

ALSO INSIDE

Side Dishes

Barbecue

Packaging

Turkey

Hispanic Foods

Eastern European

Cheddar Cheese

Mozzarella Cheese

Feb./Mar. '08

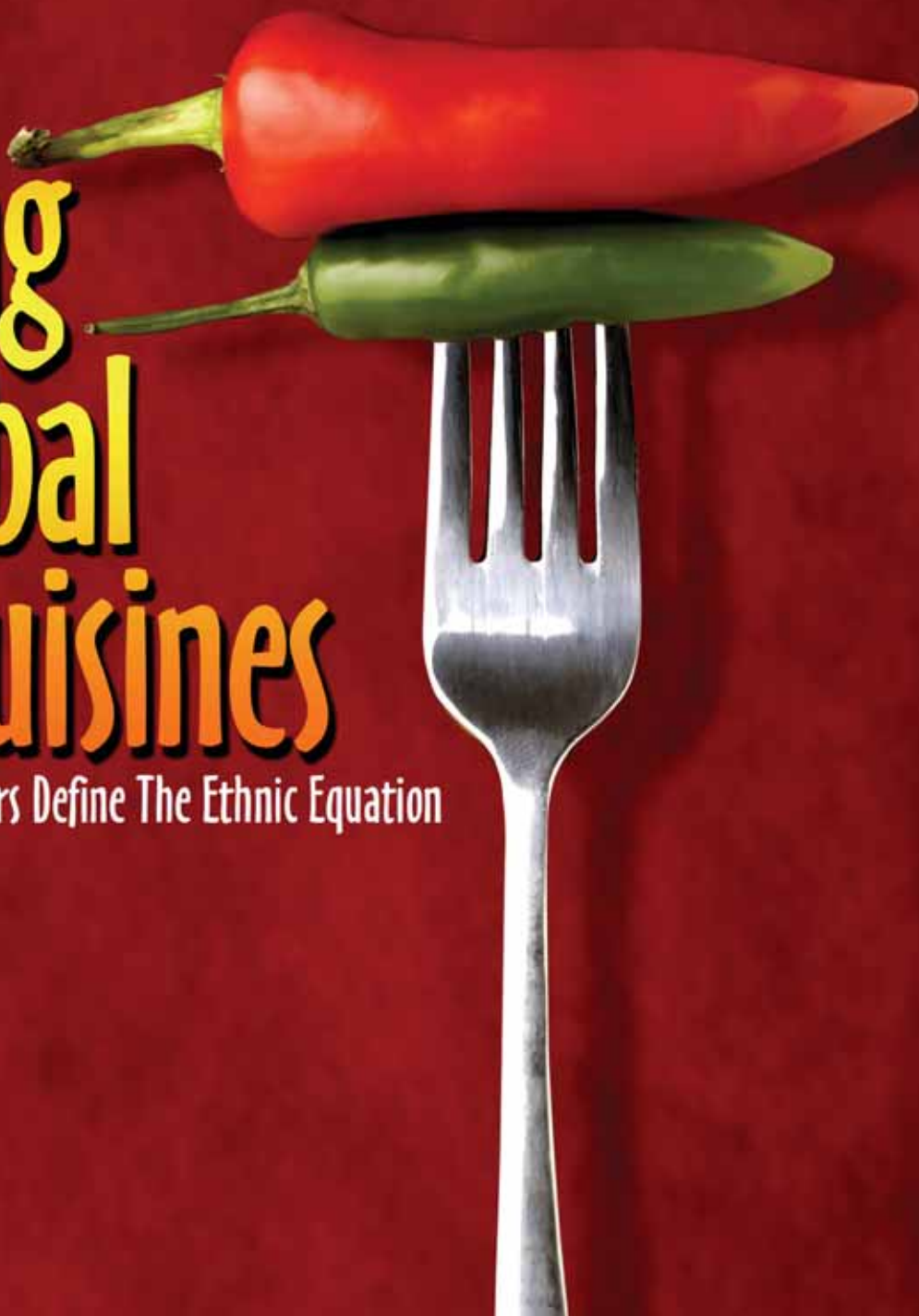
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283 Consumers Define The Ethnic Equation



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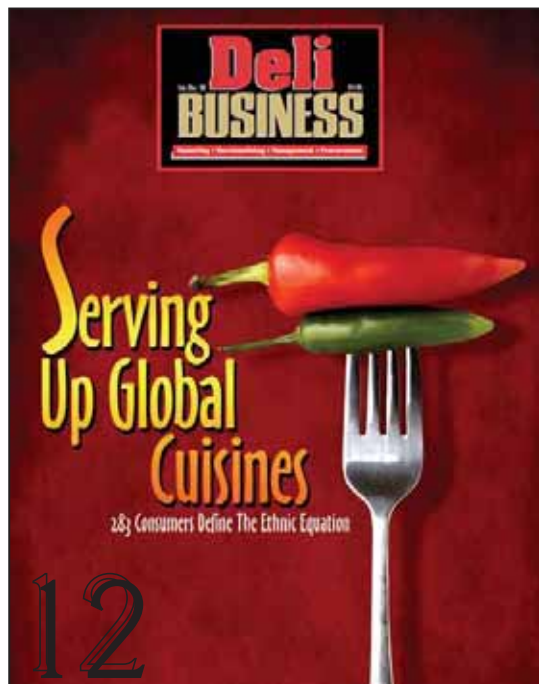




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President and Editor-in-Chief • JAMES E. PREVOR
JPrevor@phoenixmedianet.com

Publishing Director • KENNETH L. WHITACRE
KWhitacre@phoenixmedianet.com

Publisher/Editorial Director • LEE SMITH
LSmith@phoenixmedianet.com

Managing Editor • KAREN B. KING MCCALLUM
KMCallum@phoenixmedianet.com

Circulation Manager • KELLY ROSKIN
KRoskin@phoenixmedianet.com

Production Director • DIANA LEVINE
DLevine@phoenixmedianet.com

Production Leader • JACKIE TUCKER
JTucker@phoenixmedianet.com

Production Department • FREDDY PULIDO
JOANNA ARMSTRONG

Research Director • SHARON OLSON

CAROL M. BAREUTHER
ELIZABETH BLAND
BOB JOHNSON

Contributing Editors
KAREN SILVERSTON
LISA WHITE
TRISHA J. WOOLDRIDGE

Advertising
JORDAN BAUM
JBaum@phoenixmedianet.com
ERIC NIEMAN
ENieman@phoenixmedianet.com
RIC PURCARO
RPurcaro@phoenixmedianet.com

Send insertion orders, payments, press releases,
photos, letters to the editor, etc., to:

DELI BUSINESS
P.O. Box 810217, Boca Raton, FL 33481-0217
Phone: 561-994-1118 Fax: 561-994-1610
E-mail: DeliBusiness@phoenixmedianet.com

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DELI BUSINESS QUIZ



DENNIS PRICE
Category Manager-Deli
Brookshire Grocery Company
Tyler, TX

When vendors want to sell their products to Brookshire Grocery Company, Tyler, TX, for its deli operations, they go straight to Dennis Price. As the category manager-deli, he is the single point of contact for purchasing, pricing and more. Prior to assuming this position in November 2007, he worked for 16 years as Brookshire's bakery director.

Dennis has been reading DELI BUSINESS for about eight years. "I get a lot of good ideas and contact information from the magazine," he says. "But what interests me most are the brand-new items. We want to be the first to market them."

Brookshire is taking a proactive approach in providing customers with healthier meat options and home replacement meals. "We're giving people lower calories and lower-fat proteins as part of the trend toward more healthful eating," he says.

Dennis receives an iPod Nano 2nd Generation for winning the DELI BUSINESS Quiz.

WIN A FLIP VIDEO

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HOW TO WIN

To win the DELI BUSINESS Quiz, the first thing you have to do is enter. The rules are simple: Read through the articles and advertisements in this issue to find the answers. Fill in the blanks corresponding to the questions below, and either cut along the dotted line or photocopy the page and send your answers, along with a business card or company letterhead, to the address listed below. The winner will be chosen by drawing from the responses received before the publication of the April/May 2008 issue of DELI BUSINESS. **The winner must agree to submit a photo to be published in that issue.**

Quiz Questions

- 1) What is the information Web site for Hellmann's Sandwich Sauces? _____
- 2) What is the slogan for InnovAsian? _____
- 3) What is Placon's booth number at IDDBA? _____
- 4) Which organization is Jennie-O affiliated with? _____
- 5) How many years has Blue Ridge Farms been in business? _____
- 6) Which country flags are part of BelGioioso's logo? _____

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DELI BUSINESS QUIZ: Feb./Mar. 2008 Issue

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Winning The Battle For The Budget-Minded Consumer



By
Jim Prevora
Editor-in Chief

DELI BUSINESS

Darden faces what Clarence Otis (Darden CEO) characterized as a "difficult consumer environment" that "may get worse." Otis, whose company operates more than 1,700 restaurants, said diners have become "very budget conscious" during the past several months. "They are seeing more pressure on their discretionary income," he said.

As a result, some households are either cutting back on the number of times they eat out or spending less when they do go out, he said. The behavior is having more impact at Red Lobster and LongHorn, where the average check is a bit higher than Olive Garden, Otis said.

So there you have it. The quote above, which is excerpted from a recent article in the Ft. Lauderdale *Sun-Sentinel*, defines the operating environment very well. Consumers feeling pressure on discretionary income are eating out less and looking for more economical places to eat. It is certainly a problem for foodservice operators and certainly an opportunity for the deli and retail foodservice operations.

Yet, all too many stores are not positioned well to seize this opportunity. Let's look at a little checklist for winners in the new battle of the budget-minded foodservice consumer:

Food Quality

Food quality remains highly irregular. There are outlets with fantastic pizza programs, and some sell pizza not worth eating. Consumers who eat in restaurants are unlikely to enjoy food that isn't restaurant-quality. Have you been doing consumer taste tests on your product all along? If not, this might be the time to start.

Real Fresh Food At Peak Hours

Much more than typical grocery shoppers, restaurant patrons purchasing for immediate consumption need service during very specific meal times—breakfast, lunch and dinner. Yet many foodservice programs produce more drama than food. One chain has a wok program with one wok and one man cooking, order by order. It is a recipe for disappointing the customers. They are wooed to the store with the temptation of freshly cooked-to-order rice and noodle bowls, but when they get there at lunchtime, they wind up buying a pre-packaged sandwich because there is a line of 12 people at the wok station. You need capacity to handle foodservice orders promptly.

Do You Sell Meals?

Meal Solutions, Home Meal Replacement and similar

The next year or two will likely offer many opportunities to establish and deepen consumer loyalty.

terms may be ancient history now, but the fact remains that foodservice customers want to buy their meals from you at your department, not shop a whole store. The obvious part is selling meals and side dishes. If a consumer is going to pick up half of a rotisserie chicken to eat in your in-store café, or

on a park bench, you have to offer more than the chicken. Vegetables and starches are customary. That is not enough however; they may want a salad, soup, dessert, a roll, a beverage and more. Obviously no deli or retail foodservice operation can stock the full range of all these items that a supermarket does—that is OK, no

restaurant does either. You need to think like a restaurant though and select the items that your consumers want.

Where Will People Go To Enjoy Their Meal?

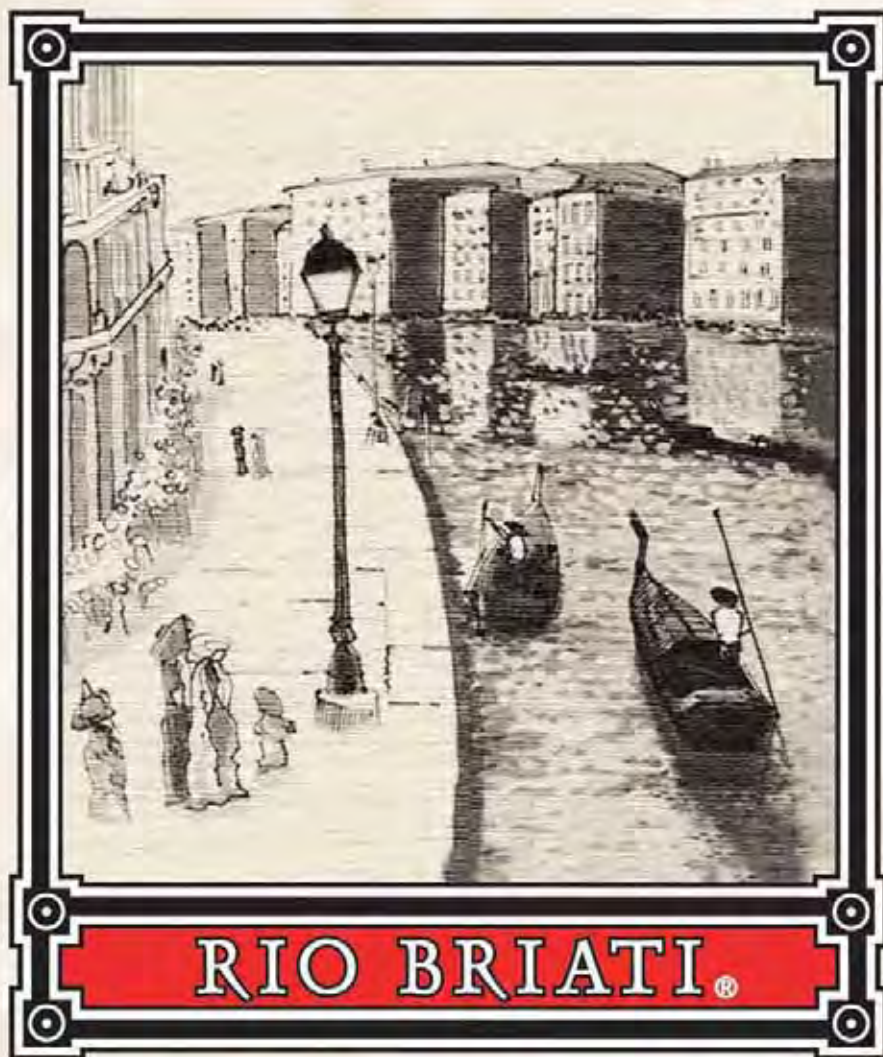
Of course many orders are to take to the house or the office, and if you have a café, that answers that. But many of these new budget-minded shoppers have grown used to going out to eat. What can your store do if you don't have a café? Well, some can improvise. Many stores build a little breakfast program around a coffee cart in the store and set up a few small tables and chairs. Other stores, at least in warm weather, can transform a bit of the parking lot or another area into a temporary café. But you can also put together a little brochure of nearby public parks with picnic tables or grassy areas. As population moves to the Sunbelt, many of these guides are good year-round.

Do You Satisfy Their Aspirations?

Getting this new clientele will require you to walk a marketing tightrope. On one end of the tightrope these consumers are looking for price, on the other end, they don't want to feel like losers—so you want to provide an experience that doesn't feel cheap. Try to avoid generics. Create a brand or identity for your operation and market that brand consistently. Let the consumers know that your deli and retail foodservice operation is something they can be proud to be associated with. Invite school children to see the operation, support the local hospital, sponsor cooking classes, give the consumers reasons to justify to their friends and themselves why they would prefer to buy from you, even if the real reason is price and they don't want to admit it.

As we work our way through the sub-prime mortgage crisis, the next year or two will likely offer many opportunities to establish and deepen consumer loyalty. The winners when good times return are likely to be those who developed the most intense affiliation with consumers during more difficult times.

DB



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Boston, MA (978) 664-1100

www.atlantafoods.com

Reader Service No. 108

The Best Generation Ever



By
Lee Smith
Publisher

DELI BUSINESS

Change is happening at record rates, and we need to embrace the future—not stifle it. I keep hearing the Millennium Generation is the worst group of young adults ever to enter the marketplace, and I wonder how that is possible. After all, I am from the original hippie generation, when our parents sent us off to college as clean-cut, all-American kids, and we returned six months later in coveralls with long straggly hair waving the peace sign.

We carried the tradition throughout our college years. Our dorms bellowed the smoke of “incense” and critics said we were always stoned. When we were ready to enter the workforce, there was no talk about us being self-centered because employers thought we were never going to work at all. It was assumed we were all into free-love and our brains were crispy fried.

It is ironic this is the generation now criticizing the Millennium Generation for wanting it all, demanding flexibility and life balance, thinking they should be part of the decision-making process and believing their opinions count. They are seen as under-educated, self-centered and lacking loyalty.

Am I the only one who laughs at these comments? Personally, I find working with this generation refreshing and challenging. I love their attitudes, I’m looking forward to seeing how they transform the workplace, and I marvel at how their desires mimic the needs of the Baby Boomers.

Instead of focusing on the negatives, we should be relishing the benefits.

1. Lack of Loyalty: This is a generation that grew up with acquisitions, buyouts and mergers. They saw their parents lose their jobs, probably more than once, because of situations they didn’t initiate and couldn’t change. Do we really think they are going to be loyal to a company, or do we believe they are going to be loyal to themselves?

The lack of blind loyalty is a plus. If they are loyal to themselves, they will take advantage of opportunities to self-educate and become partners with the companies they choose to join. Taking personal responsibility is a sign of maturity and dignity, and I like the idea of people feeling free to leave, if they are not getting promoted or dislike their job. It sure beats having to deal with dead wood and rising average hourly wage rates without an increase in productivity.

2. I Want It Now: I’m glad to hear they want a beautiful condo, a flashy new car and the latest gadgets. My generation wanted to join a commune, grow vegetables and live in tents. Eventually reality will set in, and they will find the need to make a choice between the newest iPod and diapers. They will learn, but I sure do love the ambition.

