Creamery, Malone, WI, has recently expanded its offerings with sliced goat cheeses. Cheddar, Mozzarella and Jack varieties in peggable packages containing six 1-ounce slices. The complex Cheddar adds extra flavor to sandwiches or can be served on a cheese board. Mozzarella is a mild, creamy, meltable cheese. Jack has a rich, buttery mouth feel.

[www.laclarefamily-creamery.com](http://www.laclarefamily-creamery.com)



### CHEESE & MEAT SINGLES DEBUT

Volpi Foods, St. Louis, has expanded its offerings with a new flavor combination of mild Oaxaca cheese wrapped with thin slices of uncured chorizo. At 1.5 ounces, Volpi's new Roltini Singles are individually packaged, contain 11 grams of protein and are made without synthetic nitrates and nitrites. Each batch of snacks is packaged into 12-count display boxes ready to merchandise in retailers' fresh coolers.

[www.volpifoods.com](http://www.volpifoods.com)



### 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](http://www.schumancheese.com)



### SINGLE SERVE SAVORY SNACK

Depalo Foods, Belmont, NC, has introduced single-serve Italian savory items filled with freshly shredded cheeses and sliced meats. It starts with aged dough, which creates a flavorful crispy crust and moisture on the inside. These hand-held items are made with cheeses freshly shredded daily. Ideal for the pizza department or a single-serve meal solution, these items also can be eaten on the go.

[www.depalofoods.com](http://www.depalofoods.com)



### A GRAND RESERVE CHEDDAR

Old Croc, Chatham, NJ, has introduced Grand Reserve Australian vintage Cheddar. Crafted with milk from grass-fed cows and non-GMO ingredients, Grand Reserve is carefully aged two years for an extra sharp, rich flavor. The cheese's texture is creamy, yet crumbly, with noticeably crunchy crystals. Grand Reserve is available in a wide variety of cuts, including 10 ounces, 24 ounces and a 10-pound loaf for cut and wrap.

[www.oldcroccheese.com](http://www.oldcroccheese.com)



### HANDMADE CHEESE STICK

Beecher's Handmade Cheese, Seattle, has launched the Beecher's Flagship Cheese Stick. This item consists of Beecher's signature and most popular cheese, Flagship, in a new stick format, ideal for enjoying on the go. Aged for a minimum of 15 months, Beecher's Flagship is a Cheddar-Gruyère-style cheese that has a robust, nutty flavor and subtle notes of caramel and browned butter. The single-serving snack packs 5 grams of protein in each serving. The cheese sticks are sold in packs of eight or individually.

[www.beecherscheese.com](http://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](mailto:DeliBusiness@phoenixmedianet.com)**



# Delis Most Vulnerable To Deep Discounter Threat



By  
**Jim Prevor**  
Editor-in-Chief

**W**here will the growth in retail deli come from? The attention being paid is to the benefit of using high service deli as a differentiating factor. There are indications, however, that the growth will come from more mundane efforts.

The British newspaper, *The Daily Telegraph*, reported on the latest grocery retail market share statistics in the United Kingdom:

*Aldi and Lidl have raked in an additional £1bn in sales over the past year as more shoppers desert rival supermarkets.*

*The German discounters have been luring middle-class customers from the likes of Waitrose and Marks & Spencer as well as the "big four" in recent years by selling products such as manuka honey and less expensive lobster.*

*The two chains now have a combined 14 percent of the grocery market as they continue to open stores across the UK. That is 0.8 percent higher than last year and the equivalent of £1bn in sales, according to research firm Kantar.*

*They have recently overtaken Co-op and Waitrose to become the fifth and seventh-biggest supermarkets in Britain.*

None of this is a shock. Aldi entered the UK market in 1990 and Lidl in 1994. The stores have evolved. Though the basic concept—small format, private label, deep discounter—has remained, the references in the article to manuka honey and lobster point out that the understanding of what discount means has evolved. It is not just, or even primarily, a matter of price; it is about great prices on the products people want.

Though many discount operations do tend to serve lower income people, the sweet spot in the market is discounting products for the middle class and affluent because these people have money to spend! In that sense, deep discounters differ more in format than substance from, say, Costco.

While the stores have been changing, consumer perceptions also changed. If consumers were a little ashamed to be caught shopping at a discounter, now they are perceived as intelligent people.

The transition has been gradual. As the stores changed, people's perceptions of the stores also changed. Economic fluctuations added to the transition. During the so-called "great recession" of 2008, many consumers who were suffering some

hardship tried stores such as Aldi and Lidl for the first time and found them perfectly satisfactory. When they got their jobs back or hours restored, they continued shopping at deep discounters.

What is fascinating is how the big chains, fully aware of this growing threat, never really responded. It wasn't until the last quarter of 2018, after almost two decades of watching Aldi's market share grow, that Tesco opened Jack's, named after Jack Cohen, Tesco's founder, as a competitor to the discounters. Even then, it is a kind of half-hearted effort, opening stores in locations that failed for Tesco and opening slowly only 10 small stores in the last year.

Of course, we shouldn't be surprised. In America, Walmart opened supercenters across the country and no major supermarket chain thought they should launch supercenters of their own for many years. Even when companies, such as Kroger, purchased supercenter operators, such as Fred Meyer, they failed to roll them out across the country.

In both the U.S. and UK, the focus of retailers was on trying to use existing assets in a way that preserved their business. So, you wound up with bizarre efforts, such as private label programs that were designed to be as cheap as the discounters but put in the ugliest packaging possible so existing customers would not be tempted to trade down.

We have every reason to think that Aldi, Lidl and similar concepts will continue to grow in the U.S. Perhaps more than any other department, this poses a challenge for deli/retail foodservice. The excitement in the field is fresh foods, with countless fresh food offerings, such as olive bars, wings and more.

Of course, this is exciting and delicious, but it also is high service, which means high labor, which means affluent areas and higher price points. Yet if the growth is going to be in the U.S. as it has been in the UK—with discount operations selling good quality food but at value prices—it may turn out that the growth in deli will be high quality, but prepackaged foods.

In order to stay competitive on price, the focus has to shift to new packaging technologies and new ways to offer high quality food at lower prices with less service. If the market share growth at retail will be from deep discounters, retailers need to be thinking about how to respond while vendors think about how to supply.

**DB**

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "James B. Prevor".





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[fioruccifoods.com](http://fioruccifoods.com)





# Cheese Tariffs Threaten Fourth Quarter Sales



By  
**Lee Smith**  
Publisher

**O**n page 19, we have an article about the proposed tariffs levied against the European Union and approved by the World Trade Organization (WTO) that are scheduled to go into effect on October 18. These tariffs are, in essence, an import tax to offset the losses that Boeing suffered due to the unfair trade practices of Airbus. In other words, it is a dispute between two airline companies. The damage that was approved by the WTO was \$7.6 billion.

Tariffs are punitive. They are designed to hurt EU countries, and the products they target are designed to severely hurt companies and regions as well as classes of trade. They are also designed to create loud audiences on both sides of the ocean in order to stop unfair trade practices. They are not designed to cripple, but instead to hurt and punish those companies that will cause the biggest outcries.

In this case, there are many specialty products being targeted, specifically cheeses, olives, olive oil, French wine and fruits. There are other products also on the list, but most don't affect the specialty food trade. Most people in the trade think, regardless of international law, targeting companies that had nothing to do with the trade dispute is inherently unfair.

There are many concerns. While there is a published final list of products, the list can change up until October 18, and it may be delayed, or parts of it may be delayed. The tariff percentages may also change. Right now, people are betting that the currently published list is the final list, but the uncertainty makes planning difficult.

Second, the tariffs are scheduled to go into effect in October and the ramifications for the holiday season are unknown. For specialty retailers and their producers, the fourth quarter is the make-or-break quarter. Profits are made during the holidays or the entire year is a bust.

There is a misconception that these products can be easily bought from U.S. producers. European cheese imports are approximately 40 to 50 percent of sales. The United States only produces 5 percent of the olives and olive oil consumed. Unlike many products, it is not just a matter of increasing production. In order to make more cheese, more

milk must be produced, and milk comes from lactating cows or other ruminants. In the case of a cow, gestation is nine-and-a-half months and it takes two to three years for the calf to mature. She must then be bred and, once her calf is born, she will lactate. This is when the cheeses will be made and aged for an appropriate time period.

With a withering dairy industry, it remains to be seen how many dairies will be willing to make capital investments to increase herd size. Capital investments are also a concern for cheesemakers. The cost of new vats, facilities and aging rooms are all very expensive. They must ask themselves if it's worth the risk. And what happens when the tariffs are removed?

If prices dramatically increase and sales begin to decrease, there are other short- and long-term implications. Importers and distributors may need to increase their prices and/or increase the size of a minimum delivery. They may also lay off people. Promotional monies may disappear.

Long term, the greatest danger is a strategic change with our European partners. Some companies may decide to close their U.S. headquarters and/or lay off staff. But more insidious may be viewing the U.S. market differently. Will promotional monies be moved to China and the Middle East where demand is increasing? Will the United States no longer be the pearl in the oyster? **DB**



Pg. 19



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# Warm Up To Soups This Fall



A look at the latest trends in soups in the supermarket deli

BY KEITH LORIA

Soup was once the go-to meal when someone was sick or wanted to warm up after a cold day, but the modern consumer understands soup is so much more than it once was. Thanks to a variety of interesting flavors and different ways to buy soup in the deli department, soup has become a must for stores looking to succeed.

This is especially true in the fall months, when many of the major soup companies release new tastes for the season, and people's minds start turning to soup for meals.

"Today, when people reach for soup, they're looking for something nourishing and wholesome and comforting, but more and more, they're also looking for something healthful, with a clean label and all-natural ingredients," says Ashley Albert, co-founder of the Matzo Project, headquartered in Brooklyn, NY.

Soups usually have protein, some sort of starch (noodles or rice), vegetables and a nutrient-rich broth, so it is considered a complete meal solution for many.

John Becker, senior director of mar-

keting for Sandridge Food Corp., Medina, OH, says a trend developing in fall soups revolves around grains and other functional foods as ingredients, which continue to drive product development.

"Soups are a great category to introduce on trend ingredients," he says. "And gluten free continues to drive demand. Beans and vegetables help with functionality."

Bob Sewall, executive vice president of sales and marketing for Blount Fine Foods, Fall River, MA, has seen double-digit growth in both hot and cold soups,





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and is happy the category is so strong.

"Truthfully, fall soup is becoming less and less of a thing because people are now eating soup year-round, so now it's about an everyday sell," he says. "Not that it's not important. We may use it as a time to change a couple of flavors out, but it used to be fall was just the beginning of the soup season, whereas now it's more of a promotional time for soup."

Sandy Rega, vice president of marketing and sales planning for Kettle Cuisine, headquartered in Lynn, MA, says fall is all about warmth and comfort with bold flavor twists, such as chipotle peppers, ginger and apple.

"Today's consumers are also looking options which provide a healthier spin on classic comfort," she says. "Plant-based offerings provide consumers seeking protein-packed foods a satisfying alternative."

### Following the Trends

John Cummins, director of culinary development/executive chef for Winter

Gardens Quality Foods, headquartered in New Oxford, PA, says he's seen a strong emphasis on fall soup classics come back in fashion recently.

"Some of the things we have put in development this fall is a version of the Beef Bourguignon soup, things that are rich and heavy, with mushrooms, onions and bacon," he says. "Also, a Coq au Vin, a traditional French entrée, made with ground chicken, mushrooms and bacon, but taking those ingredients and turning it into a soup for retailers."

