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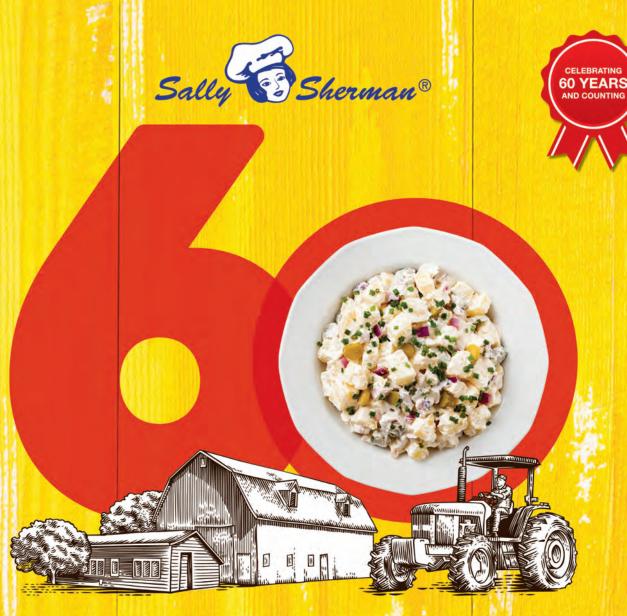


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#### Rogue Creamery's Rogue River Blue Receives Top Honor



Rogue Creamery's Rogue River Blue Cheese recently achieved a monumental first for the American specialty and farmstead cheese industry: it won the coveted title of World Champion Cheese at the 2019 World Cheese Awards in Bergamo, Italy.

Rogue River Blue Cheese is an organic, cave-aged blue wrapped in Syrah grape leaves that are soaked in pear spirits. It is made with milk from Rogue Creamery's Certified Organic Dairy Farm in Grants Pass, OR. A seasonal product, Rogue River Blue is only made for a few months each year beginning on the autumnal equinox.

This cheese was first envisioned by David Gremmels, the company's president, when he purchased the creamery in 2001. He launched the new recipe in 2002 using Rogue Creamery's classic Oregon Blue Cheese recipe as its inspiration.

Rogue River Blue took Reserve Champion and the title of "Best Blue Cheese in the World" at the 2003 World Cheese Awards. It is now the first American-made cheese receiving the Grand Champion recognition.

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LaBonneVieCheese.com

#### TRANSITIONS



#### LIPARI FOODS POSTS PRESIDENT

Lipari Foods, Warren, MI, has announced that Tim Walls has been named president and COO. He will oversee all company operations, reporting directly to Thom Lipari, CEO.

www.liparifoods.com



#### FIREFLY FARMS NAMES NATIONAL SALES DIRECTOR

FireFly Farms, Accident, MD, has named Cristi Menard as national director of sales and marketing. Menard joins the company's leadership team and will dedicate her efforts to growing FireFly Farms' market reach and its brand, growing in tandem the company's beneficial impact on the rural communities that surround its manufacturing operations in Maryland's westernmost Garrett County.

www.fireflyfarms.com

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS.....



#### VOLPI NAMED FINALIST IN 2020 GOOD FOOD AWARDS

Volpi Foods, St. Louis, is a 2020 finalist in the prestigious Good Food Awards. Finalists demonstrate a commitment to environmental stewardship and growing their businesses in harmony with a better food system. These companies emphasize fairness and transparency from seed to plate, promoting safe and enjoyable working environments, and safeguarding biodiversity by creating products free of genetically modified ingredients.

www.volpifoods.com



#### SAVENCIA SCHOLARSHIP HONORS DOROTHY DEMETER

Savencia Cheese USA, New Holland, PA, has established the Dorothy Demeter Savencia Cheeses USA Undergraduate Scholarship, honoring the first woman to receive a dairy science degree from Iowa State University. Demeter, grew up around cheesemaking as the granddaughter of Frederick Kolb, founder of Kolb-Lena Cheese Co. She grew her company of award-winning artisanal cheese and sold it to Savencia. She passed away in May 2019.

www.savenciacheeseusa.com

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS.....



#### FOREVER CHEESE WINS 30 WORLD CHEESE AWARDS

Forever Cheese Partners, Long Island City, NY, has announced that 21 cheesemakers with whom it partners with have been named among the winners at the 32nd annual World Cheese Awards in Bergamo, Italy. They stood out from the crowd as a record-breaking 3,804 entries were judged in a single day at Fiera di Bergamo. The pioneering importer of specialty cheese had over 30 cheeses from its catalog win coveted awards at the event.

www.forevercheese.com



#### ANCHOR PACKAGING LINE WINS BEST NEW PRODUCT

Anchor Packaging, St. Louis, has announced its Crisp Food Technologies Containers have won the CSP 2019 Retailer's Choice Best New Product Award. The winner of this award was determined by convenience store retailers' vote. The trophy was awarded at the 2019 National Association of Convenience Stores (NACS) Expo in Atlanta.

www.anchorpackaging.com

#### NEW PRODUCTS.....



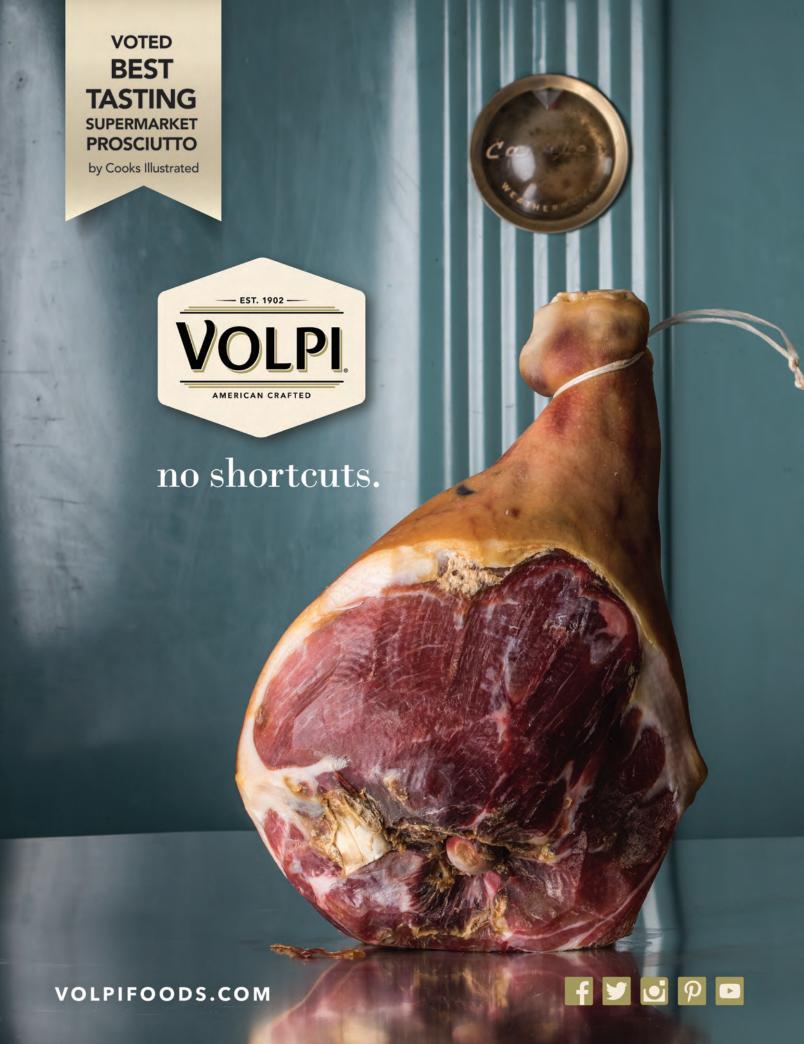
#### SINGLE-SERVE CREAM CHEESE FOR FOODSERVICE

Belle Chevré, Elkmont, AL, has added a convenient, 1.5-oz. single-serve package to its roster of Chevré cream cheese products for foodservice operators. Two of the brand's favorite cream cheese flavors at retail, Original and Fig, are available in this smaller format. Belle Chevré's handy 1.5-oz. portion cup will maximize convenience and eliminate waste. www.bellechevre.com



#### PRODUCT FOR SELF SERVICE

Landana, Holland, has launched a new range of packaged cheese slices for consumer self-service. Seven new cheese packages of sliced cow's and goat's cheeses includes favorites such as Gouda, Edam, Maasdam and Smoked Cheese as well as various specialty cheeses including Light, Olives & Tomatoes and Goat Cheese MILD. The striking new packaging design combines Landana's brand values and authentic Dutch quality. www.landanacheese.com



#### Preparing For The New Age Of Deli



By Jim Prevor Editor-in-Chief

s we enter 2020, we face a bifurcating consumer experience regarding deli products at retail. On the one hand, we have the operators such as Wegmans or Whole Foods who see deli and the broader fresh foods and retail/foodservice space as differentiators. This is the area that, more than anything else, creates a reason to visit the store and that, more than any other area, can provide the profits that make the store viable. As more purchasing moves online, one can imagine the grocery sections of stores shrinking, replaced by pick-up lockers or delivery-sorting space—while the fresh foods and foodservice elements, often with more generous seating and more specific concepts, such as wine and cheese bars, represent the New Age retail experience. It is the vision of a high service future.

On the other hand, there is rapid growth and much innovation on the theme of minimal labor and small square-foot concepts. For years now, concepts such as Trader Joe's and Aldi have been growing along these lines. Now Lidl, after a big acquisition in the New York metro area, is proceeding along similar lines, though with some efforts in service in the bakery. AmazonGo is, of course, designed to minimize labor, although political pressure has made them add staff to accept cash in some stores.

In all these cases at retail, there seems to be overwhelming economic pressure to reduce labor. Some of this is availability—it is hard to find people in many areas who want to work in grocery stores—but much of it is cost. Legal demands for higher minimum wages reverberate through the system and, even without legal requirements, many stores find they must raise wages to attract and retain staff. So automation is crucial, and that typically means less in-store service counters and more pre-packaged items.

The online movement adds, of course, to the percentage of deli products being sold in pre-packaged form. Although a lot of delivery is done right now through services such as Schlept and Instacart—where, almost always, the shopping is done in-store—it is obvious that as the online business scales up, efforts will be made to use cheaper non-retail real estate and automate shopping in central depots. Though old models, such as Webvan, didn't work, they were probably just ahead of their time. So it is likely that these centralized packing and distribution points will depend on packaged fresh foods.

Delivery services and web ordering in general have been held back by the "last mile" problem—

the high expensive of delivering to actual homes. Technology, however, is catching up. Drone delivery, robotic delivery vehicles and mobile apps that allow you to give delivery personnel access to drop packages off in your garage or behind your front door all promise to make delivery more convenient and cost effective.