3. Opinions Count: They want to be involved and not just blindly follow orders, and that’s the way it should be.

With flexibility, talented individuals can partake in the building process without the confines of predetermined schedules or career paths.

Just because store clerks were treated like village idiots in my youth, it doesn’t mean it should be a tradition. Some of the best ideas have come from the youngest members of my team. It was a fresh-out-of-college, 23-year-old Jordan Baum, currently the west coast regional sales manager of *Deli Business*, who prompted the redesign of *Deli Business* by loudly announcing it was the ugliest magazine he had ever seen. The reaction could have been defensive anger, but

everyone laughed, listened and took a close look at what we were doing. No longer must I take full responsibility for inspiration because they inspire me every day.

4. Demanding Flexibility:

With the decline of nuclear families and a workforce that is becoming more diverse, it is exciting that today’s workers are asking for more flexi-

bility. Instead of the “work the hours we need you or quit” attitude, employers can add overall stability and reduce turnover by offering flexibility and developing a capacity-building approach to knowledge with employees who cross-train within professional and disciplinary boundaries.

With flexibility, talented individuals can partake in the building process without the confines of predetermined schedules and career paths. While the Millennium Generation wants flexibility, I want to avail myself of the tremendous talent that might not look at the job I have to offer as a career, but instead as a way station to greatness or as a part-time job that is interesting, fun and stimulating. By offering flexibility, the pool of available workers includes people you never thought would work for you at the wages you need to pay.

5. Life Should Be Balanced: That is a concept I have always strived for and, if my colleagues are honest, what we have all strived for but didn’t know how to achieve. I believe there is no stronger element to develop employee longevity than offering a job that allows a balance between work, family, spirituality and fun.

The old work model was to work very hard and when you retire, you’d have time to spend at the shore, play with the grandkids or go fishing. Today, very few people look at retiring between 55 and 65 as realistic or even desirable. Without retirement as a goal, success becomes measured as what you can do today, whether it is taking a leave of absence to raft the Amazon River or spending the early months of your baby’s life together. People want the time to coach Little League or, maybe, write a book, and the workforce will not be able to stop them.

Today’s employees have multiple career paths to success. They are not uneducated or lazy. They are the best educated work force we’ve ever faced. As far as not being able to write, let’s not forget the time before computers when secretaries needed to make bosses sound competent and well spoken. They couldn’t write one whit better.

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Reader Service No. 118

DELI WATCH

Announcements



Joint Venture

PepsiCo's Frito-Lay North America division and Strauss Group, Purchase, NY, announced the signing of an agreement to form a joint venture partnership to operate Sabra. The joint venture, which will produce and sell fresh dips and spreads in the United States and Canada, expands the companies' role in providing healthier snack options and highlights their commitment to the on-trend fresh category.

www.sabra.com

Reader Service No. 401



Super Bowl Festivities

Norseland Inc., of Stamford, CT, exclusive U.S. importer of Jarsberg and representatives for Boursin French Gournay Cheese, "kicked off" 2008 with a cooperative point-of-sale Super Bowl program called "Great Sandwiches of the World." The program includes a countertop easel with easy tear-off recipes featuring these two distinctive, top-selling specialty cheeses in simple-to-prepare deli combinations, from a Jarsberg Cuban and Reuben sandwich to a Boursin Parisian Panini and Saint-Tropez Vegetable Wrap.

www.norseland.com

Reader Service No. 402



Expanded Deli Web Site

Perdue, Salisbury, MD, launched a new and improved Deli Web site, perduedeli.com, featuring the latest in deli trends, newest product information and specifications, and monthly product showcases with suggested menu applications. The site also offers enhanced product searching and photo viewing tools. Perdue is a leading international food and agriculture business providing quality products and services to customers in more than 70 countries.

www.perduedeli.com

Reader Service No. 403



\$5,000 CONTEST WINNER

The Tillamook County Creamery Association, Portland, OR, announced the winner of its third annual cheese contest. Lorie Roach, of Buckatunna, MS, took home \$5,000 and the title of Grand Prize Winner in the 2007 Tillamook Macaroni and Cheese Recipe Contest. Roach's "Jumbo Shell Pasta Stuffed with Baby White Cheddar and Chicken Macaroni" recipe won the top prize among five other regional winners from across the country. Roach's recipe was selected from thousands of recipe entries in this year's national contest.

www.tillamookcheese.com

Reader Service No. 404



Movers and Shakers

At its 90th anniversary celebration, the Georgia Society of Association Executives (GSAE) recognized Refrigerated Foods Association (RFA) Executive Director Terry Dougherty as one of its 90 "Movers & Shakers" in the industry. The Movers and Shakers are a peer-selected group of 90 association professionals who have demonstrated involvement in the association community in Georgia. Dougherty has been actively involved in GSAE since joining in 2001.

www.refrigeratedfoods.org

Reader Service No. 405



Oregon Goat Cheese

Oregon goat cheesemakers won a record 11 awards in 2007 at the American Dairy Goat Association's Goat Cheese Competition in Fort Collins, CO. Oregon Cheese Guild (OCG) winners included River's Edge Chevre, Pholia Farm, Fern's Edge Goat Dairy and Silver Falls Creamery. "This is yet another affirmation that the quality of Oregon cheese stands out as being exceptional," says OCG President David Gremmels, co-owner of Rogue Creamery.

www.roguecreamery.com

Reader Service No. 406



Power of Green

The International Dairy-Deli-Bakery Association (IDDBA), Madison, WI, sponsored a new study titled *Environmental Sustainability: The Power of Green*, which focuses on environmental issues and the pressures driving the green revolution. Conducted for IDDBA by Willard Bishop LLC, the study is designed to help educate, encourage and guide retailers, manufacturers and suppliers to embrace environmentally responsible and profitable actions. The full report is available from IDDBA.

www.iddba.com

Reader Service No. 407



Healthy Spreads

Unilever Foodsolutions, Lisle, IL, introduced new formulations of its spreads I Can't Believe It's Not Butter! and Country Crock, both of which contain no trans fats, no cholesterol and no partially hydrogenated oils per serving. These brands, along with Promise, complete the company's portfolio of healthy spread options.

www.unileverfoodsolutions.us

Reader Service No. 408

New Products



Hispanic Cheeses

Roth Käse USA, Monroe, WI, presents its Sole! assortment of eight traditional Hispanic cheeses: Queso Fresco, Queso Blanco, Queso Quesadilla, Panela, Añejo Enchilado, Queso Asadero, Cotija and Oaxaca. Featuring a versatile range of flavors and textures, the Sole! selections are adaptable to the most exotic of applications

as well as everyone's popular favorites.

www.rothkase.com

Reader Service No. 409



SMART Refrigeration

Electrolux Professional North America, Fort Lauderdale, FL, introduces SMART Refrigeration to the North American market. Each Electrolux Smart Reach-In Refrigerator or Freezer is fully equipped with a revolutionary control system to ensure back-of-house efficiency as well as the preservation of food safety and quality. Unlike traditional refrigerators, the Electrolux Smart Refrigerator is linked to a total of four temperature probes, allowing for continuous management of ambient, internal storage, condenser and evaporator temperatures.

www.electroluxusa.com/professional

Reader Service No. 410



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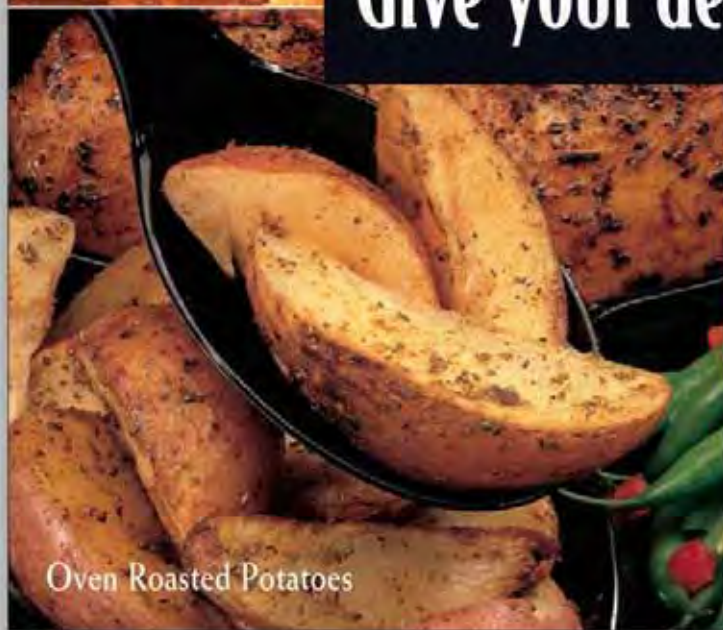


Onion Rings

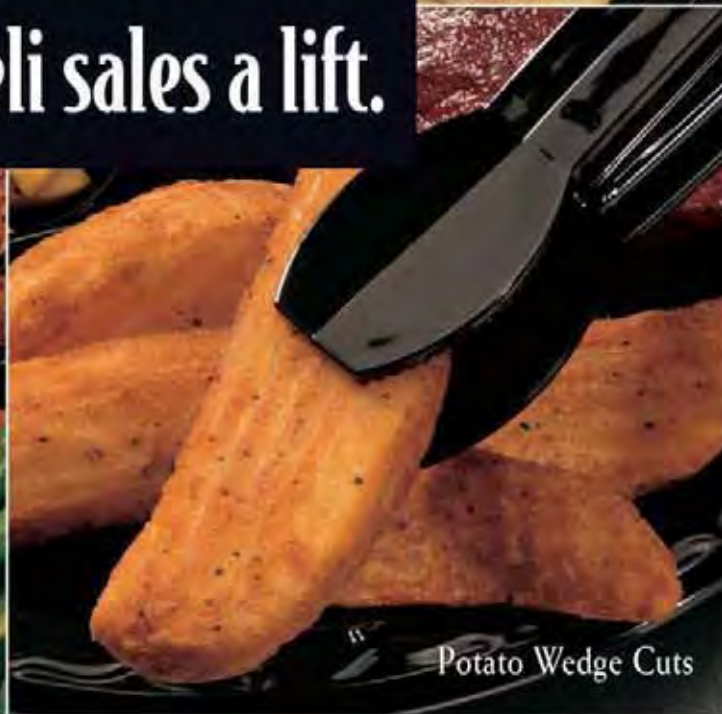


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Deli

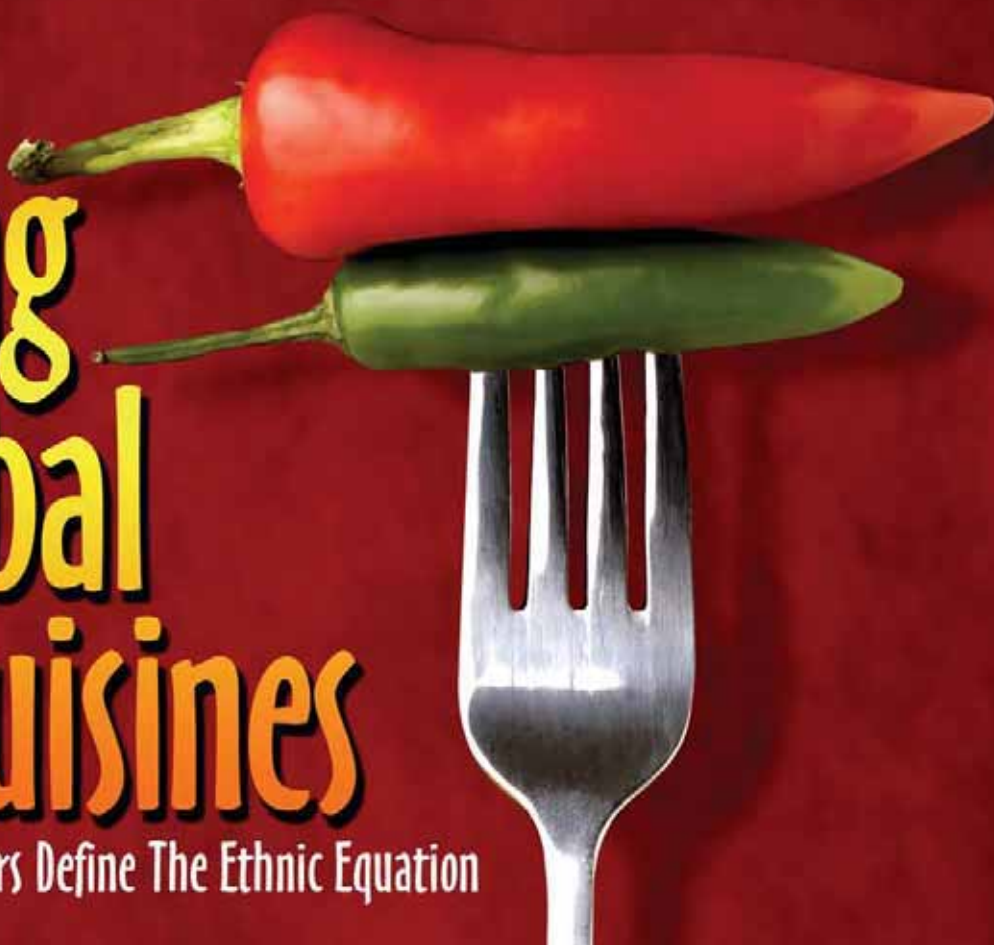
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Reader Service No. 105

Serving Up Global Cuisines

283 Consumers Define The Ethnic Equation



BY SHARON OLSON

Today's customers are more knowledgeable about food culture and cuisine than ever before. This understanding translates into greater interest and experimentation with ethnic foods and flavors wherever they eat. The population's increasing ethnic diversity, greater awareness of ethnic foods and wider accessibility to foods from other cultures have made ethnic foods an integral component of popular cuisine.

This year's consumer survey explored the top ethnic cuisines popular with mainstream consumers and the flavors characterizing these foods. The study examined how deli consumers defined the value proposition for their favorite ethnic foods and how delis can ensure a share of this growing business.

Olson Communications, a Chicago, IL-based food marketing firm that specializes in trend spotting in the food business, surveyed 283 consumers about ethnic foods and flavors. The study focused on non-ethnic consumers, of which 93 percent were Caucasian/non-Hispanic or non-Latino. Researchers also conducted small focus groups to explore consumers' ethnic food tastes and how they define authentic and ethnic-inspired recipes. In-depth interviews with retailers were conducted to learn more about local market experiences with ethnic foods.

POPULAR ETHNIC FOODS

The top three ethnic flavors that most readily came to mind among the consumers surveyed were Chinese, Mexican and Italian, with Greek and Thai flavors coming in fourth and fifth, respectively. Consumers' write-in choices included German, Jewish, Hungarian, Irish, Polish, Lebanese, Norwegian, Slovenian and Filipino.

Top cuisines were explored in focus groups, and many consumers were able to describe micro-cuisines within the top three. Consumers readily identified regional Chinese cuisines, including Szechwan, Cantonese and Northern styles such as Mongolian. Chinese is becoming a subset of the broad category of Asian cuisines, which include the foods and flavors of countries like Japan, Thailand and Vietnam. These regional foods are emerging as the new favorites, with a consumer awareness factor of 33 percent for Thai, 31 percent for Japanese, 25 percent for Indian and 11 percent for Vietnamese. Characteristics used by consumers to describe these other Asian foods were: "fresh, fast and hand-held."

When Mexican cuisine was explored in focus groups, consumers identified Tex-Mex offerings, such as tacos, enchiladas and tamales, most often as Mexican. The awareness of Caribbean and Pan-American cuisines were also noted by consumer focus groups, which recognized Cuban, Puerto Rican and Brazilian, the latter because of familiarity with churrascaria-style restaurants in the United States.

Italian is a long-time favorite category, and consumers clearly defined differences between northern and southern cuisines. They also identified Italian-American favorites, which tend to capture more of the southern Italian flavors. Familiarity with Italian cuisine has given rise to increased awareness of other Mediterranean cuisines. Greek foods were noted by 39 percent of consumers and Spanish dishes by 20 percent of consumers.

DEFINING ETHNIC FLAVORS

Consumers were asked to choose which three specific flavors they identify with each type of ethnic food—Latin American, Asian and Mediterranean. Eighty-four percent of consumers identified chile pepper

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Cold Service Case



Fully cooked Innovasian Cuisine[®] Asian entrée and Asian noodle kits can be merchandised behind the glass in your cold service case. Mix 1 bag of sauce, 1 bag of protein or noodles and 1 bag of vegetables into a large mixing bowl, toss until completely coated, empty into a display bowl and merchandise in your cold case. Our rices and appetizers are simply removed from the master case, thawed and displayed on a platter or in a bowl.



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as the flavor they associated with Latin American foods. Half of the respondents named cilantro, and 42 percent chose tomato as flavors they identified most with Latin American foods. Lime, a close fourth, was noted by 38 percent of consumers surveyed.

According to 80 percent of consumers, soy was the flavor primarily associated with Asian foods. Sixty-four percent of consumers identified ginger, and 39 percent chose green tea. About one-third of those surveyed noted curry and wasabi as Asian flavors. For Mediterranean foods, consumers clearly identified garlic (63 percent), basil (59 percent) and Parmesan (47 percent) as their three flavor choices.