Another fun and hearty item that he believes is popular in supermarket delis is the company's Bacon Cheeseburger soup and a new Beer and Cheese soup that has been well received.

"We also have a few squash soups, and vegetable soups always make a strong showing in the fall," says Cummins. "We are launching some things this spring, such as a skinny version of our Broccoli-Cheddar soup, which is lighter in calories."

Another trend Winter Gardens Quality

Foods is seeing comes from what's happening in the foodservice realm, where broth-style Asian soups are finding their way onto more restaurant menus. The company is hoping to launch its own Ramen-style noodle soup in the months ahead, looking to satisfy the demand for healthy and low-fat soups.

In response to the recent trends it has noticed take root, Sandridge Food Corp. has released several new flavors of soups that address Millennial demands, whether through more global flavors like Thai Ginger Carrot, functional offers like Vegetarian Black Bean or through superfood ingredients like its Chicken Quinoa and Kale or Sweet Potato Kale.

In addition, the company relies on old staples this time of year.

"Roasted Pumpkin and Apple is a seasonal item that does very well," says Becker. "Our Butternut Squash Bisque became such a strong seasonal flavor, we have now made it available year-round. Our chili category continues to grow, espe-

PHOTOS COURTESY OF KETTLE CUISINE





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cially our Cactus Chili, a sweet chili made with traditional ingredients, accented with corn and pickled cactus.”

At the moment, the Matzo Project exclusively sells its Matzo Ball Mix and Matzo Ball Soup Kit, so they are both staples for the fall. Albert says the company’s Matzo Ball Soup Kit hits all of the marks today’s demanding supermarket customers are looking for.

“It’s one of the only soups in its category that is simultaneously all-natural, vegetarian (the broth is vegan), kosher and MSG-free while still being richly flavored and legitimately delicious,” Albert says. “Add to that the fact that it’s easy to make and I’d say we’ve got a trendy fall soup on our hands.”

Blount Fine Foods has been working hard on the ingredient side of its soups to get fresher ingredients and improve the quality of all its soup offerings. A new flavor it has launched for the fall season includes Cauliflower Parmigiana.

Kettle Cuisine employs numerous food experts who are constantly searching for and trying new concepts and ingredients.

“We are invested in long-term partnerships with world-class data and research organizations with access to both qualitative and quantitative research,” Rega says. “As leaders in the fresh soup industry, we are committed to help our customers develop a successful soup program, working with them to determine the right mix of flavors, sizes, prices and promotions for their operation.”

While the core rotation of flavors, such as Tomato Basil and Broccoli Cheddar, are still main staples in the fall, when it comes to seasonal-specific flavors, the company offers a Spiced Pumpkin and Hot Honey & Butternut Squash Bisque.

“We are finding that consumers not only look forward to a spiced pumpkin or butternut squash soup, it is expected as a main staple time of year,” says Rega. “Our Quinoa & Sweet Potato Chili with Black Beans is

also a seasonal favorite that hits on all the top trends. We are also finding a lot of success with exciting world flavors, such as Moroccan Lentil Stew with Harissa and Black Lentil & Roasted Garlic Dahl.”

### How Best to Sell

In the supermarket deli, there are several ways that soups can be sold. Not only can they be made available behind the deli counter, served both hot and cold, but soup bars are becoming extremely popular, as many retailers are finding the value of adding extra space for hot soup offerings.

“Hot bars are a primary location for immediate consumption,” says Becker. “Many operators also bundle single-serving sizes with sandwich options in the grab-and-go area. We also have some retailers who utilize soups as a component of their meal program. For example, our White Chicken Chili can be a nacho topping, and Lobster Bisque can be used as a unique sauce over fettuccini.”

The primary volume of soup still comes from hot wells, with fresh soup being a complement to hot bars, not a competitor. And don’t think those kettles are just for soup. Becker notes Sandridge Food Corp.’s White Macaroni and Cheese makes a great option in the soup well.

### Becoming a Soup Destination

As more Millennials shop for lunches and dinners for one, employing some sort of soup destination is a great way to attract people to the store and the deli department, as many people see soup as a healthy

meal or side dish.

A robust grab-and-go selection helps capture incremental sales for a different meal occasion.

Sandridge Food Corp. has seen good success with operators who offer a base menu of flavors available every day, but also offer some daily specials to create some excitement.

“Publishing menus in advance also helps shoppers create intended visits,” says Becker. “Our soups are refrigerated, fully prepared and ready for service. There is essentially no labor in preparation. Out of stocks are reduced with the ability to quickly restock items. A well-executed soup program adds sales and margin dollars to the P&L.”

Cummins notes that soups sell best in the deli section, and although some retailers have experimented with putting soups in other areas of the store, most times they quickly return to the deli area.

“Soup is a good product, and shrink is very minimal compared to other products sold in the department,” he says. “It stays fresh, and the margins for retailers are very favorable.”

### Soup’s Evolution

The snacking trend that has defined the younger generations over the last couple of years fits perfectly with the soup category.

“Many consumers are eating less complete meals, but eating more times per day,” says Becker at Sandridge Food. “Soups are a great solution to a snack, providing needed calories and protein.”

Albert notes that soup is also a great vehicle to toss in leftover celery, carrots, onions and roasted chicken scraps to reduce food waste and is also a non-committal way for delis and their guests to explore different cultures and flavors from around the world.

“It’s a great, low-fat add-on to beef up a meal for people counting calories, and who doesn’t love to order a soup and half sandwich combo? It’s a classic,” she says.

Bros says most supermarket customers have pretty significant hot bars and offer numerous soup options around the deli.

“We try to offer the same product in a retail pack, whether it be a 16-, 24- or 32-ounce,” he says. “That’s also sold in the supermarket deli section close to the prepared foods. It’s really grown significantly in the last five years.”

Sewall agrees that soup is more popular today because it fits the healthy and clean

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look that consumers are seeking in 2019.

"As long as the label is clean and easily read with good ingredients, it's really helping to drive it," he says. "For people who may be snacking more, soup is portable and is a great snack for work, school or at home. The convenience of it has helped drive the category, plus the variety available is amazing. You can have a different flavor three times a day, seven days a week. It really fits today's busy person's lifestyle as well as their dietary goals."

### Soup Companies Play a Role

Many of the soup companies know they need to do their part to attract people to soups this fall, which is why there have been new ad campaigns on television and social media.

For example, Campbell Soup Co., based in Camden, NJ, recently teamed with NFL players Dak Prescott and Saquon Barkley for a new fall promotion. The campaign, entitled "Champions of Chunky," is an updated version of the company's classic Mama's Boy campaign from more than 20 years ago.

The spots feature the NFL stars and



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SANDRIDGE FOOD CORP.

their respective "champions" who interrupt them on game day—at a press conference, in the locker room and on the sidelines, to make sure they're filling up right with a bowl of Campbell's Chunky soup.

"We all have champions in our lives who play a huge role in our success—whether that's a parent, sibling, grandparent, spouse, stepparent or friend—and this campaign recognizes those individuals who support

us every day," says Gary Mazur, director, brand marketing for the company.

It's creative content like this that keeps soup on the minds of people throughout the NFL season, and supermarket delis can capitalize on this by bringing promotional items into the store set up by the soup bars.

### Packaging Options

When it comes to packaging, Becker shares this is an area where there has not been much innovation.

"I would like to see packaging companies spend more time in this space," he says. "We see several innovative options in Europe, but few domestically."

Sewall says some of the larger containers that delis are offering, such as the 32-ounce containers, has made it possible for more families to consider soup in the home as a meal, mostly to serve with bread or salad as a meal.

Portability is a big factor in soup's rise, and the packaging does play a big part in that, which is why many delis offer easy-use cups and bowls for soup to be scooped up, and many of these are environmentally friendly, which is also a big plus among today's consumers.

"You can eat soup in your car, you can eat it at your desk, you can take it home in a bowl, so there's a practicality to it, and I think economically, to scratch-make good soups takes a lot of effort and takes time, so there's a real perceived value to being able to buy soup and enjoy a quality, healthy product at a good price," says Cummins. "With the offerings of more and more fresh-prepared meals, it fits nicely in the supermarket deli and has really helped grow the category."

This creates opportunity for delis. **DB**





# A CHANGING CLIMATE FOR SPECIALTY CHEESE

Proposed tariffs pose serious threat to the specialty cheese industry

BY HANNAH HOWARD



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ATALANTA

A conflict with the European Union has led to a long list of proposed tariffs on goods from European countries. That list includes a wide array of specialty foods and drinks, from Scotch Whisky to olive oil to pasta to jam. One the categories with the most potential to be severely hurt is cheese, with a 25 percent tariff proposed on most types of European cheese, including Stilton, Pecorino Romano and Parmigiano Reggiano. The proposed action may affect 90 percent of cheeses that the U.S. imports from the European Union, especially cheeses from Italy, Spain and the UK.

It means that sprinkling some

Parmigiano Reggiano on spaghetti or serving guests a wedge of Manchego will be more expensive for cheese lovers. "Even if everyone works on very small margins, the tariffs will still mean an increase in prices for the consumer," explains Joe Gellert, president and owner of World's Best Cheeses,

based in Armonk, NY. "That means specialty cheeses, which now cost between \$15 and \$30 per pound, will cost between \$25 and \$50 [per pound]. The prices will be ridiculous. Consumers won't be able to pay these prices, and stores won't be able to sell their products."

"It's a real disaster, Gellert added. "This means we will not have cheese for Christmas."

Retailers and importers agree that the tariffs would result in steep prices







PHOTOS COURTESY OF SAVENCIA CHEESE



that could cripple thousands of American businesses. European cheese constitutes slightly more than half of all cheese sales in America. According to the New York-based Specialty Food Association (SFA), about 14,000 specialty food retailers and 20,000 other food retailers could be affected by the tax.

### From Airplanes to Cheese

The new tariffs stem from discord between the U.S. and E.U. over what the Feds consider to be illegal subsidies given to the European aviation company Airbus by the E.U. The allegation is that the subsidies give E.U. companies an unfair advantage and damage American aviation companies, especially Boeing. This disagreement has been simmering for decades—in 2004, the E.U. accused the U.S. of giving \$19 billion in improper subsidies to Boeing.

This May, the World Trade Organization (WTO), acting as a mediator, granted the U.S. permission to impose tariffs on the E.U., ruling that the subsidies received by Airbus were indeed illegal. The ruling paves the way for the U.S. to retaliate through raising tariffs.

At the time of this writing, October 18 is the day set for tariffs to go into effect.

But the United States Trade Representative has already prepared two

## *The greater specialty food industry will feel the impact of tariffs intensely.*

lists of up to \$25 billion worth of products that it can tax. Airplanes; bicycles; fish; wine; leather purses; carpets; brandy; glassware; pork products; and clocks make the list, as does cheese.

How did the food industry and specialty cheese get caught up in this fight? Long before the Trump presidency, the U.S. and Europe have exchanged punitive tariffs on luxury goods in order to press for resolutions to trade grievances. The goal is that European cheesemakers, hurt by the cost, will call their members of parliament and encourage them to make a deal with America about aircraft subsidies.

"It started during Bill Clinton's presidency with the dispute between Boeing and Airbus," according to Sebastien Lehembre, senior brand manager at Savencia Cheese

USA, New Holland, PA. "It's not recent, and it has nothing to do with agriculture and food business, yet cheesemakers might pay the price."

Although the proposed tariffs are incredibly sweeping, they are not entirely unprecedented. George W. Bush imposed a 300 percent tariff on the French blue cheese Roquefort as part of a campaign to persuade Europe to import hormone-treated American beef. The tariff only lasted a few months—Barack Obama reversed it pretty early in his presidency—but hormones in beef remain an ongoing contention between the U.S. and E.U. today.