So product development efforts will need to bifurcate, as well. One level in high demand will be for the freshest, most differentiating product. Things difficult to even put in a package are best. People will look for products that have less salt and preservatives. They will want their visit to the prepared foods section of the store to offer something that can't be delivered in a package.

The vast majority of the market will be packaged foods that require no service at retail and can easily be slotted into mechanized delivery systems. There will be a range of prices, of course. But, at each level of quality, the competition will be intense and the demand for low margins, at every step in the supply chain, excruciating. A lot of the product, probably most of it, will be private label.

Big challenges ahead for the industry will include where the Research & Development budgets will come from to keep the industry growing with new and innovative products. Marketing will be an even bigger problem, as tight margins will not allow for promotional efforts needed to introduce new products and to build and retain demand.

Supermarkets will have to think much harder about how the triumph of private label shifts responsibility for R&D and marketing to retailers. Few retailers are prepared to step up and accept this responsibility.

The grocerant concept—crossing the traditional retail store with the restaurant—holds out a glimmer of hope. Can the industry leverage this foodservice approach, not just to sell food that day, but to create a kind of massive product sampling effort where consumers try innovative things and then look for them in packaged variants? And can we, as an industry, both create packaged variants of satisfactory quality and keep innovating in our store-offered fresh products to keep a differentiation from the packaged foods? It is a tall order. It is, also, the unavoidable future. Forewarned is forearmed.

James 3. Theres

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### Bringing in the New Year



By
Lee Smith
Publisher

his year has been an active one for new product development, consumer driven marketing changes and an increasing concern for global warming and conservation demands. Based on the many interviews myself and our team have conducted, the following are my best guesses for opportunities in 2020.

Next year may well be the year of prepared food. The trend toward more space being devoted to prepared foods is far from new. Progressive chains and independents have responded, and the growth will continue. However, it is now a mandatory component of a successful deli department.

Prepared foods represent more than 50 percent of deli sales, and traditional deli meat and cold cuts are declining. Rather than just incorporating fried and rotisserie chicken within the deli, foodservice mini departments are being introduced. Sub departments for products, such as sushi, Asian food bars, pizza and sandwich stations, are becoming more popular. Casual sit-down dining is a natural extension.

The bottom line is customers are looking for meal options and, if done well, the supermarket deli can effectively compete with fast food and casual dining options. Supermarkets can become the better option for fast casual, since an expanded deli can offer multiple options that satisfy every member of family with very affordable prices.

Of course, the keys to success include impeccable sanitation and execution, but flavor still rules. Offerings must taste as good or better when compared to local restaurants. Price will always be important but striving to be the low-cost provider is a recipe for disaster.

Supermarkets can make their prepared food departments the first choice for quick meals rather than the last option for time-starved hungry families.

The next item on the list is the war against single-use plastics. Some areas are already in the process of banning single-use plastics but cutting back or eliminating plastics is becoming a consumer-driven trend, as they become more aware of the amount and extent of plastic pollution.

Fortunately, there are options. Plant-based clear packaging that is almost indistinguishable from plastic is available. Generally, they are for cold or warm foods, since they cannot be microwaved. In a very short time period, as short as two to three months, these products biodegrade.

There are other alternatives made from denser

plant-based packaged, such as cutlery, bowls and catering products that will biodegrade, just not as fast. It is not just clear packaging. Take-out containers made from hemp or bamboo are alternatives. They are good looking and made from prolific plant products that are renewable. Even straws are taking on a new look. Made from paper or bamboo, they are much more durable.

Most of the alternatives that are not plastic still cost more money. Depending on where stores are located, the demographics and pending legislation should play into the decision, but it should not be construed as a temporary trend. Single-use plastics are going out the door.

Plant-based meat is also a new trend. Cutting back on meat, especially red meat, is not. However, I caution about getting too invested in plant-based meat substitutes, even if they taste fine or as good as meat, which I really doubt. This is a highly processed product that is generally high in sodium. It may be a good alternative for a strict vegetarian or vegan, but as an everyday option, it isn't cutting the mustard for healthy living.

Fake meat might not be the biggest trend but increasing the consumption of fruit and vegetables is. While most people will not define themselves as vegetarian, a higher percentage of people are looking to eat healthier, including adding more fruits, vegetables and whole grains to their diets. Deli departments need to be aware and react by offering more products that match consumers' ideas of healthy eating.

Talking about healthy eating, there is a trend worth exploring—fermented foods. This is a hot, on-trend group of products that includes pickles, kimchi, olives and kombucha. Between the health benefits of fermented foods, its long shelf life and very low calories, it is a category that has become more important and will continue to do so.

Due to consumers' desire to eat more naturally and partake in healthier foods, the industry may see a resurgence in olive bars that include more variety. It is certainly an opportunity for progressive retailers and retailers that already have a foodservice offering. What is needed is more signage and better promotions. Maybe it's time to have an adjunct pickle bar next to the olive bar.

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# GOING GREEN at the Deli

From utensils to meat, a change is in the air

BY BOB JOHNSON

he deli is turning green.

How far or how fast the change will go is anybody's guess, but the trend toward both packaging and foods that are easier on the environment is real, and this is far more powerful than a fad.

Plant-based alternative 'meat' slice products are already in some delis, and interest in this growth category by well-financed concerns suggests more are on the way.

There is a rise of conscious eating, whereby consumers are looking for products and ingredients grown or manufactured in a manner that reflects one's own beliefs and preferences, according to the Madison, WI-based International Deli Dairy Bakery Association's (IDDBA) *What's in Store 2019*. Sales of organic products continue to grow as well as interest in alternatives, such as plant-based proteins.

The report also noted that transparency is among the top consumer-driven trends, which encompasses local, organic, sustainable and ethical foods as well as a desire for clean labels.

A focus on sustainable seafood can drive growth amongst mul-

tiple customer demographics, according to What's In Store 2019, and provides retailers with an opportunity to increase storytelling around products, curation and sourcing.

Retailers are looking for cleaner labels that convey 'green,' a nebulous term that generally includes organic, fair trade and free range.

#### Making a Green Statement

One of the most definitive ways to make a green statement is in the materials used for packaging and utensils.

Styrofoam is already so yesterday and plastic may be soon to follow as a material not suited to these environmentally-conscious times.

"We are seeing a lot more interest in sustainable utensils," says Peggy Cross, founder of EcoTensil, Corte Madera, CA. "It's coming from the big retailers; it's not being forced on them by government regulation. We have increased every year since we started in 2010; when things change in this business, it's for the long term."



#### Goats & Goodness GUARANTEED

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EcoTensil's flagship product is an award-winning compostable paper taster that uses one-fifth the space of other tasters and is widely available at major retailers, including Target, Costco and Whole Foods.

"What rises above all of it is just useless material, whether they are compostable or not," says Cross. "Our products use 55 to 85 percent less material. It's easy for companies to go with eco tasters for sampling. It's just a few bites, and it's very visible. It's an easy way for companies to show their customers that they care about the environment and reducing plastic."

The European Union has an outright ban on plastic utensils scheduled to go into effect in 2021, according to Cross, and on this side of the pond there is growing consumer interest in reducing plastic.

"The last year has marked a global turning point on elevating the importance of the role single-use packaging plays in protecting our environment," says Kathy Deignan, senior vice president for sales and marketing at Sabert, Sayerville, NJ. "Many

companies have made pledges to reduce, reuse and recover plastic packaging with ambitious commitment dates."

Sabert makes a full line of green packaging options, including attractive compostable cutlery, bowls, plates and trays suitable for the deli.

"With the United States accounting for 4 percent of the world's population and producing 12 percent of the world's total waste, having sustainable packaging at the deli is more important than ever," says Mark Marinozzi, vice president of marketing at World Centric, Rohnert Park, CA. "According to the EPA, the U.S. landfills 52.5 percent of waste, recycles 25.8 percent and composts only 8.9 percent."

World Centric offers a variety of compostable products and distinguishes itself by offsetting all the carbon emissions from its manufacturing and delivery and donating at least 25 percent of its profits to grassroots social and environmental groups.

"Deli operators need to know that they are generally providing their offerings in

materials that are not recyclable," says Marinozzi. "Facilities in the U.S. are not equipped to recycle items, such as plastic containers, coffee cups, plastic bags and other items that are not clean and dry. Recycling facilities in the U.S. only accept paper, cardboard, bottles and cans that are clean and free of food residue. Attempting to recycle items outside this criteria, like food-soiled petroleum-based plastic containers, is considered 'wish-cycling,' also known as tossing something in the bin that doesn't belong."

Sonoco of Hartsville, SC, has a Sonoco Sustainable Solutions, or S3, program to help manufacturers achieve zero waste to landfill by finding ways to convert waste streams to revenue or find alternative uses or disposal methods for previously unrecycled or landfilled materials.

#### Meat You Can Live With

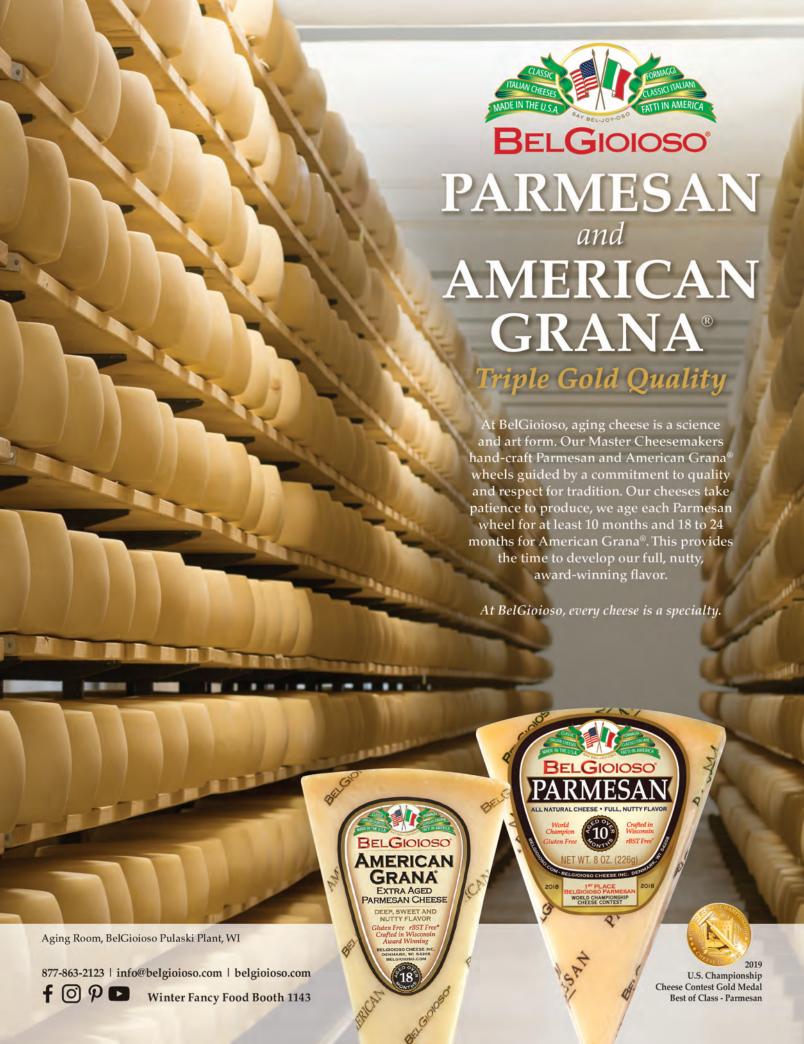
Burger King's vegan Impossible Whopper and the Beyond Meat products that appear in high-end supermarkets











brought widespread attention to a new wave of vegan 'meat' products.

