

# DELI

# BUSINESS

MARKETING MERCHANDISING MANAGEMENT PROCUREMENT

DEC./JAN. 2013 \$14.95

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## RED BARN FAMILY FARMS WINS RISING STAR AWARD



Red Barn Family Farms, Appleton, WI, was recognized as a Rising Star business by the Wisconsin Economic Development Council. Paula Homan was honored as the women-owned business Rising Star. The award recognizes businesses with great promise that have been in business less than five years.

Paula Homan and her husband, Dr. Terry Homan, large animal veterinarian, established Red Barn Family Farms in 2008 with the mission to help reinvigorate small Wisconsin family-owned dairy farms by creating an economy that values these farms and the families who operate them.

Red Barn has tapped into consumers' desires for a closer connection to the source of their food and for more accountability in how it is produced. Red Barn Family Farms are the only dairy farms in Wisconsin to have the American Humane Association certification. Farming on a smaller scale allows Red Barn Family Farms' products to meet an increasing demand not only for locally produced food but also for food that has been produced ethically and sustainably. Farmers are paid on an innovative new pay structure, apart from commodity pricing, that rewards their dedication to Red Barn's rigorous standards for milk quality and animal husbandry, or humane treatment of animals.

Red Barn cheese has earned a significant number of awards, medals, and accolades. In March, the dairy won gold, silver and bronze medals in the Mild to Medium Cloth-bound Cheddar category for its Red Barn Heritage Weis at the 2012 World Cheese Championships in Madison, while Red Barn Heritage Weis Reserve won gold and silver medals for Aged Bandaged Cheddar.

The company recently launched Edun, its New Zealand-style raw-milk Cheddar and will shortly release its 3-year Heritage Weis Reserve.

## COMING NEXT ISSUE IN FEB/MAR 2013

**COVER STORY**  
GMOs — Pros & Cons

**FEATURE STORIES**  
Consumer Research  
Asian Foods  
Entrées

**MERCHANDISING REVIEWS**  
Packaging  
Food Bars  
Soups

**PROCUREMENT STRATEGIES**  
Trends for Spring & Summer

**PREPARED FOODS**  
Pizza

**DELI MEATS**  
Roast Beef  
Prosciutto

**CHEESES**  
Mozzarella  
Cheddar

### COMING IN APRIL/MAY 2013

DELI BUSINESS will take an in-depth look at the growing popularity of specialty cheese and its impact on retail deli department sales.

**CORRECTION:** In the Expertise in Action sidebar in Encountering Craftsmanship in the Oct/Nov issue of DELI BUSINESS, we incorrectly stated that a Certified Cheese Professional who suspects a serious pathogen in a cheese should photograph the cheeses and then return the cheese to the distributor. We should have said to send the photograph to the distributor. We regret any confusion this may have caused.

### SUBSCRIPTION & READER SERVICE INFO

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Savor the luxury of the world's best cheese every day, with award-winning masterworks as comfortable on a salad as they are at a black tie event. Salut!



## Announcements



### FIRSTSOURCE: SUPERMARKET DELI

Lee Smith, senior vice president, Phoenix Media Network, Boca Raton, FL, will be the keynote speaker at FirstSource: Supermarket Deli. Combining product presentations, networking opportunities, product tastings, and private one-on-one buyer-requested meetings exclusive to high-level supermarket deli buyers and suppliers, it's a uniquely efficient alternative for buyers to source innovative products and learn what's new and hot to the marketplace — all in a relaxed, no-pressure environment over 2 1/2 days. This unique symposium will be held Feb. 5-7, 2013, at the Marriott Coral Springs Hotel in Fort Lauderdale, FL.

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



### TYSON DIG DEEP PROMOTION

Tyson Foods, Inc., Springdale, AR announces The Dig Deep promotion, featuring a coupon for \$2.50 off the purchase of two pounds or more of Tyson Boneless Wings from the deli and one Pepsi 8-pack 12-ounce plastic bottles or 7.5-ounce mini cans. Consumers can receive a free 32-ounce collectible cup with a peel-off sticker featuring a code to enter online for a chance to win a Samsung 55" Smart 3D HDTV or a trip for four to the 2014 Super Bowl. The promotion will be online Jan. 2 - Feb. 4, 2013, and also will be featured on DeliAnytime.com.

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



### CONTRACT MANUFACTURING PROGRAM

Pulaski Meat Products, Linden, NJ, has formally launched a new Contract Manufacturing Program for retailers, wholesalers and brand owners. The program offers customers the ability to create a line of private-label branded pork products with the flexibility to produce single products to a full line that can be expanded across supermarket deli departments. The program delivers the following benefits: state-of-the-art USDA manufacturing; complete turn-key solution from recipe development to packaging; competitive pricing; complete quality control program; and recipe development and testing.

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



### VERMONT FARMSTEAD EXPANDS MARKETPLACE

The Vermont Farmstead Cheese Company, So. Woodstock, VT, has produced cheese since January 2011, but has already generated 32 awards. Its cheeses will now be available in NY, NJ, NH, CT, MA, RI, SC, GA, AL, MS, TN, LA, FL and TX. Cheeses include: Farmstead Cheddar, Lillé (Coulommier), Governor's Cheddar, WindsorDale, Smoked WindsorDale, AleHouse Cheddar, Brickhaus Tilsit and Vermont Applewood Smoked Tilsit, Blueberry WindsorDale, Hot Pepper WindsorDale, Cracked Pepper WensleyDale, Cranberry WindsorDale, Chocolate Stout, F.H. Gillingham's Woodstock Village Smoked Cheddar and SugarHouse Edam.

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

## New Products



### TURKEY DINNER SAUSAGE AND DELI MEAT

Butterball, Garner, NC, now offers two new mealtime solutions that appeal to busy families — Butterball Recipe Starters Turkey Dinner Sausage and Butterball Artisan Seasoned Turkey Breast deli meats. Recipe Starters Turkey Dinner Sausage items are naturally hardwood smoked and contain 60 percent less fat than regular pork or beef smoked sausage. The new link sausage flavors are Wisconsin Cheddar and Hot and Spicy Red Pepper. The new Artisan Seasoned Turkey Breast is available in three trending flavors: Maple Honey, Smoky Chipotle and Herb Roasted.