AUTHENTIC OR ETHNIC-INSPIRED RECIPES

More than half (53 percent) of those surveyed wanted true and authentic recipes as well as ethnic-inspired recipes. When asked about specific recipes they would like to see offered when purchasing ethnic food, respondents focused on Asian, Mexican and Italian cuisines. Popular Asian recipes requested included:

- Sushi
- Beef & Broccoli with Rice
- Sesame Chicken
- Cashew Chicken
- Almond Chicken
- Orange Chicken
- Stir Fry
- Fried Rice
- Sweet & Sour Shrimp
- Egg Rolls

Specific Mexican dishes requested included:

- Tamales
- Enchiladas
- Tortilla Soup
- Tacos
- Salsa
- Mexican Chili

Italian recipes requested included:

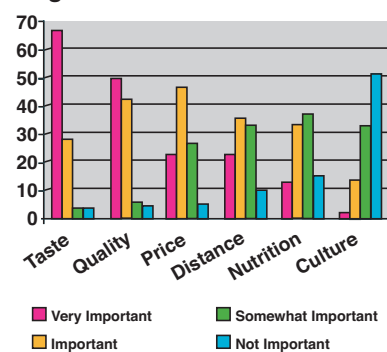
- Pasta Sauce
- Pizza
- Chicken Alfredo

BUYING ETHNIC FOODS

When consumers were asked which retail locations they thought of when buying ethnic foods, they did not identify a clear winner; however, restaurants were the top choice for 60 percent of the respondents. The grocery store was the choice of 55 percent of consumers surveyed, and a specialty ethnic market was the choice of 43 percent of consumers.

The top three characteristics identified by survey participants as being most important when buying ethnic foods were: taste, quality and price. Taste and quality each were rated as important or very important by 90 percent or more of consumers. Price was noted by 64 percent of consumers as an important or very important quality when buying ethnic foods.

Ratings of Ethnic Food Characteristics



Survey participants indicated a wide range of ethnic food purchases. Prepared entrées were the choice for 60 percent of participants, followed closely by spices, herbs and oils as choices for 55 percent of consumers. Cheeses, sauces and breads rounded out the top five picks.

Fully prepared or fresh were the most frequent ways consumers bought ethnic food items. Over one-third of those surveyed purchased ethnic food items either fully prepared (37 percent) or fresh (34 percent). Thirteen percent bought ethnic food items bottled or canned, and 11 percent bought frozen ethnic food items. Refrigerated ethnic food items were only noted by 6 percent of consumers.

Consumers were also asked if they would be willing to pay extra for ethnic foods, and 58 percent answered "it would depend." The remaining respondents were split evenly between yes and no. For those who answered "it would depend," over half would be willing to pay extra if the food was from a favorite restaurant, and over one-third would be willing to pay extra if the dish was difficult to make from scratch.

Other reasons consumers would be willing to pay extra for ethnic foods included special occasions or if they had a taste for it. For those willing to pay extra, their reasons included taste, quality, authenticity and consumers' inability to replicate the recipe at home. A few consumers said ethnic foods reminded them of their youth or good memories.

For those unwilling to pay extra, price sensitivity was the factor mentioned most often. Survey respondents felt they should not have to pay extra for ethnic foods or felt ethnic foods were not important enough to them to pay more money.

RETAILER PERSPECTIVES

Retailers report that deli customers are looking for prepared foods, cheeses and meats that are truly ethnic in terms of authenticity and preparation methods. Deli customers are also seeking ethnic-inspired offerings characterized by seasonings or varieties.

"Consumers are interested in authentic

ingredients, rather than substitutes that attempt to replicate the real thing," says Voni Woods, senior director for deli at Giant Eagle Inc., a Pittsburgh, PA-based chain. "They are exposed to specialty items on television and in restaurants and are fascinated with strong, bold, new tastes. They travel and are excited to try and recreate those foods they experienced while away from home in their own kitchens."

John Clark, director of bakery and deli operations for Harp's Food Stores Inc., Springdale, AR, is also cognizant of consumers' keen interest in recreating tastes discovered during travels. Moreover, he recognizes the impact of consumers' restaurant experiences on deli choices, citing the popularity of the sushi counter at his store. "Ten years ago, there was no sushi in Northwest Arkansas, period. Recently, there has been an influx of sushi offerings in almost every restaurant. It's hit a nerve," Clark reports. To ensure the quality and authenticity of Harp's sushi, the store hired a sushi expert with years of experience.

Other deli professionals who are in-store regularly and interact with customers observe that ethnic cuisines are more readily embraced by a younger demographic. "I would say my generation is being a little more adventurous in what they want to try," says 20-something Andrew Connor, deli supervisor at Atkins Country Market in Amherst, MA.

Research confirms that younger consumers can identify many more ethnic micro-cuisines. Yet consumers over 45 years old consider price a less important factor when purchasing ethnic foods than the 18- to 34-year-old group.

No matter what their age, more adventurous buyers are looking for something a bit different with more international flair. The types of deli offerings that fall into the "ethnic" description vary widely.

According to Giant Eagle's Woods, many consumers associate ethnic foods with hot, garlicky and spicy flavors, such as those found in bolder cuisines from Latin America, the Middle East and Asia. Woods breaks it down further, noting that Latin America is linked with spicy, piquant and cilantro seasonings, Asia is tied to

Szechwan, ginger and sesame flavors, and the Mediterranean regions are synonymous with savory, herbal, garlic and pepper tastes.

Ethnic fare is expanding, or perhaps more aptly put, splintering. Regional flavors within ethnic cuisines continue to gain a foothold. Cuban or Ecuadorian fare is complementing Mexican cuisine, while Thai and Vietnamese specialties are making their mark in the Chinese

"Consumers are willing to treat themselves, and they are savvy enough to know the difference between what is a good 'value' for their money and what is 'expensive.'"

— Voni Woods
Giant Eagle Inc.

category, and Tuscan or Sicilian creations are emerging from the Italian sector.

Woods notes that the Market District corporate brand line at Giant Eagle is expanding to include more unique and regionally authentic Mediterranean salads and fresh sauces. Now, the deli department imports fresh Italian pasta. "Italian foods are still big and growing, highlighted by prosciutto, hams and sausages," she says. "However, these widely enjoyed meats are being augmented with Spanish offerings, with Serrano ham leading the pack."

The movement toward more regionality within ethnic cuisines is evident in varying degrees at supermarket delis across the country, from major mainstream chains to specialty markets to independent operators.

Gina Provo, deli/bakery manager of Bailey's General Store in Sanibel Island, FL, says the Asian-inspired potstickers in her deli are selling swiftly, as are unusual ethnic dishes that are more regional in nature.

"I have seaweed salad, made from seaweed, sesame seeds and lime juice. We've done very well with it—it's a good mover," she says.

Katie Jones, deli manager at Casey's market in Western Springs, IL, indicates that deli offerings reminiscent of dishes in distinct Asian cultures are hot right now—and a far cry from the Chop Suey of previous generations.

"We're making a Thai dish, a peanut-crusted boneless chicken breast with cilantro on top and served with jasmine rice, that has been a big hit," Jones says. The store's potstickers, which are pan-fried in-house and served with a sesame-ginger dipping sauce, have also become a perennial best-seller.

Middle Eastern flavors and North African dishes are moving into the deli case, incorporating Tandoori cooking styles and spices like curry, cumin, turmeric, mint, dill and saffron. These spices are becoming if not as common as oregano or chipotle, then at least present in prepared meals, salads and side dishes. Woods notes that hummus and tabouleh are "big and growing" at Giant Eagle, which has also introduced a line of Indian sauces.

DEFINING THE DIFFERENCE

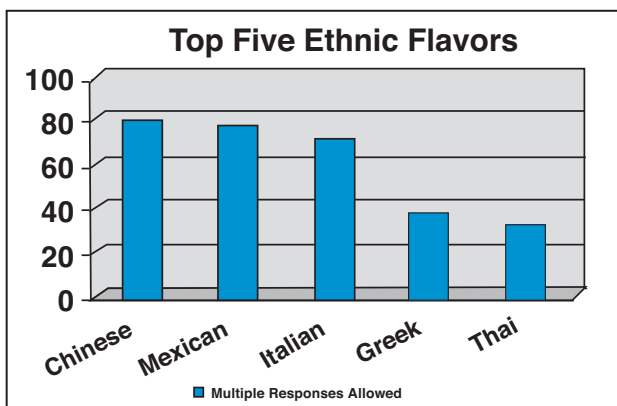
Flavors from half a world away may be showing up in prepared foods created by suppliers and in-house deli professionals, but merchandising such products has to hit close to home for a sale and, more importantly, for a repeat sale.

Indeed, adventurous as they may claim to be, shoppers sometimes need a nudge to make the leap between interest and purchase. Provo, for instance, says her deli's recent addition of a flatbread pizza with feta cheese and spinach sold well after shoppers had a chance to try it. "If you introduce it the right away and let them sample, they'll try anything," Provo points out. Sampling is key to any deli operation, but especially important when introducing new or different flavors.

Even though many value-added deli offerings—prepared meals and premium and imported meats and cheeses—carry a higher price point than commodity-style or more conventional products, the price points for ethnic foods are not typically priced higher than other value-added items, such as those geared for convenience. "If you can present them with quality, freshness and taste, they are right there for you," says Provo.

Today's consumers understand value, Woods says. "Consumers are willing to pay more for products they believe are better than what is widely available, most notably what they believe are authentic, fresh items," Woods says. "Consumers are willing to treat themselves, and they are savvy enough to know the difference between what is a good 'value' for their money and what is 'expensive.'"

DB





Side Dishes AS PROFIT CENTERS

Traditional and new-wave comfort foods add zing to a deli's rings

BY LISA WHITE

Side dishes are a given with any meal, yet they cannot be taken for granted. In June 2006, Mintel International Group Ltd., a global supplier of consumer, media and market research with U.S. offices based in Chicago, IL, published the *U.S. Side Dish Market Report*. According to the report, the total market for side dishes did not expand in real terms during 2001-2006, but it is expected to remain dynamic during 2007 through 2012. The reason should come as no surprise—consumers have a strong desire for versatile, quick-to-fix products to complement more elaborate main courses or to eat alone.

Mintel International's analysis is good news for deli departments. "The refrigerated side dish category has been growing over the past few years in supermarket delis," says Mark Brown, president, Orval Kent Foods Co., Wheeling, IL. He attributes this growth to the expansion of new products and the

emergence of private label items.

In addition to traditional mashed potatoes and macaroni and cheese, supermarket delis offer a broad array of seasonal and year-round refrigerated prepared items, such as creamed spinach, broccoli cheese rice casserole, caramel cinnamon apples, broccoli with cheese sauce and green bean casserole. "In recent years we have seen refrigerated prepared side dishes become more of an ante in the deli and in consumers' refrigerators," Brown says. "Consumers have found that refrigerated prepared side dishes have the fresh flavors and textures that can't be delivered by frozen and dry mix side dishes. They have become a regular, convenient alternative to scratch cooking."

Today's Trends

Sandridge Food Corp. conducted a research study in 2006 to determine what consumers wanted in side dishes. According to Mark Sandridge, president of the Medina, OH-based company, the study revealed four

drivers for this segment. "First, consumers wanted help in making their meal prep easier. Second, they were looking to reduce the stress in their day," Sandridge says. "Third, respondents wanted side dishes that made entertaining their guests easier. And finally, consumers were looking for better health, which really meant foods with minimally processed ingredients."

The company took this information and used it as a guide in creating prepared food products. "We decided that side dishes made sense for us," Sandridge says. "A lot of people are trying to make side dishes work. We have been more successful in foodservice than in retail. This is because we have to find the right demographic to buy these products. There also is a lot of competition."

The company created a line of "adult" side dishes geared for more sophisticated tastes, such as macaroni and cheese made with Gorgonzola. "It is still comfort food and familiar, but when you add different ingredients, there tends to be more interest from

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consumers,” Sandridge says.

With aging Americans consuming less, side dishes are turning into entrées. “Although it wasn’t our intention, the line has morphed into that,” Sandridge explains.

Along with upscale ingredients, today’s side dishes feature more international flavorings and flavor fusions from different regions, according to Debbie Lindley, sales and marketing coordinator for Nampa, ID-based Great American Appetizers. For instance, one of Nampa’s brand-new side dishes consists of deep-fried, battered jalapeños and peaches. Consumers are looking for subtle but unique flavors too, Lindley says, “which can be as simple as adding rosemary and herbs to mashed potatoes. It is not strong, but adds a different flavoring to the potatoes rather than the traditional butter or garlic.”

Brooklyn, NY-based Chloe Foods is working on increasing its variety of side dishes. President Jeffrey Siegel says retailers have been struggling to be successful in meal replacement, including his company. “We were too inexperienced, and the focus was on price. As a result, shrink was way too high, packaging costs skyrocketed and we lost consumer confidence,” he says. “We knew that if we were not going to give consumers a superior eating experience with truly wonderful products, we would not build anything.”

Consequently, Chloe Foods went back to the basics, concentrating on flavors and creating wholesome foods. Currently, the company makes such traditional products as creamed spinach, string beans, acorn squash, mashed potatoes and ratatouille. “As we start to see success with these lines, we will get bolder with our offerings. Our goal was to initially establish a strong foothold in this segment,” Siegel says. “When you get caught up in the price aspect, it’s not a good thing. Yes, we have to provide a good value, but that value is translated into what type of food is put on the table.”

Because consumers often equate value with quantity, North Kansas City, MO-based Walkers Food Products has tried to increase its side dish profits by not diminishing the size of its products. “One of the least expensive side dish items is pasta,” says Jimmy Daskaleas, vice president. “To get the best value, supermarkets are adding pre-made sauces to pasta to get value compensation with side dishes.”

Walkers sells fully cooked tubs of pasta with a 30-day shelf life primarily to retailers, which in turn sell the pasta in full-service deli cases. “Typically, deli departments will repack it and add their own sauce to our pasta,” says Daskaleas.

According to Daskaleas, the challenges in

the side dish segment stem from the lack of labor and expertise in many deli departments. “That’s where we come in. Convenience is a key factor,” he says.

Customers also expect restaurant-quality products and freshly made ingredients. “They like to see pastas made with sauce in front of their eyes. Consumers want something they can take home and be proud to serve to their families,” Daskaleas says.



Selling Side Dishes

Supermarket deli side dishes tend to mirror those found in foodservice establishments because consumers are seeking restaurant-quality foods. “Foodservice drives the industry in product innovation. Restaurants are the test market for retail, and delis are the test market for retail shelves,” Great American Appetizers’ Lindley says.

For example, Kroger’s Indianapolis store is a supermarket with a foodservice mentality. “It looks at restaurants as a guide for what direction to go in,” says Sandridge of Sandridge Foods. “When we follow a restaurant format, we find consumers are very receptive.”

Although Sandridge Foods has placed its side dish products on retail shelves, the company chooses to merchandise its side dishes in the full-service deli case. “We do limited-time offers, putting side dishes out for the holidays,” Sandridge explains.

According to Orval Kent Foods’ Brown, some of the most successful merchandising programs for refrigerated prepared side dishes combine hot-and-cold meal centers. Delis can display rotisserie meats, fried chicken and ribs in the hot section and arrange side dishes in a cold case below. An accompanying “meal deal,” featuring a discounted price for the entrée, side dish, dinner rolls from the bakery and a family-serve beverage, completes the program.

“A good variety of refrigerated prepared side dishes can enhance a total store’s home meal replacement (HMR) and convenient food offerings, which lead to higher total grocery basket dollar rings,” Brown notes. “They also provide the opportunity to create

more traffic for the to-go dinner shopping trip. Some of the best in-store marketing programs for refrigerated prepared side dishes drive stocking-up behavior with multiple-unit pricing and a variety of items to support consumers’ choices of two or three sides on one shopping occasion.”

Deli departments, however, may have to compete with meat departments for those higher rings. Nancy Cowen, director of marketing for food products, Bob Evans Farms, Columbus, OH, sees more potential for side dishes positioned in the meat case rather than the deli department. “When customers pick up their meats, they can choose their side dishes at the same time. Our products have done well in this section of the store,” Cowen says. Bob Evans Farms’ line of side dishes include mashed potatoes, mac and cheese, green bean casserole, mashed sweet potatoes, glazed apples, and stuffing.

Chloe Foods’ Siegel believes the meat case offers a lower gross-markup than the deli department. “There is definitely an application for side dishes in the deli. These shoppers are used to paying a bit more money for higher quality, whereas side dishes in the meat and dairy departments may be more economically priced,” Siegel says.

Nevertheless, retailers decide in which departments side dishes are placed. “It is contingent on the supermarket,” Lindley says. “I’ve seen these items merchandised in both the deli and the meat case. However, upscale supermarkets are merchandising high-end side dishes and appetizers in the deli. These are items you won’t find in the freezer case.”

Pleasing Packaging

Displaying products at eye level where consumers can notice them and wrapping them in eye-catching packaging can give side dishes a leg up. Chloe Foods’ new packaging features sleeves with colorful photos and artwork. “When you put string beans almon-dine in a one-pound container with shrink film and the food congeals, that is a problem. We also didn’t want our packages to have a big manufacturer look,” Siegel says.

In addition, manufacturers are steering away from dual-ovenable packaging, designed to work in both conventional and microwave ovens, in favor of microwavable containers with opaque or transparent tamper-resistant lids.

Orval Kent Foods’ Brown predicts continued growth for the fresh, refrigerated prepared foods side dish category. “Different packaging options and varieties will continue to fill consumers’ needs for fresh, convenient, great-tasting meal complements to serve their families,” he says.

DB

Turn BBQ Sales Hot In The Deli

Stoke up sizzling sales by offering a diverse roundup of meats and sauces

BY CAROL M. BAREUTHER, RD

Barbecue is exploding as a category in the supermarket deli, says Terry Hyer, chief operating officer, Zarda Bar-B-Q & Sauce Inc., Kansas City, MO. "We've gone through the pizza and Chinese cycles, now it's barbecue that's hot."