But some of the pioneer plant-based proteins have been consumed by health or animal welfare-conscious consumers for many decades.

"The market size for plant-based meats has proven to be explosive. Recent data from the Washington, D.C.-based Good Food Institute shows that plant-based meat captures 2 percent market share of retail packaged meat sales," says Jaime Athos, president and CEO of Tofurkey, Hood River, OR. "The plant-based meat category is worth more than \$800 million, with refrigerated plant-based meats driving category growth and sales up an impressive 37 percent. In comparison, sales in the conventional meat category grew just 2 percent during the same period."

Tofurkey pioneered in the vegan meats segment with its introduction nearly a quarter century ago of a soy-based high protein turkey analog.

"Plant-based foods are no longer reserved for vegans and vegetarians, but flexitarians, curious carnivores and conscious consumers alike, as well," says Athos. "Many delis use our plant-based



meats, and there are several 'groceraunt' delis that serve our slices in plant-based sandwich builds."

The latest of the plant-based sliced 'meat' product available at the deli was developed by a Millennial mother in Vermont who did not want to feed her infant processed meats.

"We are selling plant-based 'meat' in the deli at Fairway Market and at Roche Bros.," says Véronique Beittel, founder and owner of Green Slice Foods LLC, Richmond, VT. "But at most stores, Green Slice is still in the produce section with tofu and other meat alternatives. At Wegman's, Green Slice organic meatless deli slices are

in a dedicated plant-based foods section."

Green Slice produces organic veggie dogs, vegan and vegetarian deli slices in many flavors, and classic, mozzabella, and bell pepper jack vegan cheese alternatives.

"In 2020, we will be rolling out our Green Slice organic meatless deli slices in the deli section at a major supermarket chain," says Beittel.

Many other meat alternative options are also already conveniently available near the deli section.

"We have Good & Green deli slices that are sold in the area near the deli," says Marie Curcio, customer service and logistics manager at Maestri d'Italia, Lakewood,



NJ. "We won Best New Vegan Product at Expo West in San Francisco."

These Maestri d'Italia 'meats,' imported from Italy and sliced in New Jersey, come in prosciutto, carpaccio, lupine bean and spicy flavors, with two more on the way. They are available at markets, including Shop Rite and Harris Teeter.

"If you go by the responses we get on Instagram, people love it," Curcio says. "We're getting good feedback from the people who have tried it."

Corporate interest in plant-based 'meats' and 'cheeses' indicate that well-financed enterprises have taken a look and see opportunity in the category.

Amazon's Whole Foods offers a plant-based herb-roasted sliced deli turkey made of vital wheat gluten; soy; salt; bean flour; yeast extract; rice bran; organic dried tofu; dried onions; dried garlic; citric acid; and natural smoked flavor. The vegan 'meat' was joined recently by Whole Foods' dairy-free vegan sliced 'cheese.'

Investors launched Chicago-based Greenleaf Foods in 2018, and the firm acquired plant-based food leaders Lightlife and Field Roast.

Lightlife has been producing plant-based

proteins for 40 years, and has the leading brand of vegetable-based hot dogs and tempeh, and Seattle-based Field Roast was a pioneer in 1997 when it began its line of vegetable-based deli slices, sausages, burgers and roasts.

While most of the growing interest in plant-based foods comes from the search for healthier diets, and some from concerns about animal welfare, the category could benefit from environmental efforts to combat climate change.

The U.S Environmental Protection Agency estimates that agriculture is responsible for 9 percent of the country's greenhouse gas emissions, with animal agriculture accounting for about 4 percent of the total.

The most detailed greenhouse gas inventory is probably that maintained by the California Air Resources Board under the state's cap and trade legislation, which estimates the animal agriculture, including the nation's largest dairy industry, contributes a bit over 5 percent of all climate changing emissions.

But the major reason people actually buy plant-based foods is they believe they are healthier. "It's people looking for a health food item," says Curcio. "It's not just vegans."

Millennials are trend-setting foodies, and we may have passed an important benchmark when a majority of women in this age group became mothers.

Véronique Beittel invented Green Slice because when her toddler Francisca started to eat solid foods, Beittel didn't want to feed her processed meat.

#### The Green Consumer

There is mounting evidence that more consumers are looking to eat foods that are healthier, fresher and produced in environmentally responsible ways.

"It is important to address the use of petroleum-based plastic and virgin wood fiber in single-use disposable foodservice ware versus compostable materials, such as sugarcane bagasse, bamboo fiber and bio-based plastics," says Marinozzi. "With over 28 million tons of petroleum-based plastic ending up in U.S. landfills each year, and human activity testing the limits of our planet's bio-capacity, we need to find better alternatives to everyday single-use plastic and polystyrene disposables."

There is a significant potential market reward for a deli that can convey the message they have gone green.

There is also already a growing market for environmentally friendly utensils in the supermarket deli.

"Next year we will be doubling in size, especially with the change in Europe," says EcoTensil founder Cross. "We're opening a warehouse in the Netherlands."

European regulations may be a harbinger of greener packaging in blue states and localities on this side of the Atlantic.

"With the ban on single use plastic becoming effective in the EU by 2021, we have been seeing a huge demand from that side of the pond," says Cross. "I've been to numerous trade shows, done in-store research and talked to quite a few industry people over there."

Many localities have already banned the use of Styrofoam by retail outlets, including delis, and the next wave in green packaging could target reduction in tree-based products as well as petroleum-based.

"In addition to reducing our use of petroleum-based plastics, using sustainable paper alternatives can make a measurable and significant reduction in the environmental damage caused by our tree-based products," says Marinozzi.

DB

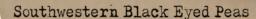






Adobo Rice & Beans





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## The 411 on Fermented Foods



#### The popularity of fermented foods continues, as its health benefits and flavors drive the category

BY LISA WHITE

hat's all the fuss about cha, kimchi and sauerkraut. fermentation? First, it what this process entails. Fermentation is the process of converting carbohydrates to alcohol or organic acids by using yeasts or bacteria under anaerobic conditions.

The Fermentation Association addresses fermentation as the main focus of food preservation, giving the category a voice and support.

According to Neal Vitale, executive director of the association, the core of fermentation is centered around refrigerated products sold with live cultures, such as pickles, yogurt-based products, kombu-

"The next wave is shelf stable prodhelps to be aware of ucts," he says. "This includes pickles and other food that doesn't have live cultures but use fermentation for preservation."

> Fermentation also is a process used to produce sourdough bread, beer and wine as well as salami and other meats.

> "Fermented food and beverages are a \$689 billion industry and will total \$888 billion by 2023," says Amelia Nielson-Stowell, editor at The Fermentation Association. "It's the next superfood and a top menu trend that's growing rapidly, as more people are rediscovering the benefits of fermented foods."

wave of popularity.

"We've seen 13 years of straight sales growth [in our product]," says Eric Girard, vice president of sales and marketing at Van Holten's, headquartered in Waterloo, WI. "The past two years have seen some of our strongest growth."

#### The Benefits

Dieticians and doctors tout fermented foods' benefit to gut health and say it's due to healthy bacteria and microbes.

But many are not aware of fermentation's history.

"Fermentation has been around for centuries and is, in fact, one of the oldest Fermented deli foods also are riding this means for creating and preserving food,"

says Vitale. "It's a worldwide phenomenon and activity."

Many countries have a higher use of fermentation with items like soy-based products in Asia.

This diverse category can be broken down into different kinds of fermentation-bacteria based, yeast based, lactic acid and mold-based fermentation are just a few examples.

There is definitely room for growth, as there is an education gap," says Nielson-Stowell. "People want fermented foods but don't understand what they are."

Healthy eating is a major driver of fermented foods' popularity. Deli and grocery sales are consumer driven, and consumers are favoring brands that are healthy, craft and artisanal, all core values of fermentation brands.

"Fermentation is about creating flavor when you focus on the process," says Vitale. "The process creates a deep, rich and exciting flavor profile, and this, with a combination of delicious food that helps gut health, is enticing for consumers."

There are surprisingly many deli foods that fall into the fermented category.

'Ten years ago, those foods weren't displayed or were a very small subset hidden within the canned goods space," says Nielson-Stowell. "Now, there are exciting and flavorful brands in the deli department."

Fermented foods are certainly in the midst of a heavy adoption period in grocery.

"From the olive bar to the dairy case to the beverage display, we see this trend as a continuing evolution of food crafted for fun and function-ingredients that not only taste great but also offer health benefits,' says Brandon Gross, vice president of marketing, FOODMatch, in New York City.

Gut health and inflammation are at the forefront of consumer consciousness, yet fermented foods also add flavor to traditional dishes.

"Fermented foods are a delicious way to add big flavor to staple dishes," says Gross. "They can act as a superfood super-ingredient."

An example is FOODMatch's updated classic Italian Giardiniera, which is chopped and fermented to add crunch, brightness and fresh-from-the-garden flavor to salads, sandwiches, soups, stews, chili, nachos, tacos and more.

In terms of meat, Romans invented fermentation of Italian salami before the advent of refrigeration to preserve meat. This food was the primary energy source fer the smoked flavor profile because it is





#### There are surprisingly many deli foods that fall into the fermented category.

for Roman soldiers marching across Europe.

"They realized that by smoking salami prior to drying it, the process would preserve it in a way that did now allow bacteria to thrive," says Dave Brando, director, international sales, Piller's Fine Foods, Ontario, Canada. "Central Europeans preinherent in their history, and they grew up

Piller's salami is cold smoked a minimum of six days, then dry aged for at least 28 days after that.

"The meat ferments during the aging process similar to fine cheese and wine," says Brando. "During this process, it obtains a mature and unique flavor profile, with certain notes up front and others evolving during the process."