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



### ANTIBACTERIAL PAPER TOWEL

Cascades Tissue Group, Waterford, NY, has introduced the Cascades Antibacterial Paper Towel, which minimizes hand contamination by killing 99.99 percent of harmful bacteria almost instantly. The distinctly green-colored paper towel can fit anywhere, doesn't require additional steps and compensates for people's imperfect hygiene habits without changing the way they wash or dry their hands. The towel releases the active ingredient benzalkonium chloride when in contact with wet hands. This active ingredient is safely used in common products, including gel sanitizers, baby wipes and antiseptic skin solutions.

[www.afh.cascades.com](http://www.afh.cascades.com)



### SMALL-BATCH ARTISAN CHEESE

Castello, Basking Ridge, NJ, now offers three of the smallest batch artisan cheeses still made in Germany. Bergkase: raw cow milk; firm texture, smooth consistency and slightly smoky aroma, like a fine smoked ham; smeared with mountain herbs and spices during the ripening process; aged at least five months. Hirten: pasteurized cow milk; aged at least seven months; develops a deep orange color; crumbly, dry texture features flavor crystals; slightly sweet caramel taste with hints of pine. Weissbier: soft, smooth and buttery; made from pasteurized cow milk; washed with Bavarian Weissbier two or three times per week; melts in the mouth with a hint of nutty sweetness.

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



### TGIF DIPS

Cedar's Mediterranean Foods, Inc., Ward Hill, MA, introduces New T.G.I.FRIDAY'S licensed refrigerated dips. The entire line of dips is Greek yogurt based and consists of six flavors in 11 ounces: Ultimate Spinach Dip with 3 Cheeses; French Onion; Jalapeño Artichoke & Cheese; Loaded Baked Potato; Signature BBQ Dip with Roasted Red Pepper; and Buffalo Blue Cheese Dip. Consumers can enjoy their favorite T.G.I.FRIDAY'S flavor profiles at home while dipping into a healthy alternative compared to other store bought dips. The dips can also be used as spreads on sandwiches or in place of condiments.

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

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



# CHEESE CONNOISSEUR

*The magazine for tasteful living*



## GOING TO THE WINTER FANCY FOOD SHOW?

Take the opportunity to take a Master Cheese Class at the esteemed San Francisco Cheese School with Lee Smith, Publisher of Cheese Connoisseur.  
Saturday, January 13th • 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM  
Special Cheesemonger's Discount \$55.00

In between judging the American Cheese Society cheese competition and the World Cheese Awards, Ms. Smith found time to intern at Latteria Perenzin in Italy's Veneto region. The creamery has been churning out cheese for four generations and today makes over 50 varieties, from wine-infused, aged cheeses to luscious Robiolas to a water buffalo soft-ripened cheese not seen elsewhere. Lee will guide you through a tasting of cheeses from this extraordinary creamery and share her photos and lessons from her time there.

### SAN FRANCISCO CHEESE SCHOOL

2155 Powell Street • San Francisco, CA 94133  
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For additional information regarding advertising, subscriptions, or in-store sales, e-mail [lsmith@phoenixmedianet.com](mailto:lsmith@phoenixmedianet.com)



## New Products



### ALL-NATURAL DELI MEAT & SALAME

Columbus Foods, Hayward, CA, has launched the Farm to Fork Naturals line with three deli meat and four salame varieties, all made from animals humanely raised on family farms, with no antibiotics and 100% vegetarian feeds. The deli meats are made from whole turkey breasts, lightly seasoned and slow-roasted. Flavors include: Oven Roasted Turkey Breast, Honey Roasted Turkey Breast and Smoked Turkey Breast. The salame is made with 100 percent pork. Flavors include: Uncured Fennel Salame, Uncured Genoa Salame, Uncured Italian Dry Salame, and Uncured Sopressata Salame. All are packaged using High Pressure Processing (HPP); deli meats in 6-ounce peel and reseal packaging; salame in a 4-ounce package. [www.columbussalame.com](http://www.columbussalame.com)



### HICKORY SMOKED JARLSBERG

Norseland, Inc., Darien, CT — part of TINE SA, Norway — premiered new Jarlsberg Hickory Smoked, at New York's Food Film Festival. Jarlsberg is cold-smoked over smoldering hickory chip embers, infusing its mild, mellow and nutty flavor with a subtle smokiness. The natural production process also gives the cheese surface a distinctive light caramel color. Part of a five day celebration highlighting the best of food film, Jarlsberg Hickory Smoked was sampled by more than 1,500 attendees and paired with Islay 8 single malt whiskeys, Frei Brothers fine reserve wines, plus several local craft beers and cider. [www.norseland.com](http://www.norseland.com)



### PRE-SLICED RETAIL PACKAGING

La Quercia, Norwalk, IA, now offers pre-sliced retail packaging. The new packages have an eye-catching design to make it pop on the deli wall; a stiff sleeve to keep product upright and attractive on shelf displays; the same internal modified atmosphere packaging that ensures the same great shelf life; the same UPC, same item number and same price. New items made possible by the new packaging include pre-sliced Lomo Americano. At 10 slices per ounce, this will with prosciutto in 20 slice/2-ounce packs. Pre-sliced Prosciutto Piccante will be released in a 3-ounce package in December 2012. [www.laquercia.us](http://www.laquercia.us)



### GLASS END & REMOTE REFRIGERATION MODELS

Master-Bilt, New Albany, MS, introduces new options for its Bottom Mount Open Air (BMOA) Display Merchandisers — glass end BMOA-GE and remote refrigeration BMOA-R models. These grab-and-go merchandisers increase pack-out and product visibility space with 17"-deep shelving. The BMOA-GE glass end models provide greater visual impact and unlimited product grouping opportunities for powerful visual displays. The BMOA-R models offer remote refrigeration systems to take heat and noise out of the sales area, which lowers the air conditioning load, resulting in less energy usage. Merchandisers offer standard limited 3-year extended compressor warranty and 2-year limited parts and labor warranty. [www.master-bilt.com](http://www.master-bilt.com)