No wonder that when trendy Whole Foods Market, headquartered in Austin, TX, opened its new Sugar Land, TX, location in December, the store's deli offerings included in-house barbecue featuring smoked ribs, brisket, chicken, pulled pork, sausage and more.

Don McCullough, executive vice president, National Barbecue Association, Austin, TX, says consumers' craving for barbecue reflects a desire for more, fast casual dining options. "They want an alternative to full-service barbecue restaurants where the wait times can be long," says McCullough, "and filling that foodservice gap becomes an opportunity ripe for developing barbecue programs in the supermarket deli."

Following are five ways deli operators can capitalize on this hot trend for barbecue:

Feature BBQ Appetizers And More

Appetizers made up 12.1 percent of all deli-prepared dollar sales, contributing \$639 million for the 52-week period ending July 1, 2007, according to *What's In Store 2008*, an annual trends report published by Madison, WI-based International Deli-Dairy-Bakery Association (IDDBA).

Looking at which appetizers sell best in the restaurant arena, *MenuMine*, published by the Foodservice Research Service, Oak Park, IL, found that all types of chicken wings rank second only to nachos, according to its June 2007 report.

Building on this trend, Cub Foods, a 79-store warehouse-format chain based in Stillwater, MN, added self-serve "wing bars" in nearly every one of its stores this summer. Four different flavors of barbecued wings—breaded and deep-fried Wing Dings, spicy



breaded and deep-fried Hot Wing Zings, Asian-flavored General Tao's sauced wings and Buffalo wings—in addition to two varieties of chicken nuggets are sold mix-and-match on a per-pound basis for a quick lunch, snack or dinner appetizer.

In addition to wings, “barbecued bite-sized ribs are perfect for a hot appetizer bar,” says Keith Wilcox, director of cooked meat for Curly's Foods Inc., Edina, MN. The company introduced its Rib Bites and Rib Nibblers last summer. Rib Bites are made from

split St. Louis ribs, while Rib Nibblers are small ham shanks trimmed to a single bone surrounded by meat.

“Merchandise either product in bulk on the hot bar along with other appetizers, like egg rolls, potato skins and mozzarella sticks,” Wilcox says. “Or, sell them pre-packaged in six to eight portions, which weigh about a pound, in the hot case.”

La Nova Wings Inc., a Buffalo, NY-based company, sells appetizer-style ribs as well as chicken wings. Michael Denticio,

executive vice president, suggests, “Pile the ribs high and pour barbecue sauce over the entire display. This will give them a sheen the lights will catch as well as the consumer's eye.”

Barbecued meats as entrées also merchandise well on a hot bar. “Pulled pork and shredded beef brisket are ideal. They hold up well on a hot bar,” says Wilcox. “The key is to add enough sauce to prevent the product from drying out. Ribs and sliced beef brisket don't work as well since they dry out more easily.”

Cross-merchandise rolls next to the hot food bar, and use a sign card to steer customers to the idea of a hot barbecue sandwich. Promotional pricing offering free rolls with the purchase of a pound of barbecued meat can ramp up sales and entice new customers to the hot bar.

Offer Grab-And-Go BBQ

According to the IDDBA's *What's In Store 2008*, 83.8 percent of supermarkets have self-serve refrigerated cases. The report also lists “convenience” as one of the main motivators behind prepared-food purchases in the deli.

Gene Pritchett, national sales manager for Southern Pride, Marion, IL, says, “Consumers today are eating more barbecue, and they don't always want or have the time to make it themselves or go out or wait in a sit-down restaurant. That's where the opportunity for the supermarket deli comes in—in the deli cold case.”

Together, barbecued chicken and ribs make an eye-catching display in the cold case or in a separate refrigerated island. “Preferences for barbecue sauces are about as regionalized as barbecue itself. There are hot ones, ones that are sweetened with brown sugar or Karo, and ones that are mustard-based, just to name a few,” Pritchett says. “Operators can cross-merchandise a half-dozen different sauces with their chicken and ribs, so customers can heat up or finish off the products at home with the taste profile they most enjoy.”

Start With Chicken, Add BBQ

Supermarket delis sold 380 million pounds of prepared entrées in 2006, with chicken representing 60 percent of this total. The popularity of chicken, be it rotisserie or fried, makes it an ideal base from which to expand a deli entrée program to include other items such as barbecued meats.

Southern Pride's Pritchett says, “Ribs are the driving force in the barbecue segment today. It is easy and profitable to sell ribs by the slab from the hot or cold case, and a slab of ribs can easily serve two people.”

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Some stores offer special promotions around ribs. "For example, "Saturday as rib day with slabs for a special price. Or, special rib promotions around big barbecue holidays, like Memorial Day and Labor Day," says Curly's Wilcox.

Beyond ribs, beef brisket—sliced or shredded—is a trendy item. "We're seeing more play for it in foodservice today, and as a result, sales in the deli are growing," says Wilcox, adding, "Pulled pork also does well for us."

"RIBS ARE THE DRIVING FORCE IN THE BARBECUE SEGMENT TODAY. IT IS EASY AND PROFITABLE TO SELL RIBS BY THE SLAB FROM THE HOT OR COLD CASE, AND A SLAB CAN SERVE TWO PEOPLE."

—Gene Pritchett
Southern Pride

To make deli service easier, John Morrell & Co., based in Cincinnati, OH, introduced in January 1 1/2-pound individually sealed pouches of beef brisket and pulled pork with sauce, which are packed 10 to a case. "The idea is that deli operators can open only what's needed," says director of marketing Erik Waterkotte. "This offers quality, shrink and food safety advantages."

The brisket and pork come frozen and can be slacked out via microwave, oven or boiling water and incorporated into a hot entrée program. They can also be sold pre-packaged in the black microwaveable trays they are shipped in and merchandised in the cold case.

Build A Meal Program Around BBQ

Combo meals represent only 1.6 percent, or \$83 million, of all deli-prepared food sales, according to IDDBA's *What's In Store 2008*. This low number points to the potential for future opportunity. According to the

IDDBA's Foodservice Opportunities research, lunch is the most popular meal to grab from the supermarket deli and dinner is second.

"To successfully compete with foodservice, deli operators not only need to create a barbecue destination in-store, but also to cross-merchandise entrées with sides and offer customers a full menu of choices," Zarda Bar-B-Q & Sauce's Hyer says.

One of Zarda Bar-B-Q & Sauce's supermarket clients in Salt Lake City features an

innovative Zarda-branded menu board program headed, "What's for Dinner?" The deli, for example, may one night promote a small combo meal, such as a rack of ribs for two, two one-pound sides and a loaf of ciabatta bread. On another night, the deli might offer a "Family Feast" for 10 to 14 people that includes two racks of ribs, two rotisserie chickens, four one-pound sides and a ciabatta loaf.

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presents different combinations, such as two ribs, a chicken leg, baked beans, a roll and chips at an affordable lunch price. This type of menu program works well either for take-out or in-store dining.

Put Showmanship Into Your BBQ

The aroma, the sight and the appetizing appeal of barbecue being cooked are among the reasons more retailers are installing in-store barbecue roasters/smokers. What's more, in-store barbecue centers allow for flexibility in creating signature products with flavors specific to a region or a store's demographics. This can add a point of differentiation for the deli and another reason for customers to search out a particular store.

Southern Pride, makers of wood-burning barbecue pits and smokers, markets its products to restaurants and foodservice operations that want their cooked meats to have an authentic barbecue flavor. "Many stores really customize this operation with either banners or in-store signage that says, for example, 'Joe's Barbecue' or 'Joe's Smokehouse.' It's a real win because you can merchandise this signature product so many ways," says Southern Pride's Pritchett. "The key to success is having a piece of equipment



that is easy to operate and isn't dependent on one employee's know-how."

Friedrich Metal Products Co. Inc. (FMP) in Greensboro, NC, manufactures in-store and tabletop units that are self-cleaning and have a convection air cooking system. "This assures consistency of cooking whether the operator is making ribs, chicken, pulled pork or a host of other smoked or barbecued

meats, poultry and even fish," says FMP's president Laura Friedrich-Bargebuhl.

Deli barbecue programs are staying in step with consumers' need for quality and fast dining options by providing in-house barbecue centers, ready-to-eat hot case offerings and heat-at-home cold case items. For the delis, they are a sure-fire way to stoke up sales. **DB**



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Five Ways To Send A Message With Packaging

Creating the right image for your deli product can persuade consumers to buy

BY BOB JOHNSON

Packaging is essential for safely storing and conveniently displaying deli products. But packaging also goes a long way in determining whether a consumer notices and buys the product. “Just walk down the dog food aisle and you will see how important packaging is,” says John King, product market manager, Saint-Damien, Quebec-based IPL Inc.

This lesson applies as much—if not more—in the deli section. “According to a 2006 report from the Flexible Packaging Association, 80 percent of purchasing decisions are made in the store, at the point-of-purchase,” says Elizabeth Sheaffer, marketing manager, Manteno, IL-based Zip-Pak. “It’s important that brands enhance the shelf impact of their packages with dynamic graphics and value-added features, such as resealable closures.”

Packaging can grab attention and deliver information. Modern deli packaging should deliver the message “this is not fast food.” Many retailers are also seeing the value in delivering the message their store operations and products are easy on the environment.

Bottom line, good packaging can be the key to making a sale. To effectively merchandise deli section products, consider the following five ways to send a message.

The Classy Presentation

Consumers come to the deli section to find better quality food and a higher-class experience than most fast-food restaurants offer. Some packaging products communicate a high-end message, which translates into a higher price point.

One signature product from Atlanta, GA-based InnoWare Inc. combines a black base with an anti-fog clear lid. “The black is



PHOTO COURTESY OF INNOWARE INC.

perceived as more upscale by the consumers than Styrofoam or colored bases,” says Tracey Murphy, product manager, InnoWare.

The shape of the container also draws attention to the product and subtly delivers a message. InnoWare markets an Expressions line of square-shaped containers, which European companies have favored for some years, Murphy says.

“Shape has a very important effect,” King says. “Europe is way ahead of us when it comes to the shape and the label.”

Package design can play a key role in the expansion of a brand, and that edge is not lost on well-known food companies repositioning products to the deli section. “The

International Dairy-Deli-Bakery Association (IDBBA) reports that 67 percent of consumers want more variety in their deli and 65 percent consider ready-to-eat foods from the deli fresher than pre-packaged foods,” says Tara Downing, product manager, Lenexa, KS-based Robbie Manufacturing. “We have seen many processors capitalize on this trend by expanding their presence from the meat or frozen case to the deli counter and supplying packaging with their brand on it to help them stake a claim in this competitive category.”

Most deli foods cost more than the retail alternatives; therefore, the best and most effective packaging may also cost more. “We



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are not the cheapest product out there," Murphy says. "We try to bring the restaurant dining experience home."

With classy packaging, consumers are prone to believe they are getting their money's worth.

The Green Message

An increasing number of people are looking for ways to become part of the environmental movement. Many are showing their support by patronizing retailers committed to improving the environment.

"Consumers will be drawn to retailers they feel are helping to save the environment," Downing says. "Consumers are increasingly becoming aware of environmental concerns and are looking at manufacturers and retailers to provide materials that are either biodegradable or recyclable."

Among the fastest growing lines in deli packaging are recyclable and biodegradable packages. "The new thing is environmentally friendly packaging," says John Sil, president, Delaware, OH-based Inno-Pak Inc.

Sil, who believes this trend began to take off in 2007, attributes it in part to the influence of Wal-Mart and its reusable packaging. "We're working with companies whose additives allow our flexible packaging to be

100 percent degradable," Sil says.

Other suppliers are jumping on the bandwagon. "We just came out with a line of biodegradable packages because the end user was looking for it," says Michele Quirk, marketing coordinator, Glen Falls, NY-based Genpak Corp.

For takeout delis, Genpak produces packaging with 20 percent recyclable polyethylene terephthalate (PET). "The processors or suppliers want to maintain a positive image with the consumer," Quirk says. "Toward the summer of 2007, it really picked up. It's become more of a priority."

Fabri-Kal Corp., a thermoformer based in Kalamazoo, MI, markets a line of 100 percent recyclable PET containers. "We have an entirely corn-based drinking cup that has grown very well since we launched it four years ago," says Colin Butts, Fabri-Kal's marketing associate.

Recycled amorphous polyethylene terephthalate (APET) food packaging is the most environmentally friendly packaging available in the market today, notes Bob Saric, global sales manager food packaging, Madison, WI-based Placon. "Recycled APET containers can be put into the standard curbside recycling stream and converted into reprocessed (RPET) packaging, which can

be used over and over," he says.

InnoWare launched Eco-Line, a line of compostable corn-based, square-shaped containers, in its effort to make packaging easy on the environment.

"There are no true biodegradable packages on the market," Saric says. "The closest we have come is compostable, which means the packages need to be put into a compost facility and turned regularly to be exposed to the right amount of oxygen and sunlight. There are currently only three such composting facilities in the entire United States."

Future developments in this area remain to be seen, but growing public demand for earth-friendly packaging is driving new products. Environmental friendly packaging is, as Butts says, "The new 'must have.'"

The Package As A Billboard

An effective package contains the product and printed information about the product, which means the side of the package facing the consumer is essentially a billboard. "The package should have a very positive face or billboard system," IPL's King says. "The packaging should immediately communicate what the product is, why it would be good for the consumer and how it would be a pleasing experience."



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That billboard is the traditional label. "Labeling in general is probably the most important thing except for safety," says Fabri-Kal's Butts. "You need to tell the customer what is in the container, how much and whose brand."

Fabri-Kal and other suppliers produce containers with this information, and with promotions or SKU-control information on the containers. Many delis augment this with their own stickers.

"Packages should include safe handling information, a use-by date and an 800 number for consumers' questions," says Robbie Manufacturing's Downing. "Providing recipes and/or cooking instructions is an added benefit."

The billboard can also be used to display coupons. "Coupons add to the functionality of the package as a whole," says Cheryl Miller Balster, operations director, Menasha, WI-based Flair Packaging International.

The label can also display a prominent brand or tell a company's story. "Some companies have very unique stories to tell about the product inside their bag or pouch and this is appealing to customers," Balster says.

The package provides the first opportunity to communicate with the potential consumer. "Packaging breathes new life into stagnant categories or products," Downing says. "Companies have a lot to say to consumers, and finding the right words or prioritizing their messages is the first step."

But to effectively pull off the billboard's communication function, the packaging must carry powerful graphics.

The Graphic Connection

The graphic look of the package is everything when it comes to getting the message across. "Package appearance certainly affects the ability to market products," Balster says. "Visually appealing graphics can speak to the freshness of the product and convey additional information."

Flair Packaging's rotogravure printing allows for photographic-quality images to be printed right on the package, which is very appealing to consumers. "As we know, there are direct neurological links between visual systems in the brain and appetite centers, so the more appealing the package is, the more likely someone will purchase it," Balster says.

Many suppliers are concentrating on adding more punch to their multicolored printed messages. "Only with properly printed graphics can the package be used to tell the story of the product," Placon's Saric says. "Printed deli containers are a great way to help sell a product."

Marketers and package designers are using high-end, attention-grabbing designs to

help differentiate products on the shelf. "Printing high-end graphics on flexible packaging is one way to achieve this," Robbie Manufacturing's Downing says. "The overall package helps communicate the integrity of the product inside."

Increasingly, an important graphic effect is to use the package as a window, affording an appealing view of the product. "Large windows are now being incorporated to show off the product," Downing says. "Anti-fog films are being utilized to help consumers view the product clearly and make their selections more quickly."

The Window To The Product

Making all or part of the package see-through can be an effective way to show off the product. "A lot of clear packaging makes the food look fresher," says Joseph R. Selzer, vice president marketing and sales, Fort Calhoun, NE-based Wilkinson Industries Inc.

Clear plastic containers help the product look and stay fresher longer. Placon's APET Crystal Seal containers have clear lids and bases so customers can see exactly what is in the package, and Placon's HomeFresh polypropylene deli containers are clearer than standard deli containers.

"The oxygen barrier in clear APET pack-

aging helps keep the product fresher longer, which extends shelf life and reduces labor," Saric says.

Clear lids sprayed with a proprietary film allow a clear view of the food regardless of the heat or humidity inside the container. "We have an anti-fog lid feature that allows a clear view of the food; that's a great feature," says InnoWare's Murphy.

A clear and resealable lid can show the product—and deliver the message the product has good shelf or refrigerator life. "Resealable closures also indicate the potential for longer maintenance of freshness, a key factor in purchasing decisions," Zip-Pak's Sheaffer says. "Zip-Pak sponsored qualitative focus groups in April 2007 to determine consumer attitudes toward resealable flexible packaging. The research has shown that consumers not only prefer resealable closures, but they are willing to pay a premium price for a product with a resealable feature."

The point of clear packaging is to let the food inside the package tell the story. "We are seeing more and more products being displayed in clear containers rather than bags and boxes that hide the appearance," Wilkinson Industries' Selzer says. "If the product looks fresh, then people will buy it. Again, the appearance tells the story." **DB**

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Creative Ways To Merchandise Deli Turkey

Enticing flavors, quality, convenience and programs keep turkey at the front of the line

BY CAROL M. BAREUTHER, RD

Taste, versatility and inherent healthfulness make turkey a consistent contributor to the deli department's bottom line. According to the Washington, DC-based National Turkey Federation (NTF), per capita consumption of turkey averaged 16.9 pounds in 2006. In the same year, turkey was the No. 4 protein choice of American consumers behind chicken, beef and pork.