The fermented food trend makes sense, as Millennials are looking for foods that do more than fill them up, but offer health benefits, too.

"Fermented foods and drinks are perfect, because they don't taste healthy, but are flavorful without all the over-processing," says Giuliana Pozzuto, director of marketing, DeLallo Foods, Mt. Pleasant, PA. "They are certainly more natural, and this makes them all the more appealing."

Some forget that olives are a fermented

food—maybe because they've been around long before the trend.

Pickles are the more obvious item that fits the category.

"Pickles are fat free, sugar free and gluten free as well as a bit part of the Keto diet," says Girard.

#### Fermented in Deli

There are a number of new developments in fermented deli foods.

Piller's recently introduced salami whips, changing the format of its meat into a thin, long meat snack with a tender bite.

"We're preslicing salami into packages, and have launched a trio with our three most popular salami flavors," says Brando. "These are in unique shapes, with Old Forest in a flower format, mustard seed in a square diamond shape and reduced sodium in a heart design."

It's important to note that, when it comes to olives, some of the most common varieties are processed rather than fermented. This includes black ripe canned olives and Castelvetrano olives, which are treated with chemicals for a quicker cure.

"Lacto-fermented olives can take months to cure fully, but it's a natural process," explains DeLallo's Pozzuto.

DeLallo's newest items include antipasto salads featuring its California Sevillano Olive, sweet Italian Roasted Tomatoes, Provolone cheese, and pesto marinade for well-rounded antipasto that brighten up many dishes as well as charcuterie trays and cheese boards.

"We have seen a lot of evolution in single-serve pickles," says Girard at Van Holten's. "We don't have jars for the center store, as we are mainly for for grab and go snack occasions."

The company, which has been in business since 1989, offers a standard whole cucumber pickle in single-serve packaging brine that keeps it shelf stable with no refrigeration needed.

In November 2018, Van Holten's rolled out Pickle Cutz, which are fermented through refrigeration rather than brine.

Many also are attributing the popularity of fermented foods to the spike in gourmet entertaining (i.e. cheese boards, charcuterie trays, antipasto spreads, etc.). Whether they have realized it or not, customers are incorporating the health benefits of fermented foods (and the famously healthful Mediterranean diet, too) in their favorite

gourmet items, from cheese to salami to olives and pickles.

#### Successful Selling

Suprmarket delis can successfully market fermented foods to customers by touting their health benefits.

"In-store demos are the best form of marketing according to suppliers," says Nielson-Stowell of The Fermentation Association. "Supermarkets and delis can work in partnership with brands to bring demos into their stores and get consumers to taste the products."

Piller's Brando recommends showing off fermented foods' characteristics by sampling at the store levvel and pairing with products that compliment the items' unique depth of flavor.

"Provide a charcuterie pairing guide that includes an in-depth flavor profile describing our signature salamis as well as food and beverage pairings," he says. "This assists customers in implementing a beautiful charcuterie board."

Vitale at The Fermentation Association recommends an increase to the square footage devoted to this category in the dali

"We're seeing fermented foods consolidated in more of a shopping area, and chains like Whole Foods and Sprouts justifiably devoting more space to this category," he says.

Many predict an influx of fermented deli items with unique flavor combinations in the years ahead.

Pozzuto at DeLallo predicts fermented foods will remain prevalent, as consumers seek out functional foods that are healthy and flavorful.

"Olives and antipasti are tasty snacks and ingredients that offer more natural health benefits than over-processed shakes and bars," she says. "That said, I think we will see more and more marketing geared towards fermented and more products come about because of it."

Girard at Van Holten's agrees, saying he's seeing a lot of competition, even if it's not direct, in this space.

"Consumers continue to turn away from salty snacks to easy grab and go items that are healthier," he says. "Pickles were often a spear at the side of a sandwich, which it still is, but can be a snack. Fermented foods will garner more shelf space in delis in the future, but companies will need to innovate with flavors to keep it fresh and top of mind."

DB









## Making a Meal DESTINATION

#### Deli entrées have evolved and become higher end to better compete with restaurant offerings

BY LISA WHITE

repared foods have definitely as well." been taking over deli departments, not only creating meal destinations that are giving today's restaurants a run for their money, but also raising basket rings for retailers.

New York City-based market research firm Nielsen reports that in the 52 weeks ending Oct. 26, 2019, prepared food dollar sales totaled close to \$30 billion, a 3.8 percent increase from the same period a year

"In general, we are seeing that consumers expect to have it all, including products that offer indulgence with healthful characteristics that feed the desires of today's consumers at home," says Sharon Olson, executive director of Culinary Visions, based in Chicago. "Healthful, delicious, accessible and sustainable menu offerings are driving foodservice and of course, that would also apply to the supermarket deli,

#### Entrée Evolution

What we've been seeing in the last four to five years is an evolution into prepared foods destinations.

"This can be a separate segment in the store in some cases, but it depends on the store format," says Eric Richard, industry relations coordinator for the Madison,



PHOTO COURTESY OF DON'S FOODS

WI-based International Dairy Deli Bakery Association (IDDBA). "Stores are taking on different types of programs, such as instore dining."

What's driving this is changing consumer eating patterns. More people want convenience and prepared food options, and the perfect time for picking up a meal is during a grocery shopping trip.

Rather than the quintessential sandwiches or pizza, shoppers are seeking healthier fare, including plant-based entrées, foods sourced locally and unique, upscale fare typically found in restaurants.

"Restaurant trends are transcending to supermarket delis," says Richard. "Retailers are in a good position to compete with restaurants."

A robust menu with new ideas is not a necessity, but a focus on flavor and doing a few things well are key.

"Those embarking on a successful prepared foods program need to compete with restaurants of all types," he says. "Customization and personalization are very important to take prepared food programs to a new level."

While one customer may want to explore different options, another's goal may be to get in and out quickly. Providing both experiences can expand a program's demographic to both types of consumers.

"From our experience, supermarket delis are evolving into a destination for shoppers, where they can find innovative entrées with authentic flavors that are fresh, healthy and satisfying," says Breana Jones, director, marketing and sales at Hissho Sushi, based in Charlotte, NC. "They want more convenience, flexibility and variety in prepared meals."

Entrée items are becoming more sophisticated in the deli in terms of product, packaging and merchandising.

"The products have moved from standard and traditional recipes to more premium ones with specialty ingredients and flavors that cater to today's more demanding palates," says John McCarthy, senior brand marketing manager, Reser's Fine Foods, Beaverton, OR. "There is also a greater variety of entrées available in both bulk and prepack. New meal kit packages are now offered that allow consumers to customize their meals."

Delis today are creating meal solution sections where entrées are sold next to complementary items, such as sides and salads, to make it easy for consumers to quickly pick up dinner on busy weeknights.

Whereas in the past, food was eaten for fuel, today it's more about the experience.

This is an important factor to keep in mind from a retail standpoint, to give consumers an experience," says Larry Montuori, vice president of sales, Nuovo Pasta Enterprises, Stratford, CT.

In the last 12 to 24 months, there has been an influx of take-and-bake and guickserve entrée foods and meals within the supermakret deli.

"Most stores offer pre-made entrée options, but some do offer self service or make-your-own options," says Derek Skogen, senior product manager, Placon, Fitchburg, WI. "Today's consumer is looking for a convenience type meal solution that does not require a lot of time and is that are quick and convenient. easy to prepare."

Most stores have a dedicated space to an entrée or meal kit section that includes items prepared in the store deli area.







customer put fried chicken, a vegetable and starch in a separate self-serve bag or container, they can now easily grab an entrée that includes all items, and it is much more appealing than a frozen dinner and, in most cases, has been freshly prepared the same day," says Skogen.

#### Trends & New Products

Customers are seeking meal solutions

As a result, Hissho Sushi created new, innovative rolls that not only deliver on taste, but also fulfill the health standard more shoppers are searching to find. "Rather than having a supermarket deli This year, the company unveiled its Spicy

Pepper Roll and Veggie TNT Rolls made with a plant-based protein to serve as the "tuna" – a roasted bell pepper.

The company also has launched three light salads to complement its sushi rolls and complete families' meals. The new Zesty Cucumber Salad, Ginger Edamame Salad and Banzai Crab Salad can serve as a side for any lunch or dinner roll.

In addition, its offerings now include six poke bowls and stuffed dumplings for a Dim Sum menu.

A number of new deli entrées have reduced the amount of artificial ingredients and now offer cleaner ingredient lists.

"We are also seeing different portion sizes in prepack entrées to cater to the different consumer household sizes," says McCarthy at Reser's.

Reser's recently launched three entrées in the deli-Baked Ziti Bolognese, Baked Chicken Broccoli Cheddar, and Baked 5 Cheese Macaroni—that are fully baked for a homemade taste and appearance without any prep. These entrées also come in a tray that is safe to heat in the microwave or oven so they can go directly from fridge to oven for added convenience.

Nuovo Pasta is relaunching its pesto line and debuting traditional sauces like marinaras, al fredos and putenascas.

"There has been an evolution with prepared food companies launching more gourmet side dishes that retailers can put together in commissaries," says Carl H. Cappelli, senior vice president of sales and business development, Don's Prepared Foods, Schwenksville, PA.

The company has launched five globally-inspired gourmet sides.

There are trends with Middle Eastern. Asian and Latin American flavors, but comfort foods remain big in the U.S.," says Cappelli. "The other big trend is prepared or heat-and-eat foods with little to no prep needed. Consumers also are seeking clean products with no artificial flavors, colors or preservatives."

There's been an evolution from plated meals to chef-inspired meal kits. Now retailers are taking the cue and chains like Kroger, Publix and Whole Foods are jumping on that bandwagon.

Over the past 12 to 24 months, Placon has launched a variety of products within its HomeFresh Entrée product line. This provides a variety of options, ranging from one- to three-compartment bases that can hold 8 up to 40 ounces of hot or cold foods.

Keep in mind that most consumers

don't know what they are having for dinner tonight let alone in the next few days.

"So it is critical to properly merchandise entrées next to sides, salads and complementary dishes to create a meal solution center," says Reser's McCarthy. "It is optimal to provide simple meal ideas using shelf signage or tear sheets at the shelf that pair an entrée with a side and a salad, etc. for a complete meal and offer special meal deal bundle pricing to make it as simple as possible for consumers."

#### Marketing for Moving

There are a couple approaches, including providing an all-in-one solution and cross merchandising with other foods.

"On the one hand, there's a basic level with rotisserie chicken, sides, a roll and beverages," says Eric LeBlanc, director of marketing, Tyson Foods, Springdale, AR. "Cross merchandising is fresher, yet you can only do this with so many meal solutions at a time."

Tyson recently worked with a retailer on co-merchandising, and by messaging outside the store, sales increased between 15 and 20 percent.