### MULTI-COMPARTMENT BOWLS

Placon, Madison, WI, has introduced Fresh 'n Clear divided bowls in black or crystal clear recycled PET as a 32-ounce bowl with three compartments and center cup, or as a 48-ounce container with four compartments and center cup. The multi-compartment bowls feature Placon's "scround" design (square-round) giving the bowls a custom look. Made with recycled EcoStar materials consisting of post-consumer bottles and thermoforms that have been diverted from landfills, the bowls offer a great recyclability message for delis to promote to consumers. The crush-resistant bowls also feature secure, leak-resistant 360° seals with lid and base tabs offset from the corners so the containers are easy to open. [www.placon.com](http://www.placon.com)



### CHINESE STYLE BARBECUE PORK

Pocino Foods Co., City of Industry, CA, has introduced a classic Chinese favorite. Commonly known as Char Sui Pork in restaurants and fast-food outlets, the pork can be sliced or diced and consumed as is or is excellent with a dash of hot mustard. Add to rice bowls, dice into stir-fry vegetables or fried rice, or use in a Banh Mi sandwich. Marketed under the brand, Pacific Gem, premium cuts of pork shoulder are marinated in authentic hoisin-based char sui sauce and slow cooked to perfection. Pacific Gem Barbeque Seasoned Pork is available in 12-ounce, 24-ounce and 3-pound packages. [www.pocinofoods.com](http://www.pocinofoods.com)



### GOURMET ANCHOVIES

The Rogers Collection, Portland, ME, introduces Roque Anchovies, a new addition to its handmade artisanal foods. Roque Anchovies are deeply rooted in the tradition of the coastal village of Collioure, France, where they have been produced since the 1500s. Collioure is situated on the Mediterranean Sea, just north of the border with Spain. This specific area of the Mediterranean is renowned for anchovies that travel in the shoals of the warm waters. Available in four types: Anchovies in salt; Anchovies in Sunflower Oil (deboned filets); Cream of Anchovy; and Roquerones (anchovies marinated in vinegar). [www.therogerscollection.com](http://www.therogerscollection.com)



### GRAB-AND-GO SALSA

Sabra Dipping Company, White Plains, NY, has added a grab-and-go pack featuring Sabra's Homestyle Medium Salsa and Tostitos Bite Size Rounds tortilla chips to its line of products. This is the first time Sabra has offered refrigerated salsa in a single serving size. All Sabra salsas are made from hand-selected tomatoes combined with chunky vegetables, herbs and spices. The new offering will join Sabra's family of refrigerated salsa, hummus, guacamole and Greek yogurt vegetable dips. [www.sabra.com](http://www.sabra.com)

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When you choose our products – Grana Padano®, Prosciutto di San Daniele®, Montasio®, Prosciutto di Parma® and Parmigiano Reggiano® – for your customers, you show a passion for incomparably delicious, natural food that's never mass-produced or processed. Because each of these products carry the Protected Designation of Origin seal, the European Union's guarantee of quality and authenticity, you know they are from a specific geographical region in Italy and are created using traditional techniques that have set the standard of culinary excellence for generations. These uniquely European delights are sure to bring a little happiness to your customers and the friends and family they share them with.



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by Jim Prevora, Editor-in-Chief

# The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Deli

**T**he closing of the famous Stage Deli in New York City is sad to those who value Jewish ethnic food. It also points to an important business lesson.

The Stage Deli, along with its neighbor, the Carnegie Deli, were really the places that brought deli into the mainstream of American culture, and in so doing helped Americanize the great masses of Eastern European Jews who came to the country at the turn of the 19th century. The deli and Jewish food became mixed in with Jewish comedy and the Yiddish language itself, as it all melted into the broader American culture.

In 1930, there were 1,550 kosher delis in New York City. Today there are perhaps 150 in the whole country.

Because of their proximity to Times Square and association with Broadway moguls and stars, the Stage and the Carnegie became the epitome of what a Jewish deli was. It was the Stage, for example, that created the photo wall, with famous people's pictures signed with their affection for a favorite sandwich.

It was a war between the Stage and the Carnegie that led to each piling sandwiches ever higher — a battle that changed the expectation of what a deli sandwich was, with six-inch overstuffed piles of meat the new expectation.

It's hard today for people to realize a delicatessen was more than a sandwich shop. It was integrally caught up in the aspirations of the Jewish people for success in America. It's hard to imagine but people worked like dogs all week and their bosses, as a reward, would take them for a corned beef or pastrami sandwich, with the prospect a powerful motivator to keep people working hard.

Think of a world in which young men would save up their pennies for the treat of a salami sandwich. If things weren't going great, you got a frankfurter; if you were in the chips, it was corned beef.

In fact, the Jewish delicatessen was unknown to the mostly rural Jews who came here from Eastern Europe. They discovered deli in America, where more affluent German Jews had set up delis in the city. The delis were kosher, so the new immigrants could aspire to eat there and, in time, adopted the food as their own.

The loss of the Stage Deli is not a surprise. Jewish delis have been closing for years. The high cost of food and other expenses, especially rent of over a million dollars a year for a small restaurant, brought us the, albeit overstuffed, \$17 sandwich. The neighborhood changed as well. Instead of being filled with Broadway businesspeople, it mostly is filled with tourists.

The action in Jewish cuisine has shifted. From Manhattan, it moved to Brooklyn and now involves artisanal gefilte fish and pastrami, as well as new delis such as Mile End in the Boerum Hill neighborhood of Brooklyn.

Deep in Jewish-American cultural mores, this deli features each year a "Traditional Jewish Christmas" — a Chinese feast! — all in sync with the common Jewish tradition of Chinese Food and a movie — what else is open? — on Christmas.

And Jewish food went mainstream. Lots of people enjoy matzo ball soup or a kosher hot dog. Smoked fish, once hand-sliced at the delicatessen, is now sold pre-packaged in every supermarket.

Still, the Stage was in business for three-quarters of a century. It changed but so did the whole world. There was a time when every single night there was a line outside the Stage Deli as men in dinner jackets and women in mink coats waited in line after the theatre for pastrami on rye with mustard. It seems impossible, but it was true. Of course, it was also true that Mickey Mantle, Hank Bauer and Johnny Hopp, as young professional baseball players, shared a walk-up apartment above the Stage in order to save a little money.

