

**ALSO
INSIDE**

Entrées
Potatoes
Cross-Merchandising
Breads
Salads
Cheese Merchandising
Goat Cheese
British Cheese
Norwegian Cheese



2nd
**ANNUAL
PEOPLE'S
AWARD**

Saluting Industry Leaders

DELI MEAT SUPPLEMENT
starts on page 43

SPECIAL ANALYSIS:
Shaping The Industry
starts on page 64



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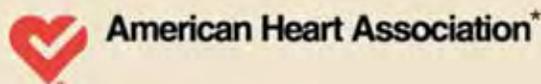
More of today's consumers want to live a healthy life, but they don't want to give up convenience and great taste to achieve it. They want it all and they want it now. That's why Pilgrim's Pride® developed the EatWellStayHealthy line for your deli case - the first line of poultry products that makes it easy for consumers to serve a variety of healthy meals with delicious homemade flavor in no time at all.

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**DELI MEAT
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Deli BUSINESS QUIZ



JONATHAN RICH
Deli and Bakery Director
G & R Felpausch
Hastings, MI

Jonathan has been in the supermarket business — and at Felpausch — for 22 years although only the past 2½ years have involved the deli department. Previous to accepting his current position, Jonathan spent 17 years in the bakery department.

Felpausch, an independently owned grocery store chain with 19 locations in southern Michigan, was started in 1933 and is now run by the third generation of family members.

Jonathan has been reading DELI BUSINESS since he became deli and bakery director. He especially likes the cheese articles and appreciates how in-depth they are because he can use the information from the magazine to educate store personnel and consumers. He also likes DELI BUSINESS because it informs him on what is available in the product lines he oversees.

As the winner of the DELI BUSINESS quiz, Jonathan will receive noise-cancelling headphones.

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Quiz Questions

- 1) What is the phone number for Redondo Iglesias? _____
- 2) What is the IDDBA booth number for Dairy Crest? _____
- 3) What is the street address for Dietz & Watson? _____
- 4) What is the toll-free number at Anchor Packaging? _____
- 5) What company makes the EatWellStayHealthy line? _____
- 6) What is the web address for Blue & White Foods? _____

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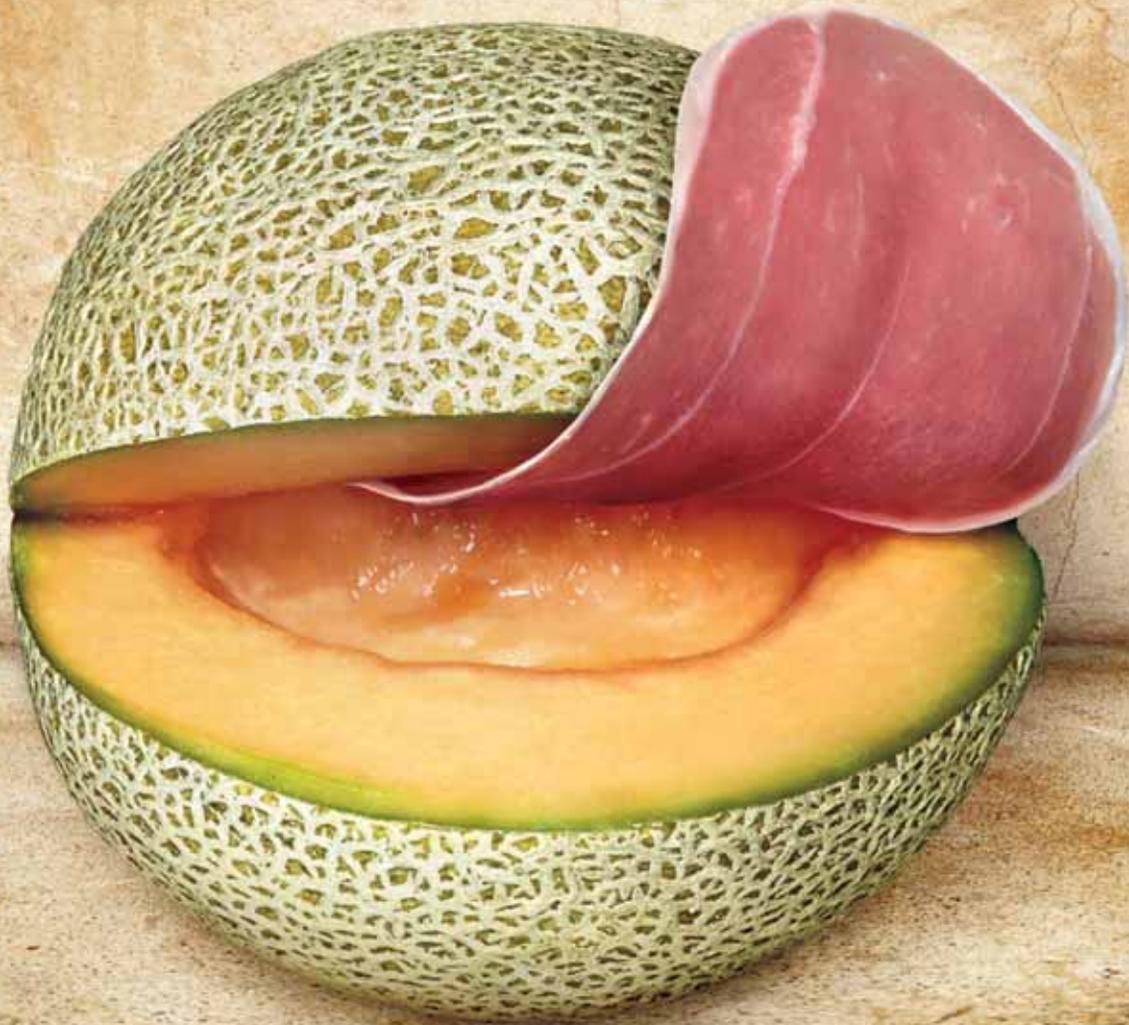
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Reader Service No. 545

Retail Identity Crisis

By
Jim
Prevor

The senses so influence human beings that it's hard to properly value intangibles. It might seem a no-brainer to select the tangible assets if you were given the choice of owning all the factories and tangible property involved in manufacture and distribution of Oreos or having just the recipe and trademark. Why give up countless millions in real property for, basically, two pieces of paper?

Yet the Oreo brand is far more valuable than all the factories because the brand "owns" the rights to shelf space in every supermarket and convenience store in America. And it does so because the brand "owns" space in the brain of every American.

Branding makes selling easy. A product or service is pre-positioned in the mind of consumers, disposing them to action and very difficult to dislodge.

Although we tend to think about branding in terms of manufactured goods, every retail store name is also a brand. And consumer awareness and perception can pre-dispose consumers on where to shop when.

When supermarkets were the only option and drew from a very limited marketing area, the store brand identity had to be broad and non-objectionable. One store might emphasize its meat department and another might let certain ethnic groups know they were welcome by carrying specific ethnic foods at holidays, but by and large, supermarket choice was so driven by propinquity that the goal of most branding efforts was simply to be unobjectionable. That is why one of the few supermarkets not to have an owner's name on the building wound up calling itself "Safeway," and that is why Safeway's first jingle was *Since We're Neighbors, Let's Be Friends*.

Store branding has always suffered because supermarkets wanted to appeal to everyone. This is problematic because if you appeal to everyone, it is difficult to have a distinctive brand proposition.

New retail realities are forcing supermarkets to reexamine branding. The problem is obvious: Wal-Mart has successfully branded itself as the place for low prices. What positioning does that leave for conventional supermarkets?

Supermarkets have been catching on. Last year CEO Steve Burd announced Safeway was about to launch "a redefinition of our brand," intended to deliver a message Burd said would distinguish Safeway's shopping experience.

The new campaign, "Ingredients for life," required substantial redesign of the stores, specialty features such as sushi and olive bars and the addition of in-store Starbucks kiosks — including cup holders on the grocery carts!

This generally well-received effort posed fundamental difficulties because Safeway still tried to be all-inclusive. In the very announcement about the effort, various Safeway executives couldn't help but emphasize "a distinct identity behind proprietary offerings," "the absolute best perishables

in the supermarket segment," "improvements in center store merchandising," a focus on "narrowing the price gap with discounters" and, finally, "You'll see us demonstrate how much better we are than our competition."

Although admirable, this muddles the message. And branding is all about clarity. One retailer with effective positioning is Whole Foods. If Wal-Mart is known for low prices and Target is for the cheap-chic crowd, Whole Foods is good for you and good for the planet.

This powerful position rides baby boomers' concern over health as the generation ages along with the younger generation's concern for the world as a whole.

So it is shocking executives at Whole Foods would even consider messing it up. But the chain recently began running price-oriented ads in the New York City

area. Some say it is competition from Trader Joe's; others say it is Wal-Mart's widely publicized move into organics that left Whole Foods executives biting at the bit to show they don't deserve the "Whole Foods, Whole Paycheck" moniker.

Whole Foods can't win this battle. Believing Whole Foods is "good for you" and "good for the world" means believing it wouldn't cut corners as other retailers would. It doesn't have to — its clientele is willing to pay top dollar for the most wholesome food, raised, processed, packaged, transported and retailed according to the highest standards.

Many true devotees of the "organic community" are not happy about Wal-Mart rolling out more organic product — even though the community acknowledges it will lead to a huge increase in organic food sales and consumption.

Wal-Mart has committed to keeping the cost of organic products just 10 percent over conventional. The fear is it will obey the letter of the law, but not the spirit — that the drive to reduce costs will lead Wal-Mart to take shortcuts and ignore non-codified organic interests. For example, organic standards say nothing about sourcing locally, but most members of the organic community see that as a basic precept.

If Whole Foods ever manages to convince consumers it offered bargain food or even food less expensive than competitors, consumers would also lose faith Whole Foods was spending the extra shekels necessary to do things right.

The positioning of Whole Foods is based on exceptionalism, a notion that it does things differently. Maintaining that impression depends on consistency of message, and promoting low prices is inconsistent with the message that this chain will spend what it takes to always, always do the right thing.

With Wal-Mart promoting organics and Whole Foods playing the price card, the danger is clear. Supermarkets have been crushed by a series of clearly targeted competitors — super centers, warehouse clubs, etc. Now the temptation will be for these specialized retailers to try to broaden their appeal to attract a wider customer base, thus leading to a confusing and undifferentiated message.

As Yogi Berra once said: "It's déjà vu all over again." **DB**

New retail realities are forcing supermarkets to reexamine branding.



Jim Prevor
is the
Editor-in-Chief of
DELI BUSINESS

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It's People Who Make It All Worthwhile

By
Lee
Smith

This issue's cover story is about some of the people who make this industry great. They have different viewpoints, but they all have passion, and they all have the ability to sustain that passion over long periods of time, going above and beyond the definition of doing a "good job." In essence, they are the engines of industry.

Like any engine, fuel is the power source. Good fuel makes for efficiency and faster performance, but all too often, especially in the retail industry, the focus is on the fuel. The fuel of this industry is data — hard numbers that give rise to decisions with the goal of optimizing results. There is no doubt that without good fuel, the engine will become sluggish and possibly fail. But, it is important that we don't forget that all the fuel in the world is meaningless without the engine.

Our industry is at a crossroads of sorts. On the one hand, self-service venues create efficiencies of scale that can reduce selling costs and still offer consumers quality products with, if anything, more choices. Technology has improved immensely in the last 10 years, to the point where many pre-packaged goods offer high quality as well as longer shelf life and more consistency than standard full-service fare.

On the other hand, there are full-service aspects of the deli that can create even better quality and bring a point of differentiation to retail, making the individual retailer more competitive. Full-service venues give retailers the option of creating nuances that can be imitated but never copied.

At the very heart of the issue are choices retailers make that are not governed by logical rules and that lead executives down paths where there is no guarantee of success but there is a chance at the pot of gold. And this "heart" is passion, a force stronger than any set of rules. It is passion that sets the stage, changes the rules and ultimately leads to new strategic directions. But, more importantly, it is passion that leads to a collective change of mind. It is said that the earth was flat before it was round, meaning that a round earth was just a crazy idea until the collective consciousness of man could accept a round earth. Only when the possibility of a round earth made sense could the science of the day make it happen.

Sam Walton had passion when he envisioned a chain of stores with lower prices and good quality merchandise that catered to rural Americans. And, ultimately, was that so different than the original organic "nuts" who wanted no part of an industrialized food supply but wanted to preserve small, rural American farms and natural foods? Two different

concepts, two different ideas, both very successful. Wal-Mart and Whole Foods. One is the largest mass marketer; the other is the largest organic chain. There is some irony that both started with a base of small towns and small farms.

The specialty cheese category is another anomaly. In a world where price and the reduction of labor seem to be paramount, this is one of the strongest deli categories emerging. The movement is not just "specialty" cheese; it is a movement to bring to American consumers cheeses from all over the world, including the farmstead and artisanal cheeses that were once thought to be impossible for a large store, much less a large chain, to carry. But something extraordinary happened, and it wasn't in the

Behind every success there were people who found the passion, courage of their convictions and perseverance to make it happen.

numbers — it was passion.

Logically, it makes no sense for a retailer to carry a product that is available only sporadically, has a short shelf life coupled with a very high price and requires lots of labor. Who would ever recommend that any chain carry a product line with no movement data and no way to check out what's really selling? In fact, if an individual store does well, it may sell only five pounds of an artisan cheese a week, yet it may need to carry 450 varieties. Impossible? No, too many chains are doing extremely well dealing with all the logistical issues, and their customers are buying it — literally.

Ten years ago, the outlook for supermarkets carrying restaurant-quality food was negative. It was more than negative, because with the exception of a few soothsayers, it was thought to be impossible. Ten years is not a long time, and now restaurant-quality food and service are more than possible — they are a reality. Byerly's, Wegmanns, AJ's Fine Foods and Whole Foods are only a few of the chains that successfully compete with restaurants.

On the other side of the "lets make our lives more difficult" crowd are the business leaders who firmly believe (and statistics bear them out) that pre-packed and reasonably priced are not anathema to great quality. In some cases, the availability of pre-sliced has spurred a group of products generally unknown to the majority of citizens not because of price but because of labor issues. New technologies now allow the finest prosciutto, Serrano, smoked fish and deli meats to be sold pre-sliced and pre-packed, and the success of those products is triumphant.

There is commonality in of all these scenarios. There may have been numbers that would mitigate the risk, but there were no numbers that would guarantee success. Behind every success there were people who found the passion, courage of their convictions and perseverance to make it happen. That takes a lot of guts, and the people honored here today have that kind of guts.

DB



Lee Smith

is the
publisher of
DELI BUSINESS



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DELI WATCH

Transitions



Ann G. Daw is the new president of the National Association for Specialty Food Trade, Inc. (NASFT), New York, NY. She has 27 years of international business and marketing experience with Kraft and Phillip Morris. She joined the association on May 5 and will assume the presidency after the Summer Fancy Food Show.



John T. McDonough has been named president of ITW Food Equipment Group (FEG)-North America, based in Troy, OH. McDonough, who was previously president of Hobart Foodservice, had been with Hobart since 1991. In his new position, he has responsibility for the breadth of FEG-North America operations.



Sara Hill has joined Carr Valley Cheese, LaValle, WI, as national sales manager. A former owner/partner of Classic Provisions, she has spent 25 years in specialty food distribution, including stints with Olfisco Inc. and U.S. Foodservice. She is a board member of the American Cheese Society and the Dairy Business Innovation Center.



Stanley Shaffer has accepted the position of vice president of operations at King's Hawaiian Bakery West, Inc., Torrance, CA. He brings 30 years of experience to his job overseeing operations at the company's flagship 150,000-square-foot baking facility. He holds various industry certifications, including several from the American Institute of Baking.



Chris Leahy has been appointed to the position of New England Regional Sales Manager for Kayem Foods, Inc., Chelsea, MA. Kayem is the largest meat processor in the New England region with over 500 products under eight brand names and distribution in over 35 states. Leahy comes to Kayem with 15 years experience in the meat industry, including a strong background in deli and processed meats. His experience includes working for Creekstone Farms, Snow Ball Foods and Sara Lee Deli, a division of Sara Lee Foods.

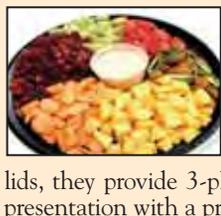
New Products



Sandwich Pockets

Kangaroo Brands, Milwaukee, WI, has introduced sandwich pockets to its award winning line of pocket breads. These pre-cut, pre-opened pitas are made with whole grains, honey and flaxseed. The innovative product has already earned respect from *New Products Magazine*, which awarded it Best New Product.

Reader Service No. 400



Strong Deli Trays

DuraCorp LLC, Lewis Center, OH, introduces SuperServe Premium Deli Trays ideal for deli platters, wings, ethnic foods and holiday and fruit platters. Available in a variety of sizes with matching clear dome lids, they provide 3-ply corrugated strength and combine upscale presentation with a proprietary leak-proof, cut-resistant coating.

Reader Service No. 401



Scottish Cookies

Walkers Shortbread Ltd., Aberlour-on-Spey, Scotland, has introduced luxury Scottish cookies with distinctive flavors, including oat-flake and cranberry, white chocolate and raspberry, stem ginger and lemon, and Belgian chocolate. Each 5.3-ounce package contains eight cookies with no artificial flavorings, colorings or additives.

Reader Service No. 402



Southwestern Flavor

The Bodacious Food Company, Jasper, GA, introduces Geraldine's New Santa Fe Cheese Straws made with Monterey Jack and queso blanco cheeses along with cumin, cilantro and chipotle. Geraldine's offers a full line of cheese straws in seven flavors including traditional, sesame garlic and low-carb.

Reader Service No. 403



Natural Meats

Coleman Natural Foods, Golden, CO, offers a new line of all-natural deli meats that contain no artificial ingredients, colors, added nitrates, added hormones or preservatives. All Coleman livestock and poultry flocks are fed a 100 percent grain-based diets that contain no animal by-products.

Reader Service No. 404



Chicken Sensors

Volk Enterprises Inc., Atlanta, GA, has introduced Cook'd Right Reversible Sensors. Adding a sensor to packages of breasts, wings and thighs lets users know the chicken has been thoroughly cooked. The color in the sensor tip changes from black to red when the chicken has reached the perfect temperature.

Reader Service No. 405



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

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New Products



Machinery Integration

Multivac Inc., Kansas City, MO, offers its horizontal thermoform fill-seal machinery integrated with Ircon Maxliner 2 thermal seal inspection technology. This allows products to be packaged at high

speeds while inspecting, identifying, tracking and, if necessary, rejecting them.

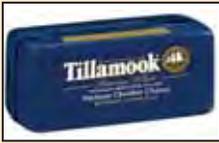
Reader Service No. 406



New Hearty Soup

Harry's Fresh Foods, Portland, OR, introduces Beer Cheese Soup featuring Rogue Ales' Dead Guy Ale. The new soup features a combination of local Cheddar and American cheeses combined with Rogue's ale to create a bold flavor substantial enough to fill the hungriest stomach.

Reader Service No. 407



New White Cheese

Tillamook County Creamery Association, Tillamook, OR, has added Vintage White Medium Cheddar to its line. It is naturally aged for over a 100 days and features a distinct, velvety, full cheddar flavor. It is a

unique product for the farmer-owned dairy cooperative, which has traditionally produced yellow cheddar products.

Reader Service No. 408



Snack Zone

Hardt Equipment, Montreal, QC, introduces the Snack Zone to its line of zone-heated merchandisers. The patent-pending countertop unit provides a dynamic merchandising vehicle for warm food products such as muffins, personal pies and pretzels, while

allowing consumers to have full and dynamic view of all products.

Reader Service No. 409



Flav-R-Savor

Hatco Corporation, Milwaukee, WI, introduces the Flav-R-Savor tall humidified holding cabinet, perfect for catering and high volume operations. It includes a standoff handle and heavy-duty 5x12-inch casters, full perimeter bumpers and a flush-mount transport latch. It is thermostatically controlled so food will stay fresher longer.

Reader Service No. 410



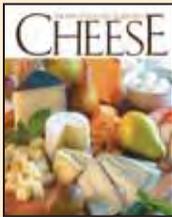
Meatballs For Kids

Casa Di Bertacchi, St. Simons Island, GA, offers commercial and commodity processed products formulated for schools. Casa meatballs are made with top-quality cuts, pasteurized whole eggs, imported Romano and Parmesan cheeses and a blend of spices. The

meatballs can be fully cooked or individually quick-frozen.

Reader Service No. 411

Announcements



The Cheese Book

Try-Foods International, Inc., Apopka, FL, has re-published *The Art of Selecting & Serving Cheese*, a retail encyclopedia showcasing 100 cheeses from around the world with descriptions, selections, storage tips, preparation ideas, full-color photos, nutrition facts, wine pairings and accompaniments for each variety.

Reader Service No. 412



Award-Winning Gorgonzola

Montforte Gorgonzola, manufactured by farmer-owned Wisconsin Farmers Union Specialty Cheese Company, Green Bay, WI, was honored with the prestigious Best of Class award at the 2006 World Championship Cheese Contest. An Italian-style cheese, Montforte has a mellow tangy flavor, soft green veining and smooth, creamy body.

Reader Service No. 413



First Place Honors

Black Diamond Extra Sharp Cheddar Cold Pack Cheese Spread from DCI Cheese Co., Richfield, WI, was awarded the first place medal at the 2006 World Cheese Championship in Madison, WI. More than 1,500 cheeses from over 20 countries were entered in 22 categories. Black Diamond took the top honors in Cold Pack Cheese.

Reader Service No. 414



Vendor Of The Year

Kettle Cuisine, Chelsea, MA, was named 2005 Foodservice Vendor of the Year by Wild Oats Markets at the Wild Stock Convention in Las Vegas, NV. Kettle Cuisine makes over 60 varieties of fresh refrigerated and select frozen soups, stews and chowders.

Reader Service No. 415



More Awards

The Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board, Madison, WI, announces that Wisconsin cheeses continued its dominance at the World Cheese Championship Contest by capturing 52 awards, more than any other state or nation, including best in class in 18 of 47 cheese categories.

Reader Service No. 416

Correction: *Americans Still Love Fried Chicken* in our April/May issue, contained errors regarding Frymax ZT and Mazola ZT from ACH Food Companies, Inc. Neither Frymax ZT or Mazola ZT are hydrogenated. Both contain zero grams of trans-fat per serving. Mazola ZT is a blend of corn and sunflower oils. Frymax ZT is a 100 percent high-stability sunflower oil developed through specially crossbred sunflower seeds. Both products have already met with great success in the in-store deli segment, and several additional chains are testing one or both oils. We regret any inconvenience this may have caused.

TODAY'S FORECAST: ENDLESS VISIBILITY NO SIGNS OF FOG



Until now selecting food packaging meant choosing between one that was clear and one that was microwaveable. At Anchor Packaging we believe that you deserve a container that is both crystal clear for optimum merchandising and microwaveable for customer convenience. That is why we're introducing the newly redesigned Culinary Classics™ line. Utilizing a new lid material and patented anti-fog technology our containers offer:

- unparalleled lid clarity for cold applications
- a fog-free lid even under heat lamps and microwave oven
- ability to withstand temperatures up to 240° F
- a one-piece container that has a black base and a crystal clear lid

The new Culinary Classics™ container offers our award winning closure system that is virtually leak-proof and lid venting that maintains food texture and crispness of hot foods.

What's the forecast for your supermarket?



Culinary Classics™

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*Saluting Industry
Leaders*



People are the foundation of any industry, and there are always individuals who are pioneers, leading the way and making their mark on the manner in which we conduct business and the direction our industry takes. These people are the evolutionaries, not the revolutionaries. By virtue of hard work and perseverance, they are leaders who influence others to succeed and to continue to grow both personally and professionally. Some of this year's nominees are well known and some are not, but they all exhibit similar characteristics.

Chosen by their peers, the nominees were selected based on the following criteria: Success in their jobs, demonstration of high ethical and moral standards, willingness to help others succeed, and industry involvement that goes beyond the quotidian requirements of their jobs. These people are leaders who deserve the accolades of our industry.



Full Name: Judy Bequette
Current company: Supervalu, Minneapolis, MN
Current title: Corporate Director of Bakery,
Deli, and Foodservice
Number of years in the industry: 20

How did you get your start in the industry?

My uncle owned a store on Washington state's Olympic peninsula — Maddock's General Store. We were suburban kids, and it was the highlight of our summer to visit this rural outpost near the Pacific, pick blackberries and ride horses with my dad. My siblings and I would stock the penny candy in the store, which also housed the fire station and post office. There was a lot of shrink in licorice whips and Creamsicles each summer, but we had a great time.

Describe your work history:

When I attended college in Seattle, I worked in area restaurants. I was fortunate to work for a great Seattle chef, Nancy Lazara, and I followed her to Larry's Markets in 1986. The Seattle food scene was really heating up, and Larry's felt like the center of the deli and bakery world. The last couple years at Larry's, I worked as director of bakery, deli and foodservice.

I joined Supervalu in Tacoma in 1992, where I was able to work with many terrific Northwest retailers. I held several positions with Supervalu prior to moving to Minneapolis as corporate director of bakery/deli/foodservice of supply chain in 2002. I love the work, the challenge, the pace, the people — isn't it great to have found the industry where boredom doesn't exist?

What industry organizations have you belonged to and what titles have you held?

I serve on the IDDBA board, have served on the Upper Midwest Bakery Association, belong to the American Cheese Society and am a Certified Purchasing Manager [CPM] with the Institute of Supply Management.

What accomplishments are your most proud of?

That's a tough question since I'm a glass half empty person, but recently completing my CPM.

What is your leadership philosophy?

Everything has room for improvement. You have to be willing to do whatever it takes.

Where do you see the industry going?

Perishable supply-chain innovation, of course. In-store delis and bakeries have never played a more relevant role in customers' lives. It's exciting to be a small part of it. I'm intrigued by the mainstreaming of organics, ethnic and specialty foods, but it's nothing new to deli or bakery — that's always been our world. The coming convergence of convenience, quality, health and indulgence — that is where the industry is going. When I visit our retailers, some of them are already there. It's like seeing the future. We have some of the most innovative retailers and manufacturers in the world.

What hobbies do you have outside of work?

Work and family keep me busy, and I returned to school last year. My husband is on the board of a nonprofit organization called Maria's Children, led by Minneapolis physician, Dr. Jan Adams, and I volunteer when I can. Google it — it is a great organization, and Patch Adams is on the board. My friends would say that I enjoy artisan cheeses, Northwest wines, reading, sailing with my brother and classic films.

What is your favorite deli food?

Any sheep cheese made by my old friends, Sally and Roger Jackson.

What is your favorite restaurant?

There is a Vietnamese takeout place called Wendy's in Tacoma, WA, that makes the greatest lemongrass chicken and iced Thai coffee. I haven't found anyplace like it in the Twin Cities, and it is the first place I eat when I go home. And any Roy Yamaguchi restaurant. It's my Northwest roots — I love Asian food. I have a colleague in Ohio who calls me the "sushi-eating, latte-drinking yuppie from Seattle," but he knows where to get really good pizza and barbecue, so I forgive him.

What is the last book you read?

Heat by Mike Lupica. My son Michael and I read it together. I love baseball, and this is a kids' coming-of-age story about a Cuban American boy who wants to pitch in the Little League World Series.

A COW TALE



ONCE UPON A TIME there were two herds of cows. From high in the Italian Alps, there was the legendary Valdostana breed who produced the world-renowned FONTINA VALLE D'AOSTA cheese. Far to the north, there was a bunch of cows that produced a disappointing copy that was covered in red wax and bore little resemblance to the original FONTINA VALLE D'AOSTA in taste or texture.

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Full Name: Mike Briggs
Current company: Willow Brook Foods
City and state of company: Springfield, MO
Position: President
Number of years in the industry: 25

How did you get your start in the industry?

I had just graduated from college with an accounting degree and needed a job, so I went to Bil Mar Foods, the turkey processor, and applied for an accounting position. There wasn't an opening in accounting, but they asked me if I wanted to be a "drawer." I said yes, figuring I could draw if they wanted me to, never imagining that a "drawer" in the trade is someone who eviscerates turkeys. But I hung in there and three months later got a job in the accounting department.

Describe your work history.