Retailers also can rotate a meal special



each night or provide the components for a meal, such as chicken tenders, sub rolls, Mozzarella cheese and spaghetti sauce for a chicken Parmesan sandwich.

"[The mindset is] how do you take something that's not exciting on its own and make it into something that feels like another meal or dish," says LeBlanc. "For example, combining buffalo wings, Hawaiian rolls and ranch dressing for a buffalo chicken slider. All you need is three ingredients, and it feels like a completely different meal."

To ensure that messaging thrives, Hissho turns to its trained chefs to connect directly with shoppers inside the deli area and capture audiences through education of its menu, tastings and samples.

"Retailers need to make it easy for consumers to find what they're looking for and provide vegan/vegetarian options, entrées for meat eaters, and items to accompany entrées like French bread and grilled chicken, salad," says Cappelli at Don's. "It should be easy for them to find meal solutions to meet everyone's needs."

Utilizing social media brings tremendous value with deli prepared food marketing programs and is something all stores should be engaging in.

"It's up to the individual chains to put the focus and concentrated effort on prepared foods departments," says Richard at IDDBA. "We're seeing new builds within supermarket chains where there is a much greater focus on this segment than in the past, and we predict that will continue to grow."





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# An Enduring Segment



#### With fried chicken, it's all about the flavor

BY BOB JOHNSON

ried chicken remains hot as a forbidden pleasure that many consumers crave as one of their exceptions to the general rule of trying to eat healthier foods.

In their reluctance to devote the attention and staff time it takes to do fried chicken right, many supermarket delis, probably most of them, are leaving money

on the table by missing opportunities to become a definite destination for this crunchy, juicy standard.

"There are opportunities to create a great fried chicken product," says Greg West, senior vice president for marketing and food innovation at The Broaster Co., Beloit, WI. "The grocery stores have had trouble creating a fresh product. There's a

lot of stuff held past its life; grocery stores have to execute and not hold it for four or five hours."

Tenders have a one-hour shelf life, according to West, bone-in less than two hours, and rotisserie chicken three hours.

"That's one reason rotisserie is so popular with the stores," he says. "But when you want great taste, it's in fried chicken."

Even with the reluctance to devote the time needed to maximize the category by always offering a fresh product, supermarket delis continue to enjoy robust sales of these products.

"Including all forms of fried chicken bone-in, skin-on parts, nuggets, strips, patties and similar items—the market at grocery and club stores continues to show good growth for these products," says Tom Super, senior vice president for communications at the National Chicken Council, Washington D.C. "Shoppers value the taste, convenience, and good, steady prices for fried chicken."

#### Make it Tastv

A successful fried chicken program begins with a product that is reliably crunchy, juicy and flavorful.

"What you really want is chicken that is moist, breading that is crunchy and spiciness in the breading, which usually means pepper," says Eric Le Blanc, director of marketing for deli at Tyson Foods Inc., Springdale, AR.

Good fried chicken, according to West, should be fresh and never frozen, marinated, coated with a breading, and pressure fried rather than open fried.

"It makes the product crispy on the outside and juicy on the inside," he says. "That's the magic. Our fried chicken, also available as spicy, has one of the lowest breading or coating levels for fried chicken. It is still very crispy on the outside and juicy on the inside.'



flavor to the fried chicken program.

"There are a lot of advantages to breading at the store level," says Le Blanc. "There is a movement away from breaded toward breading."

Suppliers can set the deli up with a package that lets staff quickly and easily coat the chicken and then fry it.

"Our proprietary process allows the operator to prebread or precoat the chicken ahead of time, allowing them to immediately drop or fry chicken upon an order," says West. "This gives greater simplicity in the execution."

There has been an evolution, as major The breading, or coating, is one area players in fried chicken have come to that adds a distinctive, and possibly fresh, embrace the delicious greasy stuff, rather

than run away from it.

"Kentucky Fried Chicken changed its name to KFC in 1991 to avoid the connotations of the word 'fried," says West, who used to work for the Colonel. "Today, they promote 'finger lickin' good.' It's all about the taste."

The fried chicken category is one deli category where, for the time being, flavor triumphs over nutrition.

"Short term, I don't think the trend toward healthier eating is any threat at all to fried chicken," says Le Blanc. "It's an indulgence product. I have seen no evidence fried chicken shoppers care about anything other than the flavor."

#### Make It Convenient

According to consumer data compiled by Tyson, when it comes to deli chicken, shoppers' convenience is even more important than quality.

More than a quarter of deli prepared food shoppers don't decide what's for dinner until someone says they're hungry, and these consumers are choosing chicken; chicken is number four among deli meats, but number one among prepared meats.

The deli is ideally positioned to offer consumers many choices of dishes to buy to combine with fried chicken to put together a convenient meal.

'Creating the meal is about stretching the meal companions," says Tyson's Le Blanc. 'If you put other fresh ingredients with it, you can provide a better eating experience. Co-merchandising is nice, but not really necessary."



The complete meal can be an effective way for the deli to display and merchandise fried chicken.

"Promoting meal kits continues to be an option delis are using, in addition to the more standard approaches of buy-one/get a free side item, weekend specials, home delivery/pick/up bonuses and the like," says Super. "Long gone is a deli that just offers bone-in/skin-on fried chicken."

The companion foods can be an area where the deli pays homage to good nutrition, in addition to offering the flavorful mist, greasy crunch that is fried chicken.

"I'm not giving up fried chicken; I just eat more vegetables with it," says West.

"Chik Fil A will have a side salad, a fruit salad, even a kale salad."

Further evidence of the popularity of convenient meals built around chicken can be found in the growing popularity of meals in a bowl.

"A bit similar to the rising demand for bowls is the renewed interest in mac and cheese dishes," says Super. "While some restaurant chains are having success by adding lobster pieces to mac and cheese, supermarkets find this to be costly and the supply too tight and uneven. So, the other white meat, chicken, is stepping-in to save the day, or rather extend the appeal of mac and cheese to those consumers who desire

more taste and texture. With an abundance of chicken breast meat, delis can be confident that managing this part of their menu will be less taxing than much of their other concerns. Also, just like fried chicken that can be offered hot or chilled, mac/cheese/chicken finds favor warm or chilled."

The recent chicken sandwich craze is yet another example of the popularity of the convenient meal that could be developed in a fried chicken program.

"The recent extreme popularity of an upgraded chicken breast meat sandwich at a major fast food chain is not lost at the deli department in many supermarkets," says Super. "These stores are diligently work-

#### MAKE THE OIL LAST, AND USE IT AGAIN

The choice of oils for fried chicken begins with choosing one that will have a maximum life and cause a minimum of nasty cleanup.

"For deep frying, choosing oil with a high smoke point will prolong the life of the oil," advises Giovanni Brienza, vice president of Frontline International, Cuyahoga Falls, OH. "Coconut, soybean, corn, peanut and canola oils are all popular choices."

Frontline makes a variety of both fresh and waste oil equipment, and offers a wealth of information on extending shelf life.

"Through the cooking cycle, some oil is inevitably absorbed into the food," advises Brienza. "Regularly topping it off will extend oil life and control food quality, as well. Next, they should filter the oil at least daily to eliminate the debris. The more debris in the oil, the faster the oil will break down. It's always wise to install a device to monitor the total polar material, or TPM, of the oil. A level higher than 14 or 15 percent will break down the oil much faster. A TPM reading greater than 25 percent is considered the discard point."

While some oils are healthier than others, fried chicken is one category where that might not matter much to most consumers.

"Maybe 40 percent of all consumers read labels for ingredients, but when you come to the fried chicken shopper they don't even pretend to care," says Eric Le Blanc, director of marketing for deli at Tyson Foods Inc., Springdale, AR.

"Long term, you may see a shift away from fried chicken, but there is no evidence that adding any kind of nutrition claim registers with these consumers. I would focus on making it taste good, rather than on the ingredients or how the chicken was raised."

Retailers who believe their consumers are exceptions to this nutritional rule, or who feel a responsibility to offer the healthiest options, do have alternatives.

"Avocado oil is probably the best from a health perspective, but it has an extremely low smoke point and is not at all appropriate for deep frying," says Brienza. "Peanut oil is very low in saturated fat, very healthy and well-suited to deep frying. Some people are concerned that it might cause issues for customers with nut allergies, but the filtration the oil goes through eliminates any allergens. Peanut oil can cost more than some of the other healthier options, so canola oil and sunflower oil are also good choices."

There are many reasons to shy away from frying chicken in animal fats, however, and good nutrition is just one of them.

"We would recommend avoiding animal fats and lard," says Brienza. "They create a host of problems, not the least of which is the health-related issue of added saturated fat. Next, because deep frying is a high-heat cooking method, we recommend they choose an oil with a high smoke point that won't also impart an aftertaste to the food. The

three most popular plant-based oils for deep frying are peanut, canola and sunflower. It's the individual owner's choice, but one of those three usually hits the balance of healthiness, smoke point and cost."

Once the oil has run its useful life for frying chicken, it can be recycled and live again as fuel or animal feed.

"There's an entire industry built on collecting and recycling used cooking oil," says Brienza. "Roughly 80 percent of it ends of up in biofuels, which are used to generate clean energy. The rest becomes nutritional additives for animal feed, and a small portion becomes glycerin used in the manufacturing of cosmetics."

The amount of oil that can be recycled for money, according to Brienza, has a lot to do with the oil chosen and the program used for keeping it free of debris.

"To maximize rebates, the key for managers is to have the highest possible yield of recyclable oil in the collection tank," he says. "They can achieve this by eliminating any water or moisture from their tanks. For example, animal fats have a high moisture content, so that's another reason not to use those. Also, don't rinse the fryers with water while draining them. Debris in the oil can also reduce the rebate amount, so be sure to filter the oil before it goes into the containment tank. The goal would be to get 98 percent recyclable used oil in the tank, so the margin of error is very small." DB



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ing to have their version of this highly/ widely popular sandwich. Operationally, executing the preparation and delivery of a successfully competing sandwich can be a challenge for some deli departments. But, for those stores that can attract shoppers with this new sandwich, the rewards can be positive and likely store wide. Stores that have eat-in/sit-down eating areas have the advantage with this sandwich."

Whatever the fried chicken is paired with, consumers want to see it displayed in a way that is easy for them to see and purchase without waiting.

"Mostly, it's in the deli's hot service case, and a good percent of shoppers like that they can grab it without waiting in line," says Le Blanc.

#### Make it Economical

One reason chicken, especially prepared chicken, is so popular in the deli is it is so inexpensive.

"Fried chicken fluctuates quite a bit with price promotions, but sales have been generally steady," says Le Blanc. "There will be a couple down years followed by a couple of up years, but fried chicken is about the most price sensitive item among prepared hot foods. Fried chicken is usually sold by the piece. Eight pieces is the most common, but you also see two- or three-piece lunch offers."