Endless numbers of business books are devoted to understanding what makes a particular business successful. Yet the real truth is that whatever that might be, continuing to do the same things will probably lead to failure. The world changes in ways subtle and profound, and failure to evolve ensures obsolescence.

The irony of the Stage Deli closure is that there is a booming market for Jewish Deli — a large and growing community of young Orthodox Jews. Unfortunately, they couldn't eat at the Stage Deli because, although it was "kosher-style," it was not kosher. This concession to modernity was made a long time ago and was, at the time, seen as the necessary accommodation to young people who didn't want the restrictions that kosher imposed on food choices — what, no cheeseburger! — as well as the operational difficulties caused by the high cost of kosher meat and the need to do things such as sell the restaurant every Shabbat to a non-Jew to operate on Saturday.

Yet the world went full circle, and now the older generation that loved deli is dying off or moving to Florida or too concerned about their health to want some schmaltz — chicken fat. The failure of the Stage Deli to evolve and serve the growing population of young Modern Orthodox Jews sealed its fate. How many among us are seeing the demographics transform around us but are failing to keep pace with them? The Stage gave us much, including that parting lesson.

DB



*James F. Prevora*



# DELICIOUS.



Without Borders™

Mission® Foodservice can help you turn your deli into something delicious. Our consistently fresh, high-quality, versatile products allow you to expand your menu and wow your customers with easy to prepare eye-catching culinary creations. To find out how you can make Mission® tortillas a part of your operation visit us at [missionfoodservice.com](http://missionfoodservice.com) or call 1-800-443-7994.

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by Lee Smith, Publisher

## A Time To Give Thanks

This may be the shortest column I've ever written. Instead writing a typical column, I just want to wish everyone a wonderful holiday season.

While I am not a big fan of New Year's resolutions, this is a good time to step back and think about the future. Where do you want to be? How do you get there? Do your plans dovetail with your company's or is it time to move on? Does someone in your life need a little extra care and compassion or deserve a big hug?

I want time to look around and appreciate everything and everyone I have to be thankful for. It's not always an easy task when fighting day-to-day challenges, but it leaves me on the plus side of life and often with renewed energy and a sense of purpose.

So, I want to thank each of you for your support of DELI BUSINESS. I want you to know that you have, indeed, made a mark in the world and that you are appreciated. Thank you for being friends, colleagues and acquaintances. Thank you for working beside me, and thank you for challenging me.

May the upcoming year be the best year of your life.

**DB**



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Lee Smith'.



# Real. Traditional. Gouda.

Made the same way today as it has been for over 100 years

Located in the Netherlands, in the city of Woerden, the van den Wijngaard family has been aging cheese for generations. The process for making the exceptional Gouda called Reypenaer takes place in a century-old warehouse, still without refrigeration. Inside, cheeses are turned and wiped down everyday by hand as the fluctuations in temperature and humidity assist in improving the aroma, taste, texture and complexity of flavors. In order for this cheese to be awarded the designation of "Reypenaer", it must be aged for at least 1 year. In 2005, 2007, 2009 & 2011 Reypenaer was awarded with the Gold Medal for Best Dutch Cheese at the International Cheese Show held in Nantwich, England.



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# On The Horizon

2013 promises to be a  
year of retail change

BY JAN FIALKOW





# Simply a Better Way to Buy.

## No Matter How You Stack It.



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**DELI BUSINESS**





**T**he overwhelming trend that retailers can latch onto in 2013 is the consumers' quest for health and wellness. It permeates every food decision — even those that fail to meet the goal. The health/wellness paradigm is so engrained in the collective consciousness that many consumers must intentionally override their knowledge base in order to satisfy their cravings. This all-pervasive health/wellness trend may not win each purchasing decision, but it certainly is a factor.

Another major trend has more men shopping for food than in the past. Whether this is because fathers are taking a more active role in the health of their families, men are experiencing greater ramifications of the economic downturn and thus have time to shop or they simply want to take a more active role in food decisions, the result is the same for the super-market deli: It's time to stop thinking of the typical shopper as female.

Two additional areas stand out as presenting growth potential in 2013 — specialty foods, specifically specialty cheese and international cuisine, and transparency.

Although these trends can be treated individually at store level, recognizing that they can all be tied together to increase department traffic and sales should be a goal.

## Health and Wellness

With the media shouting about obesity in children and age-related illnesses in Boomers, consumers are inundated with often conflicting messages about what to eat and in what quantities to eat it. They're particularly receptive to messaging that affects their children.

Nearly 20 percent of 6- to 11-year olds are obese, according to the Centers for Disease Control; this age group numbers 25.7 million or 8 percent of the total U.S. population and is poised to grow by another million by 2017, according to Mintel's *Marketing To Kids*, released in October 2012. Given these statistics, the deli department has a huge opportunity to help combat childhood obesity by presenting parents with healthful lunch box solutions for their kids.

According to a survey of 35- to 46-year-old parents conducted by Y-Pulse, a Chicago, IL-based research and consulting firm that specializes in helping food companies better understand tomorrow's tastemakers today, 70 percent of the respondents looked for healthy menu options when purchasing from the retail deli.

Protein is an important nutrient provided in meats and cheeses, says Lisa Carlson, MS, RD, development nutritionist at Unilever Food Solutions Lisle, IL. "Protein can help curb obesity by providing satiety so kids are not as ravenous when they get home from



PHOTO COURTESY OF UNILEVER FOOD SOLUTIONS

school and eat out of control. In addition, the deli has the ability to customize. Parents can ask for thin rather than thick slices. This offers the same plate coverage with fewer calories." Needless to say, this advice also applies to adults.

Charlie's Pride Meats, Vernon, CA, manufactures ready-to-slice and pre-sliced roast beef, corned beef and pastrami and pre-sliced turkey. CEO Jim Dickman explains, "In addition to being 95 percent fat-free, trans fat-free, gluten- and MSG-free, we've worked hard to reduce sodium in our meats while still finding the right balance of flavor. Combining our meats in moderation with carbohydrates such as whole-grain breads or fruits and vegetables is a perfect pairing."