### An Impact Felt from Producer to Consumer

These sorts of tariffs often target luxury and specialty products. The idea is to avoid tariffs that will raise the cost of basic necessities or damage the economy by making business inputs prohibitively expensive. Instead, they focus on goods that people can simply skip or substitute. But the precipitous drop in the now \$1.5 billion in annual sales from imported specialty cheeses will be sorely felt across all stages of the supply chain, from importer to customer.

This price escalation will simply make these imported European cheeses inaccessible to the general consumer.

The move would be "debilitating for small- and medium-sized importers, distributors, retailers and restaurants," says Thomas Gellert, president of Atalanta Corp., based in Elizabeth, NJ. "It will affect people's livelihoods and make a severe economic impact."

The resulting price escalation would simply make imported European cheeses inaccessible to the general consumer. Retailers would no longer be able to stock these cheeses, as consumers would be unwilling or unable to foot the giant price tag. Specialty food retailers, already operating with razor thin margins and highly perishable products, are gearing up for potential calamity.

Lehembre explained that the tariffs will be "potentially devastating for everybody." With about 1,000 employees, Savencia Cheese USA would have "less revenue, less investments—it would be detrimental for every part of the organization and everyone involved. It's a lose-lose situation."

The greater specialty food industry will feel the impact intensely. For exam-



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ple, the U.S. is the world's largest olive oil importer—domestically-produced olive oil meets only about 5 percent of the American demand, and we import the rest. We simply wouldn't have enough olive oil to supply the foodservice and home cooks

who use it. "This decision will have a ripple effect throughout the entire industry and the economy," says Joe Gellert.

Tom Gellert recently headed to Washington, D.C. for meetings on the Hill to lobby against the proposed tariffs. The

*The politics  
are incredibly  
complicated  
and impossible  
to predict.*



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United States Trade Representative held hearings in May and August to allow companies and groups that might be affected by the tariffs to make an argument.

Dairy and specialty food business and trade associations have spoken up, and now that window of time has closed.

The Trade Representative has announced the final list of items after the World Trade Organization released its final decision this fall.

### Uncertainty and Confusion

That won't be the end of the dispute, either. There's another case in front of the WTO that the E.U. has brought against the U.S., making the opposite claim—that the United States provided \$20 billion in illegal subsidies to Boeing. The outcome will be decided early next year and could potentially allow European retaliation against the U.S. with similar tariffs. In anticipation, the E.U. has already drafted a list of \$20 billion of American imports it will tax, from planes





PHOTO COURTESY OF WORLD'S BEST CHEESE

to food products to chemicals. Tit for tat.

As of now, the unknowns about what will actually happen far outweigh any certainties. The politics are incredibly complicated and impossible to predict. At the end of the day, “maybe cheese will be included in the tariffs after all, maybe it will be only a few cheeses, maybe it will be all cheeses,” says Lehembre. “We really don’t know for sure.”

“The only thing that President Trump has addressed directly is French wine,” according to Lehembre. “He can be very clear when he wants to be, but on this specific matter, he hasn’t said or tweeted anything. We can only wait and see.”

That giant question mark is scary for businesses—from importers to supermarkets—with specialty foods at their core.

It comes at an especially perilous time as companies are anxiously placing their orders for the fourth quarter, by far the busiest season in the specialty food business.

Many importers are “bringing in an enormous amount of product to arrive before mid-October,” Joe Gellert explains. “They’re stocking up just in case.”

This is also the case for more shelf stable items, like pasta and olive oil.

### What Can We Do?

But cheese is highly perishable, and especially when it comes to soft and fresh cheeses, the short shelf life makes stockpiling large quantities a non-viable option. “We can all speculate, but we can’t do much,” says Lehembre, who says that for

*As of now,  
the unknowns  
about what will  
actually happen  
far outweigh any  
uncertainties.*

now, it’s “business and usual.”

Some American dairy farmers have expressed their support of the tariffs. The National Milk Producers Federation, a lobbying organization that represents mostly large dairies, has testified in favor; they even asked the government to expand their list to include more cheeses. They believe that high import costs will encourage Americans to spend more money on American-produced cheese and dairy.

### Impact on American Cheeses

Huge price tags on European cheeses might, in the short term, boost sales of American-made artisan cheese. But it’s hard to know for sure; they might instead hurt sales of all cheeses.

If less cheese is sold, shipping and distribution costs could climb throughout the industry. Some domestic producers worry that distributors will raise delivery

costs to compensate for half-empty trucks. Retailers believe that consumer demand for alternatives might send U.S. cheese prices skyrocketing. Plus, American cheesemakers and milk producers who export to the E.U. may be affected by possible retaliatory tariffs.

### Raising Awareness

Family-owned cheese importer and distributor, World’s Best Cheeses, launched a grass roots campaign to raise awareness of the imported cheese crisis and encourage consumers to sign an online petition at [ImportCheeseLovers.com](http://ImportCheeseLovers.com).

“We’re hoping that enough noise will be made that they don’t go through with the crazy idea,” Joe Gellert says. “We felt it was our duty to not only educate consumers about the proposed tariffs, but combat them. The ‘Save The Cheese’ campaign and [ImportCheeseLovers.com](http://ImportCheeseLovers.com) were created to aid our retail partners in conversations with their elected officials and for consumers to voice their support.”

Atalanta Corp. is working to “put pressure on our government to prevent this from happening and to mitigate the situation when it does happen,” Tom Gellert says. “I would like to see the business community speak up, start and sign petitions. Call their congressmen. We can’t be complacent.”

Our goal is to “get the community awake, involved and speaking up,” says Tom Gellert. The future of cheese just might depend on it.

DB





# The Dip

## THAT KEEPS ON GIVING

It's amazing how an Eastern Mediterranean dish consisting of a creamy, thick paste made primarily from finely-crushed chickpeas, garlic, tahini, olive oil, lemon juice and salt has become a deli department staple.

It may be its healthier nutritional profile, the ever expanding innovative flavors or the more recently unveiled convenience packaging with pairings that have given it an edge, or maybe all of the above.

Whatever the reason, the popularity of this dip, spread and/or topping shows no

### Hummus popularity continues rising, as diverse flavors are unveiled

BY LISA WHITE

signs of waning.

The Moscow, ID-based USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council estimates that hummus sales in supermarkets are worth \$725

million and an estimated 25 percent of American homes now stock hummus in the refrigerator.

According to a report published by Market Research Future (MRFR), the global hummus market is assessed to grow 12.84 percent between 2018 and 2027. North America is the largest regional market for hummus, accounting for more than 55.7 percent of the global market share.

"Hummus has shown a steady annualized market growth of 11 percent from 2009 through 2017," says Morgan Murray,



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Tribe Mediterranean Foods, Inc.



general manager of Califresh of California LLC, located in Sanger, CA “I would have to say trends in sales are definitely up.

Due to massive marketing campaigns by major manufacturers of this product, consumers have a heightened awareness of hummus and its nutritional value. This is having a positive effect in the packaged supermarket deli aisle.”

The growing move towards plant-based proteins also has helped propel the hummus category to new heights in recent years.

### Talking Trends

Since the creation of hummus, which is thought to date back to 13th century Egypt, the category has undergone an evolution of sorts.

One example is the varieties transcending from the savory category to sweet.

Tribe Mediterranean Foods, LLC, based in Taunton, MA, recently launched a line of sweet hummus with flavors such as chocolate, vanilla, peanut butter, caramel and cake batter.

“Last I looked, the traditional hummus category was down \$3.5 million, but sweet hummus sales were up,” says John McGuckin, Tribe’s CEO. “It’s the sweet varieties that are attracting new users.”

Yet, the hummus category as a whole has a ways to go in terms of usage.

“Household penetration is still less than 30 percent in this category,” McGuckin says. “It’s now a matter of building awareness and encouraging trial. The strategy is

## *The move toward plant-based proteins has helped propel hummus.*

to get consumer insights to drive growth.”

The impetus for this may be coming from an unlikely source—foodservice.

“Panera is launching a hummus bowl on its new menu that includes various proteins, and we think that will help reset consumers in terms of better understanding hummus usage,” McGuckin says. “When the foodservice industry at large begins to use hummus in other ways, the opportunity for growth will be dramatic.”

Many are not aware that, in addition to its use as a dip, hummus can serve as a spread, side dish or protein bowl solution.

While some contend flavor innovations will be the catalyst for growth in this category, others feel a back to basics approach will get the job done.

“Consumers are favoring traditional flavors, such as original, lemon, roasted red pepper and garlic,” says Aimee Tsakirellis, director of marketing at Cedar’s Foods, based in Ward Hill, MA. “This is because

these flavors are versatile and can be used in a variety of applications, including as ingredients in recipes and as a spread on sandwiches.”

Traditional hummus not only continues to create incremental sales for supermarket retailers, but also has helped weed out the less popular flavors.

In addition, because consumers are seeking healthier snacking options, they also are recognizing brand transparency and certifications in the process.

“They are willing to pay a bit more for a value added product, such as organic options,” says Tsakirellis.

Califresh of California offers three Sarah’s Harvest Fresh Green Chickpea Hummus flavors all made with fresh ingredients, including Cilantro/Jalapeño, Roasted Garlic/Rosemary and Original. Products are sold in 9.5-ounce tubs for the packaged deli aisle and 2-pound piping bags for foodservice and prepared deli cases.

“Our hummus is made using chickpeas that are harvested green, before the peas turn into the dried seed that is used as the base ingredient to make traditional hummus,” says Murray. “We harvest the chickpeas when their seeds are tender, succulent and green, nestled in their paper-thin pods. They are picked at the precise time when sugars start to convert to carbohydrates, and both flavor and nutrition are at their peak.”

The company’s most popular flavors are Fresh Cilantro/Jalapeño followed by Roasted Garlic/Rosemary.

Innovation is definitely a driver, along with added attention on expanded usage.

“Getting ideas out of the box, like hummus with sriracha sauce and chocolate hummus [are the big trends],” says Michael Schneiderman, vice president, international sales, at Shamir USA in Port Washington, NY. “More and more new hummus combinations are on the shelves.”

### Recent Innovations

Packaging changes have definitely propelled hummus’ profile in the deli.

Tribe recently launched an 8-ounce size, when the larger 10-ounce size is typical.

“We think Millennials find the smaller size attractive, and we can keep prices down,” says McGuckin. “This way, there’s no waste, and we can offer a more accessible price point for consumers to get in the hummus category.”

Hummus also naturally lends itself to grab-and-go options.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CALIFRESH OF CALIFORNIA



## What makes hummus so appealing to retailers and consumers is its usage options.

Tribe offers a cobranded portable pairing of hummus with pretzels in a 2-ounce single-serve size for lunch boxes and snacking.

Cedar's conventional hummus is available in a variety of sizes, such as 10-ounce Topped Organic Hommus, Hommus Snack Packs, Hommus Singles, Tzatziki, and Mediterranean Salads. Its newest flavors include Dark Chocolate, Topped Organic Jalapeño and Topped Organic Balsamic Caramelized Onion Hommus.

"Our most popular varieties are Original, Roasted Red Pepper and Garlic," says Tsakirellis.

Last year, Shamir USA launched Huy Fong Sriracha Hummus, capitalizing on the spicy food trend.

### Marketing & Merchandising

What makes hummus so appealing to retailers and consumers is its usage options.

"Hummus is so versatile, it can make its way as a sandwich spread, vegan pizza topping, ingredient in make-at-home meals, and it does really well as a grab-and-go item in veggie cups or sold as a snack pack/single-serve prepared item," says Tsakirellis at Cedar's Foods.