Drilling down to the supermarket level, the Counter Intelligence Deli Consumer Study, commissioned by Austin, MIN-based Jennie-O Turkey Store, tracked consumers' purchases of deli meats during a 30-day period. Completed in December 2006, the study revealed that 48.5 percent of consumers bought turkey, 46.1 percent bought ham, 29.6 percent purchased roast beef and 28.4 percent took home chicken.

Chris Bekermeier, marketing manager for the retail deli division of Butterball LLC, Mount Olive, NC, says, "Consumers keep coming back for turkey because it has so many benefits. Deli turkey can be included in endless sandwich, salad, appetizer and even entrée recipes. Skinless turkey breast is very nutritious—low in fat, low in carbohydrates and high in protein—and has been referred to as a 'Super Food' that will help people lead healthier lives."

Offer Bold Flavors And The Basics

Consumers' desire for bolder flavors extends to the turkey category. Forward thinking turkey processors have responded with birds seasoned with Mexican and Italian ingredients. Progressive retailers, like San Antonio, TX-based H-E-B, have expanded their deli turkey offerings to include flavors with more bite, such as mesquite-smoked and salsa-flavored breasts of turkey.

According to Mike Brown, director of sales for Cooper Farms Cooked Meats, Van Wert, OH, flavors have both evolved and exploded over the past few years. "For example, black pepper is now cracked black



PHOTO COURTESY OF JENNIE-O TURKEY STORE

pepper. We've introduced a salsa-flavored turkey in southern markets, and a mango salsa turkey breast as a seasonal item," Brown says. "Both have found their niche. Our food scientists also came up with a Wild Turkey turkey, akin to bourbon ham, but this was too far out for many retailers."

A variety of flavors is vital in maintaining excitement in the turkey category for consumers who always want to try something new. "Rotating in a flavor every three to four months is an idea that has merit along the lines of how McDonald's offers the McRib for a limited-time only. Also, sampling is essential when introducing new flavors," says Butterball's Bekermeier.

While flavors are fun, they don't provide

the bulk of sales. "Consumers will likely always look to oven roasted turkey as their mainstay because it works with anything they want to combine it with," Bekermeier says. "Because of this, oven roasted turkeys represent the largest volume with approximately half of total turkey sales."

Following oven roasted turkey, honey and smoked turkey flavors round out the top three varieties, says Cooper Farm's Brown. "These three varieties represent about 70 percent of total turkey sales in the deli."

Kyle Maas, product manager for Michigan Turkey Producers Co-Op, Grand Rapids, MI, says the top three flavors are in demand because they have mass appeal. "The traditional favorites—oven roasted,



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hickory smoked and honey—are the most popular types of turkey because they appeal to a wide audience,” Maas says.

An aging Baby Boomer population and America’s growing health consciousness among consumers have led turkey processors to offer low-sodium and no-salt deli turkey products. “Our low-salt turkey product isn’t our best-selling, but it’s our fastest growing in terms of sales,” Cooper Farm’s Brown says. “We’ve seen gains of over 5 percent a year for the past two years. We’ve also introduced a few private label lines in low salt. It’s the health factor that’s drawing the sales.”

Michigan Turkey Producers’ Maas points to a greater demand for natural and organic products. “Beyond the actual ingredients used to process the meat, retailers are now concerned about how an animal is raised—what it’s fed, its living conditions, how it’s harvested, etc. That’s why we grow and process organic and ABF (Antibiotic Free/Animal By-product Free) turkeys. Consumers understand and appreciate this distinction.”

In contrast, Cooper Farm’s Brown believes organic will remain a small niche. “Therefore, we’ve decided not to go into this area. However, ABF is something that high-end retailers like Wegmans, Publix and Hannaford are definitely looking for, especially in their private label,” Brown says. “We’ve already converted two farms to ABF production. This is two out of 160 farms, so you can see the trend is still small.”

Quality And Convenience

Taste, overall appearance and turkey products made from the whole breast rather than pieces are the three most important factors consumers consider when purchasing turkey in the deli, according to Jennie-O’s Counter Intelligence research. “Overall, each of these factors appears to have grown in importance year-to-year,” says Jen Ehresmann, Jennie-O’s senior product manager.

The majority of consumers are looking for high-quality turkey in the deli. According to Jennie-O’s Counter Intelligence research, 51 percent of consumers make purchases in the premium/super premium category, 30 percent in the mid-tier category and 19 percent in the economy/value category.

Butterball’s Bekermeier says, “The premium segment of the category is where the action is and focus is, and should be, for most retailers. But it also makes sense to have limited mid-tier and price-tier alternatives for the more value-conscious consumers to be sure they don’t simply bypass the deli due to high prices.”

Behind the service deli counter, brand name is less important to consumers in

terms of quality, according to the International Deli-Dairy-Bakery Association’s (IDDBA) *What’s In Store 2008*. Only 16 percent of consumers surveyed look for branded products when buying meats at the service deli. However, nearly three in 10 consumers, or 29 percent surveyed, said they were paying more attention to brand names across all deli categories.

“RETAILERS SHOULD CARRY BRANDS CONSUMERS TRUST FOR QUALITY TURKEY AND CHOOSE ITEMS THAT REMIND CONSUMERS OF FRESHLY SLICED DELI TURKEY.”

—Chris Bekermeier
Butterball LLC

In the cold case section, brand awareness takes on greater importance, Butterball’s Bekermeier says, because deli personnel aren’t usually in the pre-sliced section to guide customers’ decisions. “Retailers should carry brands consumers trust for quality turkey and choose items that remind consumers of freshly sliced deli turkey,” Bekermeier says. “This way, when the consumer is in a hurry and can’t wait when there is a long line at the service deli counter—or the consumer is in the store after the deli has closed—they will be more prone to feel their selection will still give them a premium deli turkey experience.”

The pre-sliced lunchmeats section should be placed in close proximity to the service counter as an option to maintain sales in times of high demand or after hours. Packaging is also changing the perception that pre-sliced deli meats may be less fresh or lower in quality than meat sliced to order in the deli.

“New modified atmospheric packaging techniques give pre-sliced deli turkey that ‘sliced-in-the-deli and packed-by-hand look,’” Cooper Farm’s Brown says. “Our slices, in package weights ranging from eight-ounces to four-pounds, are laid in an S-fold in a black

molded plastic tray. The tray has clear or printed film stretched across the front and offers a more natural, fresh-sliced appearance because the plastic isn’t pressed tight against the meat as it is when its vacuum packed. Due to the demand for convenience, we’ve expanded from one to six packing lines in our new plant’s certified clean room for production of this pre-sliced turkey product.”

Food safety is another key element of quality. Butterball’s Bekermeier recommends, “As with all proteins in the service deli, proper handling is of utmost importance. Refrigeration, use of gloves when handling, rotating stock for maximum code life, rewinding open meat after use, and refacing products that have not been recently used are all important procedures to ensure food safety and freshness.”

Sandwich And Platter Programs

Turkey plays a fundamental role in a deli department’s sandwich and party platter programs. For example, Dorothy Lane Markets, a three-store chain based in Dayton, OH, offers customers its signature “storied” sandwich program, where each imaginative offering is named after a person who works for or with the upscale supermarket. Creative turkey combinations include Cindy’s New Yorker—hickory-smoked turkey, bacon, scallion cream cheese and red onion on farmhouse bread—and Will’s Big Assist—all-natural turkey breast, Emmental Swiss, sauerkraut, housemade Russian dressing—grilled on rye bread.

Butterball’s Bekermeier says, “For a sandwich program, freshness is a key factor. Running out of sandwiches is not the worst thing. Selling stale or soggy sandwiches and never seeing the buyer in your deli again is the worst thing. Highlighting sandwiches themed for the time of year and holidays are a good way to test new sandwich ideas.”

Publix, a 926-store chain based in Lakeland, FL, uses the diversity of turkey flavors to promote its popular deli party platters. The platter, aptly named the Boar’s Head Turkey Carousel, features turkey pastrami, maple honey turkey, hickory-smoked turkey and oven roasted turkey breast, served with honey mustard.

Butterball’s Bekermeier says, “For party platters, pamphlets with sharp photography of attractive tray displays are very important. An emphasis on branding can lead to consumer confidence.”

Creative party platter and sandwich programs, quality, convenience and the overall versatility of deli turkey are making a lasting impression on today’s consumers. The healthful benefits of deli turkey are an added bonus in marketing this “Super Food.” **DB**

Hispanic Foods In The Deli Translate Into Dollars

Many mainstream delis are catering to the fastest growing demographic in the United States, but others have yet to come on board

BY TRISHA J. WOOLDRIDGE

According to the U.S. Census, the Hispanic/Latin population is the fastest growing demographic in the nation, and steady growth in this sector is expected to continue through 2050. Hispanic or Latin cuisine includes a wide variety of cheeses, meats and prepared foods that not only appeals to the tastes of this ethnic group, but also the Anglo palate. Traditionally, these ethnic foods can be found in supermercados and independent stores catering almost exclusively to Hispanic or Latin shoppers. Although many mainstream delis are merchandising Hispanic foods, others have yet to come on board. In many cases, the lack of offerings is leaving a void where demand exists.

"Many chains across the country are doing an excellent job meeting the needs of their Latin shoppers," says Alan Hiebert, education information specialist, International Dairy-Deli-Bakery Association (IDDBA), Madison, WI. "However, many areas of the country with growing Latin populations have few stores dedicated to meeting Latin American needs."

Edgar Soto, vice president of sales and marketing, Bronx, NY-based Cibao Meat Products, points out Hispanic offerings in supermarket delis have come a long way in the past five years. "Retailers are more keen to the competition," he says. "They do their best to carry products typically found in independent stores and competitive markets. I was very surprised to find pork shoulder at a mainstream deli. Cooked pork shoulder is a popular item in Hispanic markets, usually sold by the pound."

The Nuances Of A Name

The terms "Hispanic" and "Latin" are often used interchangeably when referring to



PHOTO COURTESY OF ROTH KASE USA LTD.

the Spanish-speaking population in the United States, but it's important to note these terms are not the same. Hispanic, from the Latin word for "Spain," potentially includes all Spanish-speaking peoples and emphasizes the common language among these cultures, which may have little else in common. Hispanic can only be used in reference to Spain and its history and culture. The term "Latin" refers to people from Latin America, including Brazil, where Portuguese is spoken.

"The group we've come to call Hispanic in the United States consists of Mexicans,

Central Americans, South Americans, Caribbean islanders, and maybe even some Spaniards," Hiebert says. "Traditional cooking varies widely, and in many cases, bears little resemblance to our idea of 'Mexican' food. Caribbean dishes have African and French influences, while European influences permeate the cultures descended from Spanish colonists."

According to Bryce Ruiz, president and chief operating officer, Ruiz Foods, Dinuba, CA, the fruits, vegetables, meats, grains and spices of Europe were "grafted onto" the

Knowing Your Hispanic Customers

In looking at the Hispanic or Latin population within a geographic location, retailers should ask themselves the following questions:

- What percentage of residents in my shopping radius are Hispanic?
- If there is a viable percentage, do I have any Hispanics shopping my store?
- If they do, what generational demographic do they represent?

It is important to realize that country of origin and degree of acculturation play a major role in Hispanic shopping preferences. "No one knows better who shops a retail location than the retailer," says Bryce Ruiz of Ruiz Foods, who explains the various stages of Hispanic acculturation.

First-generation Hispanic shoppers make most of their meals from scratch and want raw ingredients. Important things to consider for first-generation clients are bilingual signage and personnel as well as an understanding of the ingredients they are looking for.

"If shoppers are in the initial stages of acculturation, they will want to maintain their connection to their Latin heritage while their integration to American life increases," Ruiz says. "This shopper will still prefer to shop in a store that

resonates with the sights, sounds, smells and sensibilities of their homeland. A deli can create this comfort zone through product assortment, importing specialty lines and stocking items with bilingual packaging, using bilingual coupons, posting bilingual signage, and once again, hiring bilingual personnel."

Alan Heibert, information specialist for the International Dairy-Deli-Bake Association (IDDBA) adds, "While immigrants generally work hard to learn English, first-generation immigrants may feel much more comfortable shopping in stores with associates who speak their language. Similarly, in the early 20th century, Italian and German immigrants learned English, but were more comfortable shopping where they could speak their native languages."

Fully acculturated Hispanics are the last demographic. "They may still speak Spanish but would be acculturated in most every other way," Ruiz says. "For example, they live in the world of convenience without sacrificing the quality of good-tasting food. These shoppers still enjoy the foods of their heritage; however, they don't take the time to make them from scratch because they probably don't know how." **DB**

stock of foods native to Mexico's Aztec and Inca Indians. "The Europeans were originally a rye-based culture, knowing nothing about wheat, corn or many other ingredients (chocolate, coffee, potatoes, peppers, eggplant, corn, etc.) until they traveled and met the Indians of America and/or Mexico," Ruiz says.

Hiebert calls much of Latin cooking "New World" because corn and tomatoes appear in many traditional Latin American dishes. "Tamales may be common to nearly every country in Latin America, though they are called a number of different things," Hiebert says. "Chiles are somewhat more popular in Mexico and are used much less often in South American cooking. Corn tortillas are also more common in Mexico, with many South American residents preferring wheat flour breads."

In the Hispanic segment, Mexican food has transitioned from ethnic to mainstream, appealing to both Hispanic and Anglo consumers. With such a broad audience to attract, retailers

could increase profits by incorporating foods with a Mexican flair into the deli area. "The Mexican arena, in the fresh category, is ready for the next level," says William Parker, executive vice president, Don Miguel Mexican Foods, Orange, CA.

Misconceptions Mean Missed Opportunities

Knowing the food preferences of Hispanic customers within a store's demographic area can increase sales. On the other hand, misin-



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formation and lack of education about Hispanic products can hurt sales.

"A lot of people have a preconceived notion that Spanish meats, made in Spain, are the same as Latin meats," says Alex Motamodi, general manager, La Española Meats, based in Los Angeles, CA. For example, chorizo sausage from Spain is dry-cured and can be sliced and served like salami, unlike its Latin counterpart, which needs to be cooked.

Not differentiating Spanish products from Italian products is also an issue. For example, Spanish jamón Serrano, or just Serrano in the United States, is the predecessor of Italian prosciutto. Both meats are dry-cured, often in the mountains or cool climates, but the two types of ham have distinctly different flavor profiles. Serrano tends to be sweeter and nuttier, and prosciutto is spicier. "There is room for Serrano and prosciutto in the deli," says Motamodi.

Cheeses, like meat, also vary in taste from region to region. For instance, Manchego from Spain will have a different flavor profile than Manchego from Mexico.

Misconceptions regarding the value of Hispanic products need to be cleared up as well. "People equate the meats with inferior quality; they think it cheapens the image of

the deli," Motamodi says. "It's not a matter of better or worse. They're different products."

Sonny Dickinson, vice president of sales for Queso Campesino, a part of Colorado Ranchers Dairy Products Inc. in Denver, CO, believes stores are missing out on a big opportunity by not stocking the deli with Hispanic products. "When you go to the deli, you go there for quality, convenience, variety and uniqueness," Dickinson says. He gives the example of mainstream stores merchandising Hispanic cheeses in the dairy section rather than the deli or the specialty cheese sections.

In prepared foods, Hispanic foods offer great potential in the way of variety and style. Don Miguel's Parker thinks it may be difficult for some people to get beyond the burrito and quesadilla mentality. "You need to expand into new varieties," he says. "The category continues to be potent, especially in the arena of new products, such as more authentic flavors and more authentic items." Case in point: Don Miguel is working on marketing empanadas, pastry products filled with savory meats and sauces.

Do Your Homework

Some deli managers may be unaware of the Hispanic population trends taking place

in their geographic areas. That's why it's important to do your homework, says Queso Campesino's Dickinson. "For example, North Carolina is the second or third fastest growing market for Hispanic foods, especially Mexican," he says.

And it pays to think outside the box. "Just have a little more vision," Don Miguel's Parker says. "Cater to the developing needs of consumers, both Anglo and Hispanic." He adds, "Establish consistent space for the growing category."

Hispanic holidays, as well as U.S. holidays, provide a celebratory way to market Hispanic products. "There's an opportunity to capitalize on ethnic holidays," Cibao's Soto says, "such as Three Kings Day and Independence of the Dominican Republic."

By their very nature, Hispanic foods tie into holidays. "The foods are often handheld, good for snacking and grazing, easy to prepare from home in a microwave or oven, and have great flavor," Soto says.

Hispanic foods, whether in the grab-and-go case, specialty cheese section, or ready-to-eat case, offer excellent potential for delis to cater to the fastest growing population in the United States—or any customer interested in the flavors and offerings of this diverse ethnic category. **DB**

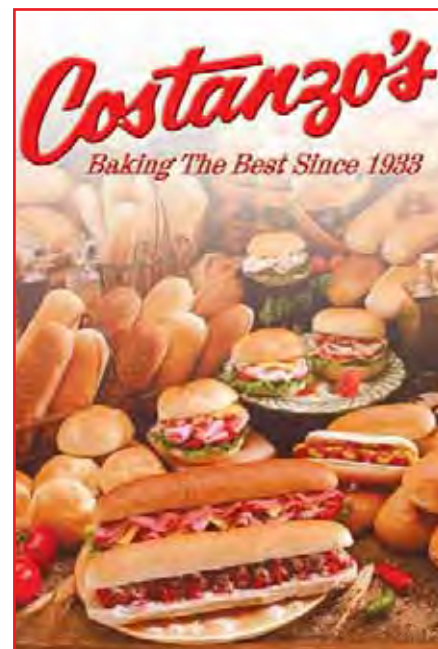


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Delis Target Eastern European Cultures

Ethnic deli meats central to attracting Slavic consumers

BY KAREN B. KING MCCALLUM

Slavic Krainerwurst, Russian Estonska sausage and Szegedi Salami may not be household names in America just yet, but they are in the homes of the Russians and Eastern Europeans who have immigrated here. Craving the deli meats of their native lands, this growing segment of the population is giving manufacturers and retailers another lucrative market to target.