Use meats and cheeses to make "sandwiches" without bread, suggests Francis Wall, vice-president of marketing for Belgioioso Cheese, Inc., Green Bay, WI. "For example, roll up slices of provolone or fontina with salami, turkey or ham."

Tracey Altman, vice president of marketing for Saginaw, TX-based Fresherized Foods, makers of Wholly-brand guacamole and salsa, advises, "Make turkey roll-ups with guacamole and add a pack of pretzels or low-fat chips."

Think outside the 'bread box' and use 4-inch plain or flavored whole-grain tortillas to prepare pinwheel sandwiches, suggests Cari Price, corporate chef and director of culinary, FoodIQ, a Springfield, MO-based recipe development company. "Use meats and cheeses or a filling such as peanut butter, banana and honey. Call it 'sandwich sushi' and market it with chopsticks for extra fun."

Let consumers choose their own toppings for take-and-bake pizza and turn leftover slices into lunch the next day, suggests

Carlson. "In addition to or instead of sausage or pepperoni, a deli can offer a toppings bar with different cut-up vegetables or fruits or have this as part of its salad bar."

Altman suggests promoting deli rotisserie chicken for dinner and as a lunch ingredient. She suggests consumers "shred leftover chicken for easy tacos, add it to a spinach salad with Wholly red pepper mango salsa or make a homemade chicken salad using Wholly guacamole instead of mayo."

The sandwich isn't the hard part of packing a healthful lunch, says Price. "It's the sides that are hard. For example, the deli can offer fresh-cut fruit salads, or yogurt parfaits with granola and berries, or celery and carrot sticks pre-packed with hummus in portion-control cups, or sliced apples with cups of almond or hazelnut butter."

Everyone gets tired of the same-old-same old and time-starved multitasking shoppers get overwhelmed with always having to come up with something new. Enter the deli. "The deli offers all the ingredients, but not everyone knows how to pull it all together into a healthful meal," says Wall. "The real show piece deli operators can offer is the usage tools."

To accomplish this, Sharon Olson, executive director of Y-Pulse, says, "Create signage or a menu board or print suggestions in brochure-form with the imprint of a brown bag in the background to give healthy lunch box selections. It's best to highlight what positive nutrients are in a lunch selection rather than negative ones left out such as salt, sugar or fat. Then, offer more ideas and information on your website. This way, those who want more information can get it, but those who don't won't have to feel they're being preached at."



The deli offers all the ingredients needed to make a complete and healthful meal, says Jennifer Egeland, MS, RD, LD, dietitian and natural foods buyer for Ball's Foods Stores, an 11-store chain based in Kansas City, KS. "There are lean meats and cheeses, whole-grain breads and salads with fruits and vegetables. Consider putting all of these ingredients together in a convenient, affordable, way."

Charlie's Pride's Dickman recommends creating a lunch kit. "Offer a choice of three types of sandwiches, such as roast beef, ham and turkey. Instead of potato chips, add in sliced apples or baby carrots or a salad. Instead of potato or macaroni salad, which are old school, offer a healthier Mediterranean-style pasta salad with olive oil. You could also offer a special selection of the day or week."

### Men in the Aisles

Many of the men of Generations X and Y grew up with Boomer moms who worked full-time and Boomer dads who were exhorted to do more around the house (even if those dads didn't always comply), so they've been exposed to the idea of men taking care of household routines since childhood.

The proliferation of television cooking shows — Emeril, Bobby and Alton all but banished any stereotypes accepted by earlier generations — and a lifestyle that worships at the altar of good food have created a culture in which men feel more comfortable cooking and shopping. Grilling and barbecuing have always been male-dominated, but more and more men are migrating into the kitchen.

Men are marrying later — their median age for first marriages was 28.4 in 2009 as compared to 22.8 in 1960 — so by necessity many of them have to fend for themselves. If those marriages don't last, men are more likely to remain single and head their own households than men of earlier generations. And if the fathers of these men find themselves single either because of divorce or death, they're more inclined to stay single as well. And then there is the growing cohort of same-sex domestic households.

The economic downturn that began in late 2008 has had a greater impact on men than on women, resulting in more stay-at-home dads and self-employed men with startup businesses. These men are taking on many of the chores previously performed by women — and that includes shopping for and preparing food.

Supermarkets that want to capture these consumers are trying new marketing concepts — from "man-aisles" that feature male-oriented foods and impulse items to ads that specifically target male shoppers. The media

is also helping, with commercials that pitch items once pitched only to women to men.

Men's magazines now contain recipes, nutrition information and male-oriented diets. On June 9, 2012, *Men's Health* launched its first-ever men's cooking school in New York City. This one-day event was held in conjunction with the magazine's 6th annual *Guy Food Guide*.

Male consumers are predisposed to shopping the deli; those with no or limited cooking skills are prime purchasers of prepared

foods and those with more developed skills are likely to expand their purchases to "ingredients" within the department.

### Specialty Foods

According to *What's in Store 2013* from the Madison, WI-based International Dairy-Deli-Bakery Association (IDDBA), "Of the \$24.7 billion in deli department sales, cheese represents 19.7 percent. Relative to total deli, specialty cheese represents 12.7 percent; service cheese 5.9 percent; and pre-sliced



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cheese about 1.2 percent.”

The report goes on to say that Nielsen Perishables Group FreshFacts finds “all three deli categories experienced sales increases in the 52 weeks ending March 31, 2012. Specialty cheese grew 5.5 percent and pre-sliced cheese grew 8.8 percent. Overall, the deli cheese category posted a 7.7 percent gain.”

Specialty cheese provides high-quality protein with an intense flavor profile. The product is inherently healthy when eaten in appropriate quantities and because of the flavor intensity, most consumers find it easy to limit their consumption to reasonable amounts.