Cedar's dedicates an entire section of its website to a recipe database that inspires utilization and application of its flavors.

But the hummus category is not without its challenges.

"I think there's been a lack of innovation, some quality issues in the category and some brand difficulties as well as a lack of marketing," says Tribe's McGuckin. "Hummus is a billion dollar category, and looking across the board, you don't see the type of marketing you'd expect in a segment of this size."

He also has noticed from data provided by category leaders that some retailers are pulling back on merchandising and promotions, focusing instead on other products



PHOTO COURTESY OF TRIBE

like guacamole.

Innovation and crossing over from savory to sweet may be a solution.

"Sweet hummus brings fruit into the category, such as bananas, apples, strawberries and blueberries," says McGuckin. "This provides more cross merchandising opportunities. Plus, this type of hummus doesn't require a carrier; it can be eaten like pudding with a spoon, yet doesn't have a high sugar content."

Another place hummus may see expansion is in deli prepared food programs.

"I believe unique deli products have a place in the prepared foods deli case," says Murray at Califresh of California. "Availability there offers the consumer an opportunity to taste and respond to the product as well as learn more about its versatility."

Given the predicted growth of the hummus category, it is evident that consumer usage will continue increasing and flavor innovation has not yet peaked.

"It is becoming more apparent, from our participation in public events, that more than ever consumers are familiar with and purchase hummus," says Murray. "This inspires me to believe the future of hum-

mus in supermarket delis is bright. I also believe the demand for premium hummus is on the rise, which is where Sarah's Harvest will have the greatest impact."

McGuckin at Tribe anticipates the rise of sweet hummus will bring new life to an already thriving category.

"Sweet hummus is where innovation has been and what's saving the category," he says. "I think the category is about to explode with the advent of sweet hummus coupled with what's happening in the food-service industry. Consumers are looking for healthy alternatives and fruit becomes viable with sweet hummus. Hopefully, retailers will think about expanding this space again, because it will be big."

It may just be an expanded demographic that will do the trick to keep this ever-evolving category top of mind for retailers as well as consumers.

"Hummus has established its spot as a must-have on every shopper's grocery list," says Tsakirellis at Cedar's Foods. "As the new generations of consumers are looking for convenient ways to receive functional nutrition, the applications and usage of hummus will increase, driving growth and, ultimately, more sales."

DB



# Keeping Crackers at the Forefront

Distinguishing deli crackers from those in the grocery aisle is key

BY HOWARD RIELL

Americans love crackers for their flavor, texture, health benefits and ability to pair with cheeses and spreads—and retailers love the sales boost they provide the deli department.

A strong variety, backed by smart merchandising, marketing and sampling, can encourage consumers to experiment with one of their favorite snack foods.

Joan MacIsaac, the co-owner of Effie's Homemade in Hyde Park, MA, says that she and her team are seeing more crackers made with quality ingredients like whole grains, butter, olive oil and specific salts as the flavor enhancers. "We are also seeing unique grains, such as buckwheat, cornmeal, rye and even spent grains. The flavor of the grain is the key component, rather than a flavoring like an herb or spice."

Effie's products are "unique in that they appeal to a wide range of customers, from Baby Boomers to Millennials," MacIsaac maintains.







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"Since our products are versatile and can be used as a cracker or tea biscuit, we find ourselves in many different shopping carts. One area that we have noticed growing and changing is with Millennial parents. They are buying our biscuits for wine and cheese nights and their children's lunch boxes."

The deli and cheese area of a supermarket is where special artisan-made products are merchandised and sold, MacIsaac points out. Her company's biscuits are made with wholesome ingredients and produced in smaller batches, which helps to maintain quality. "The deli is a natural fit for our line. On the reverse side, our biscuits are the perfect pairing partner to other artisan products, such as cheeses, preserves and chocolates."

The key selling point for Effie's is sampling, MacIsaac continues. Effie's provides free bite-sized samples in every case for departments to use for passive sampling. This, she feels, is key. "Sampling sells product and helps create loyal customers who come back to the deli month after month," she says.

Since the inception of our company, we have placed a free tray of bite-sized samples in each deli case. The department managers use the samples for pairing and bingo, they sell our biscuits along with other artisan products."

Crackers, biscuits, thins and crisps are the pairing partners for the cheeses, meats and spreads found in the deli, MacIsaac explains. These items are easier for the deli manager to maintain "since crackers don't require refrigeration, they don't spoil and the packages can stack on merchandising tables." MacIsaac is convinced that a deli department can become a destination for crackers through a combination of strong merchandising and sampling. "There are thousands of products in a supermarket, and it's difficult for a consumer to make purchasing decisions. Many consumers shop the deli specialty area because they expect to discover more quality and exciting products."

### Convenient and Healthy Options

James R. Anderko, vice president sales and marketing for Venus Wafers, Inc. in Hingham, MA, says that current trends and new flavors include organic, vegan, enriched crackers (vitamins, whole grains), vegetable-based (broccoli, carrots) and both savory and hot and spicy flavors. "Millennials are looking at convenience and healthy options for snacking."



PHOTO COURTESY OF EFFIE'S HOMEMADE



Indeed, Anderko continues, customers are shopping the perimeter of the store more frequently than center store. "Cracker options in the deli give these products greater exposure with consumers, since they're shopping the perimeter more frequently. These crackers are easier to pair with cheeses while in the deli department."

Crackers are merchandised above the deli cheese case with point of purchase materials, Anderko says, and cross merchandised with cheese, spreads and meats within the deli department. "Demos that pair with the crackers are terrific, either passively or with a demo person."

Displays that are merchandised within the deli department and/or next to cheese selections are the most successful. Strong promotions with discounts on crackers when purchased together with specific cheeses also is effective. Educating the consumer about which cheeses to pair with the crackers can help build sales, he adds, as do point-of-purchase display vehicles and providing healthy options, such as organic, non-GMO and vegan varieties.

Anderko is confident that retailers can, indeed, build cracker sales in their delis, though some do it better than others. "There are opportunities, not mistakes. Every store is different, with a variety of customers, but you can't just place the crackers on top of the cheese case and expect the customers to purchase them." His suggestion, "pair organic cheeses with organic crackers; select crackers that pair with those particular cheeses located

in the cheese department. Promote the cheese, spreads and crackers together. Show the consumer how to use them and with which cheese and/or spreads."

Offering a varied variety and keeping abreast of trends also is recommended.

"We see the interest in authentic sourdough, using traditional recipes, continuing to grow," says Wendy Wilson Bett, co-owner and Joint MD of Peter's Yard. "Our Fig crispbread has been particularly successful across the U.S., while our Caraway crispbread has found a particular niche of fans in the Northeast."

### Looking for 'Ideal Pairing'

"Based on data and feedback from our buyers and customers, we are finding, not surprisingly, that deli customers are looking for the ideal pairing cracker," says Karen Kartes Piatt, marketing and public relations specialist for Partners, A Tasteful Choice Co., based in Des Moines, WA. "They want these crackers in flavors that go well with everything, enhancing but not distracting from the foods they're serving them with. There are also customers looking for high-quality crackers in distinctive flavors that can stand on their own."

To meet both of these needs, Partners Crackers is offering a trio of popular flavors of artisan deli crackers: Roasted Garlic & Rosemary, Olive Oil & Sea Salt, and Everything & More. Piatt calls them "the tried and true flavors that buyers keep telling us are most appealing to and popular with their deli customers."





PHOTO COURTESY OF PETER'S YARD

Another clear trend, she says, is the increasing growth and popularity of deli departments in grocery stores. Delis “are rapidly becoming an important and desirable destination for cracker consumers.” Partners has enhanced its deli packaging and merchandising options significantly in the past year to make it easier for stores to sell to these customers.

“Last but not least,” Piatt says, “the trend toward consumers wanting cleaner, simpler ingredients is here to stay. Partners Crackers is committed to crafting all of our non-GMO crackers and other baked goods without hydrogenated oils, preservatives or artificial flavors. We encourage all consumers to read labels and stay informed about what’s going into their crackers, which are better for them with fewer and more natural ingredients.”

With their “increasingly on-the-go lifestyles,” deli customers also include people grabbing a quick, fresh meal “who feel compelled on impulse to try new, high-quality products that they happen to encounter in the deli,” Piatt finds. “The challenge for those of us in the cracker business is to offer products that appeal to all of these groups and to anticipate the type of customers and audiences that new and enhanced delis will attract.”

Partners has been focusing on creating multiple, time-saving, retailer-friendly display options specifically for the deli. Its merchandising basket allows for eight 4.4-ounce packages to be displayed in a two-across placement. The rustic artisan

baskets are not only eye-catching to the consumer, but make setting up and restocking easy.

“Additionally, we’ve introduced eight-unit display-ready cases with perforated tops for quick, easy and attractive presen-

tation,” Piatt says. It also offers branded, 32-unit shipper towers that feature a small footprint, an optimal height that will not block visibility, and a flat top ideal for passive sampling in the supermarket deli and store perimeter.

Partners’ products are already distributed in all 50 states and Canada in grocery center store, but executives are “excited” for the growth opportunities in the evolving in-store delis and store perimeters. “We believe our artisan crackers are the perfect fit for deli consumers who are already searching for fresh, transparent, and convenient products that are on trend with their lifestyle,” says Piatt.

Finally, it’s creative thinking and pairing that will differentiate delis.

Making the connection between crackers, cheeses and dips inspires customers to think of them cohesively when they plan their dinner parties and gatherings, Bett at Peter’s Yard adds. “Positioning crackers near chips can be a mistake. Their usage occasions are different, with chips typically being an impulse buy, often with a single eater in mind, while crackers or crispbread are inherently intended for sharing and entertaining.”

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# Growing Meatless Sales in Deli



The continued rise of the vegetarian segment has resulted in expanded options for the department.

BY CAROL BAREUTHER

**W**alk into Zingerman's Delicatessen in Ann Arbor, MI, and the first sight is of a huge four-panel sandwich board. The #2 Zingerman's Reuben, thick with corned beef, Swiss cheese, sauerkraut and Russian dressing, all grilled on Jewish rye bread, is the headliner on the first panel. This best-seller was not only chosen for lunch by then President Obama

during a visit in 2014 and rated among the 'Best Sandwiches in the U.S.' by *Food & Wine* in 2018, but the Reuben is the embodiment of classic deli fare. However, this isn't the only Reuben on Zingerman's menu. The sandwich board's fourth panel features nearly a dozen selections labeled 'Vegetarian', including its #236 Rucker's Raucous Reuben, where grilled tempeh is the corned beef substitute.

Catering to meat-free customers isn't

exclusive to Zingerman's. Dorothy Lane Markets, a three-store chain based in Dayton, OH, offers a vegan shopping guide that lists products by department. Deli selections include hummus, salads like Vegan Chinese Chicken and Waldorf Quinoa and sides such as Roasted Rainbow Carrots, Green Beans Amantine and Lemon Brussels Sprouts.

One of the best and far-reaching examples of how supermarket delis are



contemporizing to cater to meat and non-meat eaters came in September when Columbus, OH-based The Kroger Co, the largest supermarket chain in the U.S. based on revenue with over 2,700 locations, announced an expansion of its private label Simple Truth line called Simple Truth Plant Based. Initial items in this new collection include deli slices in both black forest ham and salt and pepper turkey flavors.