After three years in accounting, I was promoted to deli marketing manager, "because I couldn't mess anything up." That was about 1984 and the deli department was getting really hot. Later on, Bil Mar was bought by Sara Lee. The deli business had grown substantially, so I developed the Sara Lee Deli Concept. Bob Bova and I put it together and rolled it out. Shortly after, I took over the sales department.

In 1993, I moved to Hudson Foods out of Springfield to be the vice president of the turkey division. Hudson was later bought by Tyson. Then in 1997, I worked with an investment group and bought the turkey division and the Albert Lea sausage plant. In 2002, we bought out the investment group.

What industry organizations have you belonged to and what titles have you held?

I'm the chairman of the board for the National Turkey Federation, and this year I get to give the President the Thanksgiving turkey, so I guess I feel a little like Forrest Gump. I'm also the past chairman of the Poultry Federation,

the past chairman of the Ozark Food Harvest and the current chairman of Springfield area Chamber of Commerce. I'm now on the board of the United Way of the Ozarks.

What accomplishments are your most proud of?

The creation of the Sara Lee Deli Brand and the buying and creation of Willow Brook Foods. But, I'm especially proud when I go the IDDBA Show and see so many people for whom I've played a role in developing their careers and who have played a role in my life — the people I've helped and the people who helped me.

What is your leadership philosophy?

Find good people you trust, let them do their job and provide them with the tools to grow. I try not to manage the process but manage the results.

Where do you see the industry going?

Actually, I'm a little concerned — concerned that we are a service department and due to labor concerns, we're taking the service out. If you can't deliver on your reason for being, you're in trouble. We need to do our business [service] really well, or we will revert back to a packaged goods industry.

What hobbies do you have outside of work?

I play a little golf and read, but I can't say I have hobbies. Mostly, I work — and I love what I do.

What is your favorite deli food?

Turkey!

What is your favorite restaurant?

Boston Market

What is the last book you read?

A little book by William Danforth called *I Dare You*.

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Full Name: Wendie DiMatteo
Current company: ASK Foods, Inc.
City and state of company: Palmyra, PA
Position: CEO
Number of years in the industry: 20

How did you get your start in the industry?

ASK Foods is a third generation family-owned company founded in 1948. I had been working as a marketing coordinator for a company providing psychological services for business when my brother Joel, who was executive vice president at ASK at the time, asked me if I would be interested in putting together a marketing plan to geographically expand ASK's business territory. Since I was relocating back to Central Pennsylvania, I agreed to take this on as a short-term project.

Unfortunately, my brother was killed in a tragic car accident. It was a terrible time for the family, and my father contemplated selling the business. I persuaded him to delay his decision and agreed to stay on for a while and execute the marketing plan I had just completed. My Dad agreed to become more active again in the business until we could decide what the future might bring. I threw myself into the business, partly out of family loyalty and partly to overcome my own feelings of grief.

Describe your work history.

When I got out of college, I started teaching 12th grade, coaching tennis and overseeing 36 cheerleaders! After two years I realized teaching high school was not right for me, and I went back to school to get a graduate degree in psychotherapy. For the next five years, I was a counselor. My boss encouraged me to consider additional schooling and moving into marketing our services. I was involved in marketing these services when I agreed to develop an expansion plan for ASK. As I worked in the food industry, I realized its entrepreneurial aspect was appealing and I loved the people and the challenges. In the early 1990s, I bought the company from my father and our growth soon required building a second manufacturing plant. My educational background and understanding of people have been a great help.

What industry organizations have you belonged to and what titles have you held?

I've been very active with the RFA [Refrigerated Foods Association] and was president from 1995 to 1997. I was eight months pregnant at the time and I'm not sure the "guys" knew what to do with me, although they were extremely supportive.

I was active on the board of directors for the PA Food Processors Association and the State Chamber of Commerce. Right now, I'm co-chair with Gov. Ed Rendell for "Team PA," a bi-partisan group of business leaders who promote Pennsylvania and its economic growth.

I'm involved with the United Way Women's Council. Our goal was to raise \$1,000 from 100 women to create a fund for women's issues — abuse centers and women's health issues, for example. We target areas of need that are traditionally under-funded.

What accomplishments are your most proud of?

My greatest accomplishment would be the success and significant growth we've had regionally with a natural, no preservative deli salad line. Some people thought it was impossible to expand out of state due to distribution

and the competitive market place.

What is your leadership philosophy?

Leading by positive motivation and praise is essential. Practically speaking, it's management by walking around. I believe in being actively engaged — a hands-on approach. I still meet with clients and get involved in the day-to-day activities. I don't want my employees to be afraid of failure. They need to flourish in the face of failure and success. I think the biggest failure in life is not trying. I also believe laughter is an important part of life and business. My brother's favorite saying was, "Remember, it's just potato salad," which has helped me many of days to keep my perspective.

Where do you see the industry going?

The battle will about who can deliver the best prepared food options. We are moving to a society that will want more prepared food. People are not going back to cooking. The retail industry needs to be mindful of the growth in restaurant take-out service. It's going to see who wins in the end.

What hobbies do you have outside of work?

Tennis is my great love, but most people don't know I'm a race car fan — formula one racing. I'm also an avid college football fan. (Go Penn State!)

What is your favorite deli food?

Grain-based and seafood salads, especially seafood salads made with calamari or crab.

What is your favorite restaurant?

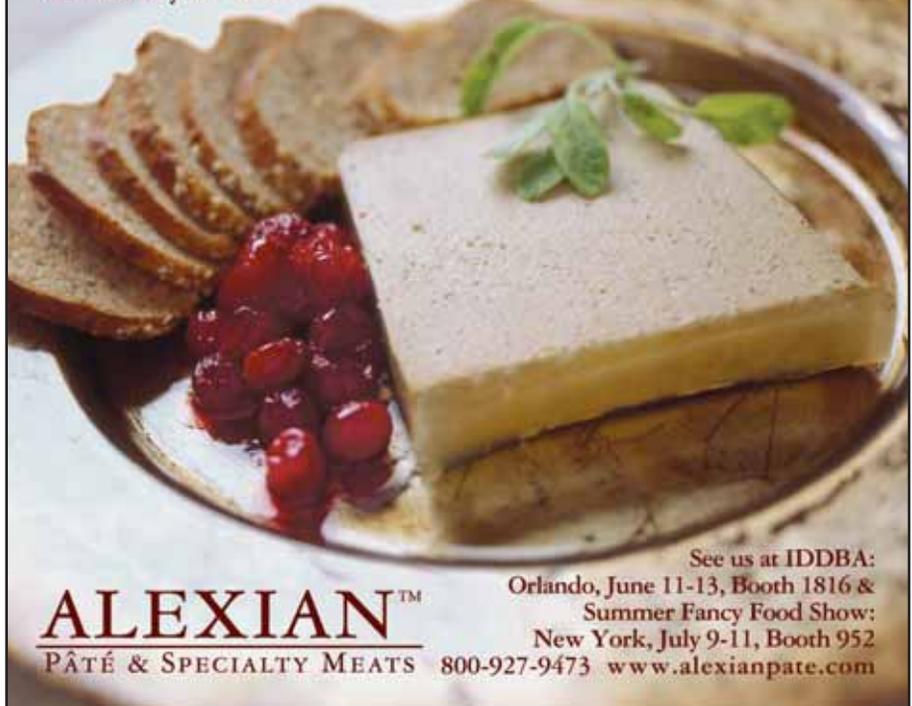
Mario's in Nashville, TN, with its wood-burning ovens and 5-star service.

What is the last book you read?

Blue Ocean Strategy: How to Create Uncontested Market Space and Make Competition Irrelevant by W. Chan Kim and Renée Mauborgne.

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Full Name: Gaetano "Guy" Giordano
Current company: Vincent Giordano Corporation
City and state of company: Philadelphia, PA
Position: CEO and President
Number of years in the industry: 40+

How did you get your start in the industry?

Working for my family in the Italian-market meat business in Philadelphia. We owned a retail shop, so I started helping out at about six years old. Actually, at that time, I would take the heavy paper shopping bags we gave away and walk up and down the street selling them for 5¢. By age eight, I was rolling in dough, and the nuns were starting to complain to my father about how much money I had in my pocket.

Describe your work history.

I've worked in the family business my entire life, although now we no longer are a retail operation but a national beef processor. The only other job I've ever had was when I was a junior in high school, I asked my father if I could go to Europe for the summer and he agreed, as long as I could pay for it myself. So I took a job at Gino's, a hamburger place in South Philly and got the money to go. I spent six weeks in Europe that summer and spent every dime I had.

After graduating from La Salle College in 1976, I went to work for our company full-time. Since then, the company has grown from a small family business to a national meat processing business.

What industry organizations have you belonged to and what titles have you held?

I'm very active in the Moorestown, NJ, community and as the chairman of the Moorestown Recreation Advisory Committee, and I'm on the board of the Moorestown Quakers Athletic Advisory Committee. I love being involved with activities that support the kids in the community. For over 40 years, our

company has sponsored Variety, The Children's Charity. For the past six years, our company has partnered with Acme Supermarket on our annual "Beef Up For The Kids" campaign. To date, we've contributed over \$250,000 to the campaign.

I'm also on the board of the Cornerstone Bank and the Food Industry Advisory Board of the Creative Financial Group.

In October, I will be appointed to the board of La Salle University.

What accomplishments are your most proud of?

My family and my children's accomplishments. All four of my kids are doing great, and I'm living the American dream. Of course, I couldn't do it without my wife.

What is your leadership philosophy?

To guide and lead and not micro-manage. I believe in giving people the tools and inspiring them to succeed.

Where do you see the industry going?

The deli is going to continue to grow and morph into a complete deli and foodservice venue with foods that are quick and easy to prepare and better quality.

What hobbies do you have outside of work?

After my family and kids, my passion in life is golf.

What is your favorite deli food?

A good corned beef or pastrami Rubeen with lots of Russian dressing.

What is your favorite restaurant?

The Saloon in South Philadelphia

What is the last book you read?

The World Is Flat by Thomas Friedman.



Full Name: Byron Hanson
Current company: Lunds/Byerly's, part of Lund Food Holdings, Inc.
City and state of company: Edina, MN
Position: Deli Category Manager
Number of years in the industry: 30

How did you get your start in the industry?

Washing dishes and cooking at the restaurant where my mother worked. My real love of the food industry came after receiving college foodservice as my work study assignment during college. There, I had the opportunity to work under Evelyn Young, foodservice director at Gustavus Adolphus in St. Peter, MN. I was asked by Evelyn to work with her serving dinner at a special evening event. Later, when she told me she was supposed to be sitting at the head table, she said, "You and I will serve together. It is always better to serve and be served."

Please describe your work history?

I worked in the foodservice industry and dreamed of owning my own restaurant. One day I received a call from the owner of a supper club who wanted to build a new restaurant. He was offering an ownership position, so I jumped at the chance. While there, we worked with the American Heart Association to develop the "Dining Ala Heart" program. After nine years, the business was sold and I figured that I was out of food forever.

I then I got a call from the food division of Dayton Hudson Marshall Fields to help out for two weeks and that turned into 13 years in the retail food sector.

What accomplishments are your most proud of?

Building and mentoring successful teams and creating an environment where every person can contribute and feel great pride in his or her own success.

What is your leadership philosophy?

I believe you have to find out how to motivate people as individuals. There is tremendous power in having someone believe in you. You must make the job relevant to each person as well as the team.

Where do you see the industry going?

If people were time-starved in the '90s, they're time-emaciated now. I think we're going to see more foodservice and restaurant quality foods in the retail environment.

What hobbies do you have outside of work?

Having grown up on a farm, I still feel the need to garden and watch things grow. I also love to travel and seek out great food.

What is your favorite deli food?

Anything that has a point of difference — I love foods that have the "wow" factor.

What is your favorite restaurant?

Artisanal in New York City

What is the last book you read?

Collapse — How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed by Jared Diamond



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Name: Fermo Jaeckle
Current company: Roth Kase USA, LTD, Monroe, WI
Current title: CEO
Number of years in the industry: 35

How did you get your start in the industry?

My family has been in the cheese business for four generations. In 1863, Oswald Roth began making and curing cheese in Uster, Switzerland. Then, in the beginning of the 20th century, 1911 to be exact, Otto Roth, the son of Oswald, left Switzerland to establish Otto Roth & Company. After my father passed away at the untimely age of 59, my brother and I were launched into the business. By the 1980s, the company was the largest importer of European specialty cheese in North America.

Describe your work history:

After 17 years with Otto Roth, the company was sold to General Foods and I began working with the New Zealand Dairy Foods Association. In 1987, I was the president of the Cheese Importers Association, and I helped to formulate policy for the USTR [United States Trade Representatives] for their use in the GATT [General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade] negotiations. GATT is now known as the WTO [World Trade Organization].

During the negotiations, it became clear to me that the European community was going to have to become less dependent on government subsidies, and I saw an opportunity to produce European-style cheeses in the United States.

My two cousins, Felix and Ulrich Roth, and I launched Roth Kase USA, LTD, in 1991. We purchased a facility in Monroe, WI, and transformed it into a multi-dimensional cheese operation based on the models used in Switzerland, and our focus changed from importing cheese to crafting and curing European-style specialty cheeses here in the United States. We still import a little cheese — some sheep's milk cheese — but primarily we are cheesemakers and purveyors of high-end artisan cheeses.

What industry organizations have you belonged to and what titles have you held?

I served as the past president of the Cheese Importer Association of America and am still on the board.

I also served on the American Cheese Society board of directors but am not currently active.

What accomplishments are you most proud of?

To have started from scratch a company that is recognized as one of the leading cheesemakers in the country. Our never-ending pursuit of excellence has led us to claim over 100 national, international, state and regional awards in the last decade.

What is your leadership philosophy?

To lead by example

Where do you see the industry going?

I see the industry exploding; we like to take credit as one of the catalysts to launching production of United States produced specialty cheese with European origin.

What hobbies do you have outside of work?

I like hiking and bicycling. And, of course, spending time with my family

What is your favorite deli food?

It would have to be specialty cheese.

What is your favorite restaurant?

I cannot say that I have one favorite restaurant. I do a lot of traveling and have a lot of favorites all over the United States.

What was the last book you read?

1776 by David McCullough



Name: David Leonhardi
Current company: Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board, Madison, WI
Current title: Director of Cheese Education and Events
Numbers of years in the industry: 31

How did you get your start in the industry?

When I was in college at Metropolitan State University, St. Paul, MN, I was working at Byerly's stocking dairy shelves. I graduated and started working with Lincoln McCallum Desnick, a food broker in Minnesota, selling retail packaged goods such as frozen pizzas and cheese to retail stores. This is a great industry to be involved in especially because of the wonderful people that are in it.

Describe your work history:

After working with the food broker, I spent several years as a field sales manager with a few different manufacturing companies. I spent several years with John Labatt's Foods and Gorton's Seafood, selling a variety of items for foodservice and retail but mainly perishable products. I then spent multiple years with Olfisco, a specialty food distributor primarily focused on the deli category with a heavy focus on cheese. Most recent is the past nine years with the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board.

What industry organizations have you belonged to and what titles have you held?

Currently I belong to the International Dairy Deli Bakery Association

(IDDDBA) and the Dairy Steering Committee. I am also a member of the American Cheese Society, where part of my responsibility is the Conference Planning Committee.

What accomplishments are you most proud of?

Being able to educate a number of people on cheese products from the state of Wisconsin.

I am always glad to try new ideas in merchandising retail deli products and the culinary profession as well.

What is your leadership philosophy?

Work hard, play hard.

Where do you see the industry going?

There will be continual growth with emphasis on specialty products.

What hobbies do you have outside of work?

I like to golf, fish, garden and cook.

What is your favorite deli food?

Cheese!

What is your favorite restaurant?

My son's restaurant, Northcoast, in Wayzata, MN.

What was the last book you read?

The Da Vinci Code by Dan Brown

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Reader Service No. 558



Name: Peter Redmond
Current Company: Wal-Mart, Bentonville, AR
Current Title: Vice President of Deli and Seafood
Number of years in the industry: 9

How did you get your start in the industry?

I moved here from the United Kingdom in 1987, and prior to that I was in the British military. My wife worked at Wal-Mart and that's how I got my start here.

Describe your work history:

I first started as an hourly clerk in the ladies department at Wal-Mart in 1991. When I graduated from the University of Arkansas, I was promoted into the home office as a buyer in the service deli and dairy departments. I also spent two years in the international division serving in both Germany and the United Kingdom. I then graduated through the buyer ranks and became vice president.

What industry organizations have you belonged to and what titles have you held?

I am on the board of the IDDBA and the steering committee of the Marines Stewardship Council, an independent non-profit organization that aims to promote sustainable fishery practices. I am also on the board of Single Parents Scholarships Fund of Washington County.

What accomplishments are you most proud of?

Within three to five years, we will be changing the seafood procurement model. We only sell wild-caught fish certified by the Marine Stewardship Council as sustainable as caught and processed in an environmentally

responsible and sustainable way. I am also proud of the conversion of regular cardboard rotisserie boxes to wax-lined rotisserie boxes that are recyclable.

I am most proud of the way we have evolved the deli department in Wal-Mart stores. We have come a long way from being a small deli in the back of the store to being a larger deli right in front with a fresh appeal.

What is your leadership philosophy?

I believe in swimming upstream. If everybody is going in one direction, that may be a good reason to go the other direction.

Where do you see the industry going?

I see it evolving and changing to where traditional areas of a service deli [bulk meats and cheeses] become less of a factor. I do see the self-service and convenience-food options becoming much more of a focus for the customer.

What hobbies do you have outside of work?

I am a big soccer player, and I also coach my daughter's soccer team. I love to hang out with my family and do activities with them, such as camping. Other than this, I am always at Wal-Mart.

What is your favorite deli food?

By far, hickory smoked ham.

What is your favorite restaurant?

My favorite restaurant is Gandhi, an Indian food restaurant in Rye, England.

What was the last book you read?

The last book I read was *Angels and Demons* by Dan Brown.



They're Looking
for a complete deli selection.

Reader Service No. 563



Name: Norman Vernadakis

Current Company: Big Y Foods Inc.,
Springfield, MA

Current title: Director of Deli Bakery Food Service

Number of years in the industry: 28

How did you get your start in the industry?

Since I was a child, I have always had a love for food. My parents would cook meals all the time. I am Greek and Italian, so the importance of family and food was always stressed.

When I was younger, I worked in the restaurant business as a cook and in catering. Food is in my blood — I am a foodie. I enjoy the whole aspect of dining.

Describe your work history:

After the restaurant business, I started out as a service clerk at Big Y. Then as a clerk, I moved to the meat department. After being a clerk, I became an apprentice meat cutter. I enjoyed cutting meats and being in the meat department — it was an exciting job.

After a while, I moved my way up to be a meat manager. I was then promoted to supervise seafood, deli, bakery and foodservice. My last promotion was to my current position of director.

What industry organizations have you belonged to and what titles have you held?

I belong to the American Cancer Society and American Heart Association. I also belong to Youth Football program and Dale Carnegie Training.

I am also on the advisory board for the Culinary Program of Western Massachusetts.

What accomplishments are you most proud of?

I am most proud of my family — my wife and two kids. Family is the most important thing I'm proud of my growth in the industry.

I enjoy challenging myself to learn more and more everyday. That's what makes this job exciting. I'm also proud of all the relationships I have built with different people in the different industries.

What is your leadership philosophy?

Don't pretend that you know it all. Work side-by-side with people so you can grow and be successful together.

Where do you see the industry going?

I see the industry going more towards higher quality and better standards. The more successful people will be the ones who focus on taking care of the customers' needs.

What hobbies do you have outside of work?

I coach my son's football team. I like to go golfing and fishing as well.

What is your favorite deli food?

Our World Classics deli meats.

What is your favorite restaurant?

True in Chicago, IL. It is an outstanding dining experience.

What was the last book you read?

Beyond World Class by Alan Ross

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Reader Service No. 214

Reader Service No. 580



Name: Ruth Webber
Current company: *Perishables Food Council Magazine* of Northern California and Nevada,
City, State: San Francisco, CA
Current title: Editor of *DeliMag* of Northern California
Number of years in the industry: 35

How did you get your industry start?

I graduated from Iowa State University with a B.S. in technical journalism with an emphasis in food science and began working with the Iowa Public Health Department in public relations. From 1954 to 1971, I worked as the women's editor for *Wallace's Farmer* magazine, a consumer magazine for rural farmers.

Describe your work history:

In 1971 I moved to San Francisco and worked for Manning's Food Service, an institutional foodservice management company. At the same time, I was a "stringer," sending occasional news and photographs from Northern California to the *Southern California DDBA News*, the regional magazine of the association. I did that from 1973 to about 1985.

The Northern California Deli Council kept urging me to start a magazine for them and in 1987, the first issue of *DeliMag* was published. I retired a few years ago, but I'm back again and enjoying the industry and the people in it.

What industry organizations have you belonged to?

I belong to the International Business Communicators, Consumer Business Professionals of San Francisco and the Perishable Foods Council of Northern California.

What accomplishments are you most proud of?

My family and four children. — it has always been family first. I'm also proud of starting a magazine. *DeliMag* has introduced a lot of people to new ideas and each other. I also hope I've empowered women to succeed.

What is your leadership philosophy?

If people work together, they can accomplish almost anything.

Where do you see the industry going?

Just getting stronger all the time.

What hobbies do you have?

I play the flute, read and take pictures.

What is your favorite deli food?

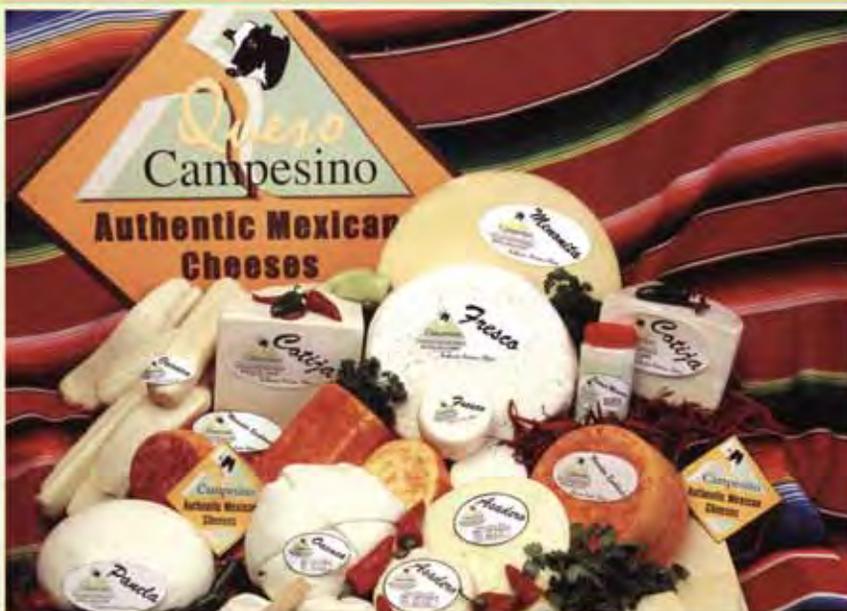
Any kind of cheese.

What is your favorite restaurant?

The Girl & the Fig in Sonoma, CA

What is the last book you read?

Nadia's Song by Soheir Khashoggi



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Dinner Entrées On The Run

*Busy Americans may not have time to cook,
but they still want homemade taste and quality.*



By Liz Campbell

At 5:00 PM, as tummies begin to grumble, the burning question of the day arises: "What will we have for dinner?" When one child has soccer practice and another a piano lesson, there is little time for working parents to prepare a scratch meal. So it is not surprising that for thousands of time-pressed families across America, the supermarket deli has become a Mecca. What is surprising is the range of foods available.

While the choices were once limited to rotisserie chicken (still the hottest seller in the deli) and potato salad, many deli managers have recognized the need for variety

and are filling it.

For example, in Café on the Run at Central Market, a 7-store chain of supermarkets owned by H-E-B, based in San Antonio, TX, customers find featured areas providing an extensive selection of options for fresh, convenient meals.

The ubiquitous rotisserie chicken is still there, but so are entrées like almond crusted tilapia, pepper-crusted pork loin with pineapple chutney and cheese enchiladas with Spanish rice and borracho beans. Consequently, Café on the Run has become a destination in itself while still offering the convenience of one-stop shopping for family

necessities like milk, juice, cereal and bread.

At Publix Supermarkets, headquartered in Lakeland, FL, the downloadable fax menu from Crispers, its dining concept, offers baked potatoes with toppings like pot roast or smoky chicken, or a southwest salad with black beans, fire-roasted corn and southwest chicken. Customers can call or fax an order, collect it en route home and serve gourmet fare to the family.

Whole Foods Market, based in Austin, TX, has taken the concept of home meal replacement to a whole new level. Its prepared foods department is a lively and appealing area showcasing the creativity and

Successful Deli Takeout Tips

Studies show that people are moving from frozen to fresh when it comes to providing a quick meal. The question is, will they come to the supermarket or drop in to a casual or quick-service restaurant. The supermarket has several advantages. It offers other staples like milk and bread for quick pick up at the same time. It usually has convenient parking. Most importantly, it has a huge density advantage over restaurants. There might be a casual chain four miles from home, but the supermarket might be just a few blocks away. Make it an attractive destination for dinner-on-the-run, and shoppers will be only too glad not to drive the extra miles.

Try innovative packaging: For example, Merit Paper Corp., Melville, NY, makes a bag designed for rotisserie chicken that is re-closeable, microwavable and has a handle. And it will not leak juices all over the car. The company also makes the same type of condensation-proof bags for ribs, ham, etc. They cost 30 to 40 percent less than domed containers and can be stamped with UPC codes. Finally, 500 bags require only a small box so they save storage space.

Keep it looking good: The deli needs to be as clean and appealing as a restaurant. Remove empty boxes, hide take-out containers and keep floors clean. Dress counters with some gingham or colorful cloth and pile them with fresh produce, breads and flowers.

Make it convenient: How about a dedicated checkout just for grab-and-go so consumers do not have to stand in line with shoppers?

Take it to the door: Hire a student for 10 hours a week (4:00

— 6:00 PM daily) to carry takeout orders to a designated parking spot. This added convenience will make you as attractive as quick-serve.

Just a call away: Think of pizza spots. Offer fax, online and phone ordering so consumers can call as they leave work and pick up dinner en route.

Make it attractive: If you are using black trays for food, add black cutlery and a fuchsia napkin for a special look to your offering. That small additional touch means quality and puts you up a notch in customers' minds.

Up-sell: Give customers a taste of something that goes well with their purchase. For example, suggest they might like to try a great salad or side. That sample could sell another dish and improve revenues.

Give them a little extra: Offer little extras in the deli: sauces, bagged salads, dressings, desserts, ice cream, pies, freshly cut fruit bowls, artisanal breads, even flowers. At 5:00 PM when the stomach is hollow, these little extras look extra attractive.

Offer specials: Create excitement in the weekly flyer by offering specials in the deli take-home menu. And offer an in-stock guarantee. Make sure you always have plenty of the special. Customers only have to be disappointed once to not trust you a second time. They will go to a restaurant because the restaurant will have it in stock.

Provide recipe ideas: Rotisserie chicken can be used in a dozen different ways. Give consumers recipe cards and provide the ingredients to prepare the dishes. It is all about making customers feel they are creative.

DB

culinary talents of store-based chefs. Quick entrées, side dishes, soups, rotisserie, grilled items and more are made with fresh, natural ingredients. Organic lamb curry, poached wild salmon and grilled organically raised chicken breast with lemon herb sauce make a tempting display for hungry shoppers looking for healthful options.

These chains are successful because they have recognized and capitalized on two things. The first is the desire to put something on the family dinner table that is not obviously purchased rather than homemade, and the second is the demand for healthful, wholesome food. The guilt factor these two issues engender is significant, and smart retailers are offering solutions.

Research done by Springdale, AR-based Tyson Foods Inc., into consumers of grab-and-go rotisserie chicken found that there were essentially two main categories of rotisserie chicken consumer. The first was labeled "labor of love." These consumers, says Eric LeBlanc, director of marketing prepared foods for Tyson, "throw the packaging deep into the garbage immediately and put the chicken on their own platter; they want it to look as if they produced it themselves." By contrast, "pragmatists" or "culinary chaotics"

unabashedly present the chicken in its container, he says, adding, "They may even use paper plates." The challenge is to appeal to both kinds of consumers.