IDDBA reports ethnic flavors — aka international cuisines — is among the hottest trends in the deli department. Its research indicates the top trendy ethnic items attracting shoppers in deli sandwich programs/prepared food areas are: crepes (27.6 percent), chipotle flavors (24 percent), hummus (23.4 percent), Korean BBQ (22.7 percent), and empanadas (21.6 percent). Others mentioned are Vietnamese banh mi sandwiches (10.5 percent) and stuffed cornmeal cakes known as pupusas (10 percent). Rotisserie chicken recipes are joining in on ethnic food trends with flavors such as lime-cilantro and chipotle-barbecue.

### Transparency

The question of who is making the food they eat is uppermost in consumers' minds. The trend that started as local and regional has morphed into one in which specifics — who grew the produce, who raised the animal, who made the potato salad — are increasingly important. Anytime the story behind the product can be shared, the consumer benefits. Trust, familiarity, and in some cases bragging rights elevate the perception of the foods. But beware — consumers are looking for real information, not some gauzy depiction of what might have transpired.

Although not universal, animal welfare is gaining inroads with many consumers. A rash of horrific videos that went viral in 2012 has made a significant impact. And speaking of viral, a consumer who feels lied to, cheated or in some other way disrespected has the ability to share his or her unhappiness with hundreds and perhaps thousands of other people.

It may be impossible to please every customer on every item during every visit, but it behooves every retailer to go out of its way to ameliorate any disgruntled shoppers that make their unhappiness known. The new methods of communication in everyone's pocket or purse have changed the landscape forever.

**DB**



# Middle Eastern Flavors Gaining Popularity

The definition of Mediterranean foods is expanding

BY BOB JOHNSON



With consumers looking for options that are both healthy and interesting, Middle Eastern food is a growing category, with the cuisines of Morocco, Tunisia and other points Middle Eastern taking their turn in the spotlight. The category the industry considers Mediterranean foods is expanding.

"I think Middle Eastern cuisine continues to gain popularity because it's a healthy and flavorful option. People want good food that's good for them and a lot of these foods

and ingredients fit that bill," says Jenni Bonsignore, marketing manager, Valley Lahvosh Baking Company, Fresno, CA. The family-owned company that produces a line of cracker breads was started 90 years ago by Armenian master baker Gazair Saghatelian.

A number of Middle Eastern foods have moved into the mainstream in the last few years as the portfolio of healthy and popular foods continues to grow. "You definitely see hummus, lentils, and flatbreads such as lah-vosh, pretty much everywhere now," says Bonsignore. "There's a growing knowledge

about these foods among consumers and as a result, they've become more mainstream and easier to find in your local supermarkets."

Another Middle Eastern food poised to enter the mainstream is falafel, deep fried balls or patties made from ground chickpeas or fava beans and spices. "I think falafel is really starting to go mainstream along with a variety of dips and salads. Baba ganoush which is a roasted eggplant dip/spread is gaining popularity," says Jeff Derr, senior manager – retail sales & marketing at Grecian Delight Foods, Elk Grove Village, IL. The company distrib-

utes a full line of Greek foods — including flatbreads and other baked items, hummus and other spreads, gyros and specialty meats, and a wide variety of yogurt, filo, cheese, olive and falafel products.

"As these foods become more known and easily available, I think what you'll see in this category is a fusion of these Middle Eastern flavors with more traditional cuisine," Bonsignore says.

The fusion of Middle Eastern and what Americans traditionally think of as Mediterranean foods is a centuries-old tradition in their countries of origin; many of the same or similar dishes are prepared according to a variety of local traditions.

Although Italian and Greek restaurants have been prominent for years, the idea of "Mediterranean" restaurants is relatively new, according to Steve Kontos, vice president and owner of Kontos Foods Inc., Paterson, NJ. "Middle Eastern foods have always been there. The Mediterranean is a large area, including all the way from Spain to Turkey. The Middle East is a smaller footprint. Twenty years ago there were more Middle Eastern restaurants than Mediterranean, but now it's reversed. Middle Eastern food includes hummus, which has been around for 25 years."

Many important dishes have long traditions in both the Middle East and the greater Mediterranean. "You've got an overlap of cuisines. Foods such as stuffed grape leaves are both Middle Eastern and Mediterranean. Olives overlap. Feta cheese and yogurt overlap. There's a lot of overlap in the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern foods," Kontos adds, especially "in the desert and pastry area. Filo dough is widely used in Syria and Lebanon, as well as Greece. They all use it for spinach pie — spanakopita — or baklava. The Greeks use walnuts in their baklava, the Lebanese use pistachios, and the Syrians use cashews and pistachios. But it's all baklava throughout the whole area," he says.

The emergence of Middle Eastern foods should bring with it a new spice palette. According to Sara Baer-Sinnott, president of Oldways, Boston, MA. "I think more spices will become popular. I think there will be more awareness of North African foods, such as Moroccan and Tunisian with lots of spices. The capers of [the tiny island of] Panetelleria [off Sicily] are preserved in salt rather than vinegar, and they're just delicious. An expansion of capers is also possible; they're really wonderful."

Oldways is a food and nutrition nonprofit, whose mission is to guide people to better health through traditional foods. It offers a range of educational and informational services, including an extensive search-



PHOTO COURTESY OF VALLEY LAVOSH

able library of healthy traditional food recipes on its website, [www.oldwayspt.org/resources](http://www.oldwayspt.org/resources).

Some Middle Eastern foods have already entered the American marketplace. "Spices that are associated with Middle Eastern food are becoming more popular, for instance, za'atar. [Za'atar recipes vary by country but in general they are mixture of ground dried thyme, oregano, marjoram, toasted sesame seeds and salt, often with the addition of sumac.] Halloumi cheese — so delicious! — is another item that many embrace. Finally, I think the concept/name of a meze plate will be used by mid-range restaurants in the years ahead," Baer-Sinnott says.

Baer-Sinnott believes Middle Eastern grain dishes with vegetables may gain acceptance among Americans looking for healthier foods for their kids. "We're seeing more grain dishes such as farro. I'd like to think Americans will be paring more grains with vegetables. It's a good way to get kids to eat more vegetables," she says.

### Health Is Still Hot

Part of the appeal shared by Middle Eastern and Mediterranean foods is that they offer healthy alternatives to foods heavy in animal fat, salt and sugar.