"Veganism as an aspiration is an interesting and impactful health and wellness piece that is trending mainstream," says David Wright, senior manager for marketing at The Hartman Group, Inc., Bellevue, WA. "Our *Health + Wellness 2019* report finds that 9 percent of consumers say they've tried eating vegetarian and 6 percent of consumers say they've tried a vegan diet in the past year. While most consumers continue to eat meat (underscored by sales data showing increasing consumption of animal proteins), the frequency with which we hear of interest in vegetarianism and veganism as aspirational diets points to something else going on."

That 'something else' is an increasingly multifaceted customer base.

### No Single Demographic

About 4 percent of the U.S. population is strictly vegetarian and about half of the vegetarians are also vegan, according to September 2019-released results of a Harris Poll survey on behalf of the Vegetarian Resource Group, based in Baltimore, MD. This might seem very niche, but the same research shows 60 percent of 18- to 34-year-olds sometimes or always eat meals without meat, poultry or seafood when eating out. What's more, 52 percent of parents with children under the age of 18 fit this category, too.

"Millennials and Gen Z consumers are leading the charge for vegetarian foods largely because they have grown up knowing that they do not have to sacrifice flavor and satisfaction for great taste," says Sharon Olson, executive director of Culinary Visions, a food-focused insights and trends forecasting

practice and division of Chicago, IL-based Olson Communications, Inc. "Look to schools and colleges with ever changing menus that appeal to a diverse international student body, and you will see the habits of

the next generation coming to supermarkets and delis.

Yet, there is a huge range, as the vegetarian segment of shoppers are not exclusive of a single demographic, according to Aimee Tsakirellis, director of marketing for Cedar's Foods, a Ward Hill, MA-headquartered maker of Mediterranean foods. "Consumers looking for vegetarian options may not be strictly vegetarian eaters."

"No longer are plant-based foods reserved for vegans and vegetarians," adds Jaime Athos, president and chief executive officer of Tofurky, makers of soy-based meat and dairy products. "Flexitarians (defined as those whose diet is mostly vegetarian, but sometimes includes meat, poultry or fish), curious carnivores and conscious consumers alike are turning towards plant-based foods as alternatives to everyday foods."

### Meatless on the Menu

Vegetarian and vegan products aren't a new addition to the deli. In fact, vegetarian products, based on product labeling and ingredients, accounted for 13 percent of deli sales during the latest 52 weeks ending Aug. 24, 2019, while vegan items tallied to 2.55 percent of deli sales during the same time period, according to New York-based The Nielsen Co.

"Vegetarian sales in deli have increased over the past three years, despite the fact that this department has shown contraction in the latest 52 weeks for the first time during this period. Despite this, vegetarian dollar share of the deli department has remained consistently between 13 to 14 percent for the past three years," says Genevieve Aronson, vice president of communications for Nielsen. "Similarly, vegan sales have increased over the same time, despite the downturn described above. Vegan deli department dollar share has been very consistent at roughly 2.5 percent."

"Health and vegetarian trumps local, as grains may be sourced from outside the U.S.," says Carl H. Cappelli, senior vice president of sales and business development at Don's Prepared Foods, Schwenksville, PA.

The company's best-selling vegetarian items include a variety of lines, such as Wheatberry; Mango Lime Quinoa; Roasted Corn Salad; Seven Grain Salad;

Cranberry Grain Salad; Island Grain with Beans; and Spicy Black Beans with Corn.

"There is a growing demand for functional foods that can fulfill a nutritional need in an alternative way. For example, hummus is a great source of protein and fiber and therefore, could be used as a protein contribution in a meal," says Cedar's Foods' Tsakirellis.

She adds that over 95 percent of the company's products, which, in addition to hummus, also include salads such as

## VEGETARIAN AND VEGAN (SORT-OF) DEFINED

There is no federal definition or regulation of the words 'vegetarian' and 'vegan' in the U.S. Across the pond, the European Commission started the process of formulating an opinion on the topic this year, which is hoped to ultimately feed into an act that definitively addresses these terms for consumers and manufacturers alike.

The challenge, especially for deli operators seeking to answer shoppers' questions about what ingredients are or aren't in a product, is that there are four types of non-meat eaters. These are Lacto-Ovo (eats dairy and eggs, but avoids meat, poultry or fish), Ovo (eats eggs, but not meat, poultry, fish or dairy), Lacto (eats dairy, but doesn't eat meat, poultry, fish or eggs), and Vegan (does not eat meat, poultry, fish, eggs or dairy), according to the Baltimore-based Vegetarian Resource Group. It gets even a little trickier. For example, some vegans avoid honey and products that contain this natural sweetener. Others want to know that the sugar in a food isn't processed with animal bone char.

This quandary isn't necessarily solved by labels. There are a number of non-profits, such as the Vegan Awareness Foundation in Richmond, VA, that offer certification and private companies, like Whole Foods Market, that have their own label and guidelines on what they label vegetarian and vegan. However, for now, the best rule of thumb for deli operators is the tried-and-true: know your products and know your customers. **DB**



PHOTO COURTESY OF DON'S PREPARED FOODS



taboule, black bean and Mediterranean lentil and both mild and medium hot tomato-based salsas, are vegan certified.

Many traditional deli salads and sides fit a vegetarian or vegan profile.

"When plant-forward hit last year, we just reclassified 30 to 40 of our products that were already this way and put them on a sell sheet to help with the marketing," says Bob Sewall, executive vice president of sales and marketing for Blount Fine Foods, based in Fall River, MA. "No longer do retailers want an assortment that only spans broth- and cream-based. Now, they also want soups that are, for example, organic, gluten-free, vegetarian and vegan."

Blount's soup selections include a vegetarian tomato bisque and vegan garden vegetable. This fall, the company will introduce a meatless chili. Additionally, side dishes span from vegetarian mashed sweet potatoes to vegan sweet and spicy riced cauliflower.

"The benefit of having plant-based sides on a deli's hot bar is a better gross margin. On a per pound basis, protein is more costly than grains and vegetables," says Blount's Sewall.

Both vegetarian and vegan breads are ideal to cross merchandise as a soup go-with, crouton base for salads and for sandwich making.

"One hundred percent of our breads are vegetarian," says Warren Stoll, marketing director for Kontos Foods, Inc., headquartered in Paterson, NJ. "And, we are in the process of rolling out breads that qualify as vegan. Currently, our best-selling Gyro bread is vegan. We sell it in four to five in a pack for retail or a 10-piece pack for food-service applications. It makes a great vegan grilled cheese sandwich best served with tomato soup."

Meats, one of the deli's classic categories, are where plant-based product development has proven explosive. For example, recent data from the Good Food Institute, a Washington, D.C.-based non-profit, shows that plant-based meat captures 2 percent market share of retail packaged meat sales and is worth more than \$800 million. Refrigerated plant-based meats are driving category growth, with sales up 37 percent.

"Consumers are looking for products that they can easily swap out for favorite or familiar products, like the chicken on a salad, the sausage in their grandmother's pasta recipe or deli slices in a traditional sandwich. To this end, we offer a varied



portfolio of plant-based products. Plant-based Tofurky Chick'n is one of our newer items that have really surprised people with its versatility. Tofurky Chick'n can be seared, steamed or tossed cold for use in salads, stir-fries, wraps and bowls. It has a great texture and protein content and is available in four tasty flavors, including Lightly Seasoned, Thai Basil, Sesame Garlic and Barbecue," says Athos.

The company's selection of plant-based oven-roasted deli slices, including Peppered, Hickory Smoked, Bologna, Italian and Roast Beef, are also popular in delis, she adds.

Last year, Maestri d'Italia, which has sold authentic Italian deli meats like Prosciutto di Parma and Tuscan Porchetta since 2014, introduced four Italian-made, U.S. pre-sliced veggie deli slices under the company's Good & Green label. Flavors include Veggie Prosciutto, Spicy, Carpaccio and Lupini Beans. The soy-free slices, formulated from high protein wheat and chickpeas in a process that includes fermentation and drying to produce both appealing flavor and texture, are sold in 3-ounce clear plastic packages.

"We weren't sure what the U.S. market wanted, so we started with two meat mimics and two produce-based products," says Athos Maestri, founder and president. "Now, before the end of the year, we'll introduce two new products: a veggie turkey and pepperoni."

New this fall, over 50 Whole Foods Markets, will introduce a Reuben redux. That is, premade sandwiches through a commissary operation that serves the Los Angeles-based Unreal Deli's chickpea-based corned beef on a whole-grain seeded roll with green leaf lettuce and a vegan Russian dressing. The produce- and

grain-based product gets its ruby red color from beets.

"We do sell pre-sliced, but most delis prefer the more authentic style of logs, like a long salami, and slice it down the middle themselves," says Jenny Goldfarb, Unreal Deli's founder and chief flavor officer, whose great grandfather owned and operated several delis in New York City and whose swap to a meat-free diet happened in 2011 when she and her family moved to California. "We have introduced a cubed version, perfect for salads and tacos, and in 2020 will introduce a turkey veggie deli meat."

### Promoting Plant-Based in the Deli

The best way to sell more plant-based foods in the deli is to let all customers know it's available.

Sign boards, product labels and in-store point of sales as well as online and weekly print circular ads are all sound methods. What's more, the deli is the perfect place to promote vegetarian and vegan foods, especially meat-free meats.

"There are two different places in the store to merchandise plant-based meats. One is in the produce department, next to the tofu, and the other is in the deli. We see the deli, right next to the real meats, yield much better sales results. That's because the vegetarian or vegan shopper will go to produce, but in the deli you get customers who eat meat regularly as well as those who are attracted to plant-based alternatives."

Cappelli recommends incorporating vegetarian dishes as a component to a dish.

"Merchandise behind the glass, as these items are colorful," says Cappelli. "Our lines also can be merchandised with meal kits, wraps, in grab-and-go cups, as sides or tied in with a meal solution."

Interestingly, nearly all (98 percent) of meat alternative buyers also purchase meat and do so more than the average meat buyer, according to *The F Word: Flexitarian Is Not a Curse to the Meat Industry*, published by the Nielson Co. on July 25, 2019.

In the end, meatless foods are not about to take over the deli, according to Eric Richard, education coordinator for the Madison, WI-based International Deli Dairy Bakery Association (IDDBA). "What these trends signal is an opportunity to offer both animal and plant-based foods to an even larger customer base. It's a win-win, the perfect opportunity for the deli."

DB



# Opportunities Abound with CHARCUTERIE

When positioned appropriately,  
specialty meats can give delis an edge

BY LISA WHITE





**W**ith today's strong economy, consumers are trading up in the deli. This is the perfect opportunity for the department to raise the bar and get into the game with charcuterie.

Derived from the French term 'chair cuit', which translates into 'cooked flesh', charcuterie encompasses cured and preserved meats, including bacon, sausage, ham, pâté and terrine.

According to recent statistics from the Chicago-based Nielsen Perishables Group, dollar and volume growth from the specialty deli meat segment account for \$200 million in supermarkets' deli and meat departments. Specialty deli meat overall dollar sales grew by more than 3 percent in the year ending February 25, 2017. Chorizo led the pack, with dollar sales up more than 7 percent. Other top-selling varieties were salami, up 3.3 percent in dollars and 2.8 percent in volume; pepperoni, growing 4.1 percent in dollars and 5 percent in volume; and sausage, which increased 1.8 percent in dollars, but was flat in volume.

"We're definitely seeing more consumers seeking authentic charcuterie products," says Scott Fegler, senior manager, business development, at Atalanta Corp., headquartered in Elizabeth, NJ. "We're starting to see a lot of awareness, specifically within

this segment, that there are other countries of origin aside from Spain and Italy."

### The Products

Although Italy and Spain are known for their charcuterie, think chorizo and prosciutto, Eastern European counties such as Germany are getting into the mix with their versions of prosciutto and speck.