Cross-Merchandising

Cross-merchandising is one way to do this, he suggests. For example, delis might provide bagged salad, sliced almonds, strawberries and dressing along with a recipe card for a chicken salad. While the meal can still be produced in 15 minutes — the critical time mass for working parents, according to Tyson's studies — "labor of love" moms and dads can still feel that they have had a hand in its preparation. On the other hand, "culinary chaotics" are glad to have the whole thing presented ready-to-go.

This sop to the conscience is not to be dismissed. History is chock-full of examples of its success. Cake mixes really became popular when the manufacturers recognized this need to have a part in the baking process. Adding an egg and beating met this need; the cake became "homemade." Today, even the concept of what constitutes scratch cooking has changed dramatically. When moms made dinner each evening with fresh ingredients, Hamburger Helper was consid-

ered an alternative to cooking. Some 30 years after its introduction, preparing this shortcut with ground beef is considered to be "cooking." Times have changed — and retailers need to move with them.

"Women especially like to feel they are preparing a meal, not just bringing it home," says Dan Emery, vice president of marketing for Pilgrim's Pride Corp., Pittsburg, TX. "It's an emotional issue. They want to feel they had a hand in preparing it." But he, too, stresses that the meal has to be able to be prepared in 15 minutes — in Europe that time is down to eight minutes.

Emery points to chains like H-E-B, Wegmans, Ukrop's, Meijer, Publix and Save-Mart, which are "aggressive and in tune with their customers." One way they do this, he says, is to group foods from different parts of the store together in the deli for the convenience of the customer. For example, a display of apple pies for dessert in the deli might give the shopper a nudge and the store a further profit item. Remember when moms made apple pie?

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FRESH INNOVATIONS.

on,” says Jill Nordby, marketing manager for Harry’s Fresh Foods in Portland, OR. “Or they’re so time-pressured, they don’t have time to make a dish that takes an hour to prepare.” This could be why comfort foods generate vigorous sales; they are familiar and deemed healthful. Harry’s Fresh Foods provides home-style entrées like beef stew, creamy chicken noodle casserole and meatballs stroganoff with noodles. “They want a sense of the food being homemade,” says Nordby, “without having to take the time to make it.”

Most families are so time-pressured they do not even think about dinner until late in the day.

“Our studies found 70 percent of meal preparers don’t know what’s for dinner at 4:00,” says Emery of Pilgrim’s Pride. “They need to be marketed to. Who are they and how can we reach them with more than rotisserie chicken?” He adds wryly, “We’ve tried to figure out new ways to do it so they don’t get chicken fatigue.”

The company offers everything from breaded tenders and popcorn chicken (attractive to kids but less healthful because they are deep fried) to a new line of healthful, grill-marked breast fillets designed to be topped with different sauces. Pilgrim’s Pride



Consumers want healthful, delicious meal options — and they are willing to pay for them.

rolled these out as part of a new program, “Eat Well, Stay Healthy,” with the blessing of the American Heart Association, Dallas, TX. Best of all they meet both guilts — home-

made appeal and nutrition — head-on. The chicken breasts are pre-flavored — Key lime, Italian, etc. — so they taste good even without a sauce. And grill marks make the chick-

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en look as though it has just come off the grill in the back.

Looking as if the food has been produced in the store's own kitchen is a key means of maintaining the perception that it is freshly prepared. This might explain why the cook-and-hold ovens manufactured by Alto-Shaam, Menomonee Falls, WI, are making an entry into the prepared meal areas of supermarkets. Not only do these cook roast beef to medium, but they can also hold it there for 24 hours without cooking further.

Because steam is used in the process, moisture remains in the food for less shrinkage.

Despite the high initial cost for these ovens, there are savings to be garnered, says Bill Rakow, Alto-Shaam corporate executive chef. "It saves expensive labor. You don't have to keep moving things in and out of a microwave. You can load it up with 14 pans of macaroni and cheese, turkey, hams, etc." The energy costs are also significantly lower — \$1 per day — and, he points out, the food comes out of the oven freshly prepared.

Freshly prepared can drive sales. Andy Seymour, vice president of sales and marketing for Perdue Farms, Inc., Salisbury, MD, says Perdue's hottest seller is a double grill-marked breast fillet that "looks like it's been produced in a restaurant or out back in the kitchen." And it can be customized, he adds, with barbeque, Asian, Cajun or other sauces

Quality has become key in the deli. Americans are becoming more health-conscious, and fat is still a major anxiety for Americans. But so too is a concern for where their food originates and how fresh it is.

for a distinctive dish. Bourbon sauce is really hot at present and Perdue makes one for this dish.

"These have given new life to the tender category," he says. Nonetheless, despite concerns about fat, deep fat-fried breaded tenders remain a popular item. To address this concern, Perdue Farms has introduced a light version with just 10 to 15 percent breading vs. the more usual 40 percent. "It has less carbs and a more healthful profile," says Seymour. "It allows those who really want the breading to enjoy their chicken strips without guilt."

But what about chicken fatigue? Tyson has recognized that delis need an alternative to rotisserie chicken so it has introduced a 1-pound rotisserie pork loin that serves three to four people. Thus far, the product, branded with the Tyson name, has been received enthusiastically. Indeed, branding is a whole other issue that some supermarkets have capitalized on. "Brands serve to guide the consumer," says Tyson's LeBlanc. "If you want the consumer to respond to your offering the way he would to quick-serve or casual concepts, give it a name that stands for value and quality."

Quality has become key in the deli. Americans are becoming more health-conscious, and fat is still a major anxiety for Americans. But so too is a concern for where

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their food originates and how fresh it is.

The National Restaurant Association, Washington, DC, compiled a list of the 10 words that generated the most interest in consumers. Not surprisingly they include: fresh, farm fresh, homemade, grilled, charcoal-grilled, roasted, charbroiled, broiled,

“[Consumers] don’t give supermarkets credit for offering a full meal. They have to walk two aisles to get the salad, then another two for dessert.”

**— Eric LeBlanc
Tyson Foods Inc.**

baked, barbecued, marinated, sautéed and hearty. The implications are clear: Americans, rapidly becoming among the most obese people in the world, have decided it is time for a change. They want food that is healthful — fresh from the farm if possible — prepared with as little fat as possible and flavorful. But beyond all that, they are willing to pay for it.

Ethnic Variations

“A few years ago, it was all about price, but flavor and goodness is crucial today,” says Jannette Webb, vice president of operations for Corn Maiden Foods Inc. in Harbor City, CA. Corn Maiden’s Hispanic entrées include tamales filled with sweet corn, chicken and roasted green chiles or Anaheim green chiles, chicken and cilantro, or flautas with fillings like lime cilantro chicken and green chiles in chipotle cream or beef with garlic, adobo sauce and chipotle cream. “People aren’t afraid of chiles anymore — in fact, they want them,” she says. “They recognize that there are many different kinds that provide flavor, not just heat.”

Research bears this out. The Center for Culinary Development, based in San Francisco, CA, is a food and beverage product development company that blends culinary creativity with strategic marketing expertise. According to its Winter 2005 Trend Mapping survey, ethnic condiments (such as sambal, fish sauce, chutneys), piquillo peppers and garam masala spice blend (for Indian foods) are definitely hot with consumers.



An interesting variety of foods prompts consumers to return often.

So delis wanting to attract the adventurous diner will need to include unique, bold, new flavor options.

“People are looking beyond rotisserie or fried chicken,” says Mark Phelps, vice president of InnovAsian Cuisine Enterprises LLC in Kent, WA. “They don’t want the same food over and over. Offering different foods in the deli case not only increases purchases but also increases the frequency of visits. They come more often to see what’s in store.” He even suggests changing the menu daily, perhaps offering a regular special, such as Tuesday is Chinese Day. The key is to promote it — and to follow through with variety.

Are Americans adventurous enough to try new things? Phelps believes they are; they just have to be encouraged to try them for the first time. He says InnovAsian is willing to work with retailers in an effective sampling program. He adds confidently, that when consumers taste the company’s best-selling General Tso’s Chicken, they will buy it. InnovAsian has introduced new, spicy flavors such as Mongolian Beef, as well as Thai Peanut and Kung Pao sauces to its line-up.

“Chinese food is perceived to be a healthful alternative,” says Phelps. “And when it’s mixed with sauce and vegetables in the deli, it looks good, so the merchandising appeal is high.” InnovAsian’s products are fully cooked as separate protein, sauce and vegetables, ready for assembly in the deli.

Thinking Outside The Box

Knowing that food is natural is another sales driver. Vincent Giordano Corp., Philadelphia, PA, makes natural roast beef

and meatballs that most delis use for sandwiches. But adding gravy to the roast beef or sauce to the meatballs turns these into a main course that can then be paired with salads and sides for a complete meal. It simply requires a little creative thinking outside the traditional sandwich box.

Tyson’s LeBlanc agrees, “Ask consumers what’s the difference between casual dining and supermarkets. They don’t give supermarkets credit for offering a full meal. They have to walk two aisles to get the salad, then another two for dessert.” Why not put them all together in the same area, he asks, so shoppers can grab it all, even ice cream and brownies for dessert, without having to run around. And he adds, when you are competing with restaurant chains who do offer the full spectrum with one stop, you have to forget the traditional lines of who does what and who gets credit for the sale. It is about generating store sales.

The deli has traditionally been six months behind restaurants in jumping on a trend, according to Emery of Pilgrim’s Pride. This is changing, especially in upscale markets. But many supermarket deli managers are still cautious. “They need to look at what’s coming along in restaurants, then jump on it right away, not six months later. By then it’s old news.”

Phelps agrees, “You have to be innovative rather than boring. Introduce Chinese Tuesday for example and give them a chance to sample the specials. They’ll be back next Tuesday again.”

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Potatoes — An American Comfort Food

Potatoes are a trendy deli item with multiple options.

By Nalini Maharaj

Even with more than half of the American public on a diet at any given time, potatoes are still a popular staple for family dinners. Having grown up eating potatoes, most consumers consider them comfort food. For many, a meal just is not complete without a side of spuds.

Potato products are doing remarkably well in the deli. According to The Perishables Group, W. Dundee, IL, deli potato sides not including potato salad (fries, baked, scalloped, mashed, wedges and others) had U.S. sales of \$60.1 million in 2005, up almost 14 percent over 2004. The numbers for potato salad are even more impressive — total delis sales of \$228.2 million in 2005, up more than 12 percent over 2004.

Whether the side is potato salad, mashed potatoes or a knish, deli potato products are selling rapidly as complements to any meal.

“Potato products are one of the most universally loved and broadly versatile food products. Potatoes continue to be a popular side dish in the deli,” says Garth Neuffer, senior director and product public relations for ConAgra Foods Inc., Omaha, NE.

Potato salad is an American classic that transcends geographic boundaries. “It is still the best selling wet salad in bulk or prepack,” notes John McCarthy, senior retail marketing manager of Reser’s Fine Foods Inc., Beaverton, OR.

Although potato salad sales are higher in spring and summer than fall and winter, there is an ongoing demand for potato salad throughout the year.

“Potato salad is taking a facelift. It is still very strong, but there has been a shift away from the traditional potato salad to new flavors. Consumers are looking for something more interesting,” explains Wendie DiMatteo, CEO of ASK Foods Inc., Palmyra, PA.

Many manufacturers have noticed this trend and are adding new flavors to their lines. ASK Foods has added Cajun and Caribbean flavors plus an olive oil and basil





Many supermarket deli departments are now offering french fries, America's favorite vegetable, as a potato side dish.

salad that does not have any mayonnaise.

Chloe Foods Inc., Brooklyn, NY, features many varieties of potato salads including Dutch-style, redskin and three potato salad.

"Consumers are very interested in premium and upscale salads. More and more consumers are looking for new and intense flavors. Ethnic foods and exotic flavors continue to grow in popularity because consumers want variety — new and different salads," adds McCarthy.

Other Potato Favorites

There are many other potato products available in the deli.

French fries may be the quintessential American classic. Harry Balzer, vice president of the NPD Group, Chicago, IL, stated at this year's Refrigerated Foods Association (RFA) convention held in Orlando, FL, that french fries are one of the top two dishes for both men and women, which means french fries can be cross-merchandised with just about any entrée.

According to ConAgra's Neuffer, french fries account for about two-thirds of all potato product servings in the industry. When consumers go into the deli to get a sandwich or a chicken meal, the majority of them will pick up fries to complement their meal. They are so popular because consumers are familiar with them; most Americans grew up eating french fries. French fries have expanded into different categories, including seasoned, curly, wedges and waffle fries.

ConAgra offers a variety of deli wedges, mashed potatoes and oven-roasted potatoes.

It also sells a line of diced and sliced potatoes called Time Savers, which provides deli operators with a convenient way to add potatoes to their offerings.

"Potato products are one of the most universally loved and broadly versatile food products. Potatoes continue to be a popular side dish in the deli."

— Garth Neuffer
ConAgra Foods Inc.

When Americans want potatoes other than fried, they most often turn to mashed. Here, too, the available repertoire has expanded. Deli operators now can choose from redskin, garlic, cheddar and sweet potato mashes, among others.

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Ways To Increase Potato Sales

Consumers are looking for convenience in potato products just as they are in other food items.

Ready-made sides have increased in sales because so many Americans are time-pressed and no longer cook at home. Prepared, ready-made potato products include various flavors of sweet potato casserole, hash browns and grilled red-skin potatoes. Consumers are always looking for fresh products with great value and a delicious homemade taste.

Freshness is crucial to the success of deli potato sales. If consumers are happy with their fresh purchases, they become repeat shoppers. Appearance and display are also important. If an item is not appealing, consumers will not buy it. Consistency is yet another major component. Consumers do not want to question the quality of their favorite foods.

"At Sandridge, we believe consumers are seeking unrivaled fresh potato flavor, even in potato salad, something Mom would be proud to serve at a family event," notes Shirley

Leonard, marketing manager for The Sandridge Food Corporation, headquartered in Medina, OH.

According to Leonard, there are a variety of ways for potato product manufacturers to extend shelf life of potato products. The process starts with cleaner raw produce and is followed by adhering to stricter standards within manufacturing operations. Adopting new methods to clean the produce also helps make the product last longer. Sandridge believes getting the product to the deli sooner can guarantee that deli operators will have a fresher product.

Leonard also feels it is important to rotate a fresh prepared product into a related product. As an example she suggests using leftover grilled redskin potatoes to make potato salad.

"As consumers become more interested in foods with fewer or no preservatives, extending shelf-life becomes a mute issue. The key is to sell the product sooner while it is fresher," says Leonard. **DB**

Mashed potatoes are increasingly making their way into the bulk and grab-and-go cases. Consumers love to match this side dish with chicken, meat loaf and other entrées. Delis should always offer hot mashed

potatoes to appeal to the on-the-go consumer, but they can also be merchandised cold for consumers who are not looking for immediate gratification.

Another popular potato choice is the

baked potato. Once a side dish that required an investment of time, made-from-scratch baked potatoes — even when made in the microwave — have proven too slow for today's harried consumers.

Gourmet Boutique, Jamaica, NY, offers a full line of re-stuffed baked potatoes that are sold from the service deli case. They are available in many flavors, such as cheddar and chives. All the company's products are made to order, fresh, with no MSG, no artificial colors and no preservatives.

"They are a comfort food that has a mass appeal because they can be quickly reheated and served. We are constantly looking to add to our line as we keep up with trends," says Jere Dudley, Gourmet Boutique vice president of sales and marketing. The company also offers old-fashioned potato pancakes.

Popular Kosher Products

Kosher potato pancakes and knishes, once strictly ethnic sides, have gone mainstream. Chloe Foods produces a full line of knishes, potato pancakes and potato pudding, which have increased in sales tremendously due to strong distribution.

"Knishes are not just popular among Jewish people anymore. Knishes are tremendous in the Metropolitan New York area and can be found in stadiums and on street corners as well. There has been a sales increase in clubs stores, but our biggest single customer is Publix," says Jeffrey Siegel, president of Chloe Foods.

The shelf life of Chloe's Kosher Kitchen brand knishes has expanded from seven days to 18 due to nitrogen tunnel packaging. **DB**



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It offers increased sales to retailers and time-saving convenience to consumers.

By Nalini Maharaj

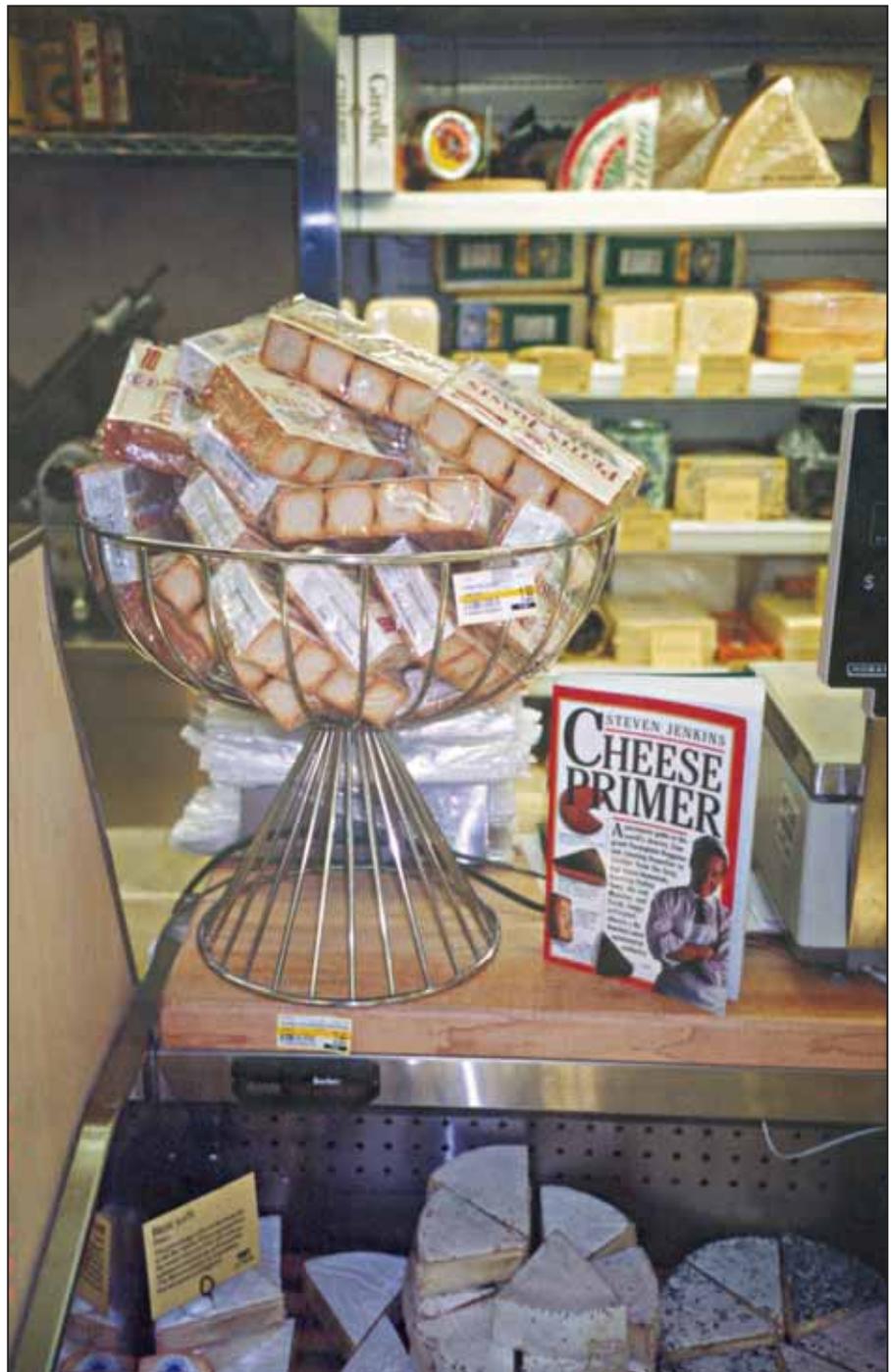
Deli managers looking to expand their department's sales often find that displaying their merchandise with that of other departments is the way to go.

According to Todd Hultquist, media relations, Food Marketing Institute (FMI), based in Washington, DC, "Cross-merchandising of general merchandise with the deli, meat and other perishables departments continues to be an appealing marketing tool for food retailers. In addition to generating incremental sales from impulse purchases, cross-merchandising offers convenience to time-pressed customers and enhances the overall shopping environment."

FMI research shows consumers often make decisions about what to prepare for dinner at the last minute. A display that includes deli items, meats/poultry, bagged salads, other relevant items and recipes helps make the decision quicker and easier.

"There is much more strategy employed in cross-merchandising displays today than just a few years ago. What was once used around a few holidays, such as Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day and Christmas, is now becoming a year-round staple of marketing and merchandising plans. Many stores have gone beyond the familiar holiday and seasonal cross-merchandising promotions and are now using a technique referred to as 'day-parting,' in which items associated with a particular mealtime are grouped together," states Hultquist.

The diversified product mix found in many stores influences cross-merchandising opportunities. "For example," he says, "the sale of cutlery and other relevant tools next to a deli or meat counter. Cross-merchandising has become especially effective at generating sales of new products. Deli suppliers are increasingly getting involved in cross-merchandising by offering ideas for promotional displays and campaigns. They recognize that enhancing the display of their products helps to generate sales and establish brand loyalty. Instead of shoppers seeing a typical meat case with rows of simple packaging, with a



Cross-Merchandising Tips

There are many ways to cross-merchandise items, but only a few are effective. It is important to choose the right strategy for the items being sold.

"The most important aspect for my company is complementary. We make it interesting for the consumer. Consumers want meal solutions that are new and different, and we help them dress things up," says Sheree Cardoos, president of Mt. Vikos, Marshfield, MA.

Mt. Vikos is promoting the idea of cross-merchandising watermelon, feta and fresh mint for a summer dessert. Another idea includes merchandising tomatoes, cucumbers and feta for a salad. "Just get a case of all these items and put them together. It's a very easy sell," she adds.

Mt. Vikos also manufactures a variety of upscale items that can be used for appetizers and desserts. The company cross-merchandises its apricot, almond and fig spreads as complementary items to meats such as pork tenderloins and chicken breasts. Its glazed and roasted figs are merchandised with desserts such as ice cream and yogurt.

Cardoos continues, "Demos and tastings, are also good ways to cross-merchandise. However, do not just have cheese with toothpicks — have cheese and crackers. If the customer can see how the items are being used, they will use them the same way as well."

Dominic Biggi, vice president of Hillsboro, OR-based Beaverton Foods Inc., a manufacturer of condiments, notes, "I think the most important aspect is a demo or a passive demo. It allows the consumers to taste and try the combinations of the products. If they can try them, they will most likely purchase them after they taste it.

"We do a lot of cross-merchandising with the meat and seafood departments," he continues. "It is a great idea to have a special on how to cook and prepare these meats to interest the consumers. You have to build the imaginations of consumers, open their eyes to the different options that are out there. Condiments are a great value-added purchase."

According to Laurie Groezinger, president/owner of Alexian Pâtés & Specialty Meats, Neptune, NJ. "Cross-selling is a very important element in our discussions of pâté when we do retail training sessions or when we have sampling demos. We love to encourage both the staff and the customers to have fun with pâté.

"For example, most people experience pâté as a treat on the end of a toothpick or as a spread on a toast or crusty bread. But imagine, for a change, spreading some duck mousse on top of a warm bagel for breakfast. Meat spreads are a traditional European breakfast fare," she continues.

"Tired of plain old scrambled eggs? Dice some of your favorite coarse-cut pâté, such as pâté campagne or wild forest mushroom pâté, throw it in the pan and chase it around with the spatula for a minute and you'll have a hearty and very tasty breakfast," Groezinger recommends.

Alexian promotes pâté with many complementary items in other supermarket departments. Wine and cheese, the most common, give a sense of traditional French cuisine. However, colorful fruits such as strawberries and orange slices can be used as a plate garnish and accompaniment. Fresh herbs, nuts and vegetables are also becoming more popular as healthful pairing alternatives.

"Cross-merchandising is a great way to raise awareness and pique curiosity of the consumer," advises Cathy Cunningham Hays, president/CEO, of Bodacious Food Company, Jasper, GA. "Coupons are a great way to cross-merchandise effectively. They get the consumer interested because of the discount. Coupons also add in extra sales because of what they are advertised with. I love shippers because they are great instant displays. Demos are wonderful but very expensive. The more we can get the word out about a product the better. Wherever a product is a good fit is a great place to cross-merchandise."

Displays play a huge roll in cross-merchandising because they are the first thing consumers notice when they enter the department.

"Displays are the best because they are immediate attention-grabbers," notes Karen Riley, corporate sales and marketing manager of Walkers Shortbread Inc., Hauppauge, NY. "They are easy to find and people notice them."

Beaverton's Biggi notes, "Display wherever there is a special. If retailers are carrying a specialty cheese imported from Italy, they should have condiments close by to complement the cheese. Have deli trays with different meats and cheeses along with condiments. Condiments are healthful, they are good and they add flavor. They are good for an up-sale, for a little more ring — they can really make a difference and increase sales, not just now but in the long run."

DB

cross-merchandised display they see a visually attractive destination."

However, adds Hultquist, turf wars can be a challenge. He describes a turf war as when a department's defined sales goal is dependent on sales space. Cross-merchandising may reduce the actual amount of selling space for deli items, particularly in smaller stores. Even when displays lead to increased sales, more labor is required because the cases need to be replenished faster.

"Cross-merchandising requires a well-thought-out plan, incentives for departmental managers and a general team approach. Stores are increasingly adding dedicated

space for cross-merchandised products. This is especially true in newly constructed and remodeled stores. Such designs help to alleviate departmental turf wars," he explains.

Cross-Merchandising Advantages

According to Ric Herrera, director portfolio planning, Sara Lee Deli, Downers Grove, IL, "Cross-merchandising increases the reach of the deli by pollinating other departments. Currently the deli attracts approximately 35 percent of all shoppers — we need to get the other 65 percent into the deli. It is also an effective solution-type or consumption-type builder for the consumer."

Sara Lee supplies meats, cheeses and breads to the deli. Its products are typically placed near each other for an easy cross-merchandising sale. Sara Lee uses advertisements and featured events, such as easels and coupons, to increase cross merchandising sales.

"I think that cross-merchandising can be a very interesting, and actually exciting, activity for the sales staff of any retail store," states Laurie Groezinger, president/owner of Alexian Pâtés & Specialty Meats, Neptune, NJ. "It allows both the salesperson and the customer to explore all the dimensions of a product, especially one like pâté. And if the

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purchase amount is increased as a result, then it is a win-win situation for everyone.”

Stef Espiritu, vice president of sales and marketing, J.G. Van Holten and Son, Inc., Waterloo, WI, notes, “Cross-merchandising can and will generate add-on purchases that increase sales. Regardless of what type of retail outlet you visit, you will see how it stimulates the impulse buying of the consumer. Some retailers do it more effectively than others, with the entire retail industry and their suppliers seeking ways to improve this merchandising tool and sharing their success in articles like this one.”

Cross-merchandising should make shopping and meal-planning easier for consumers. It helps to ensure they will come back again because they enjoyed their previous experiences.

“Convenience for the consumer is the most important thing. With cross-merchandising, consumers are able to buy multiple products at one location rather than running around the store. The items that are being cross-merchandised complement each other and are a great way to increase impulse sales because they will attract the consumer,” explains Jim Conroy, president of Conroy Foods, Pittsburg, PA.

“Cross-merchandising is important

because it helps the consumer put together a meal,” notes Dorte Schechter, marketing manager for Norseland Inc., Stamford, CT. “It is a meal solution that helps with the task of getting food on the table. Cross-merchandising can help to save time and make the supermarket more of a destination. It spices it up. We have really hit a trend where retailers are looking for meal solutions, product tie-ins that make sense and create incremental sales.”

Norseland will be promoting Saga Beef and Blue during the summer. The promotion will create cross-merchandising opportunities between Saga Blue Cheese and the meat department. According to Norseland, secondary placement of Saga Cheese in the meat department tripled sales during its 2005 Beef and Blue merchandising program.