"I think the health aspect is one of the driving factors," notes Bonsignore. "The perception is this diet is good for you and it also has many options for vegetarians, which can be appealing. Our Valley Lahvosh cracker-bread is low fat, no cholesterol, and has zero trans fats — all things that matter to a health-conscious consumer."

The trend toward healthier food — launched in large part by the Mediterranean Diet — shows no sign of slowing down.

"There is absolutely no doubt that the health trend is continuing," Kontos says.

Kontos Foods produces a wide variety of flat bread and filo products, and also distributes cheese, olives and other Mediterranean specialty items. But the firm also sells a variety of foods from other producers and, according to Warren Stoll, marketing director, the demand for healthy foods remains strong across the board.

"The health aspect is definitely important. More and more, we're becoming label watchers. We read the nutritional labels before we buy," Grecian Delight's Derr adds.

The category is doing well because the food is healthy, interesting and delicious. "The Mediterranean category is growing in many areas of the grocery store: frozen, prepared, deli, dairy," Derr says. "Greek yogurt is the biggest thing right now, not only as a breakfast item mixed with berries, honey or granola. You're seeing it as a main ingredient in dips/spreads since it's healthier than existing sour cream or mayonnaise dips/spreads."

### Taste Is Still King

Foods from the Middle East are growing in popularity because they're healthy, but they'll continue to grow because they taste good.

"The Middle Eastern category will continue to grow. The food is just so delicious," Baer-Sinnott says. "Hummus and Feta cheese have been mainstream for more than a few years. Greek yogurt is huge. I think Middle Eastern foods that will enter the mainstream in the future are baba ganoush, tabbouleh and tzatziki. For instance, I had baba ganoush on American Airlines last week — certainly an indicator that a dish is not unusual and becoming mainstream. Also, the wonderful olive bars in grocery stores are introducing a lot of customers to a variety of olives — another mainstream product. Sampling is really important to introduce consumers to new tastes."

Countless cross-promotion opportunities exist. "It would help to bring the Mediterranean foods together and have co-promotions, rather than have them separate. I see Greek and Mediterranean foods as being where Mexican food was 30 to 35 years ago. Now we have chain Mexican food restaurants all across the country," Stoll says.

"Twenty years ago when you went into the store, olive oil was a specialty item. Now people are familiar with olive oil, hummus and Greek yogurt. Manufacturers have put some great products in the stores," Baer-Sinnott adds. "The Mediterranean Diet is one of the healthiest eating patterns in the world. And it's delicious, too. Health is important; however, great taste is the No. 1 reason for growth," she concludes.

DB





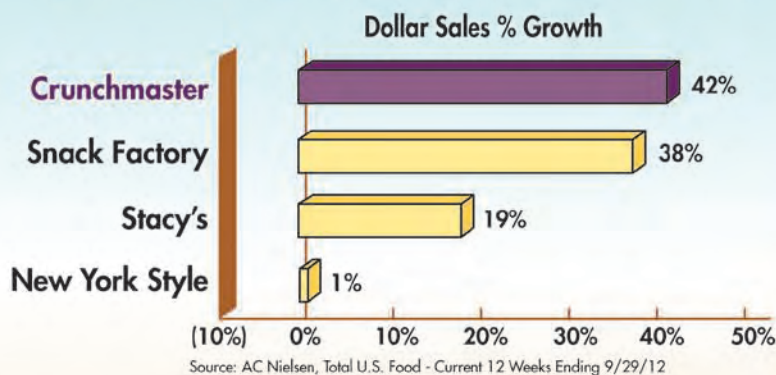
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# GROWING BEYOND OLIVES

Delis embrace olive bars as a means of attracting adventurous consumers

BY JULIE COOK RAMIREZ



The ease with which Americans travel the world has sharpened their taste buds and created a desire to replicate the exotic, gourmet tastes of distant lands at home. One of the most visual examples is the growing popularity of Mediterranean foods. One look at the sales of hummus, Feta cheese or extra virgin olive oil and you'll understand how thoroughly Mediterranean flavors have infiltrated the American diet.

The popularity of tapas, or "small plate," restaurants is evidence of the pervasiveness of Mediterranean foods. Such trendy establishments had their start in large metropolitan areas where hip, young couples are constantly looking for something new. Today, tapas restaurants can be found in every corner of the United States — from the streets of Manhattan to the cornfields of Nebraska.

The same can be said of olive bars, which makes sense because they often serve the purpose of allowing consumers to create their own tapas experience at home. Not

only do they present the opportunity to experience an array of olives, they allow the consumer to taste before buying and to mix and match their own personalized batch of olives. The result is a surge in the number of olive bars popping up in deli departments across the country.

"Along with an ever-increasing demand for convenience by the consumer, there is also a strong lean towards gourmet, restaurant-quality entertainment items and ingredients," says Giuliana Pozzuto, marketing director, George DeLallo Co., Mt. Pleasant, PA. "Olive bars are popular everywhere, in every supermarket that gives them a chance, not just in one specific region." In fact, she says, the largest percentage of growth has been occurring in the middle of the country.

Olive bars are indeed popping up in the most unexpected places, according to Ron Loeb, president and owner, The Olive Branch, a division of Farm Ridge Foods LLC, Commack, NY. "Marketplaces such as Tennessee, Ohio, South Carolina — people I

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would never think would have olive bars now have olive bars," he says.

Recent months have seen lots of trial of olive bars in stores throughout the country, according to Ann Dressler, manager, service deli/food service division, Mezzetta Fine Foods, Corona, CA. While "larger, more populated cities" still tend to be the biggest promoters of olive bars, Dressler sees them popping up just about everywhere. The appeal of the olive bar is relatively simple, both for the consumer and the retailer.

"Fresh olive bars bring an upscale feel to the store and promote cross-merchandising throughout the service deli," she explains. "They present an excellent opportunity for high profits with a relatively small investment and upkeep."

### Branching Out

As olive bars have grown in popularity, delis have expanded on what constitutes one. While the most popular olive varieties — Kalamata, Niçoise, Picholine, and Cerig-

nola — are sure to be represented, there are opportunities for complementary items as well. An array of marinated or pickled foods can be found on many olive bars, often referred to as antipasto bars, to reflect that they contain much more than just olives.