Offering fried chicken that has cooled off opens the product to an even larger number of lower income consumers.

"Once it is cold, it is eligible to be sold under the SNAP program, which opens up a lot of customers," says Le Blanc.

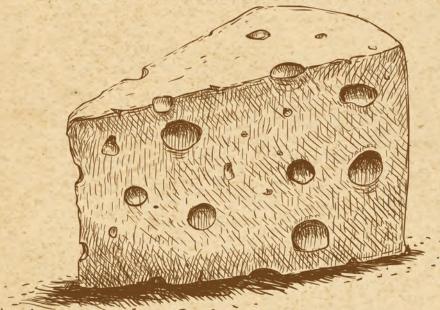
Because global trade is going through an uncertain phase, supermarket deli retailers would do well to prepare in advance for the possibility that demand for chicken could increase dramatically in a hurry and drive up the price.

"Competing red meat products have experienced much more volatility in the wholesale prices, as the ups and downs in the export market have impacted the current and future outlook for domestic availability of these meats," says Super. "At the same time, if the Chinese market re-opens for U.S. chicken, retailers could see some price pressure on their chicken products. Many of the larger retailers are working with their current and potential chicken suppliers to agree upon a contract that is fair to both sides in the event that China steps in to purchase a large, ongoing quantity of chicken."



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Discover how this age-old favorite came about and the qualities that make it so unique

BY HANNAH HOWARD

eta cheese has been a part of Greece for nearly as long as humanity itself. It derives from the very first cheese made around 8,000 years ago, which was made soon after people began domesticating animals. Historians believe that milk began to ferment while being transported in the stomach of a goat or sheep. The shepherds noticed that the new product lasted much longer than fresh milk—and cheese was born.

The first written mention of Feta appears in Homer's Odyssey, which dates from near the end of the 8th century BC. The protagonist Ulysses ventures to visit the cave of Polyphemus, also known as the Cyclops. When he arrives, he finds all the evidence of cheesemaking in action:

"We soon reached his cave, but he was out shepherding. We went inside the cave



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and looked around. It was astonishing—crates full of cheese, pens crammed with livestock-lambs and kids sorted into separate groups, with yearlings, older lambs and newborns each in different pens. All the sturdy buckets, pails and milking bowls were awash with whey. Next, Polyphemus curdled half the white milk, gathered it in wicker baskets and laid it away.

The Cyclops is the mythical grandfather of Feta cheese. Since then, this favorite has been at the center of Greek cuisine, culture and life.

#### Slice or Slab

The word "Feta" means slice or slab in Greek. That term originated in the 17th century—before then, Feta was just called "cheese" in Greece—and refers to the tradition of slicing up cheese and placing it in barrels, a practice that continues to this day. Brining is an essential part of what makes Feta unique. The cheese is traditionally made with sheep's milk, although up to 30 percent of the milk can come from goats. Feta has a tangy, fresh and briny flavor and a creamy yet crumbly texture. Sheep's milk imparts a buttery richness, and goat's milk adds acidity.

Rachel Juhl, chief educator and trainer at Brooklyn, NY-based Essex St. Cheese, has been immersed in Feta since well before the cheese importer and wholesaler launched its own Greek Feta in 2013. "It was a three-year process, which involved

learning a ton and visiting many different producers," she recalls. "It fit with our mission to find cheeses that are misunderstood in the marketplace—we find the truly authentic version." That described Feta perfectly, a cheese that is often seen only as a vehicle for salt and texture in a salad or an omelet. Instead, Essex St. Cheese wanted to celebrate the artisanal version of one of the world's most ancient and revered cheeses."

That version of its Feta comes from Agra on the island of Lesbos, where it is crafted by third generation cheesemaker M. Tastanis. The Feta is made every day between mid-December and the end of July when the sheep graze on fresh grasses, herbs and wildflowers, with a combination of chilled evening milk and fresh morning milk. After the milk is pasteurized, it is cooled down, and a spoon of yogurt, a starter culture, and animal rennet is added. Soon, it develops a creamy texture, and the curds are cut into cubes, salted and pressed for 30 minutes, then salted again on each side for several hours. The curds are thumb-sized, which is what allows the cheese to so easily crumble. It's almost the exact same process that the Cyclops used thousands of years ago.

The cheesemaker controls the content of the brine, what kind and how much salt is used, and how often the brine is changed. "Salt is another ingredient that effects the flavor," says Juhl. Tastanis changes the

brine weekly so that the Feta does not sit in its own whey, as salt pulls the whey out of the cheese.

Sheree Cardoos, who now runs Cardoos McKenna Marketing in San Francisco, worked as the president of Mt Vikos for 10 years before selling the company to Blue Marble. She still works with the brand as a broker. At Mt Vikos, which sells PDO Greek Feta, the cheese come from the milk of sheep and goats (they use about 15 percent goat's milk) that graze on fresh grasses and herbs in the mountains of Thessaly. This "gives the milk the extra wonderful flavor and quality," according to Cardoos.

They never use add calcium chloride or whey powder, common additions to cow's milk Feta, or use commodity milk or whey powder. Made in a traditional manner, Mt Vikos' Feta is crafted in 20-pound rounds, then stacked five tall in a Beachwood barrel and covered with brine. The cheese is then cellared for four months, which allows the flavor to develop into something complex, robust and toothsome. "Cheese right out of the barrel is fabulous," exclaims Cardoos. "The most delicious thing I've had."

### A Hard-Won Fight for Name Protection

After 16 years of court battles with Germany and Denmark, which make their own cheese that they wanted to be able to call Feta, the European Union



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ESSEX CHEESE AND ALISON CHRISTIANA









PHOTOS COURTESY OF ESSEX CHEESE AND ALISON CHRISTIANA

granted name-protected PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) status to Greek Feta in 2002. Other countries were given five years to rename their cheeses or stop production. Sometimes called "white gold," it is one of the country's most important food exports.

"With the economic crisis, advocating for unique stories and history, instead of assuming everyone knows, became extra important for Greece," Juhl explained. Its unique history, tradition and geographic location distinguish Greek Feta from its cousins around the world. "The flora really sets this cheese apart from everywhere else in the Mediterranean," Juhl adds. "There are more than 6,000 species of natural flora that are endemic—and they only exist in Greece."

To receive the PDO, Feta can be made in one of seven regions: specific prefectures on the mainland and the islands of the Peloponnese; Thessalia; Epirus; Macedonia; Thrace; and Lesbos. Feta is produced from breeds of sheep and goat traditionally grown and fed in these areas and whose diet is based on its natural flora. PDO Feta must be made with only sheep's milk—and maybe some goat's milk—rennet and salt. Feta is matured for at least 60 days and cannot contain antibiotics, preservatives, additives and/or food coloring. Cow's milk "Feta" is often dyed to create the natural white color of sheep and goat's milk cheese.

"Most people know Feta as the dry, salty, crumbly stuff that goes on a Greek salad," says Cardoos. "What they're buying, is cow's milk domestic Feta, often pre-crumbled," and not the real deal. As for the real thing, it's uniquely clean, sweettart and full-bodied. Only about 2 percent of all Feta consumed in the United States is actually made in Greece.

### **Enjoying Feta**

Feta is a quintessential part of life in Greece—the average Greek person consumes about 50 pounds each year, and 70 percent of the cheese Greeks eat is



Feta. In the U.S., Feta is most often served in Greek salads, but that's just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to delicious ways to enjoy the cheese. Tossed into a refreshing salad with watermelon and mint, Feta's savory notes highlight the fresh sweetness of the fruit.

Use it as a topping for pizza or bruschetta—a pizza with fresh tomato, olives, artichokes and Feta is a guaranteed crowdpleaser. It's the perfect addition to meat and cheese pies, adding a great and creamy bite. Grilled veggies and Feta in foil is an excellent meatless meal or a summer side. Feta is also a good friend to eggs, whether it's mixed into an omelet with spinach, scrambled into breakfast eggs with fresh herbs, or added to a frittata.

"I love marinating Feta in good olive oil, fresh thyme, oregano and peppercorns," Cardoos explains. "Throw that on bread, and it's heaven."

But the very best way to serve Feta harkens back to its name—as a slab, just as it is. "There is always a slab of Feta on the table," Juhl says of her visits to Greece, with meals served family-style. "It goes with lamb, fresh veggies and pretty much everything." Pair Feta with soft red wines, like Pinot Noir and Beaujolais, and crisp white wines, including Sauvignon Blanc and bubbly Cava.

DB



# The Fine & Unparalleled Goat Cheese of France

Find out why this revered cheese is becoming even more cherished.

BY HANNAH HOWARD

he great wide world of French goat cheese is, well, great and wide. Three thousand producers and 60 dairies produce over 265 million pounds of goat cheese each year—that's a staggering amount of cheese. French farmers manage the third largest goat herd in Europe, with 1,381,000 goats—it takes a lot of goats to make so much cheese. They export about 27 percent of their cheeses

to Northern Europe and America, which is a wonderful thing for us Chèvre fans. France is the largest producer of pure goat cheeses—cheese made with goat's milk only—in the world.

In French, Chèvre simply means goat. But for our purposes, when we refer to Chèvre, we're talking about the countless generations of French goat cheesemaking tradition. If goat cheeses are anything, they're diverse. We're often accustomed

to thinking of that creamy, tangy fresh kind as the only kind—but Chèvre ranges from spreadable and young to flaky and aged. The cheeses are crafted throughout all of France, and each region has its own way of doing things—and is super proud of that fact.

"What I'm always thinking about and what always strikes me when I go to France and interact with French cheeses and cheesemakers—is the centuries





of refinement," says Tia Keenan, New York City-based fromager and author of *Chèvre*. "As Americans, we don't get to see that much. It's a matter of time, culture and careful refinement that can't be replicated" that are the essential ingredients in French goat cheese.

Historically, French Chèvre has been produced in eight regions: Poitou-Centre-Val Charentes: de Loire: Bourgogne; Rhône-Alpes: Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur: Languedoc-Roussillon; Midi-Pyrénées; and Aquitaine; all south of the Loire River, where the geography, climate and tradition dictate the many varieties of cheeses crafted there. Fourteen French goat cheeses have the PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) label, ensuring that the Chèvre has been made in a strictly designated geographical area using only local milk and traditional production techniques.

### A Rich History

Goats were one of the first-ever animals to be domesticated by humans, and we've been turning goat milk to cheese for nearly 8,000 years. The style we are familiar with today has its roots in the 8th Century, when Moors from Spain set out to occupy France. The armies of the Umayyad Caliphate needed to eat, and so their brought their goats along on their journey. Their military pursuits didn't go so well, and they left their goats behind.