The idea is to show consumers they can use blue cheese rather than American cheese on hamburgers, steaks and ham to make a quick and delicious summer meal and to educate them on how to use cheese. Norseland’s promotional tools include a recipe folder and \$1 coupon.

“It will drive incremental sales and add additional ring to the blue cheese. The incremental sales in the store will go up, and it will make the store a better place to shop

for a quick, easy pick-up for the consumer,” adds Schechter.

Norseland has a cross-merchandising theme for several seasons. For spring, Fresh and Blue combines Saga Blue with produce. For fall, the concentration is on comfort foods such as cheese and crackers or cheese and apples.

“The most important thing is to make sure the cross-merchandising makes sense. If it is too far out, it will not interest the consumer,” she notes.

Besides increasing sales, cross-merchandising helps to inform consumers about specific products and how to use them, which gets consumers interested and involved.

According to Sheree Cardoos, president of Mt. Vikos, Marshfield, MA, “I think cross-merchandising is especially important with cheese because it lets the customers know how to use the product. It lets them know what goes together and gives them ideas on how to use the products in different ways. It helps to educate the customer. Stores can definitely increase sales through cross-merchandising. Eighty percent of the time, both items will sell together, and it just makes it easier for the consumer. I am really trying to push cross-merchandising and am teaching many stores about it.”

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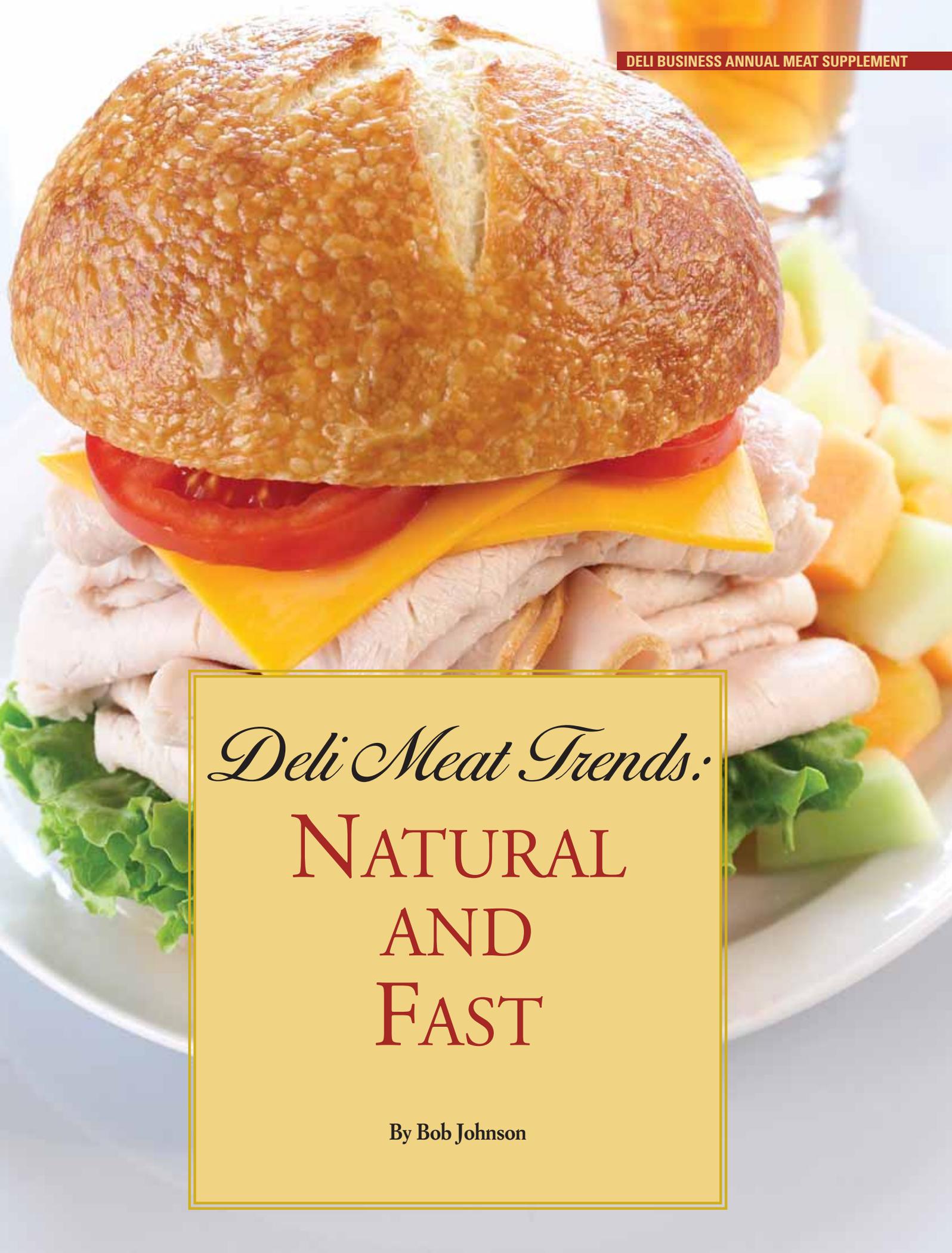
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Deli Meat Trends:

**NATURAL
AND
FAST**

By Bob Johnson



If deli meat is healthful and convenient, many consumers are willing to pay a premium.

Late last year Dan Emery, vice president for marketing at Pilgrim's Pride, Dallas, TX, started getting calls from his customers asking for natural meat products. Many other deli meat suppliers have also begun receiving those same calls, some a little sooner and others a little later than Emery.

"Natural meat should be the next big item," says Emery. "The ceiling will depend on the price difference with conventional meat, but it should become as much as organic or more."

An important moment in the development of the growing trend toward natural foods came early in 2006, when the largest food retailer in the country announced its intention to begin carrying organic products. "Interest has picked up since Wal-Mart announced in February that it was going to include organic food," relates Steve McDonnell, president, Bridgewater, NJ-based Applegate Farms, which deals exclusively in natural and organic products.

However, the demand for more natural meat products had already reached many suppliers of deli products before Wal-Mart made its announcement. "We have a line of ham, and our customers are wanting all natural or more natural products," says Jim Straughn, president, MDS Foods, Massillon, OH. "They want natural juices or an all natural product."

Straughn says the call for more natural product that began to increase around a year ago picked up more steam six months ago and now looks to be a future trend as consumers grow more discriminating. "Meat is not our primary product. Our primary product is cheese, but I think in the meat category, natural products will grow as they already have in the cheese category."

The growing demand for natural or organic deli products has also been noticed across the border in Canada. "Natural and organic deli meats are becoming increasingly important," accord-

ing to Michelle Dickens, marketing manager, Freybe Gourmet Foods, Langley, BC. "And you will see more and more product introductions in this category, probably more so than any other innovation, in the next several years."

Most producers believe the market for natural meats is not only likely to continue, but it is also likely to increase.

"The trends indicate natural and organic deli meats are experiencing strong growth but still remain a small portion of the total sales of deli meats," says Dave Brandow, director of sales and marketing, Piller Sausages, Waterloo, ON. "However, with more consumer acceptance these products could acquire a significant market share."

But while there is a consensus that a growing market for natural deli meat is here to stay, there is no consensus on what is meant by "natural" deli meats. Part of the new and growing market is the relatively small market for organic meat.

"Organic is a niche that is growing quickly, but it is growing on a small base," Emery says.

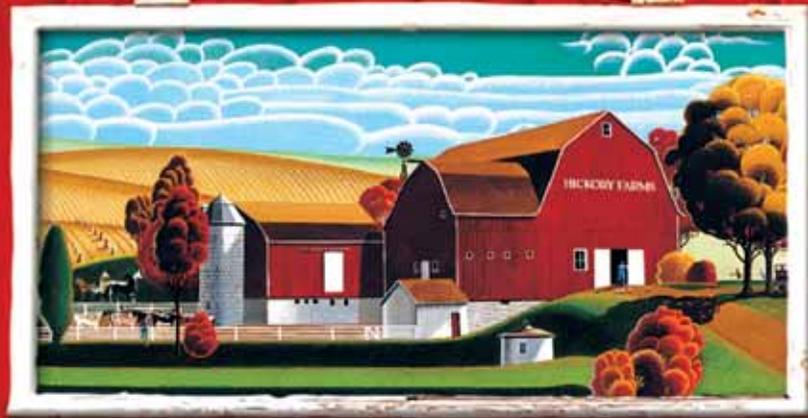
The meaning of "organic" food products is well defined by U.S. federal standards, which have helped to fuel growth in organic sales Emery believes will eventually reach the 5 to 7 percent range of all the meats in the deli department.

The market for "natural" deli meats figures to become much larger than the market for organic deli meats. Part of the challenge for producers and retailers comes from the fact that a clear and accepted definition "natural" food or meat is nowhere to be found.

"Each store or chain is going to have to decide what organic or natural means to its deli," says Applegate's McDonnell. "This is not a short-term fad — this is a long-term trend."

A Question Of Definition — And Sales

As retailers try to reach the hearts and minds of the customers who want "natural" deli meats, they will have to divine what these customers mean when they say "natural." And they



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will not all give the same answers.

For some people, natural refers to a more healthful meat product. For some, the key is a more humane system of animal husbandry. For still others, natural has to do with a product that, in the end, tastes better than conventional.

As retailers struggle to figure out what their customers want — and what they are willing to pay for in natural deli meats — they will have the help of many of their suppliers.

“Minimally processed products are definitely increasing,” says Christine Adler, marketing manager, Volpi Foods, Inc., St. Louis, MO. “With Volpi meats, the process takes much time for flavor development. We prefer a simpler ingredient list, a more natural aging process.”

Some deli meat suppliers have responded to the increasing demand for natural foods by creating new and different product lines.

“Natural food sales at retail have been increasing at a double-digit rate over the last three years and show no sign of slowing down,” according to Tony Rao, vice president for deli marketing, Carolina Turkeys, Mt. Olive, NC.

“The main driver is the consumers’ concern about the integrity of the products they purchase. In the food segment, there is concern for environmentally sound growing practices, but it extends beyond the nature of the way food is grown and includes the integrity of the product itself,” he continues.

Carolina Turkeys is one of many firms that have come out with a line of natural deli meat products. “For meat products, it extends to the growers of the food products and the products themselves as being healthful and free of bacteria and other pathogens,” notes Rao.

“Because of these increasing consumer trends in the super-market, Carolina Turkeys has recently rolled out a complete line of all-natural deli meats and cheeses under the Just Perfect All Natural brand name. This is a complete line of turkey breasts, hams, beef products and cheese. For the deli meats products, they have no phosphates, no nitrates, no binders, no trans fat, no frozen meats, no allergens, no artificial ingredients and they are low in sodium,” he explains.

These products are intended to appeal to growing health-consciousness consumers, but the new line is also designed to appeal to the desire for better tasting food. “They taste great because they are made with only fresh meat — never frozen — from whole muscle products, and they are slow-roasted for an extended period of time to ensure maximum juiciness, tenderness, overall flavor and appearance,” Rao says.

“All you have to do is look at the names of these products and you just know they taste good,” he elaborates. Here are just a few — Savory Beachwood Smoked Turkey Breast, Sun-Dried Tomato & Sweet Basil Turkey Breast, Summer Herb & Garlic Turkey Breast, Stone Ground Peppercorn Turkey Breast, Braised Autumn Gold Turkey Breast, Baked Orange Blossom Honey Ham, Appalachian Smoked Ham and Black Angus Ranch Roast Beef.”

Some suppliers have decided to partner with specialists in the field of natural or organic meat in order to produce and market a reliable new line.

“Organics and all-natural will be the next hot deli products,” believes Guy Giordano, CEO and president, Vincent Giordano Corporation, based in Philadelphia, PA. “Our company has partnered with Coleman Beef to produce its all-natural roast beef and corned beef items as part of its full deli selection of all-natural products. We expect this to be a large sales growth factor for our company.”

Coleman, which specializes in natural beef products, is finding increasing markets among educated and health-conscious consumers. “The natural and organic categories are growing, both in number of users and in depth and breadth of products used by the existing customer base,” says Ed Jenkins, president of Coleman All Natural Deli, Gainesville, GA.

“At a time when concerns over the safety and wholesomeness of foods are widespread, all-natural, antibiotic-free and certified organic claims on products provide a ‘seal of approval’ for increasingly savvy, discriminating deli consumers,” Jenkins notes. “Once educated, consumers prefer deli meats made with antibiotic-free meats that are all-natural versus those made with conventional meats that make the all-natural claim based on using all-natural ingredients.”

All retail deli managers need to do to see the future of natural meats is to take a look at the changing face of retail produce.

“As the Whole Foods of the world continue their incredible expansion, organic and natural meats will increase,” notes Ron Schinbeckler, general manager, Fromartharie, Inc., Millington, NJ. “There is a real skill to producing a nitrate-free product. Humane animal husbandry practices and antibiotic-free products are also gaining in popularity.”

The trick will be to provide the increasingly popular natural meat at a price that most or much of the public can afford.

“Natural and organic meat appeals to a broader and broader base,” according to Applegate’s McDonnell. But while he believes natural is better, he admits it is more expensive to produce. “It costs a lot to raise an animal without antibiotics, steroids and growth hormones

There is, however, a growing group of discriminating customers who know clearly what they want and are willing to pay more if necessary.

The Demand For Higher Quality

A growing group of customers wants higher quality food and is willing to pay for it.

“There seems to be growth over the last 10 to 15 years at the premium end of the category,” notes Carolina’s Rao. “Fresh Look data seems to indicate growth of premium brands and super premium private label brands. Introduction of differentiated premium brands, like Just Perfect All Natural, is seen to cater to this trend and to consumers’ desire for better quality and safer products. Many consumers will pay for high quality deli meats, cheeses, salads, etc.”

This growth in sales of higher-end deli products has to do



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with a customer base that has more education and more disposable income.

"Deli meat purchasers tend to be more educated, have higher incomes and also are a little older," Rao explains. "This really has not changed much over the last decade or so. If one looks at the reason consumers shop at the deli, you find the answer for the demographic makeup. Consumer research clearly indicates that consumers purchase at the service deli because they perceive 'fresh sliced' deli meats to taste better than prepackaged meats. Therefore, they are willing to pay a premium for this. And the better the 'fresh sliced' deli meats taste, the more satisfaction is realized and the more they will buy. This could explain the reason for increased premium branded sales and more super premium private label brands today."

Bobby Yarborough, chief executive officer of Manda Fine Meats, Baton Rouge, LA, explains, "According to IDDBA's [International Dairy-Deli-Bakery Association, Madison, WI] *Who's In Store?* report, the majority of deli shoppers are between 30 and 49 years of age and have an income of \$50,000 to \$75,000."

Others suppliers agree today's consumer knows more about the products they buy.

"Consumers are more educated and have access to information, which means they know what they want and will source it out," Piller's Brandow says. "They want higher quality deli products and flavor experiences and are willing to pay more for them with that understanding — but know that there is a limit to this as well. That is to say the product must be of good value. Just because a product is expensive does not mean it will deliver on quality and flavor, which is then not a good value. If a product

can deliver on value, then it will be rewarded with sales."

Much of this education is not formal but the result of new and expanded leisure time activities. "The customers are changing. They are getting older," according to Volpi's Adler. "The customer is also better traveled, more affluent, more experimental in eating habits, which is influenced primarily through cooking shows, food channels."

Cable-television and transcontinental-jet-generation consumers are looking for the higher end variety they have discovered. "This trend to higher end products has been steadily increasing over the past five to six years," says Adler. "Customers are becoming more aware of what they are eating and want more flavorful meats with high nutritional value."

There is also an element of educated frivolity here that can benefit the deli manager who knows how to feed it. "Generally the deli consumers are upscale or have upscale tastes, and are into food as an experience or indulgent reward," Fro-

"This trend to higher end products has been steadily increasing over the past five to six years."

— **Christine Adler**
Volpi Food, Inc.

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Fromartharie's Schinbeckler says. "Haagen Dazs, anyone?"

But there are limits to how much the deli can pay for the meats that serve these upscale tastes. "Delis are continuing in their efforts to better the quality of the product in their stores, but they still consider prices when purchasing from their own suppliers," says Freybe's Dickens.

The generally affluent clientele at the deli department drives this demand for higher quality products.

"According to the IDDBA, the most frequent deli shoppers are affluent males earning \$50,000 to \$75,000 a year, aged 30 to 49 and living in large Northeastern cities," Coleman's Jenkins says. "This hasn't changed significantly in the past few years. Affluent deli shoppers are driving sales away from commodity products in the case. The areas of the deli that are enjoying growth are the premium and gourmet, or 'super-premium', along with the aforementioned all-natural antibiotic-free deli meats."

Not only must modern deli retailers provide quality, but they must also supply variety.

"Delis appeal to all consumer demographics. However, in order to be successful, a deli must provide variety and formats of products that allow today's consumer to use them in their busy lifestyle,"

The generally affluent clientele at the deli department drives this demand for higher quality products.

according to Brandow. "For example, no longer can we send our kids to school with the same ham and cheese sandwich everyday. Variety is not just the spice of life — it is the standard."

Part of the answer to the diversity issue is to make sure retailers serve customers who have a wide range of quality and price needs. "Higher quality is definitely being demanded," according to Giordano's Giordano, "but I am seeing a trend where chains will offer multiple quality levels to be sure they are capturing all of the customers out there."

One large and growing group of deli department customers has come from Mexico and points farther south. And

these consumers do not generally fit the mold of affluence.

Price-Conscious Consumers

Few people have fully appreciated the potential customer base that the growing Hispanic population brings to the deli department. "The Hispanic population has grown, and the Mexican population is used to using a deli section in their markets," says Pilgrim's Emery.

Most immigrants and children of immigrants are of modest means, so they require products that are matched with their income levels.

"I specialize in Hispanic marketing," says Edgar Soto, vice

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president for sales and marketing, Cibao Meat Products, Bronx, NY. "The situation now is that Hispanics are becoming more price conscious. They know they pay 40 to 50 percent more to have their meat sliced, rather than take it home and slice it themselves."

In order to serve a customer base that is largely feeling an economic pinch, Cibao has developed a product that could set the standard for affordability in the deli department. "We came out with a

new salami called Del Pueblo," Soto explains. "It is priced at \$2.99 a unit for 1.9 pounds, and it's going like crazy. Del Pueblo means 'the people.'" So we made a salami for the people. We use chicken and pork, rather than beef and pork, to make it more economical."

This salami of the people may be just the beginning of deli department offerings that reflect the growing Hispanic population. "Ethnic foods in general are increasingly popular," according to Freybe's

Dickens. "Hispanic foods, especially, will have the largest percentage growth over the next several years, in line with the growing percentage of Hispanics in the U.S. population."

At the same time immigration is changing the face of the country, the increasing ease of transportation for a growing leisure class is creating ethnic markets of a very different sort.

The Adventurous Travelers

For most customers, the single item that has symbolized the deli department is Italian salami. In today's changing world, Italian is still No. 1 at the deli, but the jet-age consumer is aware of more meats and is willing to experiment.

"Today's consumer is very well traveled and has experienced many new foods and flavors," Piller's Brandow says. "They are adventurous and willing to try foods that they may not be familiar with."

At the deli, adventurous may translate into authentic European or authentic Mediterranean.

"In general, ham and turkey are still the key deli meats, but the continued growth of global travel — there are now non-stop flights from Newark to Barcelona as well as Madrid — should mean the continued growth of authentic European meats, paralleling the growth of Mediterranean foods in general," notes Fromarthar's Schinbeckler.

One consequence of the rising number of consumers educated by travel is the demand for more authentic Italian deli products. "We have noticed an increase in authentic Italian-style meat products, with an emphasis on dry-cured and minimally processed products," observes Volpi's Adler.

The desire for authentic products is leading many customers to want the deli to provide an adventure. "Anything with a lot of flavor is getting more attention — people's palates are waking up," Pilgrim's Emery says.

The deli department that benefits from this culinary wake-up will have to include a range of authentic, high quality European products.

Branding Gets You Credibility

If a deli has devoted both the time and the space to stocking a variety of authentic experiences, it may be worth the resources necessary to promote the respected brands.

"Almost every retailer has a higher-end deli meat range — like Dietz & Wat-

Continued on page 54





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Reader Service No. 556

The Convenience Package

Many deli customers are under such time pressure that they will not wait for someone to slice their meat. The answer for these customers is packaging that offers deli quality at fast-food speed.

"Today's busy lifestyles are forcing people to be pressed for time," notes Michelle Dickens, marketing manager, Freybe Gourmet Foods, Langley, BC. "Shoppers are looking to pick up quality products in the fastest way they can, and yes, that means pre-packaged deli meats. Not everyone is willing to wait to order their meats and to have them sliced."

Others agree there has been a trend toward conveniently packaged deli meats.

"There is definitely more pre-packaged meat," according to Dan Emery, vice president for marketing at Pilgrim's Pride, based in Dallas, TX. "It probably began about two years ago when people came out with the chubs. The chubs are very popular because they are medium priced, and you don't have to wait for the people at the deli to slice the meat."

However, the product in this convenience

packaging must be of the same high quality as the rest of the meat in the department.

"There is a trend toward more use of pre-pack," relates Guy Giordano, CEO and president, Vincent Giordano Corp., Philadelphia, PA. "However, it is only because of the speed of service and convenience it offers. The quality of the product is similar to what's offered in the deli case but not always of the same quality."

If the package is going to be genuinely convenient, it must hold up after the package is opened at home. "Packaging is continuing to improve with the most predominant feature being re-sealability for freshness at the consumer's residence," says Ron Schinbeckler, general manager, Frommarthie, Inc., Millington, NJ.

Resealability has improved because of advances in the science of keeping refrigerated products in good condition. "New packaging concepts, like atmosphere gas packaging, have allowed for thin-sliced deli meats to be easily peeled one at a time without tearing while still providing a shelf-life that has been achieved by the stan-

dard vacuum packaging," relates Dave Brandow, director of sales and marketing, Piller Sausages, Waterloo, ON.

Good packages must be efficient in their use of space. "The stores always want packaging that takes up less space and is friendlier to the consumer," explains Steve McDonnel, president of Applegate Farms, Bridgewater, NJ.

Enough questions about convenience packages of pre-sliced deli meats have been answered that a handful of retailers have eliminated in-store slicing entirely.

"While sliced-to-order deli meats offer consumer products for almost immediate consumption, pre-packaged deli meats offer the consumer the convenience of being able to hold the product for a few weeks before opening/serving," Schinbeckler says.

"Some retailers, like Trader Joe's and Costco, do not offer store-sliced meats. However, they do a big pre-packaged deli meat business because they have worked with their vendors to develop offerings that meet today's busy consumers' needs for convenience and freshness," he adds. **DB**

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son, Boar's Head, Thumann's, Columbus — and in most cases its own private label," according to Schinbeckler. "However, most private labels are touted as the 'value brand.'"

Brand promotion is all about credibility. "A brand gets you more credibility with the customer," says Emery of Pilgrim's Pride. And by brand, he means the brand of the meat, not the name of the store.

The consumer who judges the reputations of brands has far more information, and more skepticism, than consumers of earlier generations.

Other industry insiders agree the brand that matters is usually the brand of the product. "Branding is certainly important for the manufacturer," says Freybe's Dickens. "It can also be important for the retailer.

If a retailer is carrying several high-quality brands, it should be communicating that to the end consumers, so they know they are getting good value for their money and so they will be satisfied with their purchase."



In order for branding to work, it must be consistent and it must deliver on clear promises. "Branding is always a very important part of the consumer buying decision," explains Brandow. "Branding really equates to consumer trust and confidence and can therefore be achieved through national brands, regional brands or private label. The key is to ensure that the brand message is clear, concise and genuine in order for the consumer to gain the brand's trust. This message and delivery of the message through the products must be consistent time after time."

The consumer who judges the reputations of brands has far more information, and more skepticism, than consumers of earlier generations. "Today's consumers are well educated, have access to information like never before and will change brands if they feel the message and or the products have disappointed them," Brandow continues, "unlike our parents or grandparents who would be extremely loyal to certain brands."

Despite all the caveats, there is still a large group of customers who care about trusted brand names on their deli meats.

"National consumer research recently conducted by Carolina Turkey indicates that over 50 percent of consumers are very concerned about branded deli meats and make purchase decisions based on it," Rao says. "I can tell you from past experience that this has not changed significantly over the past 10 years. You might think this number should be higher, but you must be aware that the deli meat category is not a heavily advertised category. Compared to other food categories like soft drinks, candy, frozen foods, etc., consumer advertising is sparse. Therefore, in the absence of strong branded media advertising, the 50 percent level previously mentioned is indeed very good."

Manda's Yarborough notes, "It is always a priority for a customer to identify with your product. We take great pride in all of products, and our customers across the nation know what they are getting when they purchase a Manda, Cajun Prize or Four Star product from the deli.

"I find people are very loyal to a brand they can count on for freshness, flavor and quality," he concludes. **DB**

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Photo on this page courtesy of John Volpi Foods, Inc.

Demystify Artisan Ham Before It Baffles Your Customers



Serrano and prosciutto come with a confusing array of terms and a growing group of admirers.

By Duane Craig

Descriptions for making prosciutto and serrano, whether domestic or imported, read like a textbook on standards and codes. Their creators hold a magnifying glass to the raw materials, facilities and processes that turn an everyday piece of meat into an exquisite treat.

Within this world of whey-fed hogs, horse-bone needles and centuries-old procedures are names like Prosciutto di San Daniele and Prosciutto di Parma. Add in some domestic products crafted using Old World guidelines, and some that do not, and these hams become a confusing mix of names, terms and prices.

"It's very hard for the deli staff, much less the consumer, to understand what's going on here," notes David Biltchik, chairman of the Consultants International Group, Washington, DC, and the North American advisor to the Consorzio del Prosciutto di Parma, the association of Parma Ham producers. "We have so many dry-cured hams called prosciutto and it leads to many questions. So the poor consumer is confused, and that's why we spend so much time and energy trying to help them sort it all out."

Customer questions are compounded by perceived value and price. "The biggest difference customers see at store level is cost," says Christine Adler, marketing manager for St. Louis, MO-based Volpi Foods, importer of Galloni prosciutto and producer of domestic prosciutto. Adler is a former deli category manager for Schnucks Markets, a 100-store chain based in St. Louis. "Imports are going

to be double [the price]. I think that's all they see at retail. I don't think they realize the difference in flavor resulting from the processes used to make the ham."

People warm to dry-cured hams for their unique flavors, short list of ingredients and dining satisfaction. They are enjoying a rebirth in everyday use. People use them not just for entertaining, but also in sandwiches, for breakfasts and everything in between.

"You can use prosciutto in a variety of ways throughout the year," says Michael Moody, natural foods manager for the 2-store Oliver's Market chain based in Cotati, CA. "For example, we sell an asparagus prosciutto wrap that's very popular this time of year, as well as prosciutto with cantaloupe. During holidays, prosciutto is used for hors d'oeuvres and appetizers."

"People use it for breakfast, for lunch, for entertainment," says Adler. "They use it salad or put it into pasta. It's becoming a part of lasagna, antipastos, different types of potato salads and even breakfast quiche. It really is becoming an everyday item."

THE STORY BEHIND DRY-CURED HAM

Some dry-cured hams are cooked or smoked as part of their preservation process. Also called country hams, they are quite salty. One of the most famous examples is Smithfield ham from Smithfield, VA. All other types of hams are sold cooked. They are wet cured, and in some cases injected, with salt water brine and other ingredients like sugar, sodium nitrite and flavorings.

Imported prosciutti and serrano hams are pork, salt, air and nothing else. They are not smoked or cooked in any way. Some American prosciutti use minimal ingredients while others include flavorings or spices and sodium nitrite.

Imported prosciutti and serrano are specific to the locale where they are produced. The locale's conditions give them their individual characteristics.

Prosciutto de Parma is from the Parma region of Italy. The hogs are grown in specific areas using prescribed feed that originates there. The salting and curing process is done there, watched by the Consorzio del Prosciutto di Parma, a regulating body. There are 200 producers in the region. According to the Consorzio, Prosciutto di Parma is the No. 1 imported cured ham in the United States.

"No matter who the producer is," says Biltchik, "it must dedicate one quarter of the package to a black triangle that has the Prosciutto di Parma crown with the word Parma inside. If that mark isn't on the package, it is not a genuine Prosciutto di Parma."