Throughout the United States and Canada, clusters of Russian and Eastern European immigrants have settled in nearly every major city. "In the United States, the largest concentrations of these immigrants are located in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles as well as in several other West Coast cities, such as Seattle and Portland," says Laurie Groezinger, president of Groezinger Provisions Inc., Neptune, NJ. The company produces kielbasa, bologna and smoked, single-muscle meats under its Groezinger brand, and patés and mousses under its Alexian brand.

"The Brighton Beach area of New York, in particular, has attracted many Russian immigrants as well as the San Francisco area," says William Osanitsch, sales manager, Karl Ehmer Inc., Ridgewood, NY. This specialty meat manufacturer supplies independently owned Karl Ehmer stores across the country in addition to retail super-market chains.

In Canada, Eastern Europeans have established roots throughout the country, and the variety of meats produced by Piller's Sausages & Delicatessens Ltd., Waterloo, Ontario, caters to the palates of both Central and Eastern Europeans.

In the United States, Piller's is targeting markets in New York, New Jersey, Chicago, Southern California and Texas. "There is a growing consumer trend for upscale, flavorful products, and we changed our whole marketing strategy to identify that market," says Dave Brandow, director of sales, marketing, corporate foodservice and export. "We created a sub-brand of products under our Black Kassel label for consumers who



are well-traveled, have experienced different foods and want to be able to enjoy these foods at home."

Keeping With Tradition

Eastern Europe has been an ever-changing region of boundaries. Today's map includes the countries of Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine. Some maps also include the Czech Republic, Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

No matter where the geographic lines are drawn separating these countries, they don't begin to tell the story of Germany's far-reaching influence throughout Eastern Europe over the course of history or the migratory patterns of the Slavs, the largest ethnic and linguistic group of people in Europe. It is



PHOTOS COURTESY OF GROEZINGER PROVISIONS INC.

estimated that the Slavs, who belong to the Indo-European linguistic family, number more than 300 million in the world.

Centuries of conflicts and lands lost and won created a melting pot of diverse cultures throughout this region—establishing a style of Old World cuisine that no modern map can capture. But the influx of people from Russia and Eastern Europe has spurred demand for the specialty meats and treats of their homelands, which typically include salamis and sausages. And while ethnicity may differ from country to country, the tastes buds speak the same language—a universal hunger for coarsely ground beef and pork, visible fat and heavy garlic.

In Russia, salami is a mainstay of the diet and frequently served as an appetizer. To appeal to this population group, Groezinger's makes an Eastern European-style product

line consisting of Russian Cooked Salami as well as Estonska and Moldavska sausages. "All of these products are made from premium grade beef and pork meats, giving the sausages superior texture, bite and flavor," Groezinger says. "But they are packaged in different sizes and casings as a result of customer preference."

The vacuum-packed Russian Cooked Salami has a shelf life of six weeks compared to the Moldavska "stick" sausage, which is not vacuum packed and has a shelf life of three weeks. The Estonska small sausage comes in a two-pound, take-home size, whereas the Estonska large sausage is sold in a four-pound slicing style. Both Estonska sausages are vacuum packed.

Likewise, Russian immigrants have found a friend in Karl Ehmer's products. "In the Russian market we are known for our semi-dry smoked salami," Osanitsch says. The company's krainerwurst, also called smoked bratwurst, is a garlic-flavored sausage with Slavic origins that appeals to immigrants from Slovenia, he adds.

Gottschee, a German enclave in Slovenia, inspired the name of Karl Ehmer's Gottscheer Dry Krainer, a ready-to-eat dry sausage. This former German-speaking region in the Duchy of Carniola (Krain in German) was once part of the Hapsburg Empire. "In addition to smoked and garlic flavors, these traditional meats have a certain meaty texture these populations are accustomed to," Osanitsch says.

Old World Tastes

German-speaking Europeans who emigrated to North America in the late 1800s brought along their trade secrets, such as the founders of Piller's. "Our recipes are family recipes from Germany that have been handed down for generations," Piller's Brandow says. "In the U.S. markets we're targeting, we are promoting our dry-cured products, such as ham and sausage."

Piller's Thurginer Summer Sausage, a blend of pork and beef with a smoky flavor, takes its name from the Thuringia region of Germany, while the company's Szegedi Salami pays tribute to the world-famous paprika from this Hungarian city. Piller's Hungarian Salami also has a paprika overtone, while its German Salami has a stronger garlic and pepper flavor.

The company's packaging also caters to customers' preferences. The Thurginer Summer Sausage comes pre-packaged in individual slices, and the Szegedi Salami is available in whole and half chubs. The Hungarian Salami comes in pre-packaged shingle styles, a pre-packaged shaved style and a half chub.

Piller's Black Forest Ham, a more well-

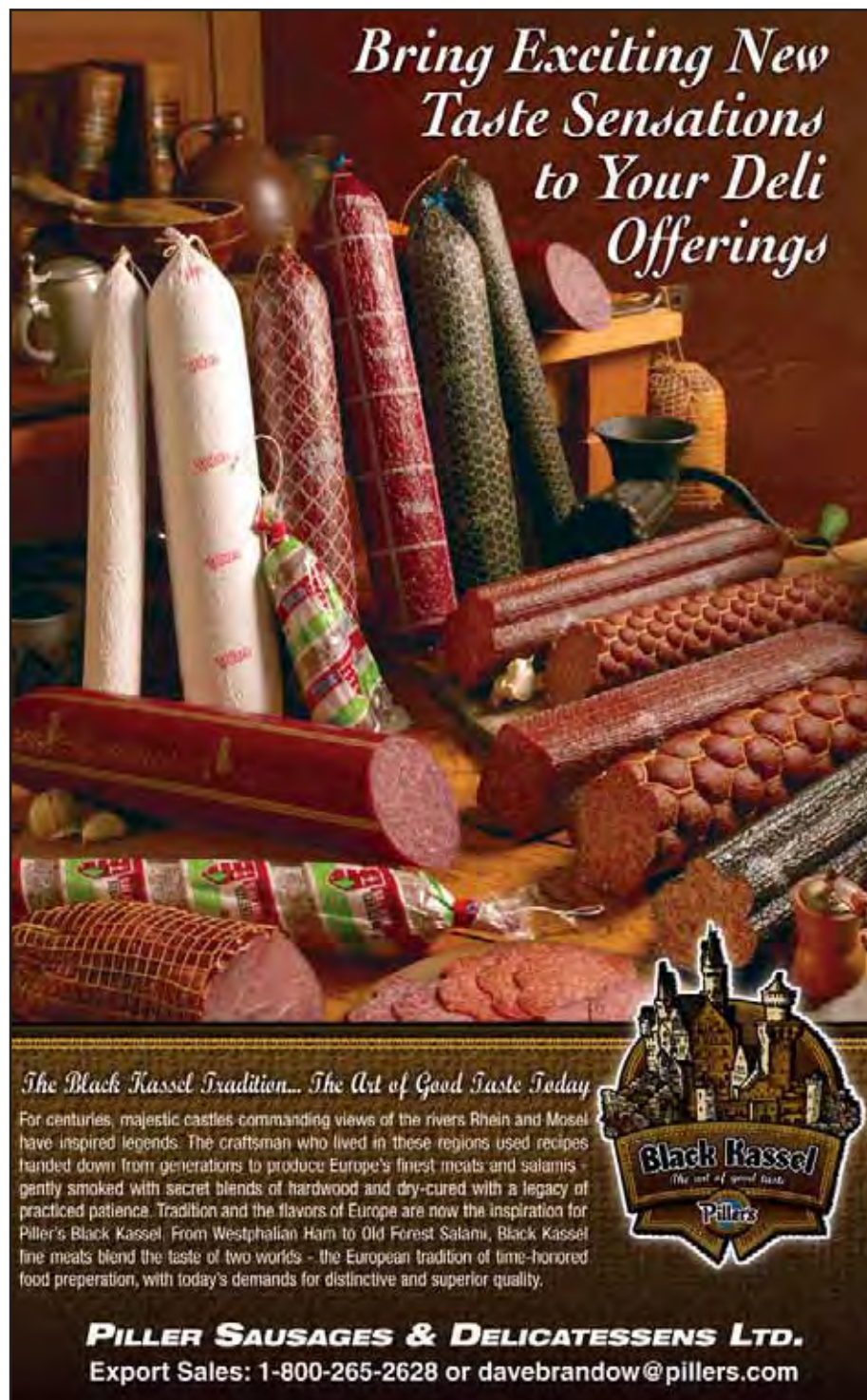
known staple the deli case, is also packaged in a variety of ways to meet customers' needs. These include half, whole and mini-size hams, as well as pre-packaged shaved and shingle styles.

The price of keeping with tradition, however, generally comes with a higher price tag. "Our products are on the high end of the scale," says Groezinger, who notes some customers simply want the best of the category and are willing to pay for it.

As part of its product line aimed at East-

ern Europeans, Groezinger Provisions' Alexian brand is introducing chicken liver and goose liver mousses. "All Europeans eat paté in some form," Groezinger explains. "The French call it paté, the Germans call it pasteten and the Eastern Europeans call it pashtet, meaning a meat spread usually containing liver from fowl."

Most of the pashtet she found in ethnic markets was being imported in small tins and selling at high prices. Alexian's mousses, however, contain purer products that have



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to be refrigerated. "We have just introduced it and do not know if it will sell on a regular basis," Groezinger says. "And, of course, it will be more expensive."

Moving Into The Mainstream

The assimilation of Eastern Europeans and Russians into North America also brings a change in the venues selling these specialty products. Small, ethnic markets have primarily carried them, but now larger retail supermarkets are making room in their deli

cases for these meats, such as Central Market in Texas, a retail chain with 50,000- to 60,000-square-foot markets.

"Central Market has an excellent program and has been a long-term prominent retail partner," says Piller's Brandow. "They carry our full line of Black Kassel products in their delis and packaged counters. We're targeting consumers who have a discernable taste and an appreciation for fine quality—much like the wine industry has experienced with consumers' more sophisticated tastes."

Piller's is launching a new product in the United States aimed at this consumer group called Alpen Schinken, a ham product similar to prosciutto, but whose roots can be traced to a German-speaking region in northern Italy. "Alpen Schinken has a great delicate texture and flavor that lends itself to accentuate many entrées or to be used as hors d'oeuvres," Brandow says. "It's a great accompaniment to sliced fruit."

The smaller ethnic stores are also growing exponentially as business booms. "Russian immigrants who have identified the need and opened importing and distribution businesses both on the East and West coasts are expanding their businesses," Groezinger says.

She points to a company in Brooklyn, NY, called Net Cost Market, which has six stores, five of which are in New York and one in Philadelphia. In 2007, the company added deli departments to all of its stores and opened its first supermarket, a 17,325-square-foot store in Staten Island, NY. "The company's small supermarkets are moving toward American marketing and sales, and we supply the Eastern European-style, pre-cut deli meats," Groezinger says.

Selling Slavic Deli

Demographics play a key role in deciding where to zero in on Eastern European customers. Larger retail chains looking to cash in must determine if a sizeable concentration exists in their geographic areas to support the effort, and if they decide to take the bite, must be prepared to get the word out by advertising.

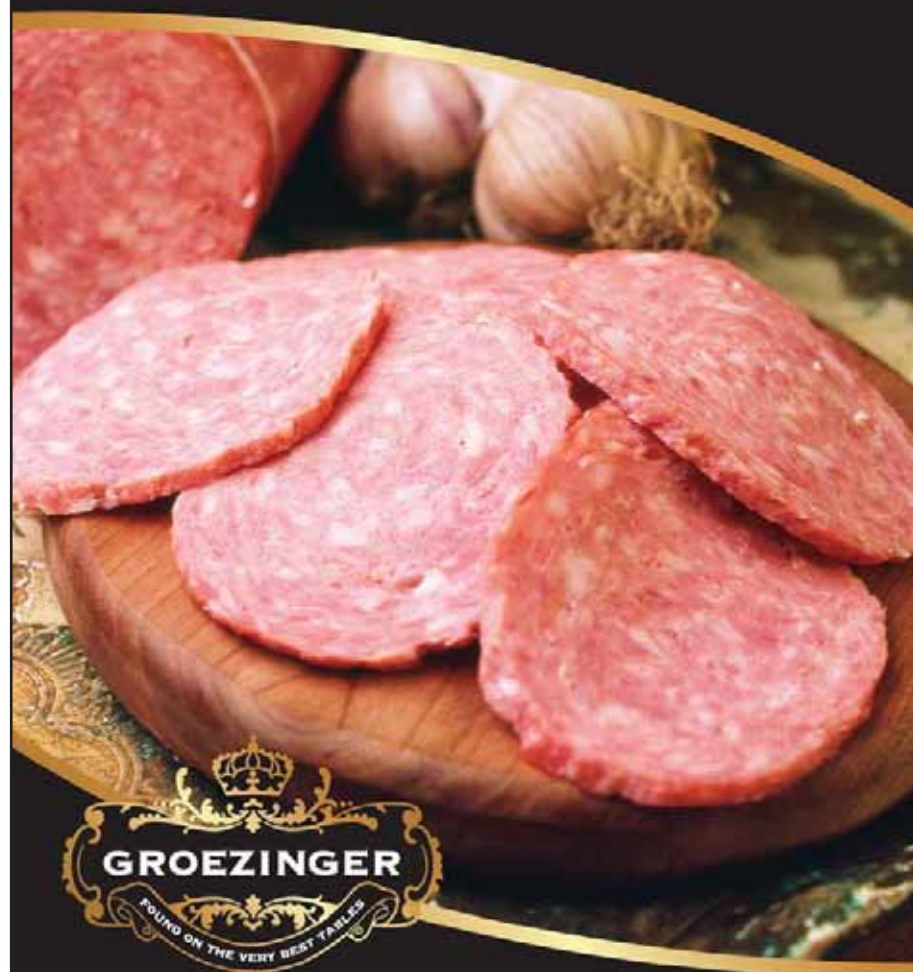
Groezinger suggests that supermarkets do some cross-merchandising by bringing in imported mustards, breads and candies to complement the deli meat selections. Most importantly, she recommends an over-the-counter sample program.

"Sample, sample, sample," Groezinger emphasizes. "In this culture, food is not purchased on sight alone. The buyer and vendor need to do a sampling program so people can discover what these great foods taste like."

Brandow believes that consumers are truly looking for a different flavor experience. "We strongly believe in consumer trial and support sampling and demo programs with our retail partners," he says. "Also, having Piller's products available in pre-sliced packages and chub formats allow retailers to offer our products for grab-and-go customers. We want consumers to embark on a flavor adventure with our full-bodied flavored products."

Where that adventure leads could be anywhere from Germany to as far as Russia, just as long as it evokes memories of traditional Slavic fare. **DB**

What Europeans have in mind when they think "delicatessen"



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Mid-Range Cheddars Vault Sales Upward

Selections at nearly every level of distinction offer opportunities for growth

BY KAREN SILVERSTON

When it comes to specialty cheese, Cheddar is king. However, buyers who have developed a passion for cheese can easily forget the majority of sales do not come from limited, high-end cheeses selling for upwards of \$20 per pound. Although high-end sales continue to increase, that market is focused, and it's the mid-range Cheddars that offer real opportunity for sales growth.

"Cheddar is still the universal cheese. Some delis we talk to sell as much Cheddar as all their other cheeses put together," says Joe Widmer, owner of Widmer's Cheese Cellars, Theresa, WI, and a Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker. The title of Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker is a coveted designation requiring three years of coursework and product evaluation, preceded by 10 years of experience working as a licensed cheesemaker and five years of experience making the variety for which the cheesemaker desires certification.

Entry-level specialty Cheddar is not synonymous with the store brand from the dairy case. It may be young, but it will have an age statement and sell in the mid-single-digit dollars-per-pound range everyone can feel good about. "It has to be able to fly out of the store," says Jed Davis, director of marketing, Cabot Creamery Cooperative, Montpelier, VT.

Stepping up from the entry tier, domestic and imported Cheddars at nearly every level of distinction can be found priced under \$20 per pound: organic, grass-fed, single farm or breed, sustainably produced, goat milk, reduced fat, probiotic, and naturally aged wheels. "We call this range profitable," says Dave Leonhardi, director of cheese education, Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board (WMMB), Madison, WI.