"Consumers are craving new products, and these have a more smoked and dry aged flavor profile than typical Italian type hams and salamis," says Fegler.

Not only are these Eastern European meat specialties being marketed for charcuterie boards, but these products also are being incorporated in authentic dishes from the region.

"Another trend we're seeing is a bigger focus on specific breed types and country of origin, since there is more consumer awareness," says Fegler. "Both the upscale and [more pedestrian] types of charcuterie are growing."

Another development is the prevalence of dry-cured sausage, which has become more of a staple in supermarket deli grab-and-go sections.

"Consumers can find many interesting flavors incorporated into the product or dry rubbed on the outside," says Alexandra Groezinger, vice president of Alexian Pâtés,

based in Neptune, NJ. "It really makes a nice addition to a charcuterie board. I am also seeing packs of sliced sausage or deli meats in the specialty cheeses and meats sections of the deli, whereas sliced meats were predominantly in a different area of the store."

## CHARCUTERIE TYPES & CHARACTERISTICS

### CURED SAUSAGES

Ground meats and salt are encased in a casing tube and either boiled, smoked, or cooked. Includes pepperoni, salami, mortadella, sopressata, capicola, chorizo and saucisson sec (a French-style salami).

### PÂTÉ & TERRINE

Ground meats that are heavily seasoned and placed into a mold to be cooked in a hot water bath. Pâtés are typically made from the finer-textured duck liver, whereas terrines are from coarser forcemeats. May be made from duck, goose, beef, chicken, salmon or turkey.

### RILLETTES

Often made from pork, the meat is heavily salted and cooked slowly in fat until it is tender enough to be shredded. Once cooled, the fat forms a paste, allowing the rillettes to be used as a spread. May be made from pork, salmon, duck, goose, chicken or rabbit.

### SALT-CURED MEATS

Salt-cured or brined meats use salt as preservation. This is done through osmosis and dehydration, drawing out and replacing the water with salt. The salt is also helpful in halting the fermentation process while denaturing proteins, thus preventing the meat from breaking down and spoiling. Salt-cured and brined meats include prosciutto, bacon and jamon.

### WHOLE-MUSCLE CUTS

Where a whole muscle is salt-cured or brine-cured and later shaved into slices. These are often the most popular form of charcuterie.

*Source: Folio Fine Wine Partners, a Michael Mondavi Family Co., Napa, CA*





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Alexian offers 20 different flavors of all natural pâtés as well as a line of European-style smoked meats and sausages as part of its charcuterie line. Its pâtés are free from preservatives, additives and artificial ingredients, with no hormones or antibiotics.

"Our pâtés range anywhere from the traditional country style pâtés to the softer, more spreadable mousse, to vegetable and vegan varieties," says Groezinger. "Alexian is family owned, and our recipes are deeply rooted in our European heritage, as they originate from the sausage makers and charcuterie masters in our family tree."

With the holidays quickly approaching, timing is key for charcuterie, as this is when consumers are seeking variety and entertaining ideas.

"People are looking for something different in the last quarter, and duck tends to be seasonal," says Sebastien Espinasse, who handles sales and marketing at Hayward, CA-based Fabrique Delices.

The company sells duck pâtés, duck prosciutto and other duck cured meats. The company recently introduced a new mousse snack pack and is working on creating charcuterie boards that include pâté, crackers and olives.

"We eat duck regularly in Europe, but in the U.S., it's more of a delicacy and popular during the holiday months," says Espinasse.

At Les Trois Petits Cochons - Three Little Pigs, headquartered in Brooklyn, NY, the company offers charcuterie lines in chubs and flavored slices.

"Ours is a French style, with a mix of herbs from the south of France," says Morgane Huet, marketing associate. "We're always coming up with new flavors with our lines."

Mirroring the trend of plant-based foods, there also are vegan charcuterie options available.

"The flavor is not quite there with these products," says Espinasse. "Instead, the focus is on the meat, including its origin, ingredients and production methods. The trend is to stay authentic, artisanal and true to the flavor of the product, while not cutting corners with the quality."

### The Promotions

Charcuterie is most often thought of as an appetizer component that's paired with cheeses, crackers, maybe imported olives, dried fruits and nuts. Yet, it pays to think outside of the box.

Although the majority of charcuterie is geared for grab and go areas of the store, some supermarket delis have incorporated these items into their catering and prepared food programs.

"In the last quarter, retailers are looking for something special to bring more attention to their departments," says Espinasse. "Charcuterie meats are pricier than everyday items, so consumers will spend more in the last couple months of the year on these types of products."

In terms of pairings, the flavor of charcuterie can be enhanced with different beverages, such as wine, beer or cider.

"When we develop a product for this market, we do a lot of pairings to ensure the meat flavor doesn't conflict," says Espinasse. "It needs to be balanced."

A well-organized and well-rounded charcuterie platter can be a show stopper and a conversation starter.

"Many are intimidated by the idea of putting one together, so supermarkets could really capitalize on the opportunity to make charcuterie platters for the customer," says Groezinger at Alexian Pâtés.

It also helps to provide insight on usage and pairings.





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"Our labels are in French, so it can be confusing as to what to do with charcuterie," says Huet at Les Trois Petits Cochons. "Beautiful photos that show charcuterie slices on a baguette with cochons or in a sandwich can help."

New packaging innovations have made charcuterie more accessible as a snack.

"Snacking is trending right now, so brands are creating snack sized bites of their products or making a partner pack of items that complement each other," says Groezinger at Alexian Pâtés.

The increasing number of size variations and formats also have expanded the marketplace and demographic for these higher



## A CHARCUTERIE PRIMER

### JAMÓN SERRANO & JAMÓN IBÉRICO DE BELLOTA

Jamón Ibérico de Bellota is one of the most expensive cured meats, as it is made from special black-hooved pigs. The hams are aged up to five years to develop their trademark sweet, nutty flavor. Jamón Serrano is a more affordable version made from white pigs and aged for less time.

*Country of Origin: Spain*

### SALAMI

One of the more common encased meats, with a variety of styles differing in heat and spice. Pepperoni, or salami piccante, is among the most well known types of salami. While pork salami is the most popular, beef salamis are available.

*Country of Origin: Italy*

### BRESAOLA

An air-dried, salted beef that has been aged two or three months. A lean meat with a less gamy flavor.

*Country of Origin: Spain*

### PROSCIUTTO

A common type of charcuterie made from pork, prosciutto is silky and versatile, with a prominent umami, or savory, flavor.

*Country of Origin: Italy*

### SPECK

A smoked cured meat that is similar in flavor and texture to bacon, with a milder flavor and firmer texture than prosciutto.

*Country of Origin: Italy*

### MORTADELLA

A cooked sausage made from pork, similar to bologna, with nuts and spices added.

*Country of Origin: Italy*

### CAPICOLA

Also known as Coppa or Capocollo, this tender smoke sausage is produced from pork and features spices and herbs.

*Country of Origin: Italy*

### SOPRESSATA

This sausage, with an uneven, rustic appearance, ranges in flavor from spicy to sweet, depending on the spices used.

*Country of Origin: Italy*

### CHORIZO

A sausage notable for the addition of Pimentón de la Vera, a smoked paprika that gives chorizo its distinctive red color. The type of paprika will make it either spicy (picante) or sweet (dulce).

*Country of Origin: Spain*

### PÂTÉ

Generally comprised of either ground pork, duck, or chicken liver mixed with spices, Pâtés may range from silky smooth to coarser country-style.

*Country of Origin: France*

### RILLETTES

Slow cooked meat, typically pork, rabbit, goose, duck or salmon, that is shredded to make a coarser spread. Best served cold.

*Country of Origin: France*

### SAUCISSON SEC

A French-style salami that is thick and rich, similar to pepperoni.

*Country of Origin: France*

*Source: Folio Fine Wine Partners, a Michael Mondavi Family Co., Napa, CA*

end products.

"We now have chubs and sliced product that is shelf stable," says Huet at Les Trois Petits Cochons. "Because these items don't need to be refrigerated, it is easier for supermarkets to merchandise the products anywhere in the department."

Although the packaging emphasizes convenience, it cannot forsake presentation in the process.

"Right now, there are more snack packs out there and everything is prepackaged, but there is more plastic than product inside," says Espinasse at Fabrique Delices. "Everyone wants added convenience, but at the end of the day this means more plastic in the sea."

In spite of the environmental implications, consumers are seeking authentic products in a grab-and-go format, and this is impacting product delivery in the charcuterie segment.

"Salami whips have become more popular," says Fegler at Atalanta. "This is similar to a meat stick, with dried salami that's aged 28 days. It's called 'kabanos' and is a single-serve item. New pack sizes and formats, along with presliced charcuterie, is big, but the future of this segment continues to upscale."

It remains to be seen what impact the recent African swine flu epidemic will have on the segment over the long term. In the short term, it has strained charcuterie supplies this past year.

"This is the largest animal disease in modern history, with 100 million pigs in China killed due to this disease," says Fegler. "Supply has been strained since earlier this year, but is getting worse every month, and the virus has spread to other countries, including southeast Asia and South Korea."

This is expected to drive charcuterie prices up and impact the market for the next two to three years.

"Next year, we may see an increase in raw material prices that will further put a strain on the category," says Fegler. **DB**





DELI  
MEATS

# JAMBON DE BAYONNE

The Ham of the Basque

BY LEE SMITH



The nearest airport is the Pau Pyrenees, located in the commune of the department of Pyrenees-Atlantique, our entry into the Basque country and the place our search for the treasure called Jambon de Bayonne—one of the most exquisite dry-cured hams in the world—begins.

Upon arriving to a heavy mist, predicting future rain with winds (called foehn), falling from the hidden-behind-the-clouds Pyrenees Mountains and balanced by the moist air from the Atlantic Ocean, one can instantly tell this is the perfect climatic balance for aging hams. From the ocean breezes and mountain air currents, frequent rain and humidity, the Pays Basque (the French name for the Basque region) becomes the ideal location for generations of cured ham producers.

Made for over 1,000 years, Bayonne ham has a history as rich as the people of the Basque. While salting techniques to preserve meat and seafood probably go back more than 1,000 years due to the salt water springs and easy access to the ocean, the process of using salt to dry cure legs of pork probably arrived with the Romans.

Bayonne is in the French Basque area of southwest France straddling the border of Spain. The Basque country contains seven provinces, four of which are in Spain and three in France. For the people of the Basque, whose traditions go back to Neolithic times, Basque is Basque, regardless of what territory a country claims is theirs. They are fiercely proud of their culture, and it is reflected in the region's architecture, color, festivals and products.

While the Spanish Basque are often fighting for their independence, the French have a gentler relationship. Contrasting the cultural difference between Spain and France, a French Basque family will have the choice of entering their children in a school where French is the primary language and Euskera, the ancient language of the Basque, is taught as a second language, or a parent may choose to enter their children in a Basque school where classes are taught in Euskera and French is taught as a language course. This utmost respect for community and culture ensures respect and shared goals.

The native language, Euskera, is one of the great linguistic mysteries. To date, it is one of the very few, and maybe the only, language that can't be traced back to

its original roots. It is believed is that the Basque migrated from the east over 7,000 years ago, ushering in the Neolithic Period, and became geographically and socially isolated; however, Euskera may be far older. Originally agrarians, they joined with the native hunter-gatherers of the area. They missed the Iberian migration during the Bronze age and later the invasion of the Iberians in 714 AD. Their genetics show lit-

tle in common with either the Spanish or the French.