Other imported brands also depend on distinctive labeling attesting to origins and preparations that embody prescribed procedures. Prosciutto di San Daniele is from the Italian Friuli region where higher altitudes and drier air impart a unique flavor and texture. Other notable prosciutti are Prosciutto di Carpegna and Prosciutto Toscano.

Serrano ham from Spain has qualities similar to Italian prosciutto. The Instituto Nacional de Denominaciones de Origin

(INDO), maintains the Denominación de Origen (DO) program for these dry-cured hams and oversees quality control. Spain has four regions that fall under the DO program. Serrano does not refer to a region; it simply means "from the mountains."

Some U.S. producers follow authentic Italian recipes. These prosciutti are different than Italian versions since they do not use the raw materials from specific regions in Italy and may include ingredients not found in the Italian product. For example, Volpi makes an American prosciutto very different from a Prosciutto di Parma because the hogs used are leaner than those used for the Italian product. To people trying to avoid fat, this may be an advantage. For others, many of the unique flavors of Prosciutto di Parma are associated with the fat.

The lower price point of the domestic products can introduce new customers to the world of prosciutto and serrano. It also allows retailers to offer some price options.

PACKAGING HELPS DRIVE SALES

All these products have gained popularity because of growing interest in ethnic food and because they are often featured on cooking shows and in recipes. Sales, however, are tied closely to demographics.

"In our store, these hams have always been popular," says Stephanie Standen, deli manager for one of three stores in the O'Brien's Market chain, headquartered in Riverbank, CA. "We have other stores, though, where it's not as big an item."

"Right now, Spanish products are where French were 10 years ago," adds Filena Fernandez, marketing specialist for Webeco Foods of Miami, FL, a distributor of Redondo Iglesias serrano hams "and they are the hottest thing. We're selling more Spanish products than ever before."

"Dry-cured ham is a category that's been growing at double digits for the last five to six years," adds Volpi's Adler. "For example, prosciutto has definitely increased its volume by double or triple. Not only is it on all the food shows, but it's also a more healthful product since it has less salt than a regular ham and is minimally processed."

According to the Consorzio, "Sales of Prosciutto di Parma reached an all-time high in 2005 with more than 5.5 million pounds imported from Italy into the United States, about 20 percent more than was sold in 2004. Imports of pre-sliced, packaged Prosciutto di Parma were an important factor in generating the record-breaking sales."

These hams are available in bulk for slicing in the deli, although they present challenges. The hams are often too big for deli

When To Stock What

Producers, importers and retailers see retail price driving decisions about whether or not to stock these items. David Biltchik, chairman of the Consultants International Group, Washington, DC, and the North American advisor to the Consorzio del Prosciutto di Parma, sees Prosciutto di Parma, at \$20 per pound, a hurdle for lower-end markets. Alberto Minardi, a partner and general manager of Principe Foods Inc., Los Angeles, CA agrees, yet he opens the door by noting these products can elevate the quality perception of the deli case. Others say they are a must to stock.

"Every deli department should be able to provide its customers with the essentials, one of which is a quality prosciutto," says Marc McCullagh, marketing manager for Hayward, CA-based Columbus Salame Company. "With the Slow Food movement taking shape, American consumers are learning how to appreciate the joys of good food. They are learning how to cook with it, entertain with it and just simply enjoy it as a snack."

Filena Fernandez, marketing specialist, Webeco Foods, Miami, FL, echoes his assessment as it applies to serrano. "I believe there's a difference in flavor, and I think it's a matter of educating the public. I think that the public should have access to both serrano and prosciutto and be able to choose. The Spanish ham is sweeter."

Stores can consider adding to what they already carry or adding some price-specific products from the category to test sales. What to stock depends on the store's customers.

"Upscale supermarkets should definitely slice to order because that's what the consumer wants," begins Sherrie Zebrasky, retail advisor to Principe Foods and retired deli buyer for the 69-store Wegmans chain, based in Rochester, NY. "But they should have the pre-sliced for convenience, too. The typical prosciutto purchase is a quarter pound or less, and the pre-sliced pack will be about that"

"We have it pre-packaged, pre-sliced and in open pieces," says Stephanie Standen, deli manager for one of three stores in the O'Brien's Market chain, based in Riverbank, CA. "We sell prosciutto di Parma and then we sell a domestic brand that doesn't require any trimming. We have other stores in our company where it's not as big an item."

"If you go to an area with many ethnicities, you will have many different brands of prosciutto, and there will be pre-sliced as well as bulk in the case," explains Christine Adler, marketing manager for St. Louis, MO-based Volpi Foods. "Those are the markets where you'll find a lot more dried cured products. That's where you'll find the Spanish, German, Canadian and Italian versions. If I were a buyer in a less diverse area, I wouldn't put in three or four prosciutti and expect to be able to sell them all."

"Upscale markets will tend to draw more customers looking for a prosciutto because of the retail price of a quality prosciutto," says McCullagh. "To realize maximum prosciutto sales, delis should provide both an imported prosciutto and a more reasonably priced domestic prosciutto."

DB

slicing machines. Then, too, there are special trimming and slicing requirements that savvy customers expect to be done correctly.

"Waste remains an issue," says Alberto Minardi, a partner and general manager of Principe Foods Inc. in Los Angeles, CA. A subsidiary of Kipre Holding, Principe is the authorized U.S. and Mexico distributor of Kipre's brand of Prosciutto di Parma and Prosciutto di San Daniele. "The correct approach is always towards education in terms of training deli personnel on how to handle, store and slice the product."

"The down side of slice-to-order is not all deli personnel have the skill to do it right," says Sherrie Zebrasky, retail advisor to Principe Foods and retired deli buyer for Wegmans, the 69-store chain based in

Rochester, NY. "You have to trim the leg exactly right. You've got to cut away the skin. You have to slice it very thin, lay it on tissue and put tissue between the slices. So it's labor intensive for the deli people."

Manufacturers are addressing these issues by changing the way bulk product is packaged and by relying more on pre-sliced and pre-packaged products. Webeco Foods offers deli loaves of its imported serrano ham, and in May it began offering pre-sliced packaged serrano.

Others also point to the importance of pre-slice to future sales.

"The future of a product like Prosciutto di Parma to guarantee its quality, its freshness and its taste is in prepackaging," says Consultants' Biltchik. "In England, for exam-

ple, the supermarkets realize it's a tough product to handle in the deli section so they've built up their customers' confidence in pre-sliced. Three ounces is the normal pre-sliced retail pack you find and that's enough to serve two people very nicely."

"Pre-sliced items are growing at about 35 percent a year," adds Minardi.

While pre-sliced appears to be an important new direction for these products, there is still a strong deli case following.

"There is a lot involved in processing the prosciutto," says Adler, "so we offer one that is already trimmed and ready for the deli to slice. As I purchased this product for supermarkets over the years, the pre-slice was growing but not at the expense of the bulk. Pre-sliced is easy, it's quick, you don't have to stand in line – I think that's a different customer. The ones who have it sliced at the deli case are die-hard deli customers. They want to be served and want you to take care of them. I don't see that customer going away."

SHELF LIFE AND PROMOTION

"When you get into a product like this that has a high retail, anything from 45 to 60 percent profit should be possible depending on the retailer," says Zebrasky. "It has to have a higher retail to make up for shrink on the whole ham product."

"The whole Parma Ham has a shelf life of six months or longer," explains Biltchik, "but once it's open, the store should use it in 30 days or less. The packaged pre-sliced product has a much more limited shelf life – 90 days. It requires good logistics, and retailers need a supplier who will get that product into their warehouse fast since it most likely has to come in by ship, a 30-day process."

Once the product is in the store, the opportunities for promotion and cross-merchandising are vast.

"You have to tell some people how to use it," explains Zebrasky. "People who know prosciutto will know what they're going to do with it. It would not be unusual in a real upscale venue for someone to come in and buy a pound or two of prosciutto for a party. There is also an opportunity at the point of sale for the deli people to be able to explain the product to the customer."

"Tastings!" exclaims Biltchik. "It really is the only way. We support tastings in the store. The Consorzio, working through its marketing agencies in the United States, welcomes proposals. And if a supermarket chain wanted to do a fantastic thing, it could do a promotion of fresh melon and Prosciutto de Parma."

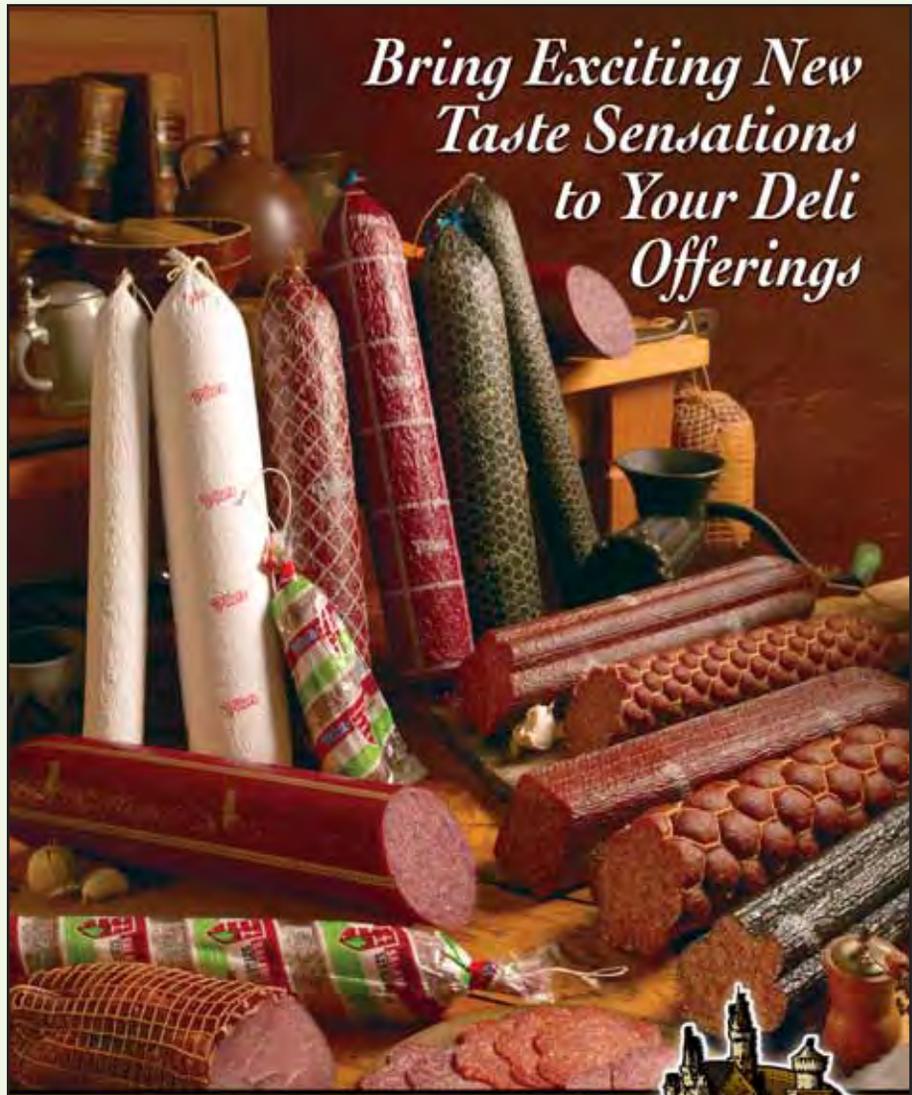
"Sampling. Recipe ideas. Do demos," advises Volpi's Adler. "We're actively working

on promotions through the retail level. Getting the customer using it more often also means taking the time to show them how to use it. I think it's just a matter of educating the customer."

"We stress the retailers slice the product until they drop!" says Principe's Minardi. "Focus on demonstrating the product at every occasion. Co-promote with other products like mozzarella and imported Ital-

ian cheeses."

According to Marc McCullagh, marketing manager for Hayward, CA-based Columbus Salame Company, a producer of domestic prosciutto and other specialty deli meats, "The ever-growing market of pre-sliced meats provides an extra avenue for realizing sales. A 2- to 4-ounce package of sliced prosciutto is perfect for entertaining and allows for an ideal retail price." **DB**



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The Importance Of Bread

Varieties of breads help consumers build the perfect sandwich.

By Nalini Maharaj

Deli department breads have come a long way from traditional white and wheat. Consumers can choose from a vast array to make the perfect sandwich.

According to *What's in Store 2006* from the International Dairy-Deli-Bakery Association (IDDBA), Madison, WI, 70 percent of U.S. bread and roll purchases take place at grocery stores. Twenty-five percent of in-store bread and roll consumers bought more bread and rolls than the previous year. Of the consumers surveyed, nearly half felt product quality had improved, and 44 percent claimed to purchase more due to increased variety.

Healthful Breads

"Consumers want variety in selection and consistency in quality," says Shelby Weeda, president of King's Hawaiian Bakery West, Inc., Torrance, CA. "There needs to be equal attention placed on deli bread products and meats in order to provide that experience for customers. While white breads like our Original Recipe have been a mainstay with consumers, we've seen an increased demand for grain and wheat-flavored varieties for health-minded consumers. Our successes in rolling out the 100 percent Whole Wheat and Honey Wheat products are an excellent tribute to that trend."

Consumers want the ability to choose products that meet both their tastes and their health preferences and concerns. Fourteen percent of consumers bought fewer breads and rolls than in the previous year, with just over half these consumers indicating the reason for the decrease was a particular diet, according to *What's In Store 2006*.

"Consumers are definitely looking for more whole grains, but they must be whole grains that also taste good," says Joan Rubschlager, secretary-treasurer for Rubschlager Baking Corp., Chicago, IL. "Breads offer much opportunity for adding delicious whole-grain options to the diet. Most consumers see the need to add both flavor and nutrition with all foods in their diet. Bread is



Merchandising Breads In The Deli

The deli department offers many opportunities to increase sales through impulse purchases and cross-merchandising. “The deli is a great place to sell bread because while consumers are standing on line waiting for their meats and cheese, they can purchase their breads right there rather than walking around the supermarket,” says Karen Toufayan, vice president of sales for Toufayan Bakery, Ridgefield, NJ.

“King’s Hawaiian has found the deli is an ideal place for selling product,” states Shelby Weeda, president, Kings Hawaiian Bakery West Inc., Torrance, CA. “We constantly seek to position our products as premium, one-of-a-kind authentic specialty breads. Having our bread and rolls in the deli section — away from the bread aisle — creates a sense of separation from other breads for consumers. Additionally, consumers see our product as a meal solution in the deli section, not just an accompaniment. King’s Hawaiian has found its chicken, turkey and ham meal-deal programs to be mutually beneficial in working with delis. Consumers can purchase pre-prepared entrée items with sides and receive either a 4-pack or 12-pack of our dinner rolls. Customers recognize the brand, and it provides deli buyers with added value and increased sales for take-out items.”

Cross-merchandising breads, meats, cheeses and condiments can be very profitable if items are displayed to give consumers a one-stop shopping experience.

“I have had some success with cross-marketing Cedar’s wraps with Cedar’s hommus,” adds Dominick Frocione, vice president of sales, Cedars Mediterranean Foods, Ward Hill, MA, “We do something such as buy a 16-ounce hommus, get a free or deeply discounted wrap. I’d be happy to tie in a deal with a deli meat but haven’t done so yet. I like the idea of cross-marketing with another item because it usually affords a manufacturer the chance to get his product in the hands of a new customer. The trick is getting the retailer to work with us on margin to build new customers. Everyone is under pressure to raise margins, and in some cases that limits growth opportunities.”

Proper deli displays can be a challenge since most delis have limited space. However, displays attract consumer attention and pique interest in a product.

“The deli is a bad place for breads if they are not properly merchandised and taken care of. Stores should be consistent with placement in the deli. Breads should be in the same spot in a branded display unit. Chains should always be consistent and visible with their breads in the deli. The proper code dating is also important,” says George Kashou, vice president/owner of Kangaroo Brands, Milwaukee, WI.

Deli breads should be displayed front-and-center in the deli. Placing breads in front of the meat and cheese cases attracts consumers, especially when they are ordering the fillings for a sandwich.

“The best place for deli breads is on the ‘knee-knocker;’ but they tend to be disappearing as stores add the newer deli cases. Wire racks and baskets offer the next best choice for displaying deli breads. Care must be taken, however, to be sure the breads are not positioned in direct line with a refrigerated case exhaust or directly on top of lighted display cases, because such position produces frequent changes in temperature that cause moisture to be drawn from the product. This can lead to dry bread and/or premature mold on the products,” states Joan Rubschlager, secretary/treasurer for Rubschlager Baking Corp., Chicago, IL. **DB**

no exception — people do not want to add ‘empty’ calories with a white bread when they can add necessary whole grains and flavor, too. Most consumers are now becoming aware that more whole grains in the diet offer many benefits.”

The company’s fastest-growing group of breads is the Rye-Olas. These are four breads made with 100 percent whole rye. According to Rubschlager, these very dense, grainy, European-style breads appeal to several different types of consumers: those with wheat allergies, those wanting to add more whole grains to their diets and those who just enjoy them.

Paninis Are Hot

“There has been an increase in demand for panini breads — they have become the latest trend for breakfast, lunch or dinner. However, wraps and roll-ups are extremely popular as well,” relates Chef Demetrios Haralambatos of Paterson, NJ-based Kontos Foods Inc., which manufactures hand-stretched flatbread, including panini, pocket-less pita and pocket pita.

Haralambatos describes the panini as an upscale sandwich and says the trend started in Boston, MA, and New York, NY. Hot-pressed sandwiches are now popular throughout the country, although they may have different names in different regions. In the Northeast they are usually called paninis, and in the South they are usually called hot press. One of the more famous varieties, the Cuban sandwich, is made with specific ingredients — layers of ham, roast pork, cheese and pickle between a sliced length of Cuban bread — and then pressed in the panini grill.

Throughout the last year and a half, panini sandwiches, have gained popularity in the deli department.

“Consumers like paninis because they are a warm sandwich that is more appetizing and more of a meal than just a regular sandwich,” says Karen Toufayan, vice president of Toufayan Bakeries, Ridgefield, NJ.

Retailers, including Tom Thumb, Dominick’s, ShopRite and Albertson’s are offering paninis that are normally placed in the display case where consumers can pick

which one they want. The sandwiches are then put on a panini press and warmed up.

Different types of grill presses produce different looks. One heats up a sandwich with grill lines, one does it without grill lines and another makes grill marks on only one side of the sandwich. These grill marks are a significant feature for some demographics. For example, most Cuban sandwiches in Florida do not have grill marks.

Consumers Like Flatbreads

Pitas, lahvosh and wraps are also growing trends in the deli department. Offered in healthful varieties such as whole-grain and low-carb, these breads have helped to expand the horizons of many consumers who are now accustomed to ordering a wrap or pita sandwich.

A trend with pita breads is the different healthful varieties available to the health-conscious consumer.

“Consumers want a more balanced eating habit. They want more healthful breads with clean ingredient labels that are all natural,” says George Kashou, vice president/



King's Hawaiian



King's Hawaiian 'Deals' with Deli Consumer Demands



With nearly 50 years experience, King's Hawaiian knows a thing or two about baking great tasting, high-quality bread for their loyal customers. Deli buyers can leverage this customer loyalty and generate revenue by featuring King's Hawaiian as part of meal deals.

King's Hawaiian, maker of the nation's top-selling dinner roll, originally developed its meal deal concept to increase deli buyers' profits. By including King's Hawaiian rolls, operators started to enjoy wider profit margins due to the low-unit cost of King's Hawaiian rolls and the added value of pre-prepared meal offerings.

Deli buyers nationwide continue to enjoy these profits today.

Increase Revenue By Meeting Consumer Demand

It is important for deli buyers to stay in touch with changing consumer demands. Today's busy consumers want meals that are not only great tasting, but also convenient.

Recognizing this shift in consumer preference, King's Hawaiian worked with delis nationwide to include the home-style taste of King's Hawaiian bread with the convenience that delis offer.

Meeting changing consumer demand is an important first step in growing and maintaining the customer base.



Increase Revenue By Blending Brands

The loyal customers of King's Hawaiian have been purchasing and enjoying the delicious sweet bread for more than half a century. In order to attract new and retain existing customers, deli operators can benefit from offering meal deals that feature King's Hawaiian products.

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owner of Kangaroo Brands, Milwaukee, WI.

Kangaroo's patented pocket pita is pre-opened so it is ready to be filled without tearing. The company also makes salad pockets, sandwich pockets and regular pockets. Salad pockets can be used for chicken or tuna salads, and the sandwich pockets can be used to replace bagels or sliced bread. Pocket pita varieties include white, wheat and honey, and whole grain.

"Consumers are much more sophisticated these days," explains Jenni Bonsignore, marketing coordinator of Valley Lahvosh Baking Company, Fresno, CA. "Being into food is trendy and hip. A lot of people watch the Food Network, and celebrity chefs are a hot commodity. I think consumers in the deli want to experiment with new foods, try to improve how the food they serve looks on the plate and sample new flavor combinations. Flatbreads have become very mainstream now, and people are starting to realize how versatile they can be."

Valley Lahvosh manufactures lahvosh, an Armenian flatbread. Lahvosh is low fat and does not have any cholesterol or trans-fat. It is made in a variety of sizes and shapes, including a heart and a star. The smaller sizes are often served with cheeses and spreads or used as an hors d'oeuvre base.

The medium sizes can be used as a pizza crust or a tostada base.

The traditional lahvosh is a 15-inch

"People want more variety and understand that choosing different breads for their sandwich can give it a whole new twist. If you don't offer consumers enough choices, they may go elsewhere."

***— Jenni Bonsignore
Valley Lahvosh Baking Co.***

round crispy bread alternative that can be broken up into irregular-sized pieces to eat as is or with meats and cheeses. This size can also be moistened to soften it so it can be

used to make a wrap-style sandwich.

"In the current environment, I think bread is very important to a sandwich program. People want more variety and understand that choosing different breads for their sandwich can give it a whole new twist. If you don't offer consumers enough choices, they may go elsewhere," adds Bonsignore.

The company also makes Valley Wraps, which are lahvosh breads that are soft and pliable right out of the package and thus perfect for wraps. Valley Lahvosh promotes recipes for everything from breakfast wraps to deli wraps to vegetarian wraps.

"Wraps are displacing pita bread and conventional rolls in front of retail deli counters," according to Dominick Frocione, vice president of sales for Cedars Mediterranean Foods, Ward Hill, MA. "Pita bread customers are moving to wraps and lahvosh because they hold up much better than pita bread, which is pretty fragile when you start adding condiments. The Northeast has always been a strong pita market, and it continues to do well, but wraps are commanding a lion's share of the space and sales volume."

Cedars manufactures wraps and lahvosh in a variety of flavors. The best selling are white, wheat, low carb, tomato/basil and spinach. Cedars will be launching a flax seed lahvosh in the near future to cater to health-conscious consumers.

"Wraps work very well for sandwich programs because they are very versatile. They do not break down when you add condiments, they are available in a number of flavor profiles and they also offer the consumer eye appeal. The color is much more apparent in wraps [than in other types of bread] and makes a great looking roll-up sandwich. Wraps also hold up well under refrigeration versus other style bread that might be used in a sandwich program," adds Frocione. **DB**

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Five Seismic Shifts Shaping The Deli Industry

How can retailers organize their procurement and operate a successful supply chain?

By James E. Prevor
Editor-In-Chief

It is tempting to say that changes in the industry have transformed the role of the buyer of deli and other perishable foods, but a more accurate assessment is that a profoundly new situation has altered the role of every player in the supply chain. And if the job of a buyer has changed, it is no more so than the job of the seller has changed. How any individual retailer or vendor deals with the new supply chain realities will play a big role in the success each organization will enjoy in the years to come.

There are five earthquakes that have transformed procurement and are continuing to shape the new supply chain reality:

1. Consolidation

Not all that long ago, the big talk in the industry was fear of the “fax auction” where, as fax machines became commonplace, every vendor started faxing over offers every morning. It seemed like a race to the bottom for price. All of a sudden, without any work, buyers would have access to every vendor’s price every day.

With the development of e-mail and various electronic procurement systems, the sharing of information has made for an even more competitive environment. But, for large chains, the fluctuation in day-to-day price by

vendors, or even the offer of special deals, is mostly irrelevant because nobody is sitting around with enough excess product to allow the sudden shifting of vendors.

This creates a dynamic not often noted. Although it is presumed that larger chains with more substantial buying power can buy for less, this is not always true. In many cases, larger chains are so constrained in their choice of vendors and so need to plan procurement in advance that they are unable to take advantage of fluctuations in supply and demand. In addition, large chains account for such a large portion of each vendor’s business that the vendors often cannot sustain unprofitable business to these customers. In effect, the buying organization has to consider supplier maintenance and development in its purchasing. What good would it do Wal-Mart, for example, if it continuously bankrupts its vendors and has to constantly scramble to find new ones?

Consolidation has created the need for operators to make sure that vendors have predictable sales at a sustainable price so as to insure adequate supplies and minimal out-of-stocks.

2. Micro-Marketing

It is said that for every action there is a

reaction, and the action of retail consolidation — particularly as such consolidation has been undertaken with the explicit goal of reducing costs through centralized procurement, higher volume private label production runs, greater leverage with suppliers, etc. — is likely, if not counteracted in some way, to lead to a national chain of boring uniformity, unresponsive to the regional, ethnic and demographic differences and thus unable to maximize sales.

Indeed, this is not a hypothetical threat; it is an almost exact description of what happened when Safeway acquired such regional jewels as Dominicks, Randalls and Genuardi’s. In its attempt to drive costs from the system by leveraging buying power, Safeway eliminated popular hometown products, brands and private label items. Predictably, whatever costs were driven from the system could not possibly compensate for the alienation of customers, and Safeway has backtracked, in some cases by trying to restore certain items, in other cases by giving up and selling or closing stores.

If, on the one hand, consolidation has led to a need for volumes of product so massive that day-to-day trading is almost impossible, the same consolidation has led to a reaction in which chains are emphasizing micro-mar-

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keting — adjusting store assortment to meet the needs and desires of the clientele of individual stores. So Wal-Mart has a rabbi at a store in Tennessee and Albertson's has a kosher deli in the store in Boca Raton, FL, and an ethnic hair center in a store serving a different demographic group 20 minutes down the road.

Indeed, sometimes this micro-marketing trend is so strong that chains are literally setting up different concepts: Publix Sabor, a concept focused on Latinos, for example.

The consequence of this micro-marketing is an enormous increase in the complexity of procurement and difficulty in managing the supply chain.

Large national chains looking to do a good job are running stores to appeal to Latinos, Asians, the elderly, kosher food consumers, halal food consumers, single urban professionals and much more.

In the past, most stores did not go beyond a region; now they go around the country. In an environment focused on removing costs from the system, the need to make this work is an enormous challenge in the industry.

For vendors, the question is how do you get attention for your product that sells well in communities with large Thai populations. For retailers, the question is how do you evaluate all these products, distribute all these products and manage vendor relationships with so many producers.

3. Product Mix Goes Upscale; Foodservice Becomes Big Business

If micro-marketing does not increase the complexity of the product mix enough, two other trends really are icing on the cake of complexity in the deli department.

As Wal-Mart has staked out its territory, claiming ownership of the paycheck-to-paycheck consumer, supermarkets have done two things.

First they have emphasized a broad assortment of high-quality perishables. For example, stores that a decade ago sold a few types of slicing cheese now regularly have an assortment of specialty cheeses.

Second, finding difficulty competing with Wal-Mart on conventional grocery products, supermarkets have come to emphasize labor-intensive foodservice offerings.

Of course, procurement for this new array of products offers special challenges. The decision to sell specialty cheese, for example, means the necessity of selecting what cheese to sell since no store can carry every cheese and there are distinctions between cheeses based on the country of origin, the state of origin and the producer, which is not the case with the purchase of

bulk commodities.

Foodservice has its own challenges, as there are enormous considerations with ease of preparation, equipment needs, branded programs, in-store vs. commissary vs. purchase from manufacturers.

Especially vexing is that few people in a traditional supermarket deli operation have any experience or competency in dealing with these issues.