Not Just One Cheese

With so many Cheddars competing for attention, differentiating them is essential. Leonhardi trains buyers by doing a vertical

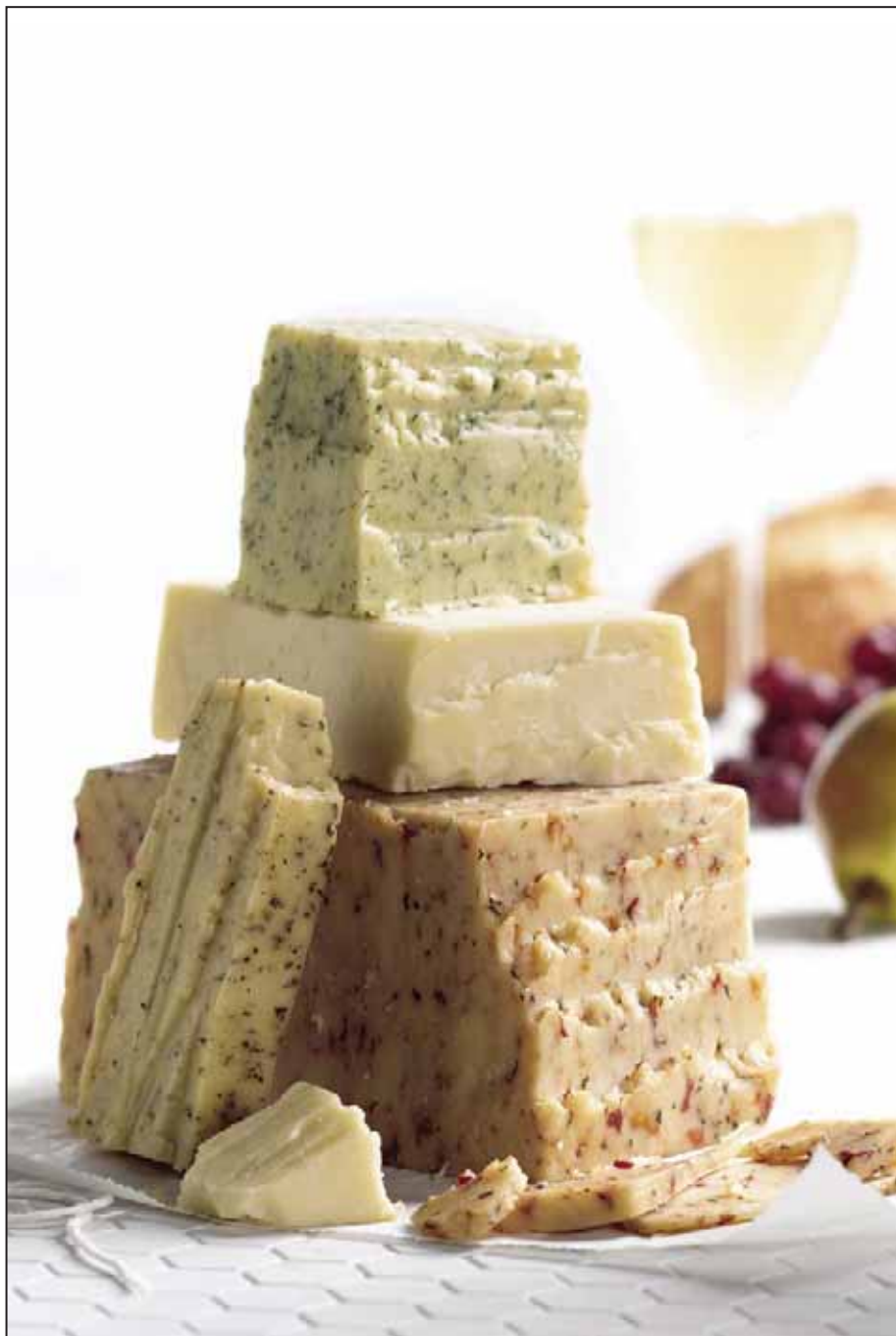


PHOTO COURTESY OF CABOT CREAMERY

tasting by age “starting from Cheddar curd, then moving to pressed curd, to mild, medium, sharp and extra sharp Cheddar, and then on to extra aged Cheddar,” Leonhardi says. “Then we taste flavored Cheddar. It could be as simple as a smoked flavor or any of the Cheddars ranging from Merlot to vegetables and spices—flavors are limited only by imagination.”

Comparing cheeses of the same age adds to the complexity of differentiating them. “To make it more intricate, I offer a taste of one-year-old Wisconsin Cheddar and a one-year-old Vermont Cheddar. Tastewise, you will definitely notice one has a different flavor profile from the other, yet they all fall into a modest to mid-range level,” Leonhardi continues. “At the very essence of Cheddar, there’s a make process that is either traditional or industrial. All Cheddars emanate from one of those two processes. Milled is the old-fashioned way. Stirred curd is the industrial way.”

Other factors are size and style. “Form will impact flavor, whether it’s a 22-pound daisy wheel, a 72-pound mammoth, a 40-pound block, a 13-pound longhorn or another,” Leonhardi explains. “There will be

differences—not over the top—but big enough to note and big enough for retailers to look at taking different formats. They will perform and function differently.”

The type of packaging used for aging also affects the flavor of the Cheddar. Packaging options include plastic, wax or cloth-wrapped. “Some products might not be aged more, but because of the way they are handled, through proper affinage, develop a flavor profile and characteristics that are very special,” notes Cabot’s Davis.

Milk is another differentiating factor, such as being standardized or pasteurized. “Sometimes, we differentiate by farm or by type of animal, just Jersey, for example,” says Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker Bob Wills, owner of Cedar Grove Cheese, Plain, WI, maker of organic, GMO-free and pasture-based Cheddar. “We’re making cheese for a customer selling a spring, summer, fall and winter Cheddar. Each is different because of the butterfat, protein and pasture that are characteristic of the season. None end up being extraordinarily high-priced products, and they’re products where, if the customer decides they like that characteristic, they can get it again.”

Aged cheese is not just mild cheese aged for a longer duration. “We pick specific cheese to set aside for aging. We tighten the window so we can predict how it will age out,” says Jeff Mazanec, brand manager for Hiram, OH-based Great Lakes Cheese Company. The company makes Adams Reserve Extra Sharp New York Cheddar, which is aged a minimum of 12 months and produced in Adams, NY.

The length of time a cheese is aged helps determine its price category. “Our nine-month is less expensive than our two-year product because it only has to age nine months. Our two-year Cheddar has been sitting, aging for two years,” says Jay Allison, vice president sales and marketing, Tillamook County Creamery Association, Tigard, OR.

“There really is incremental cost in aging the cheese—for every month the cheese is sitting in a climate-controlled environment and becoming everything it can be,” Cabot’s Davis explains.

Grafton Village Cheese Company, another traditional Cheddar producer, makes a bandage-wrapped Cheddar coated in lard. It’s aged underground in a climate-controlled environment. “Natural aging like this requires

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daily attention at the outset and a regular maintenance over its entire life,” explains Peter Mohn, vice president of the Grafton, VT-based company. The company’s aged Cheddars, aged one to four years, and its flavored Cheddars are positioned in the mid-upper range.

Sales of Widmer’s Cheese Cellars’ super-aged Cheddars (six years and older) are steadily increasing. “But at this point, a two-year-old sells best,” Widmer says. “It already has the aged Cheddar profile but doesn’t have the higher cost associated with a four- or six-year-old.”

According to WMMB’s Leonhardi, cheese that ages out well is worth the price. However, time, labor and availability bump cheeses such as Widmer’s six- and 10-year Cheddars, the Cabot Clothbound Cheddar Wheel, Fiscalini Vintage Bandage Wrapped Cheddar, Beecher’s Flagship Reserve and Grafton’s natural-rinded Cheddar into the high end.

Building The Foundation

Strategic buying requires knowing both your product and your consumer. “If you only know one or the other, you can’t be successful in today’s highly competitive world. Today, there’s a different consumer, and there’s a wider array of variability of consumers,” says Dr. MaryAnne Drake, associate professor at North Carolina State University (NCSU), Southeast Dairy Foods Research Center, Raleigh, NC.

“Consumers are now going to cheese bars, and they want the same type of information they’ve been getting about wine,” says Tracy Plante-Darrimon, director of marketing, Meyenberg Goat Milk Products, Turlock, CA, producers of two ages of goat Cheddar. “They want to know if you know the producers, what to look for in color, what to look for in density, what you look for at the beginning and following the taste.”

If you don’t know the profiles of your consumer, Plante-Darrimon suggests starting with more familiar Cheddars that are an easier sell, and then gradually add more varieties as your consumers become interested and more educated.

Transitional selections help educate consumers to value-added Cheddar, and may come from any of the subcategories. “Making the variety more enticing means working with consumers who may or may not have adventurous palates,” says Cabot’s Davis.

When creating an aged Cheddar program, buyers should expect to build a relationship with a cheese producer and plan well in advance. Less-experienced buyers might assume cheesemakers can fulfill a large order at any time—but that’s not nec-

essarily true.

“Aging cheese is a long-term commitment, and there are many opportunities for retailers looking beyond the dairy case for a better cheese at a reasonable price,” says Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker Jeff Widmer, owner of Maple Leaf Cheese, Monroe, WI. Maple Leaf Cheese produces many varieties of cheese, including Cheddar aged one to two years, and English Hollow Cheddar, introduced in fall 2007, a small batch, milled curd, rind-formed 28-pound wheel.

The company also provides customized cheese programs.

At Henning’s Cheese Inc., based in Kiel, WI, customers sometimes request longer aging, according to co-owner Kay Schmitz. “Some stores ordering mammoths want wheels with more age and flavor, and we do custom aging for them.” Stores buying 38-pound wheels to accompany the larger mammoths are finding they are selling more cheese. “They’re easy to handle and cut, so the stores actually sell more cheese,”



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Schmitz says.

When buying, arrange for point-of-sale material, promotions and front-line training. "To put it out there and let the consumers help themselves isn't enough," says Great Lakes Cheese Company's Mazanec.

Changing Consumers' Habits

Attracting consumers to the specialty case can be a challenge. If consumers who habitually purchase Cheddar from the dairy case are encouraged to buy or view new and interesting Cheddar types in the specialty case, they'll see other cheeses they might want to try. "Offering new types of Cheddar in the specialty case can provide more conservative consumers with exposure to this set," says Tony Meredith, dairy category director, Fort Lauderdale, FL-based Fonterra Brands Americas Inc. The company imports Mainland Cheddar, a line of aged Cheddar (up to two years) and three- to six-month United States Department of Agriculture-certified organic Cheddars, all made in New Zealand using milk from grass-fed cows.

Wendy Brewer, marketing director for Grafton Village Cheese Company, relates how one particular supermarket chain does a phenomenal job educating consumers about cheeses. "They show their love for cheeses, beginning with the specialty cheese person educating the cheese department staff. They buy various ages as well as flavored Cheddars. Each store has a lovely display, and they do a great job of educating the consumer about the cheeses," she says.

Sampling is the best way to promote a variety of Cheddar cheeses. "It's important to educate your people behind the counter and to budget for sampling," Meyenberg's Plante-Darrimon emphasizes.

"Demos are expensive, but great," says Tillamook's Allison. "Don't make consumers

decide on the label—give them a sample and say, 'Here, try this.' Getting it to the mouth of the consumer, having the product right there and making the suggestion always increases sales."

Abundantly display Cheddars, taking advantage of color and shape. "Big wheels draw people to your store," says Henning Cheese's Schmitz.

Create multiple, prominently located secondary displays. Use accurate signage that includes the name, a few words conveying style and flavor, origin, price, and a selling point or two. "Signs are important even when a salesperson is on hand to answer questions," says Tricia Heinrich, vice president of communications, California Milk Advisory Board (CMAB), based in South San Francisco, CA.

Merchandising Cheese for Retail is one of several excellent guides for professionals developed by CMAB, and is available in the "Professionals" area of the Real California Milk Web site (www.realcaliforniamilk.com).

"Especially from a deli perspective, you have to cross-market and cross-merchandise. Be best buddies with the produce department so you know what Cheddar will go with what fruit and what fruit is in season," says WMMB's Leonhardi. "Anytime is a good time for cheese on a salad, so what are they doing to promote cheese on salad? Be good partners with other department heads and find out, 'What do you have that goes with my cheese products?' You can also cross-merchandise in your department. Maybe your sliced roast beef is a great partner with your Merlot Cheddar. Or, when selling a cheese ask, 'Can I interest you in our Italian beef?'"

In signage and dialogue, "pinning down some uses communicates nuances and helps guide choice," says Cabot's Davis. Entry-

level Cheddar is great for snacking and recipes. "Some of those same everyday cheeses, with a little additional aging on them, transcend to the next level where they incorporate savoring, entertaining or gifting. You would never be embarrassed to put one of these out as an hors d'oeuvre for your Saturday night group." Home chefs might choose from the mid-tier when creating a signature dish.

NCSU's Drake says it takes multiple presentations to introduce a new flavor or flavor profile that is distinctively different from what people are already used to consuming. "Analyze the condition of the cheese and turnover rate and know which cheese was restocked five times while its neighbor was topped off once," Drake says. "The reality is: Flavor is determined by the consumer. We have an influence, but ultimately it comes down to what consumers like and don't like."

A Stepping-Stone

Consumer-friendly flavored Cheddars serve well as a stepping-stone to other varieties. "It used to be that pricing was the major consideration for Cheddar, but now it's quality, taste and variety, and some people are willing to pay higher prices for that," says David Freedheim, sales consultant, California Milk Advisory Board (CMAB), South San Francisco, CA.

And the blue ribbon-flavored Cheddars at the 2007 American Cheese Society (ACS) competition prove that flavor can stand on its own. Barely Buzzed Coffee Lavender Hand Rubbed Cheddar from Beehive Cheese Company, Uintah, UT, is a smooth, full-bodied wheel with an espresso brown exterior. Other recognized flavored Cheddars include: Tillamook County Creamery Association Garlic Chili Pepper Cheddar and White Cheddar with Smoked Black Peppercorns; Cedar Grove Cheese Pesto Cheddar and Caraway Cheddar; Rogue Creamery (Central Point, OR) Chipotle Cheddar; Carr Valley Cheese (La Valle, WI) Cranberry Chipotle; Fiscalini Cheese Company (Modesto, CA) Purple Moon (Cabernet soaked); and Grafton Village Cheese Company Maple Smoked Cheddar.

"To entice customers, sometimes you need to show them something other than just Cheddar. Some stores build a display and include different flavors every month," says Henning Cheese's Schmitz.

From exotic to classic—and mostly priced in the middle range—flavored Cheddar is attractive on a cheese plate and lends itself to food and beverage pairing. "Manufacturers continue to innovate to make types appealing for consumers," says Meredith of Fonterra Brands Americas.

DB

Mozzarella Tops The Revenue Charts

This perennial favorite twists and turns to suit modern culinary tastes and trends

BY ELIZABETH BLAND

Across the board, specialty cheese professionals agree that the demand for fresh Mozzarella has grown in the past five to 10 years, and the category continues to expand in exciting new directions. Mozzarella is a contortionist cheese in both body and personality. It twists and turns, reinventing itself to suit modern culinary tastes and trends. Its ability to adapt has made it the most widely consumed fresh cheese in recent years.

Milks Affect Mozzarella's Tone

In the United States, "Mozzarella" is an umbrella term for fresh cheeses of Italian origin that undergo kneading and stretching of the curd; hence, the Italian name *pasta filata*, or "pulled curd." In Italy, the only true Mozzarella is the Mozzarella di bufala campana DOP, a cheese made of water buffalo's milk from the Campania region. Italians call fresh *pasta filata* made of cow's milk *fior di latte*, which translates as "flower of milk." Mozzarella styles gained popularity throughout southern Italy, spawning similar cheeses, such as Burrata, Scamorza and Burrino. Outside Italy, the Armenians perfected the art of string cheese, and in Mexico, cheesemakers from Oaxaca stretched their curds into long ribbons and rolled them up like balls of yarn.

Fresh *pasta filata* cheeses have an exotic yet approachable nature. Doug Jay, president, Atlanta Foods International, Atlanta, GA, cites Mozzarella's mellow flavor as one of its main attractions. "People want sweet and milky," he says. With customer education and exposure, cow's milk Mozzarella is an easy sell—so easy that two cow's milk Mozzarellas now rank among the top 10 best-sellers for Atlanta Foods—Rio Briati Mozzarella Ball Fresh Cryovac and Belgioioso Fresh Mozzarella Ciliegine in brine.

In spite of the worldwide fame and prestige of buffalo Mozzarellas, product lines in this category have not expanded as much as domestic cow's milk selections on the domestic market. One oft-cited explanation



for the preference of cow over buffalo is buffalo's foreign flavor, which can come across as sour or bitter to the American palate. Erri-co Auricchio, president, BelGioioso Cheese Inc., Denmark, WI, compares buffalo and cow's milk Mozzarella to venison and beef. "One is gamier than the other," he says. "The composition is similar, but the flavor is different. Mozzarella di bufala is a fresh cheese but with a little something extra."

Nonetheless, Italian buffalo Mozzarella prevails as the queen of all Mozzarellas. It continues to intrigue Americans despite its short shelf life, higher price and exotic flavor. Consumers are seeking out Italian brands, such as Cilento, Campania Felix and Ciresa, as well as domestic water buffalo products from Bubulus Bubulis and Woodstock.

Sizing Up Shapes And Flavors

The traditional shape of Mozzarella—and the best-seller worldwide—is the large ball commonly labeled "ovoline," but the smaller rounds are gaining ground as well. Bocconcini ("bite-sized") and even smaller ciliegine ("cherry-sized") shapes are becoming popular as consumers discover new applications for these smaller sizes in the kitchen.

Concord, CA-based Mozzarella Fresca has gone full force into educating both professional and home chefs. With a vast collection of recipes on the company's Web site (www.mozzarellafresca.com) and a traveling master chef, Mozzarella Fresca demonstrates the cheese's versatility while promoting fresh Mozzarella as a creative category. Mozzarella Fresca produces all sizes of Mozzarella, ranging from the one gram "pearlini," which is as small as a No. 2 pencil eraser, all the way to a three-pound loaf. The tiny cheeses can substitute for shredded Mozzarella as a melted topping.