### Jambon de Bayonne History

The story of Bayonne ham is more recent, but no less interesting. It is also utterly delicious and suitable for every meal. It may be served in the morning with a poached egg or eaten thinly sliced on fresh crusty bread with the equally famous



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sheep milk cheese of the region, Ossau Iraty. Whether cooked or eaten as is, it is a pink to bright pink color surrounded with snow white fat. Even though it is cured with salt, it is not salty, tastes sweet and nutty, and has a silky mouthfeel. Elegant and very refined, it is to France what prosciutto is to Italy.

While the origins are a bit of mystery, as are all things Basque, legend has it that Bayonne Ham was created after an extraordinary hunt. One day, Gaston Febus, the Count of Foix, wounded a wild boar, which then ran off. The boar was not discovered until months later in the Salies-de-Bearn salt water area, perfectly preserved.

More logically, salt-curing was well known by then, and it was refined by the Romans who had a long history of curing pork with salt and natural winds. Additional evidence is the similarity of production between the prosciutti of Italy and Bayonne ham of France.

The native pig is an unusual creature and not the best for commercial production. Called the Pie Noir du Pays Basque, it is as its name suggests—a piebald black and pink animal. It takes longer to mature and puts on more internal fat, making it the perfect pig for Bayonne ham. Today, the breed mostly has been supplanted by the large

white breeds.

The Pie Noir almost disappeared by the 1980s, but are seeing a slow resurrection, as demand for authenticity and the preservation of original species grows.

### Unique Production Methods

Regardless of breed, pigs must not be fed or treated with steroids, fish oils or antibiotics. The piglets must stay with the mother, and all must be allowed to free forage on roots, corn, nuts (usually acorns) and grasses. In addition, they may be offered cereals.

Up in the mountains, it is not unusual to see free roaming sows and piglets wandering the side of the road, foraging as they go. At night, they will return to the farmer for dinner and a good night's rest.

Bayonne ham is an EU Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) product, and strict rules and regulations are necessary for the rearing of the pigs, production and aging of the hams. The controlling body for enforcing regulations is the Consortium du Jambon de France.

Pigs to be used for Bayonne ham must be born and raised in southwest France. The production of the ham must be done in the Adour Basin, nestled between the Atlantic Ocean and the Pyrenees Mountains.

Part of the beauty of Bayonne ham is its simplicity. There are three ingredients—pork, salt and air. Just as important as the pork is the salt that will transform a raw leg into a dry-cured ham. The salt cures the ham, drawing out the moisture and acting as a preservative.

The salt that is required to be used in the salting and curing process is Salies-de-Bearn. This type has been harvested since the Bronze Age. It is a treasure found under the Pyrenees Mountains that rises to the surface through both natural waters and salt springs.

The Queen Jeanne d'Oraas' salt spring is especially pure and produces salt water that has a concentration of salt 10-times stronger than seawater. The salt at Salies-de-Bearn is produced very simply; the water is evaporated in salt trays. It is 100 percent natural, but rich with trace elements, especially magnesium and iron.

The Salies-de-Bearn salt is known by gastronomes throughout the world for its taste and health benefits. It is the cornerstone to Bayonne ham and it is, in fact, owned by the Bayonne Ham Consortium.

While the first salt plant was built in 1899, like most of the Basque, its history is far older. The salt springs were well known long before 1899 and a cornerstone of the





economy as far back as 1583. The Book of Salies names the original 500 families that formed the first coop, and they still own the rights to the salt springs. Even today, descendants of the original families still receive their fair share of the profits. However, they must reside in the city. If you are a direct descendant, you may move back to Bearn and claim your birthright.

Take a walk around town and you will find older homes with a trough out front. It was at these houses' salt troughs where buckets of water would be brought to evaporate and the resulting salt was then used. Even today, the water and troughs are still in use, and a family can take as much water as they want.

### The Perfect Bayonne Ham

Aged for a minimum of nine months, Jambon-de-Bayonne is produced using traditional methods. It is believed that nothing is a secret when you trust in a product that has a respect for tradition.

Each step plays an essential part in curing the perfect ham.

Producers may only use legs from authorized slaughterhouses, and they must be transformed within seven days.

The salting is done in winter-style conditions. The fresh hams are rubbed with

salt exclusively from Salies-de-Bearn. They are then covered in a thick layer of salt and placed in the salting room.

The hams are hung to rest at low temperatures, where the environment is kept artificially winter-like, using modern techniques. They will stay there to begin to dry.

After a period of resting, the hams will be hung from the rafters, where the long process of maturing begins.

Following this step, the process called "Panage" is done to slow down the aging process. A mixture of pig fat, rice flour and pepper is applied to the exposed part of the ham. This will allow for a much gentler aging and the curing of flavors during the long process.

While the ham is maturing, it is developing its mild and refined flavors.

The hams must be aged for at least nine months, but depending on the size of the ham, it may take as long as 12 months. Hams can be aged up to 22 months, but they are generally preferred younger.

The final step is the testing period, when the quality of the ham will be assessed by independent and highly-qualified experts. After passing rigorous quality control steps, the ham will be branded with the Lauburu Cross, the Bayonne seal.

There is only one step left and it is to

enjoy the beautiful product called Jambon-de-Bayonne or Bayonne Ham. Beautifully made in a geographic area surrounded by natural beauty and a heritage as old as the Pyrenees, the Basque people continue to amaze everyone with their joy for life and fierce independence coupled with grace and refinement.

### The Final Product

Better yet, put the Basque country on your bucket list. Surf in Europe's hottest spot, Biarritz, where the seafood is hours old. Hike the Pyrenees and indulge in duck, goose and dark black cherries that pair perfectly with local sheep milk cheeses. Seek out the festivals.

And, if you have a few spare hours, visit the town of Espelette with its picture-perfect Basque houses, white and red with Piment d'Espelette hanging from the rafters. One of the world's most prized spices, Piment d'Espelette are dark, cherry-red peppers that are naturally dried and smoky, sweet and spicy.

Oh, one last tidbit of intrigue. The Makhila, the prestigious walking stick of the Basque. Elegant and practical, it is the perfect walking companion that can be used as a weapon of redoubt. You are on your own.

DB



# *Fresh and Fast*

Fresh perspectives on grab-and-go in the deli

BY SHARON OLSON



Today's consumers' lives are speeding up, and they expect their fuel to match their pace. But "fast" food isn't limited to the quick-service and convenience channels anymore. Leaders in deli, prepared foods and retail foodservice are stepping up their offerings, as consumers search to strike a balance between fresh versus fast, healthful versus convenient and large versus local. Chicago-based Culinary Visions delved deep into consumers' quest for fresh food they can take on the go in a survey of 1,500 consumers from across the nation.

While the word 'fresh' can be difficult to pin down, gaining access to the unique perspectives of a variety of demographics

helped open up insights into what consumers expect from fresh food, how their perceptions of fresh food influence their purchasing decisions and which characteristics most define it.

Regardless of individual consumers' responses regarding their fresh food preferences and spending habits, deli operators can feel confident that they are doing something right. Seventy percent of all consumers surveyed said their local deli has plenty of convenient fresh food options.

## **Fast and Youth-Driven**

The study found that younger consumers ages 18-34 are the most interested in grab-and-go foods, consistently expressing the



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most interest in concepts they can quickly purchase and take away to eat later at their convenience across the deli, prepared foods and foodservice markets.

Food from the supermarket deli received high marks from all demographics, with 77 percent of all consumers surveyed responding that they are likely to purchase freshly-prepared food from a deli. But when broken down, the most enthusiasm still came from younger consumers. Eighty-two percent of those ages 18-34 said they were likely to purchase freshly prepared food from the deli, compared to 76 percent of those ages 35-54 and 73 percent of those ages 55 and older.

Fifty-five percent of all consumers surveyed said they were likely to purchase a grab-and-go sandwich from the deli. While this slight majority may not seem astoundingly impressive, much greater interest emerged when age demographics were isolated. Sixty-eight percent of consumers ages 18-34 said that they would be likely to purchase grab-and-go sandwiches from a deli, compared to 57 percent of consumers ages 35-54 and 44 percent of those ages 55 and older.

And when it comes to grabbing a quick bite from a convenience store, the division between age groups grew even wider. Fifty-two percent of consumers ages 18-34 said they enjoy eating food from convenience stores, compared to 40 percent of those ages 35-54 and 20 percent of those ages 55 and older.

Only 38 percent of consumers surveyed

agreed with the statement that convenience store retail items are just as fresh as prepared items from the deli. The perceived edge that delis have may in fact be due to the easy access they have to building their sandwiches from freshly-baked bread. Seventy-seven percent of consumers said that in-store bakeries offer a good variety of fresh food options, and 79 percent of all consumers said that bakery items are fresher when baked on-site.

Another appealing factor that attracts younger consumers to grab-and-go may be that the deli doesn't make them feel like they have to make a trade-off between great taste and convenience. Seventy percent of consumers ages 18 to 34 said that prepared items from the deli are just as fresh as items made to order, compared to 60 percent of consumers ages 35-54 and 53 percent of consumers ages 55 and older. In the deli, younger consumers find that they can achieve harmony with delicious options that are both fresh and fast. Clear plastic packaging communicates a key role in evaluating deli food's freshness. But it turns out that the healthfulness of the ingredients consumers see might not matter as much to them as the fact that the food inside that packaging is fresh.

While an overwhelming 85 percent of all consumers surveyed reported that transparent packaging is important when it comes to defining fresh food, consumers were still split when it came to



choosing between healthfulness and indulgence. Forty-eight percent of consumers responded that they don't care about healthfulness when it comes to snacking on the go. When fast is the priority, consumers are more willing to bend restrictions, inviting deli operators to present a wider and more unique range of offerings for consumers' consideration.

Evolving understandings of what constitutes healthy also have an impact on consumers' decision-making for grab-and-go-purchases. Consumers used to fear certain ingredients like fats and carbohy-





drates. Now, “good” unsaturated fats are in vogue, as many consumers pay extra to add avocado to their sandwiches and find themselves ditching the idea of diets.

Eighty-five percent of consumers said they think people get too caught up in food fads, and 81 percent of consumers said that they shouldn’t have to try too hard to eat healthy. Furthermore, 70 percent of consumers agreed that when it comes to eating healthy, people tend to overthink it.

Freshness may be important, but the study reveals that as the definition of healthy continues to expand to encompass multiple aspects of wellness, consumers do not necessarily view fresh and healthful as one and the same.

### Fast but Not Delivered

Food delivery services have exploded in popularity with such intensity over the last few years that the names of all of the numerous apps have become difficult to distinguish, let alone to squeeze into your smartphone’s storage capacity.

For tech-savvy consumers, they make ordering food directly to your door—or wherever you are, for that matter—as effortless as lifting a finger.

That’s why it’s surprising that younger consumers were the demographic least likely to say that they find delivery to be fresh. According to the study, 58 percent of consumers between the ages of 18 and 34 agreed that delivered food is rarely fresh, compared to 52 percent of consumers between the ages of 35 and 54. Baby Boomers were the demographic most likely to spring to delivery’s defense, with only 37 percent of those ages 55 and older agreeing with the statement that delivery food is rarely fresh.

Stacked up to prepared foods, delivery was outdone. Sixty-four percent of those ages 18-34 said that refrigerated prepared foods taste fresh.

As for older consumers, that number held steady with 65 percent of those ages 35-54 and 65 percent of those ages 55 and older agreeing that refrigerated prepared foods taste fresh.