Formal foodservice offerings and expansion into upscale specialty offerings share the same characteristic: They reject the traditional retail paradigm in which retailers just put out products and see if they sell.

Formal foodservice offerings and expansion into upscale specialty offerings share the same characteristic: They reject the traditional retail paradigm in which retailers just put out products and see if they sell.

Foodservice and, to a large extent, upscale items where no conventional supermarket can stock all available brands and types, depend on the vendor making a decision. This means retailers get involved in cuttings and tastings and similar evaluative techniques. It also means the need for consumer research to be able to make selections on behalf of one's customers.

Many a kosher buyer successfully bought ham for supermarket chains. It was not necessary for him to personally taste the ham. The changing nature of the deli product mix, however, is demanding new competencies on the procurement end.

4. Global Procurement/Private Label/ Product Development

Once upon a time...

Few products were imported

Private label was rare in perishables.

Retailers considered products presented by manufacturers and producers.

Imported product was presented to retailers by importers or specialty food distributors, private label product was pushed by private label manufacturers, and every vendor was eager to tell stores what to sell.

The large scale of modern retailing, the use of so many imported products and the international scope of many of the large retailers have led to many efforts to directly import products. In some cases, it has led to the opening of separate global procurement offices. Buying around the world increases lead times, increasing transit times, and it can leave a retailer short of product if there is spoilage in transit or non-delivery. There are complicated issues regarding currencies and advances. Few deli buyers have any experience with these issues.

Wal-Mart has its Prima Della line. Safeway has its Primo Taglio and Safeway Select Lines. Kroger has its Private Selection line. The product mix at most chains today is heavy to private label. But procuring and handling private label perishables is another ball of wax. How does a chain make sure such perishable items are consistent and do not sully the brand name? How should these products be positioned in the mix with national and regional brands? Deli buyers are not used to dealing with these issues.

In today's competitive environment, few deli operations have the luxury of sitting back and waiting to be presented with product ideas. When executives at Costco were interested in the prosciutto business, they knew the old-time model of having experienced people slicing prosciutto at store level would not fit its model.

So a team was dispatched to Italy to meet with top producers. The result: Pre-sliced, pre-packaged prosciutto is now a best seller at Costco. But old-style buyers could not make something like that happen.

Between global procurement, private label growth and the need to participate in product development, the skill sets for deli buyers are more varied than ever before.

5. Food Safety And Food Security

In the good old days, a buyer had a great deal of flexibility. The earnest young man (it was always a man back then) shows up on the doorstep with a smile, a shoeshine and a promise to make it work, and the old buyer, seeing a hint of himself 30 years earlier, decides to give the kid a break.

Today, that flexibility is much less. Now that buyer needs to know if the production plant is HACCP-certified, if it is properly registered in accordance with The Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002, and if it meets internal chain requirements for food

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safety and food security.

Not only has consolidation limited the choice of suppliers since only a few can meet volume requirements, but food safety and food security concerns have also further attenuated the list of available suppliers. At very least, the lag time before a supplier can be certified has increased substantially.

It all adds up to a world in which buyers find their freedom of action significantly constrained by laws, regulations, rules and requirements.

What To Do Next

So, confronted with this new environment, how do retailers respond? What kind of competencies do retailers need in their buyers? What new responsibilities are put on vendors? How can retailers organize their procurement and operate a successful supply chain?

First, kill all the buyers. Well, not literally. But in many cases, the old job title of buyer does not exist anymore. Maybe someone is a category manager or a merchandising manager. But these are not merely semantic differences. The titles reflect the reality that buyers today have many responsibilities that go beyond haggling for a lower price.

Second, split the responsibilities high and low. It is very common today for the actual procurement responsibilities to be divided. On the one hand is the actual decision to carry a product and buy it from a specific company. This process often takes months, sometimes years. It involves, at base, a high-level deli person to “make the deal.” Then, once the deal is established, it requires a replenishment clerk to keep it going. The actual establishment of the deal can involve many other people as well. For example, a separate food safety person may have to sign off on a vendor’s facilities and paper trail.

It is also possible that certain types of procurement can be assigned to specialized procurement agents. The global sourcing office, for example, might buy prosciutto for stores on several continents. Because making the deal usually involves contracting for certain volumes, setting either a price or a reference off which the price will be determined, etc., the deal involves significant financial liability and thus usually is negotiated by a person with great responsibility and a position of trust in the retailer’s organization. The actual title of the person will depend on several factors including the size of the retailer, the importance of the product and the scope of liability.

In some chains and situations, it may be the deli director; in other situations there may be procurement personnel just for that purpose. Commitments over a set dollar



In today's deli, procurement responsibilities go far beyond getting the lowest price.

amount may require approval of a chief financial officer or a buying committee.

Third, make the vendor do the buying. There are a lot of programs and a lot of names: Vendor managed replenishment and collaborative planning, forecasting and replenishment (CPFR) are among the most common. Once the basic decision has been made to handle a product, there is a substantial argument that vendors should do the buying.

One of the biggest costs in manufacturing is the maintenance of excess inventory. By giving the vendor exposure to real-time sales and inventory data, the vendor is able to better anticipate need for product, plan production runs and coordinate transportation — all things that drive costs out of the system. Increasingly, we are seeing situations where vendors are being asked to maintain title to goods until the product leaves the distribution center. This model also frees up retail staff to focus on where they can add value: Selecting product, effective marketing and merchandising.

Fourth, work the metrics. How do you determine if a supplier should be retained or replaced? The old way allowed for a lot of judgment calls, which meant everything from personality conflicts to bribery could influence supplier retention. New systems now enable the procurement staff to carefully monitor sets of metrics and, typically, vendors are informed, in advance, what metrics they are obligated to reach.

Out of stocks, late delivery, rejected product — for each product category, metrics are established and communicated. The evaluation of the vendor thus switches from a subjective, emotionally driven experience to an analytical skill. And, indeed, the skill set of buyers switches from an ability to make sub-

stantive judgments about product quality, character and performance to a database-driven, quantitative ability to review, manipulate and evaluate the data collected from various systems.

Fifth, someone has to be in charge of the food. It could be the vendors. If they are appointed as a kind of category captain for, say, wet salads, they may have the expertise and experience with other retailers to know what products are worth trying. In other cases, retailers may sign up for a branded program, such as the ones Boar’s Head and Dietz and Watson offer, and allow the vendors to handle the merchandising mix. Typically, though, retailers like to maintain control over their offerings, and this is more so as chains try to position themselves as upscale.

In such cases, a system has to be established for identifying likely products and evaluating products. So at Whole Foods Market, with an enormous focus on specialty cheese, the chain has a national cheese buyer, Cathy Strange, who has been in the restaurant business, is the former president of the American Cheese Society and has an affinity for the Slow Foods movement and the cultural richness of cheese.

But she is the exception — most chains do not have people in the procurement positions who are “foodies,” able to evaluate subtle distinctions in flavor and texture. These chains lean heavily on vendor expertise, may do in-house cuttings with staffers, may have formal test kitchen evaluations and may run consumer focus groups; they may look at competitors and what they are doing.

But no matter how high-tech and demanding the procurement of deli products has become, no matter how complex the supply chain is to manage, somebody, somewhere, still has to select the food to sell. **DB**



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Salads — Fresh Image Builders

Deli salads are key to building consumers' perception of freshness.

By Nalini Maharaj

Consumers love deli department salads, many of which are comfort foods they have grown up with and still enjoy. With summer approaching, increased salad sales are on the way. Whether for a barbecue, picnic, family gathering or no-cook-meal, some sort of salad is bound to be on the table.

According to *What's in Store 2006* from the International Dairy Deli Bakery Association (IDDBA), Madison, WI, sales of salads in the service deli represent about 12.5 percent of all deli sales, for a total of approximately \$1.86 billion.

Sales of refrigerated prepared salads, not including fruit salad, gelatin salad or fresh-cut salad, reach approximately \$400 million per year according to the Refrigerated Foods Association (RFA), Atlanta, GA in its *25th Anniversary Supplement, 2005*.

According to ACNielsen data in an RFA report, the heaviest users of refrigerated prepared salads are empty nesters followed by middle-aged childless couples. The report also indicated that the West has 25 percent of sales dollars and the South makes up 41 percent of sales volume.

The More Variety, The Better

Salads in the deli include traditional commodity salads (potato, macaroni and cole slaw). However, they have taken on a new look and some new additions to keep customers happy. Variety is the key to keeping customers interested and coming back on a regular basis.

"The sale of commodity salads is going down because consumers are shying away from the mayonnaise based, caloric, high-fat content. Foods are changing and salads are a focal point for change. Consumers are interested in more contemporary flavors," says Jeffrey Siegel, president of Chloe Foods Corporation, Brooklyn, NY.

Some consumers are staying away from

Continued on page 74



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PROCUREMENT STRATEGIES

Continued from page 70

the traditional salads due to health concerns. Others are trying new items because of perceived health benefits. Deli offerings must change so they can keep customers interested and coming back.

"At Sandridge, our traditional potato, macaroni, and cole slaw offerings have developed into the popular and profitable Grandma's Original Recipes line of fresh foods," says Mark Sandridge, CEO of Sandridge Food Corporation, Medina, OH. "Same store sales of Grandma's pre-packaged salads are up 43 percent this year compared to last, and we see this trend continuing. Like a caterpillar transforming into a butterfly, these commodity products have become exciting again with our wide varieties. To appeal to a broad range of consumers' tastes, we offer everything from old-fashioned to German to Texas redskin potato salads."

According to Mark Brown, president of Orval Kent, Schaumburg, IL, "Orval Kent's best-selling refrigerated salads still are potato salads, cole slaws and macaroni salads because consumers still rely on the traditional favorites that they grew up with at family dinners, parties and barbecues. These are the tried-and-true crowd pleasers and will continue to be the mainstay for our customers.

"At the same time, we are witnessing growing interest in innovative items for customers who want to add new items to their menus, whether it's for parties or everyday dining at home. Overall growth in this particular section is being driven by innovative new items that replace preparation for consumers, or offer a restaurant-quality experience at home," he continues.

Another way to offer variety is to make natural and organic items available. Although consumers who normally buy conventional will often try natural and organic, the reverse is not necessarily true.

"There is more interest in natural and organic items," notes Wendie DiMatteo, CEO of ASK Foods, Inc., Palmyra, PA. "Consumers are requesting salads that are made with organic ingredients that have no preservatives and have natural dressings. You will see more organic offerings in the deli pretty soon. This is a trend ahead of us that we are considering. It will not take over the deli, it will just be a small section."

Another trend DiMatteo touches on is the consumer's interest in variety. "There has been a decrease in traditional salads. There is still a lot of strength in the category, but it has taken a facelift to more variety. The new varieties have taken on a high volume and consumption so that the consumer does not get tired of the same old flavors. Ethnic trends such as Asian, Italian and Mexi-

can are very popular at the moment. You must also keep the vegetarian in mind so offering a tuna, egg or grain salad is also important. A blend of categories is very important. However, do not go too heavy — go just enough to make choices available to customers," adds DiMatteo.

ASK Foods offers a variety of potato salads and cole slaws with different flavor profiles, including Cajun potato salad, baked potato salad and sweet potato salad, that are more healthful. Cole slaw varieties are available with vinaigrette and sweet honey mustard dressing.

Salads dressing are an easy and distinctive way to offer variety.

"The consumer is very different today as opposed to two years ago. You have to cater to consumers, entice them and make products that are interesting so they will be successfully sold."

***— Tara Milligan
Chicken of the Sea,
International***

"Consumers are looking for unique items and flavors. Asian salad dressings such as ginger have become very popular. Another trend would be the expanding applications of salad dressings. Many people are now using them to cook as well as for a topping on a salad. Consumers are looking for high quality and full-flavored products that are healthful," according to David Federico, marketing manager of Naturally Fresh, Inc., Atlanta, GA. Naturally Fresh has extended its ranch category by adding a Southwestern-style ranch dressing and a jalapeño ranch dressing.

"Serve what the consumer would like to eat. The consumer is very different today as opposed to two years ago," suggests Tara Milligan, director of marketing for Chicken of the Sea, International, San Diego, CA. "You have to cater to consumers, entice them and

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Increasing Salad Sales

Retailers can increase the sales of deli salads by effectively merchandising the pre-pack, full-service and self-serve cases with a variety of choices and by promotions.

Convenience is of great importance to consumers. They want to be able to go into the store and get right out, especially if they are on their lunch break or rushing home to prepare a family meal. The grab-and-go case should be a destination for the busy consumer.

"[Retailers] are appealing to the 'empty fridges,' 'takeout enthusiasts' and 'enablers' who embrace the convenience of takeout foods, as defined in a study by Technomic Inc. [Chicago, IL]," explains Mark Sandridge, CEO of Sandridge Food Corporation, Medina, OH. "Takeout options at supermarkets are growing at the expense of QSR and casual dining restaurants. But one size does not fit all, or in the food industry, one ingredient does not work for all recipes.

"At Sandridge, we have discovered that some customers are seeking more grab-and-go packages of salads, and retailers such as Publix have expanded their grab-and-go cases. In response to the growing trend of takeout foods, we are expanding our Grandma's line for this very reason — to offer these consumers more variety and selection to take home to eat. Salads are one part of the total offering that grab-and-go consumers seek. Retailers like Whole Foods are addressing the entire take-out segment with a wide variety of fresh options," he adds.

"I think retailers should focus more on sampling," states Jim

Daskaleas, vice president of Walker's Food Products Company, North Kansas City, MO, "Many consumers are nervous about spending their hard earned money on an item unless it tastes good. Sampling is a great way to encourage customers to try new things and gain feedback on what they think. Retailers should have a sign encouraging consumers to ask for samples. Sampling is a great attribute to repeat sales."

Geography and ethnicity play a role in consumer preferences, so retailers need to be aware of customer demographics.

"Retailers must know demographics so they can cater to the needs of an individual's flavor profiles. They must know the communities' likings," notes Daskaleas.

"The ability to merchandise in display cases is the key to impulse buying. Customers are able to identify the product and the ingredients used in the salad. Display dishes and background information on the product are also very productive," adds Wendie DiMatteo, CEO of ASK Foods, Inc., Palmyra, PA.

"To keep shoppers in the fresh department longer, stores can create variety, innovation and a 'treasure hunt' environment for consumers. This can aid in increasing chain loyalty by making your store a destination where they can explore and discover new foods. The use of seasonal or rotational offerings, pre-packaged salads in freestanding coolers and merchandising in the prepared foods area are additional ways to inject differentiation into the deli department," advises Mark Brown, president of Orval Kent, Schaumburg, IL. **DB**

make products that are interesting so they will be successfully sold. You can update your products by looking at what restaurants are serving. Instead of serving a traditional tuna salad, try serving a chop chop salad or an Asian salad."

Fresh Is Key

"Freshness in the deli is very important, especially among young people who do not cook. They want the ability to go to the deli and enjoy something fresh that tastes great. The perception is fresh, and perception is reality. It is important to ask yourself would you eat what you serve," adds Milligan.

Olson Communications, Inc., Chicago, IL, did a deli customer survey that disclosed 67 percent of surveyed shoppers pick their shopping location depending upon the quality of the ready-to-eat items in the deli. Seventy-nine percent of those shoppers purchase ready-to-eat side dishes and 20 percent do so once or more a week.

According to Jim Daskaleas, vice president of Walker's Food Products Company, North Kansas City, MO, "Retailers should promote fresh-tasting, made-at-store-level items with fresh vegetables and cheeses. The word fresh is the most important thing. The basics should be offered along with high-end salads. Having a culinary chef preparing

foods looks good and is a fresh niche that will keep consumers coming back

Keeping salads fresh is a major factor in keeping the consumer satisfied and coming back time and time again. Steve Smith, president of Kash n' Karry, Tampa, FL, says the company's new retail concept of "fresh, delicious foods" is the reasoning behind the chain's on-going conversion to Sweetbay Supermarkets, its new fresh store concept.

"Steve Smith is absolutely correct," emphasizes Sandridge of Sandridge Food. "In fact, you will find every retailer with its own type of 'fresh store concept.' Look at Whole Foods and its entire store. Look at the restaurant industry, such as Ruby Tuesday and its fresh salad bar near the entrance. The perception of fresh foods is extremely important to consumers when determining where to shop or eat. This is becoming increasingly important as consumers seek more healthful food choices that taste good. So the image of carrying fresh foods, whether it be fresh salads, produce or prepared foods, is very important to consumers."

"I completely agree with Smith," adds Chloe's Siegel. "Freshness is vital. That's why we make the components for an exceptionally well-made salad program."

Chloe Foods has evolved its salad program to fit the fresh profile. The ingredients

to make a salad are packaged in vacuum-sealed bags, ready for retailers to use when needed.

"Fresh items portray a fresh image. You can be ahead of the game by having fresh perishables — the more extensive the line the better. Fresh deli salads are core to progression for more innovative creative prepared foods, which can encourage the consumer to try new items. The deli, seafood and meat departments are all key components for enhancing the fresh concept," says ASK's DiMatteo.

"The biggest issue/concern is having a homemade appearance. Getting away from the processed look is very important. Quality does mean something," adds Walker's Daskaleas.

Quality also plays a major role in repeat sales in the deli. If something is not appealing to a customer, he or she will not buy it.

"The bridge for new entry into creative, innovative salads helps make the transition to prepared foods more comfortable. Retailers are making a mistake by focusing on price point. They should focus on repeat sales. If a product is of good value and quality, the consumer will be willing to pay more and make the deli a destination. The quality of the product does enhance repeat sales," stresses DiMatteo. **DB**

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Recipes



Caramelized Apples and Onions with Candied Nuts and Blue Cheese on Wholeaves® Romaine Hearts

By Chef Wendy Brodie



SERVES APPROXIMATELY 30

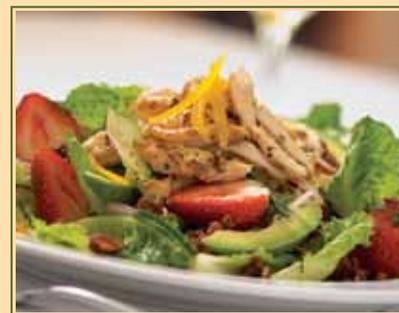
- 2 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 large Fuji or green apple, thinly sliced
- 1 large yellow onion, thinly sliced
- ½ cup candied nuts (walnuts or pecans), rough chopped into about ¼-inch pieces
- ½ cup crumbled blue cheese
- 30 Wholeaves® Romaine Hearts leaves

In a sauté pan, heat 1 Tbsp oil and add the sliced apples, quickly cooking and turning the apples as they brown and caramelize. Remove to bowl when done. In same pan without washing, add remaining tablespoon of oil and heat. Add the onion to the pan. Turn the heat to low and slowly cook, turning regularly, until the onions are golden brown. Add onions to the apples and mix. When cooled, stir in nuts and blue cheese.

To serve, place a rounded teaspoon on the stem end of each leaf.

Citrus and Tarragon Tossed Chicken Salad

By Chef Todd Fisher



SERVES 6-8

Dressing:

- 2 Tbsp Dijon mustard
- 2 Tbsp honey
- 2 Tbsp orange juice
- 1 Tbsp lemon juice
- 2 tsp minced shallot
- 4 Tbsp rice vinegar
- 2 Tbsp red wine vinegar
- ¾ cup olive oil
- 1 tsp salt and pepper
- 2 tsp minced tarragon

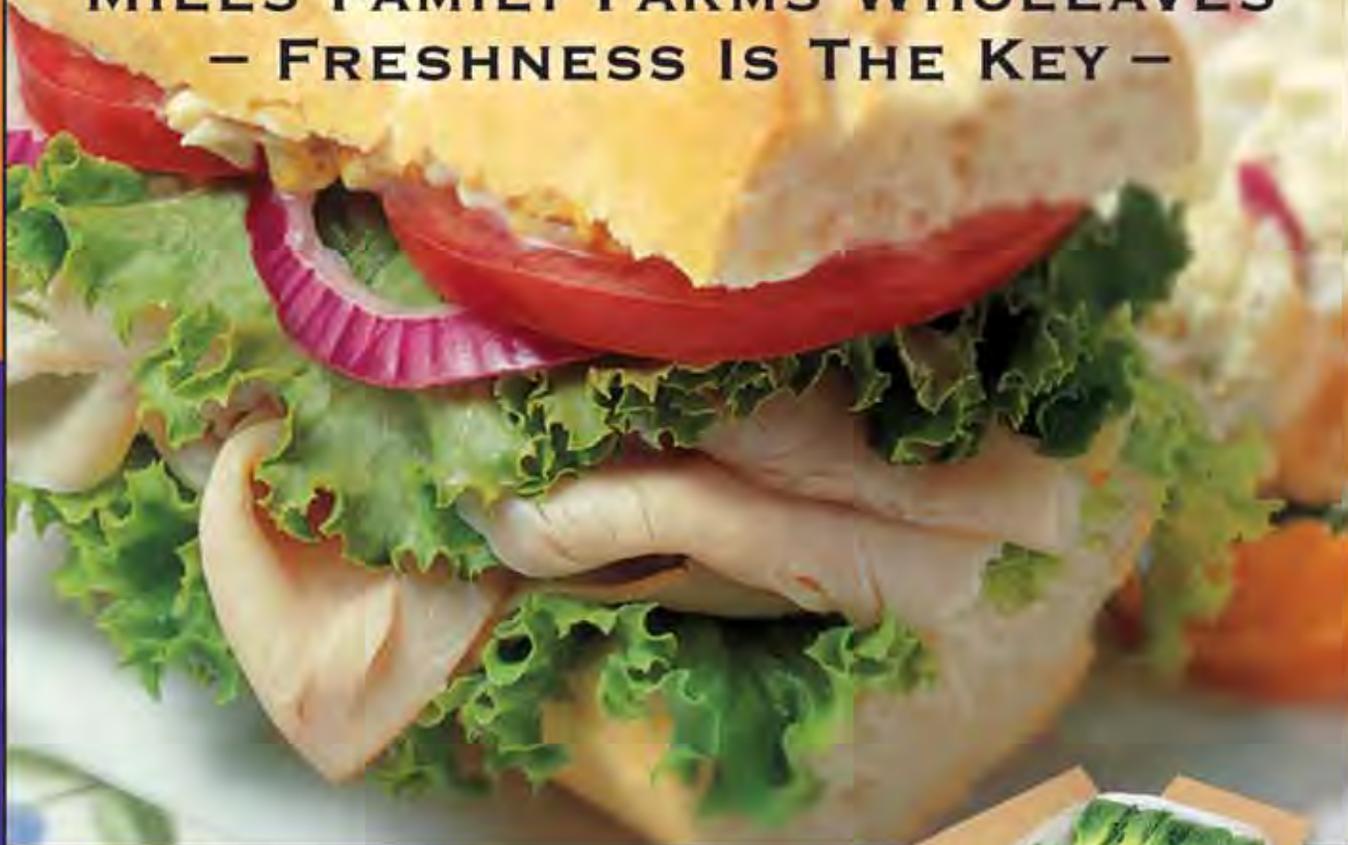
Salad:

- 4 boneless skinless chicken breasts
 - 2 bags of Mills Family Farms Green Cascade Mix®
 - 1 basket strawberries, top off and quartered
 - 1 small red onion, sliced
 - 10 cherry tomatoes, cut in half
 - 1 avocado, diced
 - 10 radishes, quartered
- Dressing

To make dressing, combine dressing ingredients in medium bowl and mix well to create vinaigrette.

Over medium hot grill, grill chicken breasts until done and let cool. Once cool, slice ¼-inch thick. In a large bowl, toss together Mills Family Farms Green Cascade Mix®, strawberries, red onion, tomatoes, avocado and radishes. Drizzle with dressing, add chicken and toss. Serve immediately.

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Specialty Cheese Merchandising

By Karen Silverton

Specialty foods, in general, draw a more discerning audience than commodities or groceries, so they require a different merchandising mind-set. One of the deli areas where this is particularly noticeable is the specialty cheese area.

"Retailers need a system in the cheese case that communicates to the consumer as well as to the store merchandiser," according to Alvaro Iparraguirre, vice president of business development, Anco Fine Cheese, Fairfield, NJ. "You want the wow factor — a feeling of freshness and variety.

"In the supermarket, you call attention to flavor through signs and the way you group the cheeses. How you merchandise the cheeses depends on the type of store, what the branding of the store is trying to say, and what we can do given that retail space. It may be by consumer usage, method of production or the milk source," says Iparraguirre.

"The core cheeses are based on store demographics. Certain ones are commodities. Our goal is not to move away from them but to increase their range by adding variety, going just a step above what you currently carry, at the same time ensuring the consumer is not taken aback by a selection that may seem too exotic," he explains.

"Then, we would add a few stars — trendy,

flavored, artisan or farmstead cheeses and cheeses from different milk sources. In a gentrified area, that may be 30 cheeses. In the suburbs, it may be

Retailers must devote time and energy if they want to move high-end cheeses.

only 10, but you are making that statement. You need the perfect blend that drives the consumers into the store, builds the store brand, intrigues the consumers and allows them to make that purchasing decision.

"When you take advantage of additional floor space with massive, legally built, out-of-refrigerator displays, you are also increasing your sales. If you don't have space for a large display, put in a small one. Buy two barrels and put them out with a cave-aged Emmentaler and a Reggiano — maybe 12 additional SKUs," Iparraguirre suggests.

According to Byron Hanson, deli category

manager for Lunds and Byerly's, Lund Food Holdings, Inc., based in Edina, MN, "We do a dynamite job of merchandising. Our cheese-of-the-month program does a phenomenal volume. We have had great success with display carts out of refrigeration and great success with the impulse buying of cheese.

"There's not one particular way to display cheese — you merchandise according to how the consumer shops. We often marry two types of merchandising, arranging by country or region and by type of cheese. You want to organize geographically, because it makes sense while you shop to see Italy, France, Switzerland, Spain and then England. You would not merchandise English cheese by Mexican cheeses.

"For a shop-able experience, you arrange by country and by type," he continues. "We isolate blue cheese from the others because blue mold can go everywhere. Customers who want blue cheese come specifically for it and want to see the full assortment. Goat cheese is another destination cheese."

Experts agree on paying special attention to blue. "Merchandise blue by itself, separately from all the others, so that the knife and the air are not shared with other cheeses," advises John Ciano, president of Crystal Food Import Corporation, Lynn, MA. "Put cheese from the same families together. It is good for the cheese. For example, put cheese such as Brie, triple crème, Coulommiers and Pierre Robert together. In the next section, put all semi-soft such as Port Salut, St. Nectaire, then a section for hard cheese."

"A Cheddar display can be overwhelming," explains Erin Shirkey, brand manager for Adams Reserve Cheddar, a product of Great Lakes Cheese Company, headquartered in Hiram, OH. "Our differentiating point is it comes from New York and is aged 12 months. It helps to distinguish Cheddars within the display by region and by description, such as mild, or by age, such as nine months, 12 months, two years and so on. Tasting can be key and having multiple ages available for sampling enables the consumer to go up the ladder a bit each time."

Sid Cook, cheesemaker and owner of Carr Valley Cheese Company, LaValle, WI, agrees. "We like to put all Cheddars together with my cave aged Mammoth Cheddar as the centerpiece and wrapped pieces around it — a fresh, a baby Cheddar, a mild, a medium, a year old and so on. We make Cheddars up to 10 years old.



Photo courtesy of Richard Silverton/Photo taken at Lunds

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"You can group by region, depending on the amount of cheeses you carry. In our four stores we have mostly Wisconsin cheeses — more than a

"There's not one particular way to display cheese — you merchandise according to how the consumer shops. We often marry two types of merchandising, arranging by country or region and by type of cheese."

— Byron Hanson
Lund Food holdings, Inc.

hundred. Some we buy and age, and we make around 60 varieties. We have another display where we group by type of milk: goat, sheep, mixed and cow milk. Big beautiful displays of a selection of cheeses that are very much alive and that you can sample are helpful," Cook continues.

"Another natural grouping is usage," says Lund's Hanson. "Italy has many grating cheeses: Parmigiano-Reggiano, Grana, Asiago, aged Piave. We might include harder domestic and Argentinian cheese, too, but during our Italian events we use only Italian products, not Italian-style



Grouping by country and type facilitates the shopping experience.

All photo courtesy of Richard Silverston

products. We also like to do a display with fresh mozzarella, tomatoes and basil.