The Loire River Valley farmers began caring for the goats and transforming their mlik into cheese. Over a millennium, they built up a Chèvre empire; 70 percent of France's goat cheese is crafted in the Loire. "Thousands of unique things happened over time to bring us to this moment," says Keenan. "Not a lot of ingredients can claim that." It's that generations-after-generations of tweaking, perfecting and recommitting to quality that makes for a truly unparalleled food. Like all well-made cheese, it all starts with the impeccable quality of the fresh milk.

Although the industry has seen innovation, the cheesemaking basics remain unchanged. Starter cultures are added to raw or pasteurized goat's milk, and rennet begins the gradual coagulation of the milk over one to two days. The solid curd is usually drained through a cloth and is made up of caseins—large molecules of milk proteins—and fat. The curd is then molded into whatever shape the cheesemaker chooses and salted. Some

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cheeses are dusted with vegetable or oak charcoal. Some cheeses are eaten fresh, after being drained, while others are carefully matured. With age, cheeses become firmer, denser, drier and more complex.

Around the year 1880, goat's milk producers began working together in cooperatives, particularly in the Centre and Poitou-Charentes regions. Dairies at this time were the first to produce goat cheeses from pasteurized milk. Even as many cheesemakers scaled up to meet larger demands for selling and exporting,

they did not lower their quality standards or disregard time-honored tradition. They've accommodated the realities of modern commerce, while staying true to their identity.

In the 1970s, with a revived interest in fresh and traditional foods, goat cheeses gained a renewed popularity and started to become sought-after around the world. French goat cheese has also laid a foundation for the much newer American artisanal cheesemaking movement, too. "We should have respect and gratitude for

French goat cheeses, as they have influenced global cheesemaking," Keenan says. "This is foundational cheese."

### So Many Cheeses, Such Little Time

Where to start? French goat cheeses are anything but uniform—they represent diverse regions, styles, textures and tastes. They can be made from either raw or pasteurized milk (raw milk cheeses are available in the U.S. only if they are aged over 60 days). They can be crumbly or creamy; young or aged. Chèvre comes in discs and wheels, logs and pyramids, and even cute little buttons. Before marketing strategies were a thing, cheeses presented in different shapes, perhaps dusted in vegetable ash, rolled in herbs or pressed with a leaf, distinguished themselves as special in a crowded market. The cheese represented a particular microregion with its own sense of history and place.

Fresh goat cheeses have a light, bright creaminess, and no rind to speak of. Those snow-white logs and spreadable tubs of Chèvre are young and lactic, with an acidic bite. Natural rind goat cheeses like Valençay, Crottin and Selles-sur-Cher develop their exteriors as they age over time. With some cheeses, powdered vegetable ash helps neutralize the cheese surface, so the correct molds can grow and create the rinds. Bloomy-rinded goats like Goat Brie, Goat Camembert, Bûcherondin and Chèvre d'Argental are coated with Penicillium candidum, and aged goat cheeses like Tomme de Chèvre and Bleu de Chèvre develop complex flavors over time.

Instead of being intimidated by the dizzying array of cheese options, Keenan recommends feeling empowered to explore and have fun with cheeses that may be either familiar or new.

### Some Favorites to Try

There's no wrong place to begin when it comes to exploring the many possibilities of Chèvre. You can't go wrong with asking your monger for a favorite find. Here are a few popular varieties, in no particular order:

• Crottin de Chavignol from Berry, in the Loire Valley, is a rustic little round of cheese which packs a wallop of tangy, sharp flavor. It becomes drier and increasingly intense with age, a bit gamy and incredibly delicious.

- Tomme de Chevre Aydius, from the village of Aydius in the Béarnaise Pyrénées region of France, is made in the style of the sweet, smooth sheep's milk wheels famous in the region, except with raw goat's milk. It's aged for about six months for a grassy, fruity and an almost (wonderfully) musty flavor.
- The pyramid-shaped, ash-coated Valençay comes with a story: after Napoleon's military defeat in Egypt, he demanded the pointed tops of the cheese be removed, hence the truncated top. The thin rind yields to a dense, piquant paste with mineral notes.
- The tiny village of Saint-Maure, southeast of Paris, is famous for its goat cheeses—shaped like logs and pierced with a straw or stick from end to end. The straws began as a trick for keeping the fragile, young cheese logs from crumbling into oblivion, and continue because, well, they're tradition. The texture of Saint-Maure de Touraine becomes firmer with age, bridging the crumbly/creamy divide. Balanced, lemony, tangy and classic, this AOC-protected cheese has been made for more than a thousand years.
- Goat cheeses can be blue, too. From the Vendée, in western France, Bleu du Bocage is aged for several months, but retains a stunning delicateness. Its bright white paste is laced with a grayish-green blueing. It has a toasty, clean flavor, with a not-at-all overpowering blue saltiness at the finish.

### Pairing, Cooking and Digging In

Goat cheese is "an almost magical ingredient that's both accessible and special at the same time—an everyday ingredient that never ceases to surprise," notes Keenan. It's also a nutritional heavy-weight, packed with calcium and protein, along with vitamins and minerals. It has less lactose and less sodium than cow's milk cheeses and is easier to digest.

Goat cheese is a "wonderful, fresh, nutritious, delicious ingredient that can go into all the dishes you are making," says Keenan. It can be a perfect way to add great flavor and depth to all the fresh vegetables you have in your fridge, turning a simple salad into a satisfying meal.

When Americans think goat cheese, we often think salad. And while a warm medallion of a goat log atop a bed of peppery arugula or fresh Chèvre crumbled into a bowl of beets and walnuts is a gorgeous thing, salads are just the start of veggies. Keenan suggests u cheese in place of mascar much any recipe, but perl in stuffed shells. Serve you cheese for dessert with suggests understand the suggests understand the start of chocolate and fresh berries.



the many culinary possibilities.

Dig into some fresh Chèvre for break-fast, perhaps with sliced ripe peaches and a generous drizzle of honey. French goats are great additions to scrambled eggs and frittatas. They add personality and depth to mac and cheese, gratins and roasted veggies. Keenan suggests using fresh goat cheese in place of mascarpone in pretty much any recipe, but perhaps especially in stuffed shells. Serve your favorite goat cheese for dessert with shards of dark chocolate and fresh berries.

When it comes to wines, acidic, mineral-driven and citrusy Sauvignon Blanc or Chenin Blanc pair beautifully with those same qualities in Chèvre. Bubbly wine can cut through the cheese's richness with its fizzy texture—try Crémant de Loire, sparkling wine from the Loire region. Natural wines and goat cheeses often meld beautifully too, as they share just a bit of tanginess. Keenan also recommends pucker-inducing naturally fermented sour beers and ciders, which echo Chèvre's underlying funk.



# PROFIT FROM IN 2020's Four Deli Meat Trends

Looking ahead at a dynamic new year

BY CAROL BAREUTHER



ay the word 'deli' and for many it's the classic image of whole cured hams, long netted salamis and fat finger-like sausages hanging invitingly over glass fronted cases that comes to mind. Meats indeed are a cornerstone category in this perishable department. Today, deli lunchmeats represent nearly one-fifth, or 18.3 percent, of total supermarket

deli sales during the 52 weeks ending Oct. 26, 2019, according to Nielsen Total U.S. Food data.

Yet, times are changing.

"The retail landscape is shifting more today than it has over the last 50 years," according to Eric Richard, education coordinator at the International Dairy Deli Bakery Association (IDDBA),

PHOTO COURTESY OF COLUMBUS CRAFT MEATS



headquartered in Madison, WI. "Overall, I think we'll continue to see an evolution of the deli, as operators seek to adapt to customers changing eating and lifestyles, and the deli meat category will certainly be a part of this."

Here are four ways to capitalize on trends in flavor, convenience, authenticity and creativity to help sell more deli meats in 2020.

### 1. FLAVORS: TRADITIONAL & TRENDY WINS

In a Presidential Election year, the usual trends get skewed by the return to comfort food, says Jim Pierson, vice president of sales for the Pocino Foods Co., in City of Industry, CA. "We see the largest growth in salami and dried sausage, followed by ham and then turkey."

Turkey is the Number One deli meat by dollar sales, according to Nielsen Total U.S. Food data.

"Our best-selling products include our Oven Roasted and Thanksgiving Style Roasted Turkey Breast products," says Adam Grant, associate brand manager for retail deli for Butterball, headquartered in Garner, NC. "In 2019, we launched an extension to the Thanksgiving deli line with our Herb Roasted Thanksgiving Style Turkey Breast product, which features a topical herb seasoning that brings the savory flavor combination of holiday stuffing and oven roasted turkey to the table year-round."

Ham ranks second in deli meat dollar sales, followed by salami, beef, chicken and bologna. However, a different order emerges based on percent year over year growth. That is, salami leads (+3.4 percent), followed by bologna (+3.2 percent), beef (+2.7 percent), turkey (+1.3 percent) and ham (+0.8 percent). Lunchmeat chicken experienced a 7.9 percent drop in dollar sales.

However, as consumers' flavor preferences expand, there is a demand for unique, bold flavor offerings in the deli category. These flavors include ethnic and regional flavors, sweet and spicy, and bold, say manufacturers.

"Our team is leveraging recent research in our flavor innovation strategy for the bulk deli," says Hilary Gerard, senior marketing manager, Cargill Protein North America, based in Wichita, KS. "Two key takeaways from that work are to prioritize ham and chicken varieties for flavor innovation, as these proteins performed strongest





in consumer response, and that southern and southwestern flavors were most frequently preferred."

More delis are offering pepper-coated and uncured bacons, according to Megan Dorsch, marketing manager for Nueske's Applewood Smoked Meats, in Wittenberg, WI. "This is in part because black pepper is a classic, but has also been a hot flavor this year and, in the case of our uncured bacon, because of consumers' interest in alternative ingredients."

Teriyaki and Hatch Chili are among ethnic flavors emerging, says Pocino Foods' Pierson. "Pork belly continues to explode due to being Keto-friendly, since ours is minimally processed and can be easily repurposed from barbecue to teriyaki sauce. Other deli meat best-sellers are Pastrami and Pepperoni. Pastrami is being repurposed into new recipes, for example, with a chimichurri sauce. Pepperoni continues to be a nice spicy and flavorful addition to any sandwich."

Looking ahead, Mediterranean flavors are expected to grow in popularity, according to the Food and Flavor Trends 2020 and Beyond Global Trend Survey, presented by Les Dames d'Escoffier International in October 2019. In addition, the survey suggests more exotic flavors from North Africa and the Middle East will gain attention. This offers inspiration for not only the manufacture of new products, but also trendy usage ideas for traditional deli meats.