What accounts for this perceived discrepancy? Not a technological aspect, certainly. It’s not just a stereotype that younger shoppers tend to gravitate toward digital interfaces to mediate their purchases; 43 percent of those ages 18-34 said they prefer to use a kiosk or touch screen for ordering their meals, compared to only 28 percent of those ages 35-54 and a mere



9 percent of those ages 55 and older.

And the reason doesn’t seem to be because their food isn’t arriving fast enough either, with 48 percent of those ages 18-34 responding that they use a kiosk or touch screen to order their meals more quickly.

Rather, it seems that younger consumers connect freshness with food they can easily trace to its source. Sixty-eight percent of consumers ages 18-34 said they like to purchase items that tell them where the ingredients have come from.

While ordering delivery often involves layers of multiple middle-men, refrigerated prepared foods benefit from their trustworthy locations in supermarkets and the deli. When it comes to freshness, handy grab-and-go items like grilled chicken hummus wraps and quinoa salads often beat delivery.

### Fast and Ethical

The word “ethical” is joining fresh, healthful and flavorful on consumers’ list of demands. Today’s conscious consumers don’t want their dining decisions to have any unintended negative consequences on the world, and they’re trying to limit that impact by examining the way their choices influence the environment, labor practices and their communities.

One form through which this trend has manifested is through farm-to-ta-

ble restaurants, restaurants that tout their direct lines to farms, fishermen and other producers. Seventy-nine percent of consumers surveyed said they love farm-to-table restaurants, and 77 percent of consumers say that they believe farm-to-table food tastes better. Sixty-two percent of consumers said that they actively seek out restaurants that menu responsibly produced foods.

Ethical isn’t limited to in-restaurant dining experiences. In fact, this growing trend has begun reaching its way into the world of quick fuel, too. Fifty-seven percent of consumers said that there aren’t enough ethically-produced snacks available to them, and 55 percent said that they would be willing to pay more for food they grab on the go if they knew it was ethically produced.

So what are consumers looking for when they say they are seeking out food that is fast and ethical? The results demonstrated that the word is a sweeping term that can cover a range of considerations, from the material resources that go into the production and preparation of food, to the people providing the manpower for the operation. Sixty-six percent of consumers said that they care about ordering protein that is sustainably raised or caught, and 87 percent of consumers said that they like to patronize businesses known for treating their employees well.

And while using transparent, plastic packaging is an effective merchandising strategy in allowing consumers to see for themselves if food is fresh, the bulk of the packaging can carry other implications, as well. Sixty-five percent of consumers said that the environmental impact of take-out containers and to go boxes concerns them, and 83 percent said they wished operations would use more environmentally-friendly business practices. Fast options that take the steps to alleviate consumers’ hesitations, whether through grab-and-go packaging that denotes it’s recyclable or a label that boasts fair trade certification, will make consumers feel good about where they put their money. **DB**

*Sharon Olson is Executive Director of Culinary Visions®, a division of Olson Communications based in Chicago. Culinary Visions is a food-focused insight and trend-forecasting firm that provides original consumer and culinary professional research for companies in the food industry.*



# SNACK ATTACK

## How supermarket delis can improve sales of this evolving category

BY KEITH LORIA

In the U.S., snacks represent a \$51 billion industry, with new products accounting for approximately 5 percent of sales in the category.

There's no shortage of snacks available in the supermarket, but the chips, cookies and crackers that line the grocery aisles are not the only ones that today's shoppers are on the lookout for. In fact, the snack category is getting a big boost thanks to sales of items in the deli section of the store.

Most of these snacks are often presented to be a more premium option than what would be found in the snack aisle, such as organic veggie chips, a brioche muffin or a gourmet cookie. Most of these products are also individually wrapped and packaged to be eaten on the go.

Paul Baker, co-founder of UK-based St Pierre Groupe, says convenience is clearly a huge driver when it comes to today's snack offerings and those being sold in the deli department.

"While all Americans have adopted on-the-go lifestyles, we really see GenZ leading the snacking craze," he says. "They're replacing meals with more snacks throughout the day. For this reason, we see snackable and craveable handheld items like muffins, Danish, croissants, scones, biscuits, bagels and rolls experiencing more growth."

In response to this growing trend, St Pierre Groupe has recently launched a new line of on-the-go products that consist of individually-wrapped European snacks like cake bars, shortbread bars, waffles and crepes.

Jason Bross, president of Lifestyle Foods, headquartered in York, PA, says recent trends in snacking items are an uptick on value-driven snacks with fresh foods that are highly visible food displayed in the packaging. He's also says extended shelf life for snacks are becoming popular.

"We have made recent changes to our packaging to reflect this demand, adding



to the shelf life of our products," he says. "In the deli section, there has been more space on the shelves allocated to the category, which is why an extended shelf life is important."

Jeremy Johnson, general manager of Encore Specialty Foods, based in Hingham, MA, sells a fair amount of Italian crostini snacks in the deli department as well as pita chips and olives.

"We are seeing more and more products available in the snack category, and what I'm noticing is new and different packaging that attracts consumers," he says. "A lot of what I see that is doing well are crackers with things on them, like seeds or sea-salt chunks on top instead of baked into the dough."

Single-serve, grab-and-go snacks are also on the rise, because portion control is a bigger need for many consumers today. To respond to this trend, Encore Specialty Foods has a line of olives in 1-ounce

packaging that does very well in the supermarket snack segment.

"This has become something really good for us; it's an alternative to a lot of the junk food that's out there, like potato chips, so when a consumer goes to pick up a soup or sandwich from the deli for lunch, now they have more options than they used to have on the side," says Johnson. "They can grab our olives, and people are just trending towards making better choices."

### Health & Wellness

As consumers shift away from a traditional diet mindset in pursuit of health and wellness, brands previously marketed as "thin," "lean" or "skinny" are embracing new descriptors, such as "smart." This has helped drive sales in the category.

The St Pierre Groupe has seen the snack category experience a lot of innovation because of its recent health and wellness initiatives.



"Consumers are actively seeking out snacks that are free of artificial ingredients," says Baker. "For us, we believe bakery snacks with real ingredients just taste better, which is why all St Pierre products are non-GMO and free from trans fats and high fructose corn syrup."

Johnson has noticed an increase in the amount of organic snacks, which is a segment that has been growing for a long time.

"When I look at the deli department today, what I see from competitors is more of this organic segment," he says. "Also, products that have claims of health benefits, so that's something that we have put a bigger focus on, as well."

Lifestyle Foods' best-selling item as a company is the Hollywood Snack. It's comprised of apples, grapes, cheese cubes and honey wheat pretzel sticks, and it fits in well with the health and wellness trend.

It also is a good snacking product for school-aged kids, as parents like the healthy food aspect and the kids enjoy the different flavors coming together in one package. With kids making up a majority of snack consumers, this is an important product, Bross says.

Johnson feels the trend of healthier products only works if the product is good in terms of taste.

"One thing we're always discussing when we're considering new items, obviously packaging is important and the call-outs are important in terms of health benefits and calories, so those things can make a consumer try a product once, which is great, but if it doesn't taste very good, they are not going to buy it again," he says. "It's great to have a product that will drive consumers in, but in order to be sustainable, what's inside the new innovative packaging has to be of good quality for people to come back."

### New to the Shelves

Jessica Brown, marketing manager for Yucatan Foods, based in Los Angeles, says the company recently began offering Yucatan Guacamole Squeeze, a first-of-its-kind packaged guacamole product in a flexible squeeze pouch that allows for greater usage convenience and extended shelf-life for reduced waste.

"This is the perfect snack for anyone looking for guacamole convenience," she says. "There are no spoons or bowl required, so there's no mess. The air-tight seal prevents oxygen from entering the pouch, which means you get green guaca-



mole for up to 10 days."

Brown notes the product's unique design improves its delivery, with an innovative cap and nozzle transforming guacamole from mainly a dip to a healthier condiment option, thus expanding the entire market for guacamole.

"Like guacamole, the condiment category is seeing expansive growth, driven by consumers looking for healthy products with high-quality ingredients and plant-based spreads," she says. "Yucatan Guacamole Squeeze addresses these unmet consumer needs with this innovative packaging design."

A new snack product that Encore Specialty Food will release later this year is a line of focaccia flatbread snacks coming in from Italy. Essentially a cracker, it's based on the tradition of focaccia so it offers a high olive-oil content and looks like focaccia flatbread.

"We're very excited about that. We're always looking for new olive or antipasti items as well to sell by the pound behind the deli case," says Johnson. "It's something we are always looking to expand."

### Marketing Matters

Knowing that consumers are seeking convenience, transparency and value, Baker notes delis can use descriptive language to call out the quality of snack products while offering a discount for a value meal.

For example, a sandwich, drink and choice of snack for a set price or a protein, two sides and bakery snack for a set price improves the appeal.

"When we launched our new on-the-go range, we created standing and countertop

racks to drive awareness to our products," says Baker. "These displays paired with our hard-to-miss orange packaging can help attract shoppers to the deli section."

While certain stores do a better job than others, Johnson notes one thing he hears a lot from supermarket deli buyers is they don't have enough space. And even if they love the item and want to have it in their department, the lack of space can keep it from happening.

"Finding more space is key both for companies like ourselves who want to get our products into the supermarket delis, and also for buyers at the store level to creatively find the space and better merchandise, to have more options available for the consumer," he says. "There has to continue to be more creative ways to merchandise around the deli space, such as with baskets or butcher-block table displays, and pushing the envelope."

A veteran in the industry, Bross has seen a lot of marketing and merchandising measures come and go through the years, but one thing that is a staple of good sales involves keeping snacks where people can see them.

"If they are eye level standing up, it's our experience the products have higher levels of sell through," he says. "For the snacks that are in the deli section, rather than the grocery aisle, they are more sold for on-demand consumption. It is a mixture of perishable/non-perishable healthier items in the packaging."

To be successful in the snack category, Bross says it's vital a deli display a core offering of items with proven success, while rotating in different varieties regularly.

**DB**



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## A Taste of Norway in the U.S.

In the early 19th Century, Norwegian cheesemakers attempted to produce a domestic version of the increasingly popular Emmentaler cheese from Switzerland.

But it wasn't until 1956 through 1965 that innovation with these cheeses was top of mind. This was when the University of Agriculture in Norway conducted developmental research on a semi-soft part skim cheese with eye formation. Professor Ole M. Ystgaard is credited for developing the bacteria cultures and manufacturing techniques used to process the cheese.

This new cheese, later to be known as Jarlsberg, was named after Count Vadel Jarlsberg, whose estate was on the Oslo Fjord near where it was first manufactured. The original Norwegian recipe cheese has been exported to the U.S. for over 50 years. Jarlsberg's mild, mellow and nutty taste is unique, and it has always been naturally lactose-free.

Jarlsberg is manufactured in 20-pound wheels and 10-pound loaves and is made from pasteurized cow's milk. The cheese is classified by the USDA as semi-soft part skim cheese but, because of the eye formation and the method of product, Jarlsberg has been classified for U.S. Customs purposes of entry into the country as a Swiss/Emmentaler type cheese.

Jarlsberg Lite, a reduced fat version of Classic Jarlsberg, was introduced into the U.S. in 1990.



From left: A 1988 article on the 10 millionth Jarlsberg wheel arriving in the U.S.; Jarlsberg founder Ole Martin Ystgaard

Norseland, Inc., owned by TINE SA, is the exclusive importer and sales and marketing agent responsible for Jarlsberg in the U.S. and Norway's largest producer, distributor and exporter of dairy products. TINE is a cooperative owned by more than 13,000 Norwegian dairy farmers, and each farmer is a shareholder in the cooperative. The milk that they deliver is processed into more than 200 different products that are sold around the world under the TINE trademark **DB**

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