Convenience is often a priority for consumers and retailers alike. BelGioioso offers pre-sliced Mozzarella in 16-slice packs ready to serve in a Caprese salad. In 2006, Mozzarella Fresca introduced Mozzarella Fresh Medallions—individual flattened discs, each with its own protective thin skin. Designed for sandwiches, the medallions maintain their whey, keeping the surrounding bread from becoming soggy after preparation.

Mozzarella is a natural match for salami, and producers have responded by creating Mozzarella rolls in a variety of combinations. King Cheese, Monrovia, CA, originally a producer of Armenian string cheese, has carved a niche in the Mozzarella category with its line of Spirella brand fresh Mozzarella rolls, ranging from spicy sopressata to imported white truffle infused-ham with basil. King Cheese uses a Mozzarella-to-meat ratio of 75 percent cheese and 25 per-

cent meat for a perfectly balanced roll that holds together when sliced. "If you have the right profile, right quality, right flavor and right consistency, you can bank on the repeat customer," says Vicken Aghchikian, King Cheese's president.

Calabro Cheese, based in East Haven, CT, recently introduced prosciutto rotolini in portion-control sizes—rolls about half the size of an index finger. Calabro markets them as bite-size snacks for party platters, but they can be sliced into miniature pinwheels.

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—Vicken Aghchikian
King Cheese

Delis and restaurants interested in creating their own signature Mozzarella rolls can start by using the fresh Mozzarella sheet from Atalanta Corp., Elizabeth, NJ. This convenient format allows chefs to experiment with new flavors for appetizers and sushi-style presentations for fresh Mozzarella bars.

Restaurants Roll Out New Trends

Specialty pasta filata cheeses have invaded restaurants, showing up on gourmet pizzas, in appetizers and even as desserts. Paul Blake, president, Finica Food Specialties, Mississauga, Ontario, notes that one of the latest appetizer trends in Canadian restaurants is fresh Mozzarella served with a dash of balsamic vinegar. His favorite is Villa Manodori's Dark Cherry Aged Balsamic. "Put a drop on your Mozzarella, and you're a hit at the party," he promises.

Also gracing menus is Burrata, a Mozzarella pouch filled with fresh cream, curds and Mozzarella strands. With a dash of olive

oil, Burrata becomes an irresistible appetizer dip. Restaurants gravitate toward interesting variations on Italian standards. Margaret Cicogna, Italian cheese consultant for Atalanta Corp., recommends a Burrata-style cheese called Tenerella al Tartufo Bianco, produced by il Forteto of Tuscany. Inside the Mozzarella ball is a mass of rich cream and fluffy ricotta blended with bits of white truffle.

Even traditional cheesemakers like Italy's Campania Felix are branching out. "The research for new products is ongoing," says Campania Felix's president Enrico Parente. In addition to the company's DOP Mozzarella, in recent years Campania Felix has turned out a Burrata di bufala and invented a brand-new cheese called Tartufella, a blend of DOP Mozzarella di bufala campana and truffles. Tartufella has proven a huge success, winning international fans as well as awards.

In the midst of all the flavors are the purist cheeses—Mozzarellas with no decoration and no explanation needed. Many Mozzarella producers proudly offer high-quality, classic Mozzarella, giving customers the option of enjoying the cheese in its pure form or adding flavorings as desired. According to Fiorella Cutrufello, director of sales and marketing, Calabro Cheese, Mozzarella is part of the everyday Italian culture. When American customers ask, "What do you have new in Mozzarella?" Cutrufello answers matter-of-factly, "Nothing. There's nothing new in Mozzarella. It's Mozzarella."

A less obvious market for Mozzarella is the sale of curds to restaurants and retailers for in-house Mozzarella production. Making Mozzarella in the store and in front of interested consumers is cheese theater at its best, generating excitement as well as revenue. Customers crowd around cheese counters at the "shows" waiting for the cheesemaker to hand them the Mozzarella equivalent of a balloon animal. As homegrown as this Mozzarella seems on the surface, the curds are purchased from large-scale producers whose pre-packaged products line the retail shelves.

To extend Mozzarella's short shelf life and preserve its fresh milk flavor, producers go to great lengths to find the best protection for their cheeses. Among the most common types of packaging are fluid-filled cups and bags, Cryovac, Thermoform, and plastic wrap. "You cannot preserve Mozzarella forever," BelGioioso's Auricchio warns. The key to good Mozzarella is fresh clean milk that is spun into cheese as soon as possible and consumed at the peak of freshness.

Though Mozzarella is a fresh and fleeting cheese, it is here to stay. As industry trends reveal, pasta filata is a dynamic category that constantly evolves, yet never strays too far from its southern Italian roots. **DB**

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FDA Issues Documents On The Safety Of Food From Animal Clones

15.jan.08

FDA News Release

<http://www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/NEWS/2008/NEW01776.html>

After years of detailed study and analysis, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has concluded that meat and milk from clones of cattle, swine and goats, and the offspring of clones from any species traditionally consumed as food, are as safe to eat as food from conventionally bred animals. There was insufficient information for the agency to reach a conclusion on the safety of food from clones of other animal species, such as sheep.

The FDA today issued three documents on animal cloning outlining the agency's regulatory approach—a risk assessment, a risk management plan and guidance for industry.

The documents were originally released in draft form in December 2006. Since that time, the risk assessment has been updated to include new scientific information. That new information reinforces the food safety conclusions of the drafts.

In 2001, U.S. producers agreed to refrain from introducing meat or milk from clones or their progeny into the food supply until the FDA could further evaluate the issue. The U.S. Department of Agriculture will convene stakeholders to discuss efforts to provide a smooth and orderly market transition, as industry determines next steps with respect to the existing voluntary moratorium.

The agency is not requiring labeling or any other additional measures for food from cattle, swine and goat clones, or their offspring because food derived from these sources is no different from food derived from conventionally bred animals. Should a producer express a desire for voluntary labeling (e.g., "this product is clone-free"), it will be considered on a case-by-case basis to ensure compliance with statutory requirements that labeling be truthful and not misleading.

Because clones would be used for breeding, they would not be expected to enter the food supply in any significant number. Instead, their sexually reproduced offspring would be used for producing meat and milk for the marketplace. At this time, the agency continues to recommend that food from clones of species other than cattle, swine and goat (e.g., sheep) not be introduced into the food supply.

An animal clone is a genetic copy of a donor animal, similar to an identical twin, but born at a different time. Cloning is not the

same as genetic engineering, which involves altering, adding or deleting DNA; cloning does not change the gene sequence. Due to their cost and rarity, clones are intended to be used as elite breeding animals to introduce desirable traits into herds more rapidly than would be possible using conventional breeding.

IFSN: Hand Sanitizer Fact Sheet

15.dec.07

International Food Safety Network

Andrew Stormer

foodsafety.ksu.edu

What are alcohol-based hand sanitizers?

The term hand sanitizer encompasses many types of gels, wipes, foams or liquid solutions. These products typically contain ethanol, isopropanol or n-propanol in concentrations ranging from 40 percent to 95 percent. The alcohol immediately destroys the bacteria and viruses that it contacts. Some sanitizers may also contain a moisturizer to help combat the dryness caused by the alcohol. Because of their ease of use and relative convenience, alcohol-based sanitizers have grown in popularity, and some people even use them as a substitute for hand washing.

How effective are hand sanitizers?

Research has shown that sanitizers are effective at killing and inactivating most bacteria and viruses. Alcohol-based sanitizers are recommended as a way to help prevent the spread of many common pathogens, like tuberculosis, and foodborne illnesses, such as norovirus. These sanitizers are, however, not as efficient as hand washing in reducing numbers of bacterial spores, protozoan oocysts and certain non-enveloped (non-lipophilic) viruses. Some of these viruses include HIV, Hepatitis A and rhinovirus. It has been shown that sanitizers containing moisturizers may lead to the accumulation of more bacteria on your skin.

Past research has suggested that hand sanitizers don't work as well on visually dirty hands. However, recent research, such as that done by Don Schaffner from Rutgers University, has shown that sanitizers can still significantly reduce the number of bacteria even with debris on the hands.

There is currently no research that shows alcohol-based sanitizers contribute to the development of resistant bacteria.

Can hand sanitizers be used as a substitute for hand washing?

The differences between hand washing and using alcohol-based sanitizers are insignificant concerning pathogenic bacteria. However, hand washing is more effective in



Martin Mitchell, technical director of the Refrigerated Foods Association (RFA) and managing director of Certified Laboratories, compiles TechNews.

The information has been compiled from press releases, news articles and government announcements and policy clarifications. Additional information may be obtained by contacting RFA by phone at 770-452-0660 or online at www.refrigeratedfoods.org.

the removal of viruses, spores and fungi. So no, hand sanitizers are not substitutes. Hand washing is still the champion of clean hands and preventing the spread of infectious diseases.

Which soap you choose will also make a difference in how clean your hands become. Recent studies have shown that soaps containing antibacterial agents do a better job at destroying colony forming units than plain soap. However, there is evidence that the overuse of such agents may lead to resistant strains.

What should I look for in a sanitizer?

When shopping for a sanitizer, you should look for one containing at least 60 percent alcohol. A sanitizer with n-propanol is generally only found in Europe, and is slightly less effective against bacteria and viruses than both ethanol and isopropanol. Ethanol is more effective against viruses than isopropanol. Isopropanol is more effective against bacteria than ethanol because it is less volatile. Because the difference between their efficacies is not significant, either one will suffice when used in an adequate concentration.

A Memorable Experience



By
Jeffrey Spear
President

Studio Spear LLC
Baltimore, MD

Shopping for groceries is one of those recurring events that most people would describe as either a necessary, mundane or tedious chore. Whether they shop every day, once a week or manage to postpone the inevitable task for longer, it is not an eagerly anticipated activity.

Some operators, notably Wegmans and Whole Foods, have been redefining the shopping experience, making it more enjoyable for a larger number of shoppers. In fact, and on separate occasions, Wegmans and Whole Foods have each been described as the "Disneyland" of supermarkets.

Unfortunately, it seems the supermarket industry as a whole still views its offerings as mundane and engages consumers with as much enthusiasm. While there have been numerous advances made in store fit-out, product variety and ancillary services, there is still little evidence that retailers are working to excite, inspire or motivate their customers beyond efforts linked to price or, to similar degrees, convenience.

I recently conducted an informal survey of newly constructed supermarkets and their deli departments to see what had been done to make the shopping experience a bit more unique and compelling. Aside from technology-driven ordering systems and the expansion of made-to-order sandwich counters, or Publix's recently announced curbside carry-out service, I haven't seen much happening in deli departments that would excite or motivate shoppers. More importantly, I haven't seen evidence of innovations that would significantly increase sales attributed to the deli department.

I make a habit of attending lots of domestic and international trade shows, including Food Marketing Institute (FMI), Fancy Food, International Dairy-Deli-Bake Association (IDDBA), Fine Food Australia and Sial. As a result, I have seen countless varieties of cheeses, dry-cured and prepared meats, salads, etc. What astonishes me is that, with so many competing brands, ethnic specialties, geographic appellations, product formulations and flavor profiles available, deli departments are still making the same offers with the same products.

Going a step further—and aside from limited improvements in storewide ambience—the fit-out of deli departments remains uninspired and is uninspiring. I certainly understand and appreciate the limitations that occur when resolving issues linked to store functionality and food safety. That being said, nothing much appears to be changing.

Of course, there have been some attempts made to break the mold—typically changes in countertops—from

metal to more natural surfaces such as stone, the introduction of more distinctive light fixtures and even supplier-branded merchandising displays. Aside from these nuances, innovation has taken a back seat. It's almost as if deli managers are all working from a template, taking deliberate steps to create a shopping experience that equals (or parodies) their competitors and, at the same time, maintains the status quo.

While some supermarkets are including facilities for on-premise consumption, these dining areas are typically set apart from the deli counter and other active shopping spaces. And although these annexed facilities have their advocates, I've always found the ones that immerse, surround and involve me with the mecha-

nizations of food preparation to be much more enticing, entertaining and enjoyable.

I still remember my visit to Mazzaro's, a specialty food retailer in St. Petersburg, FL, a couple of years ago. The coffee bar is situated in the center of the store. While shoppers passed by with their carts, patrons were invited to sit at the bar, sip an espresso, enjoy a snack and watch the on-premise bakery roll out dough and prepare the day's pastries. It was akin to being backstage at the theater, watching the actors and props coming and going during a scene change. If I lived in the area, this store would undoubtedly be a regular destination of mine.

Consider the old-style markets such as Pike Place Market in Seattle, WA, The Ferry Building Marketplace in San Francisco, CA, or the Reading Terminal Market in Philadelphia, PA. These are all places rich in ambience, effectively blending food retailing (heavy on deli offerings) with on-premise dining and culinary entertainment. Not only are these environments rich in sensory appeal, but they also offer a dizzying array of products, brands and culinary choices and are all thriving institutions.

Imagine what would happen if these attributes were applied to the deli department in your store. Just think how fun it would be to watch deli workers passing around chubs of salami in the same manner as those fishmongers tossing whole salmon in Seattle.

Whether it be access to the "backstage" goings-on in the slicing room, an entertaining and distinctive store-within-a-store "Deli-land," or simply a space that stimulates the senses through a more dramatic use of artfully designed fixtures, surfaces and appliances, operators have lots of options to choose from.

With growing numbers of consumers seeking new sources of culinary stimulation, it seems that conditions to maintain loyalties, attract new customers and enhance sales are excellent.

DB

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Blast From The Past

F

or over 70 years, San Francisco, CA-based G.L. Mezzetta has brought Mediterranean foods to the American table. In 1935, the company's founder, Giuseppe Luigi Mezzetta, and his son Daniel opened a storefront in San Francisco's Italian North Beach district to sell imported Italian peppers, olives and other staples. Over the years, the business grew, and in 1973, Daniel's son, Ron Mezzetta, became general manager. Under his leadership, the Mezzetta brand was established.

As business flourished, the company needed a larger production facility, and in 1980, it moved from North Beach to Sonoma, CA. In the early 1990s, Mezzetta purchased Kona Coast Sauces & Marinades to capture a piece of that market. Ron's son, Jeff Mezzetta, joined the company in 1993 and became president in 2004. A new state-of-the-art facility in American Canyon, CA, was completed in 1997.

Still a family-owned and operated company, G.L. Mezzetta is a leading producer of specialty peppers and olives in the United States, with distribution in Canada, the United Kingdom and the Pacific Rim.



Blast From The Past is a regular feature of DELI BUSINESS. We welcome submissions of your old photos, labels or advertisements along with a brief description of the photo. Please send material to: Editor, DELI BUSINESS, P.O. Box 810217, Boca Raton, FL 33481-0217 or e-mail DeliBusiness@phoenixmedianet.com. For more information contact us at (561)994-1118

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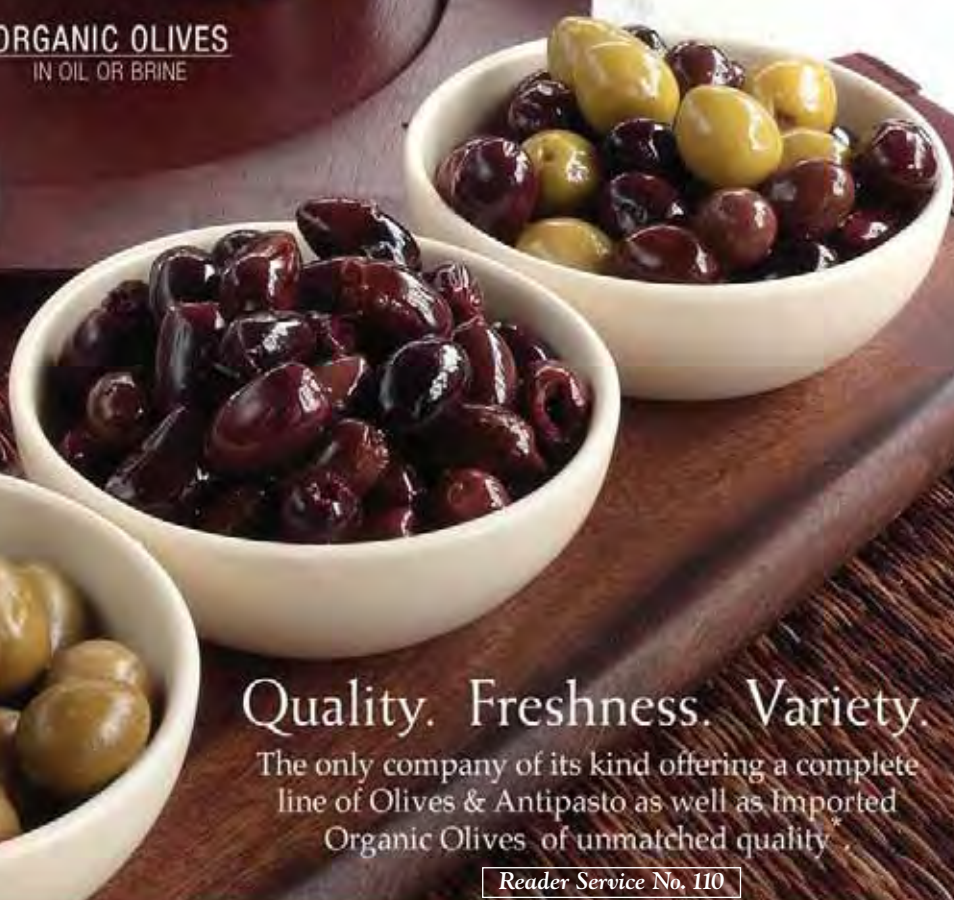
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