"If supermarket delis do it right and offer both new flavors and high-quality classics, they'll see huge growth as Millennials are raising families and want to feed them well, but have limited time for meal prep," says Nueske's Dorsch.

### 2. CONVENIENCE: THE NEED TO FEED TIME-STARVED SHOPPERS

The demand for convenience is driving change in today's deli landscape. That said, one of the biggest trends in 2020 will



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likely continue to be grab and go, according to Butterball's Grant. "With consumers looking for quick and convenient options, numerous retailers are beginning the transition of converting their dedicated bulk, service deli space into grab and go displays. This is leading to volume and dollar sales shifting from bulk deli to grab and go."

Bulk, or deli meats sliced to order, still make up the majority (60 percent) of category sales versus pre-packaged (25 percent) and grab and go (14 percent), according to IRI market advantage data for the 52 weeks ending Aug. 11, 2019, as published in the IDDBA's State of Deli Meat & Prepared Foods report, released September 2019. However, bulk deli meat dollar sales decreased (\$163 million) over the last year, while pre-packaged and grab-and-go both increased, \$34 and \$192 million, respectively. The result is that convenience formats account for nearly 40 percent of

deli meat sales.

"Grab-and-go solutions like pre-pack-aged sliced deli meats reduce labor for the retailer and allow shoppers to easily take from the case without waiting at the deli counter. Plus, there is more interest from Millennials and Gen Xers in the snacking, grab and go and entertaining categories, while Boomers are more likely to shop the full-service deli counter."

Snacking and entertaining are indeed huge trends. In fact, nearly half (47 percent) of U.S. consumers snack everyday, according to the *State of the Specialty Food Industry* research, 2019-2020 edition, by the New York, NY-headquartered Specialty Food Association. Plus, half (50 percent) of Americans entertain guests at home at least once a month, and nearly one-quarter (21 percent) do so daily or weekly, according to results of a 2017 published online survey released by German

market research group, GfK.

"We've seen delis begin stocking more of our bulk, traditional snack sausages right in the case, like Landjaeger—a rich, peppery Alpine-style snacking sausage, Beef Sticks, All-Beef Summer Sausage, and other shelf-stable sausage sticks that fit the desire for snacks and creating platters at home," says Nueske's Dorsch.

New premium snacking kits sold under Cargill's Castle Wood Reserve brand contain rolled deli meat paired with a unique cheese and sides, like dark chocolate dried cherries or yogurt-covered granola clusters.

For snacking or entertaining, Piller's Fine Foods' 6-ounce Black Kassel-brand charcuterie trio includes the Brantford, Ontario-based company's signature-shaped salamis: heart-shaped D'Amour, square/diamond-shaped mustard seed and flower-shaped Old Forest.

"The artisanal shapes lend themselves to elevated entertaining," says Stephanie Eagan, director of marketing. "The retail-friendly trio is shelf stable, offering greater merchandising flexibility within the deli department or other areas of the store. The peggable trio can be displayed in or out of refrigeration in its retail-ready display box, baskets and more."

### 3. AUTHENTICITY: TELL 'EM & SELL 'EM

Transparency is a huge selling point in delis today, according to the IDDBA's Richard. "This encompasses everything from telling customers what's in a product to how it's made. It's an especially important point for deli meats, since these are processed products."

A cleaner label product is becoming more paramount and asked for, more than ever before, as the average shopper is becoming more educated, manufacturers say.

"The deli category hasn't experienced much growth in the ABF (antibiotic free) or organic product space, but natural and clean-label, premium products have grown. To respond to this, we offer premium deli products with no nitrates or nitrites, no added hormones or steroids, made from whole turkey breast, and all our products bear the American Humane Certified seal," says Butterball's Grant.

For shoppers looking for a 'better for you' option, Piller's Fine Foods is launching a 4-ounce All Natural Charcuterie Trio. This package offers three uncured salamis—Double Smoked, Spicy Hungarian

and Black Peppercorn. All three flavors are minimally processed and contain no artificial ingredients, flavors or colors; no preservatives; no nitrates and nitrates added, and are made with pork raised with no added hormones.

Beyond the ingredient label, 93 percent of consumers think it's important for brands to provide more detailed information about what is in a food and how it's made, according to *The Transparency Imperative 2018*, published by the Vienna, VA-based Food Marketing Institute in partnership with Label Insight, headquartered in Chicago. What's more, 74 percent of shoppers in 2018, compared to just 39 percent in 2016, said they'd switch from their usually purchased brand to one that provides more information than just what's on the label.

"We have a growing handful of deli customers that have maps showing the locations of all their product suppliers on the wall—they're a fun graphic to look at and familiar maps, like those of the U.S. or even of particular states, engage customers on a personal level. Maps give shoppers a way to relate to their purchases. It's just such an effective, memorable way to show where food comes from," says Nueske's Dorsch.

### 4. CREATIVITY: SANDWICHES 2.0 & BEYOND

With the maturing Millennial generation able to spend more money than the Baby Boomers, the need for 'something new' more often is important for the retailer in providing new options, says Pocino Foods' Pierson. "For example, take any sandwich and put it on a pretzel bun. Slice your roast beef into a chipotle Philly cheese sandwich."

Restaurant-quality ways to use deli meats are one reason why Columbus Craft Meats offers high-quality whole muscle but not flavored meats, according to Evan Inada, charcuterie and partnerships director for Hayward, CA-based Columbus Craft Meats, a brand of the Hormel Foods Corp., headquartered in Austin, MN. "Shoppers want quality first in their deli meats, then they want to know what they can do with it. For example, five years ago no one really knew what to do with roast pork loin. Now, deli operators can cross merchandise the pork with, say, a Havarti or Brie, and apple chutney and the consumer can make sandwiches like what they could order out at a restaurant for double or more the price."

Charcuterie is another big opportunity to upsell deli meats and much more, Inada

adds. "Helping a deli customer choose maybe three good salamis, a pâté perhaps, two to three cheeses, a jam, berries or grapes and maybe some dark chocolate. That can quickly add up to a \$75 to \$100 basket ring."

Both upscale sandwiches and trays lend themselves to customization.

Seventy-two percent of consumers today expect restaurants to accommodate customization requests, according to the

2019 Flavor Consumer Trend Report, from the Chicago-based market research group, Technomic

"Deli meats can be used for many more applications, including salad and soup toppers, salad kits, in-store made upscale lunches or snacks and as a pizza topping. For example, we're seeing an uptick in mortadella on pizzas. The new usage options for deli meats are endless," says Columbus' Inada.

DB



### When Historic Know-**How Meets Quality**







Bayonne Ham is the result of a thousand years of tradition and know-how, valuing and respecting the product's production process. From being served at the tables of historical figures, such as King Henri IV and French author Rabelais, to becoming the first French product to be awarded the Protected Geographical Indication in 1998, Bayonne Ham is one of Europe's most acclaimed hams.

### THE PGI DESIGNATION, A SEAL OF **GUARANTEE AND RECOGNITION**

The European Union created the Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) in 1992, a sign of quality that aims to guarantee the origin of products, which come from regions of history and tradition. For Bayonne hams, the PGI status means two things: pigs must have been born and bred in Southwest France and curing must take place within the Adour River basin.

### **EIGHT STEPS TO CREATING AN AUTHENTIC PRODUCT**

Bayonne Ham is produced using an eight-step traditional method from the arrival of fresh pig legs to the branding of the Bayonne Ham "Lauburu" cross. Each one of these steps is essential to delivering a high-quality

product, and Bayonne Ham has always been transparent about its process.

- Arrival of the legs: Producers of Bayonne Ham receive fresh legs from authorized slaughterhouses.
- **Salting**: Fresh hams are rubbed with salt from Salies de-Béarn salty spring water. They are then covered with a thick layer of salt and placed in salting rooms.
- **Resting**: Hams are suspended in a room where they are dried at low temperature in artificially-created winter conditions.
- Drying: Hams are hung in drying rooms, where the long maturing process begins gradually enhancing their flavors, aromas and tenderness.
- "Pannage": The process of applying a mixture of pork fat and flour to the ham's muscular parts, making for a gentler drying process during the long maturing period.
- Maturing: This step allows the ham to acquire all its qualities and reveal its personality: mild

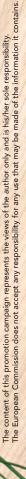
flavors, balanced saltiness and delicate aromas.

- **Sampling**: Experts test hams and their taste at the end of the curing period. On average, it takes nine to 12 months to make a Bayonne Ham.
- The "Bayonne" seal: The process' final step is the application of the Basque cross or "Lauburu" with a hot branding iron to all Bayonne Hams that have respected the requirements at every step of the production process.

Visit Bayonne Ham at Winter Fancy Food Show at the French Pavillion **Booth #752** 

**About the Bayonne Ham Council** 

The Bayonne Ham Council was created in 1991 to promote the Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) Jambon de Bayonne, which was formalized on October 7th, 1998 by European decree. Organized as an Interprofessional Body, it gathers every actor involved in the production of Bayonne Hams including 950 pig farms, 39 livestock producers, 23 cutting plants and 30 curing units, all located in Southwest France. Visit http://www.jambon-de-bayonne.com/en/for more information.









## ENJOY IT'S FROM EUROPE





## The Truth Behind La Traversetolese's Parmigiano Reggiano Historic Logo

Since 2006, people in the U.S. and all over the rest of the world have been savoring, with great pride, chunks of premium White Gold Parmigiano Reggianowinner of the Super Gold medal at the World Cheese Awards. Aside from being one of the most delicious Parmigianos out there, the White Gold's creamery, *La Traversetolese*, carries a piece of Italian history behind its iconic winged victory logo. In fact, if you look at a wheel of White Gold, you can notice it, stamped on its rind. Here's why.

At the end of World War II, as the American Allies troops were liberating Italy, the Nazi soldiers had to retaliate back to Germany. Brutal beasts that they were, it was common practice during their retreat to stop in every village, pillaging it and killing its inhabitants. The people of Traversetolo



Ambrosi's Master Cheesemaker admires a half wheel of White Gold Parmigiano Reggiano at Slow Food's Cheese event in Bra.

knew that the Nazis were coming, thus they all hid inside the city hall for several days. Fortunately, and against all odds, they survived.

Upon exiting the city hall, the first thing everyone saw, sitting tall above them, was the town symbol—a statue of the Winged Victory, which dated back to World War I. Since that day, the Mayor of Traversetolo declared that all the town's businesses could, and indeed should, have the Winged Victory logo as a symbol of good luck and perseverance.

The consortium of Parmigiano Reggiano specially granted permission to *La Traversetolese* to have an official stamp of the winged victory for the wheels of cheese.

All is well that ends well, and in this case, an icon was born. **DB** 

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