Cut To Order Or Pre-Cut?

Cheeses from Neal's Yard Dairy, London, England, are optimally cut to order, according to Debra Dickerson of Oakland, CA-based 3D Cheese, which represents the British company in the United States. "Neal's Yard Dairy cheeses are best grouped together, with signage for name recognition, in stores committed to cutting upon request. A Neal's Yard Dairy cheese is at its peak when it arrives on a pre-order. It should be sold as close to the time it was cut off the master wheel as possible. Cutting at time of sale and wrapping in cheese paper rather than plastic wrap will better maintain the integrity of the cheese," says Dickerson.

"Everybody is looking for something different, whether it is organic or upscale, but people have to wrestle with the idea of having or not having it because of cost," notes Fred Chesman, cheese department vice president, Atalanta Corporation, Elizabeth, NJ.

"Upper-end stores have demand for cut-to-order. Shoppers want to see the cheese cut right in front of them, and a good reason for having it is it looks fresher. A cheese cut to order in the deli could also be sold pre-cut. To decide what mix you need or whether to cut to order, you need to be aware of what your shoppers want, what they're buying the cheese for."

"Determining how much pre-cut you'll need depends on the volume and type of business. If Wednesday morning is slow, we cut and wrap up some cheese because Friday afternoon will be very busy. For efficiency, we need certain cheeses wrapped and ready, so we display whole wheels with some pre-cut pieces nearby," says Carr Valley's Cook.

"Strong, concise, consistent signage that gives good information about the cheese is essential," recommends Kirsten Jaeckle, marketing director for Roth Käse USA, Ltd., Monroe, WI. "Include the name, origin, milk type, what it pairs with and what you can do with it, so consumers will not be intimidated by the myriad of choices.

"It's the story that sells the product, and the sign is the beginning of the story. After signage, there are repeating streamed videos, recipes and information about the company. From a convenience and labor standpoint, always have some pre-cut or pre-packaged cheese. If you sell washed rind cheese, wrap it in breathable paper," continues Jaeckle.

Promotional Opportunities

When you are selling an unusual — and often expensive — specialty cheese, promotions become paramount.

"Our sales team and brokers work with retailers and buyers on promotions," says Jamie Wichlacz, marketing manager for Belgioioso Cheese, Denmark, WI. "They may bring in wheels and display them, do demonstrations and cut for immediate sale. They may put one or two wheels on a cart or on the deli counter. An American Grana wheel would take up a lot of room. We might also promote via a silent sampling in a





sampling cheeses is extremely important. What we're sampling is what we sell," says Cook.

"Promotions are a two way street — buyers ask and sellers suggest," relates Atlanta's Chesman. "Most displays are one item or a group of items at a time, wherever you can get funding. You work within their parameters, but normally, a buyer's suggestions are acted upon.

"Sampling is the least expensive way of getting somebody to buy something, if you can just leave the samples on the counter and let consumers taste it. A demonstrator will cost \$100 a day. Nor-

mally, suppliers will fund samples, and you should give feedback to the seller about the sampling," Chesman notes.

"Stores can ask their wholesaler what's on schedule for the next two to three months. We pass along promotions from our suppliers. If the store can take less profit, we can promote and tie things together," explains Crystal's Ciano. "The manager can also arrange for a demo to learn about a product."

According to Anco's Iparraguirre, "When we create a promotional calendar, we focus on

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Top two photos taken at Central Market; bottom two taken at Lunds

come on ice within a display."

Perhaps the most important promotion is sampling. As with any food item, getting it into the consumer's mouth is the key to making a sale.

"The WMMB [Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board, Madison, WI] does tasting promotions. Many distributors are passing promotional allowances from producers to the retailer because

regional events. If you know your clientele, you can tailor your large suppliers' broad stroke promotions to your store. Do something that is meaningful in your region. Bastille Day is fine in some areas and not respected in others.

"Value-added recipes using regional foods are an excellent strategy. You can sell a cheese for a

"If you know your clientele, you can tailor your large suppliers' broad stroke promotions to your store. Do something that is meaningful in your region."

— *Alvaro Iparraguirre*
Anco Fine Cheese

much higher margin because you dressed it up. Hollow out a strawberry, stuff it with mascarpone, top it with chocolate and the markup is fantastic," Iparraguirre continues.

Increase The Ring Further

High-end cheeses pair well with high-end accompaniments. Consumers who are willing to spend more for a high-quality cheese will often add a specialty accompaniment if the store suggests it in the specialty cheese department.

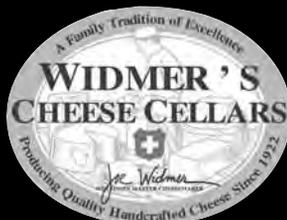
"Do as much cross-merchandising as you can so when you have someone's attention, he or she sees what goes together," advises John Ciano, president of Crystal Food Import Corporation, Lynn, MA.

"Adding cheese-appropriate accompaniments can take specialty cheese to a more interesting place," believes Elizabeth Fugas, president, Phoenix, OR-based Rising Sun Farms, Inc., whose products include fruit balsamic drizzles. "We prepare for Friday afternoon shoppers by grouping local produce and rare products with our wine, cheese and accompaniments. People sample and pair our drizzles with cheeses and wines and come up with their perfect pairing — fig drizzle on blue cheese, pomegranate drizzle on goat cheese or strawberry drizzle on Brie. Often they leave with all the ingredients. The smart retailer would use what is local and rare, and play up support of local agriculture, too."

"Specialty cheese accompaniments are wonderful. Any time you get something sweet with a blue cheese, like chestnut honey or pears and a mustard jelly, it's a flavor explosion. Put quince paste and Marcona almonds with Mahon. Add olives and thinly sliced meats so you're not eating only cheese. Dalmatian fig spread, wine jams, onion spreads and 34° Fruit Pastes [from 34°, Sydney, Australia] are great. Drizzle balsamic on Parmigiano-Reggiano as a dessert plate instead of something heavy and sweet," suggests Byron Hanson, deli category manager for Lunds and Byerly's, Lund Food Holdings, Inc., based in Edina, MN. **DB**

"Work with store chefs to create menus featuring specialty cheese since it can be used in all parts of the meal. Stores display the finished dish and assemble ingredients for quick shopping.

We've also had great success with Chef Jonathan Bennett's [Moxie Restaurant, Cleveland, OH] recipes such as Shaved Apples, Butter Lettuce & Cheddar Vinaigrette showcasing Adams Reserve



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Cheddar on our website. But effective cross-merchandising can be as simple as putting a basket of cheese in the apple section of the store,” says Adams Reserve’s Shirkey.

Try-Foods International, Inc., Apopka, FL, has a unique specialty cheese merchandising program that includes a 100-cheese guide that mainstream retailers can place at point of sale. According to

“Effective cross-merchandising can be as simple as putting a basket of cheese in the apple section of the store.”

— Erin Shirkey
Adams Reserve Cheddar



Passive sampling and cross-merchandising promote sales.

Kathy Gdula, marketing and promotions manager, the laminated retail reference called *The Art of Serving and Selecting Cheese* can be placed a podium that conveniently flanks a specialty cheese

case. A consumer edition of the guide is available for sale in a countertop merchandiser. Try-Foods’ cheese recipe card packs include full color photos and accessible recipes for 24 varieties of domestic

and imported cheese, such as Radicchio and Gorgonzola Salad. The company’s mobile wine and cheese cart is a handy vehicle for cross-merchandising wines in the cheese department. **DB**

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Goat Cheeses Offer Opportunities For Growth

By Betsy Slinkard

Goat cheese, as part of the specialty cheese category, has seen steady growth for the past 10 to 15 years; however, the sales base was small and increased interest was only experienced by specialty cheese retailers and very upscale chains. Today, consumers are demanding goat cheeses from restaurants and retailers at every level from mass marketers, mainstream retailers and even fast food restaurants.

Much of the progress must be attributed to domestic producers who have stepped up to the plate by producing world-class cheeses and introducing American consumers to the joy of fresh goat cheeses that are young and playful, instead of aged versions, often past their prime, that entail getting past pungent aromas that can assault the senses. Goat cheeses have gone from being cheese-snob fare to great introductory cheeses for customers just starting to explore the world of fine cheese.

Marin French Cheese Company, Petaluma, CA, has manufactured cheese in the same location for 136 years. "We produced our first goat cheese two years ago," Howard Bunce, operations manager and cheesemaker, reports. "Now we have five goat cheeses, and we're getting ready to release three mixed cheeses, half goat and half cow. Goat cheeses are going very well for us. Our sales are increasing."

The company has a goat's milk Camembert, Yellow Buck Chevre and Marin Chevre Blue.

An increasing awareness of health and nutrition is driving goat cheese sales.

This last is a blue cheese/Brie combination — blue inside and Brie outside.

Maxx Sherman, national sales and marketing manager for Marin French Cheese, characterizes the growth of the goat-cheese category as tremendous. "We started at zero in September 2004 when we began wholesaling goat cheese. We've always been known for cow's milk cheeses. Certain enzymes and cultures in goat's milk are good for digestion. For some reason, people are becoming more lactose intolerant so they switch to goat's milk," Sherman says.

CheeseLand, Inc., Seattle, WA, is a direct importer offering a family of Dutch cheeses made from cow, sheep and goat milk. The company sells directly to retailers and through distributors nationally.

According to Mark Roeland, manager, CheeseLand's business has grown. The company's Benning brand, a young, mild goat cheese aged six weeks, tastes almost like cow's milk. "People don't expect it to taste so good, but once they try it, they like it more than they had expected to. Our Balarina brand is a goat cheese aged for three years. It tastes almost like Parmesan. People try it and say, "Wow! I didn't expect it to taste this good!"

CheeseLand started selling goat's milk cheeses 20 years ago. "After 15 or 16 years, it's finally starting to catch on," Roeland asserts. "People are becoming more knowledgeable. They travel to Europe, read, watch the Food Channel. Food festivals also help raise awareness. This past May 13 and 14, there was a huge cheese festival in Seattle. Some 35,000 people attended. There were a lot of domestic and imported goat cheeses. This broadens the base for cheese. It helps."

Tom Toto, president, West Caldwell, NJ-based Advantage International Foods Corp., importers, distributors and marketers of specialty cheeses and accompanying items, says, "The growth of goat cheeses has been fairly substantial and will continue at a very robust pace. Fresh-style goat cheeses have gained popularity because of increased salad consumption."

Michele Wells, director of marketing and one of the owners of Haystack Mountain Goat Dairy, Longmont, CO, believes, "Goat cheese consumption is growing partly as a result of the fact that many people cannot digest cow's milk. The fat in goat's milk is easier to digest than cow's milk. For a lot of people, goat's milk is the only milk option, and, therefore, the only cheese option. Also, many people just like the taste." Haystack Mountain makes fresh chevre — two fresh ripened, three raw milk and one feta. "We're just goat people," Wells points out.

Since beginning operations in 1934 from its headquarters in Santa Barbara, CA, Jackson-Mitchell's Meyenberg Goat Milk Products has established itself as a premier manufacturer of goat milk products. With farms and facilities producing 18 million pounds of goat milk annually and lines of distribution stretching around the world, Meyenberg has grown from a medically focused, niche-market company to one whose products possess widespread, global appeal.

"Although we've been in the goat milk business for 71 years, we've only been in the goat cheese business for about a year," says Ken



A decade-plus of goat cheese sales growth shows no signs of abating.

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Strunk, Meyenberg COO. "I can only tell from friends who've been in the goat cheese business for years that goat's milk cheeses across the country have reached a whole new level. The uses are many and varied — crumbled in salads, in quesadillas, in sauces."

"The growth of goat cheeses has been fairly substantial for the last 10 to 15 years and will continue at a very robust pace."

— Tom Toto
Advantage International
Foods Corp.

Cypress Grove Chevre, Arcata, CA, began as a hobby for Mary Keehn, who wanted to provide a healthful source of milk for her children. She soon discovered she had a talent for selectively breeding goats and a natural flair for cheesemaking. In 1983 she made the move from kitchen hobbyist to cheesemaking entrepreneur. Today, Cypress Grove is a leader in the domestic goat cheese market. A year-and-a-half ago the company moved into a new facility that has helped its growth.

"There has been tremendous growth in the goat cheese category, but there is a shortage of milk. It's not as readily available as cow's milk," Keehn explains. Cypress Grove has hired someone to work with its dairies to help them grow and implement the best practices that encourage growth. A hindrance to the growth of the category is that goat's milk costs two times — almost three times — as much as cow's milk because, among other factors, there is more labor involved.

The public loves goat's milk because of its nutritional benefits and flavor. In the past year Cypress Grove Chevre added three new products. Mad River Roll is a soft-ripened log that chefs or stores can slice and sell by the pound. The company also added an 8-ounce cheese called Fog Lights, a ripened cheese.

Orangeville, ON-based Woolwich Dairy, Canada's largest goat cheese producer, has been manufacturing goat cheese since 1983. "We're doing quite well," says Michael Domingues, director of sales and marketing. "Our business continues to grow 15 percent per year, which is good. There are a lot more factors that benefit goat



Many fine dairies are offering a wide variety of goat cheese types.

cheese's growth rather than hinder it."

According to Scott Grzybek, brand manager, BC-USA is an American subsidiary of Bongrain Cheese, which is headquartered in France. The company's main product is Alouette Cheese, a spreadable cow's milk cheese.

"Chevrie, a spreadable cheese, is our main goat cheese product," Grzybek states. "We also produce the Montrachet brand log goat cheese and Saladena, a crumbled goat cheese. Saladena is the No. 1 crumbled goat cheese at retail, not counting foodservice. This product accounts for most of our goat cheese sales," he claims. Grzybek says there are two flavors of Chevrie, three flavors of Montrachet and two flavors of Saladena.

Grzybek sees the goat cheese category continuing to grow. "American consumers' palates are expanding. They're getting used to different types of foods. Goat cheese is getting into major [restaurant] chains such as Buco di Beppo and the Cheesecake Factory. As Americans get more knowledgeable the category will grow."

Nutritional And Other Benefits Of Goat Cheese

"The goat cheese category isn't a flash in the pan. People are becoming more health-conscious, more aware of the nutritional value of what they eat. Goat cheese has a healthy origin from the milk supply itself," comments Strunk of Meyenberg Goat Milk Products.

Advantage's Toto notes, "Goat cheese is perceived as a fresh, lighter product without an overpowering taste. Typical goat cheeses are consumer-friendly. They combine well with cranberry, basil, tomatoes, garden herbs and salads. Our company promotes freshness. People who are lac-

tose intolerant or who eat cheese for nutritional value choose goat cheese."

Marin's Bunce also notes the benefits of goat's milk for the lactose intolerant. "The protein structure and lactose in goat's milk are a different structure and easier to digest. It's lower in fat and cholesterol. The calories are also a little lower."

"People who are into natural foods and who are health conscious gravitate to goat cheeses for their nutritional value," according to CheeseLand's Roeland. "The goats are raised on smaller farms. They're outside eating grass in a natural setting. This appeals to people, too.

"There's increasing interest in the goat cheese category because people are experiencing different flavors. When they sample goat cheeses in a store, they find that young, fresh goat cheese tastes better than expected," Roeland continues.

"Health and digestibility are reasons a lot of people try goat cheese," according to Haystack Mountain's Wells.

Woolwich Dairy has two target markets. The first is the trendy foods market. "People's palates are more adventurous," Domingues says. "They watch the Food Network. People are better traveled; they want to try different foods. They entertain at home and don't want to put a block of Cheddar on the table."

The second target is the health-conscious, aging population. "They read nutritional facts. They're better educated on what's good for them. They know goat cheese is lower in cholesterol and fat. They know there's less lactose in goat's milk," he states.

Future Growth

Toto believes aged, soft-ripened artisanal

Goat Cheese Varieties

“There are many varieties of goat cheese from Italy, France, Spain, Holland. Goat cheeses are available from all over the world. Good examples of domestic product are Cypress Grove that’s more artisanal and Montchevre that’s more commercialized,” says Tom Toto, president, West Caldwell, NJ-based Advantage International Foods Corp. “Goat’s milk gouda-style cheeses have had a positive impact. They’re from Holland and have been in style for the last few years. Murcia Al Vino, a wine-rubbed goat’s milk cheese, has also had a positive impact.

“Goat cheeses are used in foodservice on pizzas, salads, casseroles. Restaurants vary tastes and textures. Firmer and more aged goat cheeses are great for an after-dinner cheeseboard in restaurants,” Toto elaborates.

As to goat cheese varieties, Michael Domingues, director of sales and marketing, Woolwich Dairy, Orangeville, ON, observes that whatever you can make with cow’s milk you can make with goat’s milk. “They’re no limitations on what you can do with goat’s milk. We provide our customers with one-stop shopping.” **DB**

cheeses offer “a lot of potential for future growth. These goat cheeses will be the next round having substantial growth,” he states.

“We’ll continue to see growth in raw milk goat cheeses because people are very interested in products that are more ‘alive.’ Raw milk cheeses have more going on taste-wise,” believes Wells.

Haystack Mountain Goat Dairy is going to be doubling the size of its goat herd over the next year. The company is a farmstead cheesemaker, meaning it has its own herd and makes the cheeses on the farm. There are only 50 farmstead cheesemakers in the country. Others buy milk on the open market or frozen curd. “You don’t notice the taste of frozen curd as much in a simple chevre, but you wouldn’t use it to make specialty cheeses,” Wells states.

Bunce says Marin’s sales are increasing and the company is increasing supply to meet demand. “More people are becoming familiar with goat cheeses and their benefits. People are developing a more ‘intellectual’ palate. They’re becoming a lot more particular.”

Meyenberg’s Strunk believes more product



Goat milk’s easy digestibility is one reason the cheese is so popular.

Photo courtesy of Haystack Mountain Goat Dairy

diversity is coming. “For the past 12 years, we’ve seen soft goat cheeses in the market with a variety of flavors such as spices and black pepper. Now there are artisanal cheese producers across the country. It’s no longer just fresh chevre, although that’s still the largest category. There are more hard cheeses and more differentiated styles of goat’s milk cheeses.”

In 2005 Meyenberg introduced four new Jack cheeses, including plain, jalapeño, smoked and garlic and chive, and an aged Cheddar.

“There are soft goat cheeses in the market,” Strunk says, “but you rarely see goat’s milk Cheddar or Jack cheeses. These are five extraordinary cheeses from a company with 71 years of experience providing the finest in goat milk products.”

Cypress Grove’s Keehn observes, “The fresh goat cheese market is pretty well saturated because it’s easier to produce. The firm and soft-ripened cheeses are where the most growth is. People are looking for new, innovating shapes and sizes. We’re introducing new products to meet consumer demand.”

Obstacles To Growth

BS-USA’s Grzybek says, “Availability is an issue for goat cheese that the cow’s milk category doesn’t have to deal with. Cow’s milk is an enormous commodity and that doesn’t exist for goat’s milk. Before you contemplate any future expansion, you first have to make sure you have the supply. It’s not like the cow industry where there’s a readily available supply out there.

“As it becomes worthwhile for farmers to get into the goat’s milk business, they’ll do it. But the United States is behind the rest of the world. Goat’s milk and goat’s milk cheeses have been tremendously popular in Europe for years so they don’t have the same issues we do,” Grzybek asserts.

Advantage’s Toto says, “As long as farmers receive a reasonable rate of return, they will expand their herds. Manufacturers are expanding their production facilities because of good consumer acceptance.”

CheeseLand’s Roeland also sees availability as an obstacle to growth. “When farmers can get more money for goat milk, they’ll get more goats and fewer cows. The price of cow’s milk is lower now.”

According to Marin’s Sherman, California’s goat milk producers are selling all of their milk. “It’s a competition with the cheesemakers. It’s competitive to acquire milk. This is why Marin French Cheese Company purchased our own herds. However, it’s a temporary hurdle. We need more milk, so we buy more goats. The only obstacle is finding more goats.

“Goats are more seasonal,” Sherman continues. “Goat’s milk is production managed. You can rotate the herd so you have milk year-round. From early November through February, goats don’t produce that much milk. You can’t produce the same quality of sort-ripened cheese with frozen curds, so production will drop during those months, the time you need it most. But the butterfat content goes up. When it’s colder longer during the day and there’s less light, goats produce more fat on their bodies to keep warm. This goes into the milk. So the flavor is better and it’s a higher yield, but there’s not enough milk. We ran out of milk last year.”

Haystack Mountain’s Wells says there is an unmet demand for products. “We’re facing increased shipping costs because of gas prices, and this is making cheese more expensive.”

“Our biggest obstacle to growth is getting enough goats to produce the milk we need,” says Woolwich’s Domingues. “We work with the farmers and give them a fair price for their milk.

They're our lifeline. We're dependent on them. It's a partnership. As our business grows, we want farmers to reap the benefits. As we take care of them, we're securing our own future. In Canada we partner with 225 to 250 farmers.

"We've opened a second facility in Quebec that opens another access to goat's milk. As you tap into different markets, you're getting access to more milk," Domingues says.

Promotional Opportunities

Advantage's Toto says promotional opportunities depend on the channel. In the supermarket, there are price promotions, for example, 4-ounce domestic goat cheeses at two for \$5, a price attractive to consumers. "Retailers cross-merchandise crumbles in the produce department," says Toto. Advantage International Foods also has promotions for foodservice distributors.

According to Sherman, Marin has a promotion for its Yellow Brick Chevre coming up with Bristol Farms, an 11-store chain headquartered in Carson, CA. "Bristol Farms has 50 cases of cheese on hand and will probably start June 1. Heineins, a 16-store Ohio chain, also promotes our cheese. Locally, we rotate our goat cheeses and promote them four times a year," he says.

Meyenberg's Strunk explains that the people who buy Meyenberg goat cheeses are typically health-conscious consumers. "We sample our

products at consumer events such as tomato festivals and food fairs, and we do a great deal of sampling in conjunction with product introductions. Today there is some sort of goat cheese in every

"When farmers can get more money for goat milk, they'll get more goats and fewer cows. The price of cow's milk is lower now."

— Mark Roeland
CheeseLand, Inc.

grocery store, but it's the specialty stores where you'll find the variety."

Cheeseland's Roeland gives stores credit back

for sampling. "We need to get the cheese in people's mouths. Glossy ads don't do it," he asserts.

Keehn notes Cypress Grove has one part-time sales person. The company is growing as fast as it can manage. It exhibits at the Fancy Food Show two times a year but does not have a big promotional program. It sells primarily through distributors and does promotions with restaurants when it has a new product.

Woolwich Dairy does a lot of sampling at the retail level. "We need to educate consumers," explains Domingues. "Consumers have a lot of preconceived notions of what goat cheese tastes like. We gear our products to the North American palate. They have a fresh, crisp taste. When consumers try it, they say, 'Wow!' It's the process and the quality of the milk that makes it different. That's another reason for the partnership with our farmers."

Woolwich also does some trade shows and some consumer shows in Canada such as the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto, ON, that attracts 375,000 attendees. "We do a cheese-making demonstration, cooking and sampling. People get to see the package from start to finish," Domingues relates. "We also work with teachers. We want to educate younger consumers about goat cheese. Our building has a viewing gallery where students and other visitors can watch our goat cheese being made and packaged." **DB**

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The British Are Coming!

By Karen Silverston

America's appetite for British cheese rang up more than \$35 million in export sales (19.5 million pounds) for Britain in 2004 and 2005. The ever-popular imported Cheddar and Stilton bring consumers into the store and offer worlds of flavor for every palate from the novice to the connoisseur, making these cheeses a must-have for every retailer.

"Cheddar is the leading category," notes Kirsty Grieve, regional food and drink manager for Food from Britain (FFB), headquartered in London, England. "With 82 percent of the market in the United Kingdom, you can see we're mad on Cheddar, too. Of course, you've tried one, but don't think that's it! Understanding Cheddar is a journey for a lifetime."

British cheesemakers submitted 118 Cheddars for judging in the 2005 British Cheese Awards, but there is much, much more to British cheeses. "The British offer more than 450 different cheeses [counting Cheddar only once], from tiny goat cheese to huge 55-pound Cheddar," notes Juliet Harbutt, Culinary Events, Ltd., Oxon, England, and founder of the British Cheese Awards.

"British cheeses are successful because they are really accessible. They taste good, they don't smell bad, they're not covered with mold and they're easy to understand in a way that some of the continental cheeses aren't," states Maria Walley, marketing manager, Cheese From Britain,

based in Cincinnati, OH.

"They taste good because they have an excellent climate for dairy farming and are very good

There is a world of wonderful British cheese beyond classic Cheddar and Stilton.

with animal husbandry. They never use growth hormones and the cows graze outside most of the year. Plentiful rainfall and moderate temperatures make lush grass for grazing. Good grass means good milk, good milk means good cheese. They keep some very old traditions — Cheshire dates back to 1086 — yet they are constantly innovating and coming up with new products. It's not uncommon to walk into a store and see 20 facings of British cheese," continues Walley.

Although Cheddar and Stilton dominate, retailers need to be acquainted with several British cheese terms: territorial, additive and continental.

"Territorials' originated in a specific region from a specific recipe and are associated with their region of origin. They include Cheshire, Double Gloucester, Lancashire, Red Leicester and

Wensleydale," says Grieve. "Most are made outside their traditional region now, and some very large producers make all of them. Some quite popular ones made by small artisan producers within the regions may be available from Neal's Yard Dairy [London, England]. Cheddar and Stilton are so popular and so important that they have become market categories of their own, but they are examples of territorials, too."

"Additives' does not have the negative connotation it has in the United States. It means cheeses with fruits, vegetables, herbs or spices added, such as cranberries or chives. Often the base is a territorial, such as white Stilton or Wensleydale. 'Continentials' are Brie — or Camembert-style cheeses made in Britain," concludes Grieve.

What To Carry

Deciding what to include begins with what is in your cheese case now. Lynne Wood, based in Hoboken, NJ, vice president of sales and marketing for Dairy Crest USA, a subsidiary of Dairy Crest UK, headquartered in Surrey, England, would include a standard blue Stilton, an extra mature blue Stilton and a selection of Cheddars. "It's good to have a couple of territorials, especially farmstead varieties. For growth, add popular English specialties and fruit cheeses.

"There will be differences from producer to producer in texture and flavor depending on how long your Stilton is in the maturation store, or whether a fruit cheese is hand-mixed and hand-pressed or extruded, and whether or not there are artificial ingredients. "In a handmade fruit product, the base cheese is mixed in a bowl with fruit and then hand-pressed into cheese molds. The texture is almost spreadable, not crumbly, so you'll get a cranberry and cheese together. In the extruded product, the texture is not as good," continues Wood.

"At the retail level, your artisan selection makes the department unique, but industrial cheeses are the bones and set the structure of your cheese case," according to Stephanie Ciano-Pace, vice president of sales and purchasing, Crystal Food Import Corp., a Lynn, MA, importer of about 140 British cheeses.

"Very small producers have a problem of supply. There are often shortages because a producer can't make enough. Some cooperative creameries collect milk from a series of farms in the area and can accommodate a larger chain yet still maintain



Photo courtesy of Cheese From Britain

When Americans think British cheese, they think Cheddar.

The Classics

Cheeddar was originally a cylindrical, raw-cow's-milk farmhouse cheese. It was clothbound, naturally yellowish with no color added and had a warm, round, deep, long flavor. It is now manufactured globally, mostly from pasteurized milk, on and off the farm in blocks and rounds. West Country Farmhouse Cheddar is a Protected Denomination of Origin (PDO) cheese from Devon, Dorset, Somerset and Cornwall. Three Somerset farms produce traditional unpasteurized Cheddar.

PDO Stilton is a blue-veined, pasteurized cow's milk, semi-hard cylindrical cheese made only in Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire by seven creameries using a historic recipe. It is creamy and has a deep-flavored whitish-yellowish paste with greenish-blue veining that follows tiny fissures in the cheese and a brown coat. It matures approximately 10 to 15 weeks after it is made, depending on the creamery, and though it is a dry blue, it has a creamy mouth feel. **DB**

the tradition and flavors of a small dairy. With Stilton, we've found that it makes sense on the retail level to carry one that is more industrial for people who want to grab a product at a price point — this will probably be your bigger sales item — and have one or two of the more artisanal Stiltons to appeal to the upper end clientele," Ciano-Pace says.

According to Cheese From Britain's Walley, other criteria are the type of rennet used and whether pre-cut is available. "Pre-cut is growing because grocery stores want to handle as little as possible. Twenty-five cheeses are available pre-cut. The British have been very responsive to the packaging and labeling needs of the American retailer and the demand for fixed weight packs, new and interesting cheeses and helping to actively promote the British cheeses."

"Export requires cheese with shelf life. It must be easy to understand, accessible and artisan at the same time. To promote the more fragile specialty cheeses, the cheesemonger has to be trained and the consumer has to be educated. Farmhouse and premium cheeses like Cornish Yarg [from Lynher Dairies Cheese Co., Cornwall, England], wrapped in nettle leaves, belong in the cheesemonger arena," says FFB's Grieve.

Retailers must know their consumers' palates. "Understand the demographic and adventurous nature of your consumer, the price point at which



Photo courtesy of Dairy Crest Ltd.

The British offer more than 450 different cheeses.

a product doesn't work for you and the flavor profile of the cheese. When deciding on a line of cheese, make sure it is a good match," advises

counter in London, but we will not necessarily be seeing those cheeses here.

"Neal's Yard Dairy developed the Borough Market line to be successful in stores where pre-cuts are the norm. The Borough Market brand cheeses are made by Neal's Yard Dairy producers and are selected for their deep, complex, balanced and round flavor," says Dickerson.

Up-And Coming Cheeses

Expect more flavored cheeses, many with real fruit added, such as Cheshire with fig and apricot, white Stilton with mango and ginger, white Stilton with cherries, apricots or lemon, and Wensleydale with cherries, cranberries or blueberries.

Savory torte-style layered cheeses such as Heart of England and Stripey Jack show off the contrasting taste and color of five different territories. Wine Derby, a pressed cooked cheese, is made with elderflower wine.

The artisan cheese lover may want to explore some handmade cheeses. These include such modern Irish cheeses as Darú, a new semi-hard farmhouse cheese from Cooleeney Farm in County Tipperary, and Gabriel and Desmond, mature, hard cheeses made with summer milk from West Cork Natural Cheese in County Cork.

British cheeses are also available in parchment packs and kosher retail packs.

There is renewed emphasis on regionality, so more cheeses will be marketed with a sense of place. They can take adventurous consumers down a new path on the Cheddar journey. **DB**

"The British have been very responsive to the packaging and labeling needs of the American retailer and the demand for fixed weight packs, new and interesting cheeses and helping to actively promote the British cheeses."

*— Maria Walley
Cheese From Britain*

Debra Dickerson, Oakland, CA-based 3D Cheese, which represents Neal's Yard Dairy in the United States.

"We are seeing more farmstead cheeses on the

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Norwegian Cheeses: Quality And Unique Flavor

By Trisha J. Wooldridge

“Norway is associated with lush grasslands,” explains Deanna Finegan, marketing manager for Norwegian cheese at Norseland, Inc., Stamford, CT, when asked why Norwegian cheeses are so popular. “Norway is associated with lush grasslands. Cow farms are not that big, usually only 10 to 15 cows per farm. Nice, clean water comes from the mountains. Norwegian milk is one of the finest in the world, which enhances the flavor of the cheese.”

Norseland, owned by Tine Norwegian Dairies, is the exclusive importer, sales and marketing agent of Norwegian cheeses across the United States and Canada. Most people are familiar with Jarlsberg, the primary cheese of Norway and the country’s version of Emmentaler, the popular cheese from Switzerland. Jarlsberg has a following and demand for its unique flavor that has yet to be reproduced in any other cheese. However, Norway offers a variety of all-natural cheeses, each with a distinct flavor profile.

Jarlsberg & Jarlsberg Lite

Jarlsberg and Jarlsberg Lite are global brands, trademarked by Tine B. A.; Jarlsberg is also the flagship cheese of Norway.

“It’s a semi-soft, part skim cheese with a mel-

low, nutty flavor and a characteristic pattern of holes,” describes Finegan. “The production is state of the art with a secret and unique starter culture.” Jarlsberg is aged for a minimum of 90 days, bringing out the distinct flavor.

Norway offers a variety of fresh and unique cheeses that consumers just eat up.

According to Finegan, the cheese was named for Count Vadel Jarlsberg, whose estate is located on an Oslo fjord near where the cheese is manufactured.

The cheese dates back to the early 19th century when Norway attempted to produce a domestic version of Swiss Emmentaler, but the efforts created a slightly different product. From 1956 to 1965, the University of Agriculture of Norway researched the adaptation of the semi-soft cheese with hole formation. Professor Ole M. Ystgaard is credited with developing the bacteria cul-

ture and manufacturing techniques used today to make Jarlsberg. That cheese was introduced in the United States to supermarkets and specialty cheese shops in 1965.

“It was received very well,” states Finegan. “It quickly became a very popular cheese.”

Jarlsberg Lite, introduced to the U.S. market in 1990, has also climbed the same successful ladder as its classic predecessor. Both cheeses are all-natural, but Jarlsberg Lite has 50 percent less fat and 30 percent fewer calories than traditional Swiss cheese. It maintains flavor integrity despite the lowered fat and calorie count, making it one of the best tasting light cheeses in the U.S. market.

“It’s one of our best sellers,” Finegan says, attributing a part of the success to the growing population of health-conscious consumers demanding choices that are all-natural, low in calories and fat but still high in flavor. “It’s traditionally crafted and aged and carries that distinctive mellow, nutty flavor of its parent, the classic Jarlsberg, yet is significantly lower in calories. The lighter form is delicious and a great benefit to consumers on restricted diets who feel they have to give up ‘real’ cheese altogether. It’s deceptively rich and creamy, melts beautifully in cooking and can be utilized in a wide variety of quick, simple recipes, in addition to low-fat sandwiches and wraps that are so popular today.”

Both Jarlsberg and Jarlsberg Lite offer a lot to consumers. Both can be part of a cheese plate with crackers or fruit, used atop salads or included in an array of recipes. Both cheeses melt smoothly, so they work well in anything from a grilled cheese sandwich to a cheese sauce to a casserole to a fondue. Jarlsberg tastes great on its own, too. “Try it with fruity white wine, like a Riesling, or a good aged red,” suggests Finegan.

Consumers can purchase classic Jarlsberg in wedges or wheels, in pre-sliced packages or sliced fresh at the deli counter. Jarlsberg Lite is available sliced or chunked from the deli or pre-sliced.

Ski-Queen Gjetost Cheese

Another cheese from Norway that is growing in popularity is Ski-Queen Gjetost brand cheese, also a trademark of Tine.

Known in Norway as “brown cheese,” it is often compared to fudge in consistency. Gjetost is a goat milk sweet cheese made from whey, milk and cream. The dark color and sweetness come



Photo courtesy of Norseland, Inc.

Jarlsberg is the flagship cheese of Norway,

Growing An Already-Loyal Customer Base

Many Norwegian cheeses already have a loyal consumer following, but not all consumers are aware of their distinct flavors or how versatile these products are.

What is the key to getting more customers? Deanna Finegan, marketing manager for Norwegian cheeses, Norseland, Inc., Stamford, CT, suggests a few things. "Have a theme, such as summer grilling. Show how to use the cheeses, such as in salads, casseroles, and hors d'oeuvres."

In addition to a "huge, attractive display," she suggests there also be samples available. "Demo it at the same time and place as the display."

If people can try the cheese, it will expand the customer base. As with so many foods, getting these cheeses into customers' mouths is the key to increased sales.

And then there is that all-important but intangible sales ingredient. "There's something romantic about a wheel of Jarlsberg," she says. **DB**

from natural milk sugars caramelizing during the manufacturing process.

"It was invented in the 1860s by a farmer's wife. She was the first person to pour cream into a pan of boiling whey," says Finegan. "They say it's as exclusive to Norway as trolls and fjords."

In Norway, the cheese is sliced thin and served on waffles, says Finegan. In the United States, it is often used for fondue but also works well in sauces, pies and cakes. It can also be served as part of a dessert course or with fruit as a sweet appetizer.

Ridder, Snofrisk and Nokkelost

"Ridder" translates into 'knight,'" Finegan says. "It was given that name because of the strong characteristic flavor."

Ridder is a full-fat cheese with a bold flavor similar to Port Salut. It was developed in Norway in the late 1960s "on a small dairy farm located near one of the most beautiful fjords in West Norway," according to Finegan. Ridder has a soft texture and can be served in a variety of ways, such as folded into strips on its own with a plate of summer fruit or in a variety of recipes calling for strong cheese.

Snofrisk is a mild goat cheese that is very

smooth with the consistency of cream cheese. Made from 80 percent goat milk and 20 percent cow milk, it was launched at the Olympic Games in Lillehammer in 1994.

"It's a great introduction to goat's cheese for those who have never tried it," Finegan explains. "The cow's milk makes it a little milder, especially for those not accustomed to the 'goat' flavor."

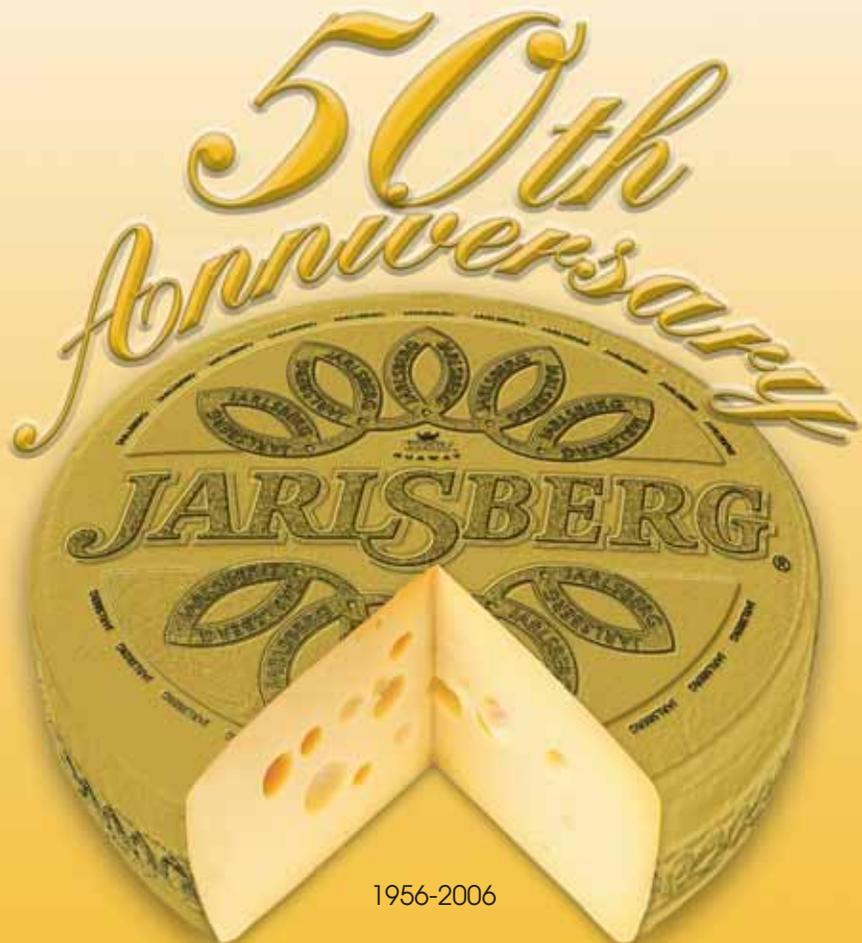
Norseland also offers Nokkelost cheese, the only cheese it distributes from the Blind Cow

Cheese Company, which began on the Solheim farm in As, Norway. The owner, Inger Rosenfeld, received her first cow, Melissa, as a gift. Melissa was blind in one eye, thus inspiring the name.

While Rosenfeld and Blind Cow Cheese Company did not create Nokkelost cheese, Norseland carries its version. Nokkelost is a semi-hard, golden cheese made from whole milk and spiced with clove and cumin seeds, creating a unique flavor. **DB**

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Register For RFA's June Technical Web Conference On Viruses And Foodborne Illnesses

The RFA will be holding a Technical Web Conference on June 14, 2006, on the topic of "Viruses and Foodborne Illnesses." Featuring Dr. Craig Hedberg, this is an opportunity to learn more about viruses. Among the topics he will discuss are virus structure and replication, viruses with food-safety implications, mode of transmission and etiology of foodborne virus infections, effectiveness of sanitizers in killing viruses, and current virus detection methodology — just like "Virology 101." He has even promised to include a few comments on the avian influenza virus.

The sole session will be held on Wednesday, June 14, 2006, from 1:00-2:30 PM EDT (12:00-1:30 PM CDT), 11:00 AM -12:30 PM MDT, 10:00-11:30 AM PDT).

For full details of the Web Conference, call the RFA office at 770-452-0660.

Encouraging Hand Washing

Foodsafe — Connecting Food Safety Professionals

Carl S. Custer

Multidisciplinary Microbiologist
USDA FSIS OPHS MD MIB

About 30 years ago, I saw two federal establishments that had the hand wash station immediately inside the ready-to-eat room (Virtually all of them do now). So, the last thing employees did before going to their work station was wash their hands in full view. One establishment even did videos of employees washing their hands and showed them periodically to reinforce that they were being watched.

Now, most Federal establishments have their hand wash station immediately inside the ready-to-eat room. Employees don their garments, aprons, wade through a foot sanitizing solution, then wash their hands, sanitize, don gloves and some even have them sanitize the gloves and plastic apron.

One thing that employers can do is offer hand washing and sanitizing solutions that are not harsh. Face it — some employees cherish smooth hands so work with them.

New Treatment For food Poisoning

May 11, 2006

University of Bristol (UK)

www.bristol.ac.uk/news/2006/974.html

A team of researchers working at the University of Bristol has found a potential new treatment for listeriosis, a deadly form of food poisoning. Their work is reported in *Nature Medicine*.

The group, led by Professor Jose Vazquez-Boland, has shown that one particular antibiotic — fosfomycin — can treat *Listeria* in the body, despite it being ineffective in laboratory conditions.

Because it was not effective in the laboratory, this drug has never been considered for the treatment of listeriosis, in spite of it reaching the infection sites more effectively than other antibiotics.

Professor Vazquez-Boland said: "Our results illustrate that antibiotic resistance in the laboratory does not always mean that the drug will not work in the infected patient. This work brings some optimism to the highly worrying problem of the increasing resistance to antibiotics."

Listeria bacteria cause the foodborne disease listeriosis. It often triggers a brain infection and kills up to 30 percent of those affected.

Exterminate Bug-Based Food Dye

May 1, 2006

CSPI News Release

Carmine and cochineal extracts, the red food dyes made from the dried bodies of the cochineal insect, should be exterminated from the food supply once and for all, according to the nonprofit Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI). The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is considering a rule that would require disclosure of carmine or cochineal on food labels — a proposal CSPI says is an advance over the status quo in which the dye can be described merely as 'color added' or 'artificial color.' But while the proposed disclosure rule would help consumers who know they are allergic to carmine avoid it, a ban would protect those who might not know.

CSPI contends FDA's proposed rule lowers the number of people who experience allergic reactions to carmine and cochineal each year and the expense of emergency-room treatment of those reactions far outweighs the costs of relabeling or reformulating carmine-containing products. Furthermore, CSPI urges that if the FDA does not ban the substance in food, it should at least require labels to disclose that it is 'insect-based,' which would be useful to people who wish to adhere to kosher or vegetarian diets.

"Why tolerate a food coloring that sends a couple hundred people to emergency rooms each year, yet its only purpose is cosmetic?" asks CSPI executive director Michael F. Jacobson. "Here's an idea for food companies: If you want to make your strawberry or cherry yogurt a brighter shade of red, why

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.

not just add more strawberries or cherries instead of resorting to insect juice?"

CSPI is sending the FDA summaries of 32 adverse reaction reports it has received since it first petitioned the FDA about carmine and cochineal extract in 1998. Typical symptoms included itching, swelling of the eyes or tongue, difficulty breathing, hives and headaches. Carmine is used in various yogurts, fruit-flavored drinks, candies and other products.

Incidence Of Infection With Pathogens Transmitted Commonly Through Food

May 17, 2006

Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (2006; 55: 392-395)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Journal of the American Medical Association (295:2241-2243)

Foodborne illnesses are a substantial health burden in the United States. The Foodborne Diseases Active Surveillance Network (FoodNet) of CDC's Emerging Infections Program collects data from 10 U.S. states regarding diseases caused by enteric pathogens transmitted commonly through food. FoodNet quantifies and monitors the incidence of these infections by conducting active, population-based surveillance for laboratory-confirmed illness. This report describes preliminary surveillance data for 2005 and compares them with baseline data from the period 1996-1998. Incidence of infections caused by *Campylobacter*, *Listeria*, *Salmonella*, Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* O157 (STEC O157), *Shigella* and *Yersinia* has declined, and *Campylobacter* and *Listeria* incidence are approaching levels targeted by national health objectives. However, most of those declines occurred before 2005, and *Vibrio* infections have increased, indicating that further measures are needed to prevent foodborne illness. **DB**

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Know Thyself, Know Thy Customer

By
Steve
Dragoo

"Know thyself."

Ancient Greek aphorism, often attributed to Socrates

This editorial's title may not seem particularly profound at first glance. I would agree were it not that this message has been repeated time and time again during the more than three decades I've worked in this industry. Why? Perhaps it is because often we know what to do but don't always do what we know to do. We may become victims of our own success (often narrowly defined as meeting or beating last week/month/year sales numbers) and falsely assume continued "success" demands we perpetuate the same hiring, training, marketing and selling strategies that brought us to our current market position.

"The significant problems we face cannot be solved by the same level of thinking that created them."

Albert Einstein

A mere 50 years ago, approximately three-quarters of all U.S. food purchases were made from supermarkets. Today, less than half of every American family's food dollar is spent in traditional supermarkets. The reality is that an ever-increasing number of U.S. restaurants (an estimated 925,000), coupled with new food market formats — the very large, very small, very convenient and very special — have eroded traditional supermarkets' share of business. Many are afraid to look beyond this week/month/year. In many cases, operators are doing little more than hanging on, while holding meetings to discuss last week/month/year — and trying to figure out why what used to work so well doesn't anymore.

"Work is theatre and every business a stage."

Joe Pine and Jim Gilmore

In 1999, Joe Pine and Jim Gilmore's ground-breaking work, *The Experience Economy*, presented an original approach for appealing to an increasingly sophisticated customer. Central to their thesis is the position that busy, savvy, affluent consumers will choose to do business with retailers, professional service firms and others who understand them and can provide top-quality, authentic experiences during the business transaction. Such businesses will recognize the careful selection of employees and providing the proper training, scripting, orientation, etc., are critical first steps in engaging the customer. This must be followed by placing these people in an environment that has been carefully designed to round out the customer's experience.

"Know thy customer."

Modern American aphorism, often attributed to customers

How well do you know your customers? A few years ago, this question would have conjured up images of walking through the store to meet individual shoppers. Today, the

term "customer" may elicit an image of a focus group participant or a consumer cluster member from the latest demographic study or loyalty card report.

"To do is to be." — Rene Descartes

"To be is to do." — Jean-Paul Sartre

How well do you know your store's overall competencies? What things do you do particularly well? Is your reputation built on marketing these competencies through advertising

and word-of-mouth recommendations? Do customers seek you out because of these — or in spite of them?

What are your service departments' competencies? Do key differentiators encourage loyal customer patronage? Which, if any, of these departments are weak links? Do the strategies and deliverables of these key departments support your company's explicit and implicit promises to your customers? Do the departments

seek to craft meaningful experiences customers will want to repeat? Is what you do consistent with what you say you are?

"Turnabout is fair play."

American idiom

Before making any changes — or staying the course — stop and consider the CPOV — the customer's point of view. Do customers feel they are known by your employees? Do they associate your store with a particular attribute or set of competencies that matter to them? Can they identify what your departments do well? Why do they shop with you — convenience, freshness, service, price, experience, etc.?

Often, by the time the harried supermarket shopper reaches a perishable department, he or she is "decisioned out." These "aisle-weary warriors" are almost certainly hoping to encounter professional service staffs — people who will ask questions, listen and make appropriate suggestions based on what they learn during the sales transaction.

A growing number of shoppers seek choices guided by seasoned service advisors who can communicate often-subtle differences in similar foods. Personnel must remember that many of today's busy consumers have more disposable income than disposable time. The layout of today's modern supermarket requires the time-starved to hurriedly make their selections from the 45,000 SKUs — often inconveniently displayed in a florescent-lit football field-sized store.

Nothing I have seen or read drives home the importance of the time component of the shopping experience more than *Trading Up: The New American Luxury* by Michael J. Silverstein and Neil Fiske. They reference a study stating "only 10 percent of working women with children at home had a dinner menu in mind by 4 PM on a typical workday." This insight provides an open invitation to the sales person to interact, engage, entertain and provide dinner solutions to these who desperately need their assistance.

DB

A growing number of shoppers seek choices guided by seasoned service advisors who can communicate often-subtle differences in similar foods.



Steve Dragoo

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COMPANY	PAGE#	READER#	CATEGORY	PHONE	FAX
ACH Food Companies, Inc.	65	212	Frying Oil	800-527-3026	901-381-3067
Alexian Pates	19	546	Pates	800-927-9473	732-775-3223
All QA Products	62	547	Equipment	800-845-8818	352-335-4980
Anchor Packaging	15	548	Packaging	800-467-3900	314-822-2035
Anco Foods	91	549	British Cheese	800-526-2596	201-641-3059
Anco Foods	85	550	Goat Cheese	800-592-4337	201-641-3059
BelGioioso Cheese, Inc.	9	124	Cheese	877-863-2123	920-863-8791
Blue & White Foods, LLC	41	584	Hummus	718-932-9000	866-675-3772
Cedar's Mediterranean Foods, Inc.	18	213	Mediterranean	800-280-7392	978-374-7356
Chloe Foods, Inc.	INSERT		Olives	718-827-9000	718-547-0052
Ciao Ltd.	17	552	Fontina Cheese	315-475-0475	315-475-0557
Cibao Meat Products	48	553	Hispanic Deli Meats	718-993-5072	718-993-5638
Coleman Natural Products	49	211	Deli Meats	800-849-5464	770-531-1603
Conroy Foods	47	104	Condiments	800-317-8316	412-781-1409
Consorzio Grano Padano	13	554	Grand Padano Cheese	39-020-910-9811	39-030-991-0487
George E. DeLallo Co.	100	107	Olives & Antipasto	724-853-5353	724-523-0981
George E. DeLallo Co.	54	555	Olives & Antipasto	724-853-5353	724-523-0981
Dietz & Watson Inc.	51	556	Deli Meats	800-333-1974	215-831-8719
Faribault Dairy	82	557	Cheese	507-334-5260	507-332-9011
Finlandia Cheese	23	558	Deli Sandwich Cheese	973-316-6699	973-316-6609
FoodMatch, Inc.	81	559	Olives	800-350-3411	212-334-5042
Formaggio Italian Cheese	79	560	Cheese	845-436-4200	846-436-7076
Vincent Giordano	53	132	Deli Meats	215-467-6629	215-467-6339
Hickory Farms, Inc.	45	562	Deli Meats	866-231-0863	419-893-3451
Hormel Foods Corporation	24-25	563	Grab-and-Go	800-523-4635	612-931-9372
Inline Plastics Corp.	31	564	Packaging	800-826-5567	203-924-0370
Innovasian	67	565	Asian Food	425-251-3706	425-251-1565
Kings Hawaiian Bread	61	566	Breads	310-533-3250	310-533-8352
Klondike Cheese	82	567	Cheese	608-325-3021	608-325-3027
Kontos Foods, Inc.	63	568	Flatbreads	973-278-2800	973-278-7943
Manda Fine Meats	52	569	Deli Meats	800-343-2642	225-344-7647
Maple Leaf Consumer Foods	35	541	Deli Meats	916-863-3461	916-782-1272
Marcel et Henri	48	593	Pates	650-871-4230	650-871-5948
MDK Enterprises, Inc.	38	570	Equipment	800-310-8017	520-579-7310
MDS Foods, Inc.	83	571	Amish Cheese	330-833-8358	330-833-1252
Merit Paper Corporation	33	572	Packaging	800-346-1560	631-454-9170
Mills, Inc.	76-77	171	Fresh Produce	831-757-3061	831-424-9475
Norseland, Inc.	93	574	Cheese	203-324-5620	203-325-3189
Norseland, Inc.	5	543	Blue Cheese	203-324-5620	203-325-3189
Pilgrims Pride	2	575	Poultry	800-824-1159	214-920-2396
Pillar Sausages & Delicatessens Ltd.	57	596	Deli Meats	800-265-2628	519-743-7111
Placon	69	577	Packaging	800-541-1535	608-271-3162
Plainville Farms	52	578	Deli Meats	800-724-0206	315-638-0659
Plastic Packaging Corp.	30	579	Packaging	800-342-2011	413-731-5952
Praters Foods, Inc.	30	592	Prepared Foods	806-745-2727	806-745-9650
Principe Foods U.S.A., Inc.	7	545	Prosciutto	310-680-5500	559-272-6183
Queso Campesino	26	580	Hispanic Cheese	303-316-4251	303-316-4249
Redondo Iglesias USA	99	581	Ham From Spain	718-729-2763	718-937-3250
Refrigerated Foods Association	32	582	Association	770-452-0660	770-455-3879
Reser's Fine Foods	11	117	Mashed Potatoes	800-333-6431	503-646-9233
Reser's Fine Foods	29	200	Entrées	800-333-6431	503-646-9233
Reser's Fine Foods	21	210	Stuffing	800-333-6431	503-646-9233
Rose Packing Co., Inc.	58	594	Deli Meats	800-323-7363	847-381-9424
Rubschlagger Baking Corporation	62	583	Bakery	773-826-1245	773-826-6619
Sabra	41	584	Hummus	718-932-9000	866-675-3772
Sandridge Food Corporation	72-73	595	Salads/Prepared Foods	800-627-2523	330-722-3998
Service Solutions Consulting, Inc.	26	214	Consulting	615-351-8935	615-595-6910
SIAL Convention - Imex Management	95	542	Trade Show	704-365-0041	704-365-8426
The Snack Factory, Inc.	42	585	Snacks	888-683-5400	609-683-9595
Summer Fresh Salads, Incorporated	71	586	Salads	877-4-SALADS	905-856-9298
J.G. Van Holten & Son, Inc.	42	587	Pickles	800-255-0619	920-478-2316
Ventura Foods	37	211	Condiments	760-447-9657	303-679-0095
Walker's Food Products Co.	74	588	Side Dishes	818-472-8121	816-421-7273
Widmer's Cheese Cellar	82	590	Cheese	888-878-1107	920-488-2130
Woolwich Dairy	88	591	Cheese	908-647-6485	908-647-8305

Blast from the Past



Woolwich Dairy Inc., was founded in 1983 in Orangeville, ON, but this family-owned and -operated business got its start in Portugal when owner Tony Dutra's mother Adozinda supplied her village with homemade goat cheese. When the family moved to Ontario, she purchased a goat farm in Grand Valley and began making the same Portuguese-style goat cheeses for her family and friends.

Tony's wife Olga came up with the idea of starting a company using the family recipe. Tony and Olga left their full-time jobs in 1987 to take on this new venture, calling it Nova Cheese Inc. With Adozinda's cheese expertise, Olga's marketing skills and Tony's manufacturing background, the family began supplying southern Ontario with goat cheese. In 1989, the owners of Woolwich Dairy approached the Dutras about selling the business and retiring. The Dutras bought Woolwich, jumping at the opportunity to expand. Woolwich continues to experience 15 to 20 percent growth each year on average.

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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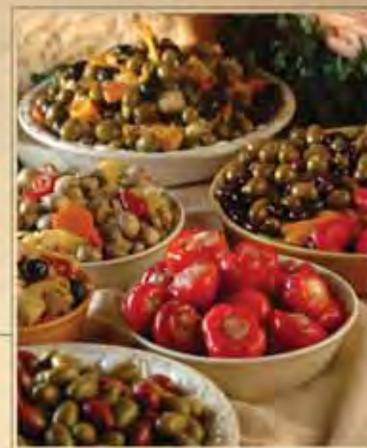
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