"With the increase in at-home entertaining, and as stores undergo redesigns with a shift toward meeting the demand for new, creative, and gourmet ideas, our customers have been looking to make their olive bars more of a destination, a Mediterranean marketplace, if you will," says George Christodoulou, director of retail sales, Castella Imports, Hauppauge, NY. Castella encourages deli operators to incorporate its line of flavored balsamic vinegars and oils into their olive bars, along with its bruschetta creations and grilled vegetables.

Increasingly, these "Mediterranean marketplaces" are home to a wide variety of complementary products. Peppers, cornichons, caperberries, mushrooms, tapenades, sweet white garlic, cipolini onions, and artichokes can all be found peacefully co-existing with their olive cousins, along with fresh cheeses such as Mozzarella or Feta.

Peppadew peppers have also proven popular on the olive bar, according to Mary Caldwell, marketing director, FoodMatch Inc., New York, NY. Their bright red color and unique shape attract attention and provide a welcome contrast, she says.

Loeb says The Olive Branch has introduced fresh pickles to the olive bar concept, a move that results in "phenomenal margins."

Portland, OR-based Mama Lil's Peppers has been selling pickled peppers marinated in oil and peppers pickled in sweet brine on olive bars in the Pacific Northwest. It's all about creating contrast, says Jay Beattie, president. "Olive bars are typically centered around the specialty part of the store, which is usually higher fat items — cheeses and cured meats such as salami, prosciutto, and spreads. The items on the olive bars, specifically our peppers, have vinegar to them. Just like wine, the acid plays off the fat on the other items."

Exotic peppers and colorful olive medleys create an exciting presentation for consumers on the lookout for fresh ways to entertain, adds Pozzuto. Increasingly, she says, stores are coming to DeLallo for a full line of antipasti to round out their olive bar offerings. "In our experience, olive bars are most successful when they include more than just olives, in particular, antipasti items and deli favorites such as specialty cheeses, cured meats such as salami and sopressata, European crackers, crispy breadsticks, dips, and bruschetta spreads," she explains. "They all make natural pairing items for merchandising with olives."

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definition of olive bar. A self-proclaimed purist, Mezzetta's Dressler believes olive bars present better and boast a longer shelf life when olives are the only items displayed. "It promotes better sales on the higher profit olive items and keeps cross-contamination to a minimum," she says.

FoodMatch's Caldwell encourages deli operators to merchandise domestic and imported specialty cheese and artisan breads near the olive bar. "Cheese, bread, olives, and antipasti are a natural pairing and easy for consumers to visualize," says Caldwell. "This will encourage trial for new consumers and offers a terrific upsell in the deli and bakery."

### Price Considerations

Typically carrying a price tag of \$7.99 to \$9.99 per pound, olive bars are often viewed as the domain of the higher echelon, more sophisticated consumer with a greater discretionary income. However, olive bars have transcended demographics and can be found across the income spectrum.

"Olive bars are no longer found only in higher-quality-focused stores," says Mama Lil's Beattie. "Some of the more broad-based chains now have olive bars, so they're starting to expand to larger income variations

nationally."

Olive bars may be available to consumers of many different income levels, but that doesn't mean they'll be able to afford to shop them. By their very nature, olives and many of the complementary products commonly sold on olive bars are rather pricey. Mama Lil's, for example, doesn't necessarily gear its products towards high-income consumers, but that's the demographic that tends to buy them. "Because they're small batch and very hands-on and labor-intensive, they're very expensive, which lends itself to a higher-income consumer," says Beattie.

In tough economic times, The Olive Branch's Loeb says, someone trying to figure out how to feed their family is unlikely to spend \$8 to \$10 per pound on olives.

While lower-income consumers may not be able to justify shopping at the olive bar, they will still buy olives if they're so inclined. They'll just make their purchase elsewhere in the store. "The lower-income buyer may be looking for a cost effective olive and will not want to pay the per pound price," says Castella's Christodoulou. "Historically, we have then seen that buyer go to alternative areas in the store, such as grocery jars."

While income may be the demographic

most often cited in relation to olive bar sales, age is actually the most important factor, says Caldwell. Younger consumers may not have direct experience with olives until they live on their own and cook for friends and family. As their cooking and shopping experiences grow, so does their familiarity with more ingredients throughout the store, including the olive bar. This presents a tremendous opportunity for delis to engage with a new demographic and establish customer loyalty.

Deli associates can introduce a new generation to the olive bar by educating them and encouraging trial. Once they've experienced a higher-quality specialty olive, Caldwell says, they're unlikely to return to prepackaged varieties. A deli can keep customers loyal by ensuring their olive bar offers a quality selection that is well maintained and merchandised properly. Their olive bar can become a destination.

"Once shoppers start going to a competitor simply for olives, how soon will it be before that shopper starts making other purchases there?" asks Caldwell. "That same shopper is buying specialty cheeses, coffees, teas, and artisan breads. To remain competitive, stores need to be sure they're meeting all those needs."

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# Fried Chicken Transcends Trends


PHOTO COURTESY OF TYSON FOODS, INC.

Fad diets have no long-term effect on fried chicken sales

BY CAROL M. BAREUTHER, RD

**T**ravel to any corner of the globe and you'll find some form of fried chicken. In the U.S., it morphed from a pre-World War II Sunday dinner special to a post-war everyday dish after chains such as KFC, Chick-Fil-A and Church's started popping up across the nation. Even fat-phobic diet crazes can't conquer its popularity.

Maria Brous, director of media and community relations at Publix Super Markets, headquartered in Lakeland, FL, says, "Our deli fried chicken has always been a customer favorite and continues to be today."

Fried chicken is second only to rotisserie as the best-selling variety among the top three prepared chicken items in the deli. According to the Nielsen Perishables Group, Chicago, IL, fried chicken accounted for 6.9 percent of deli prepared food dollar sales in the 52-weeks ending June 10, 2012. This

considerable contribution means it can certainly pay to focus on fried chicken programs by capitalizing on current trends and savvy merchandising techniques.

## Get Fresh

Recent advertising from QSR giants Hardee's and KFC focuses on fresh prepared rather than frozen pre-breaded chicken. Hardee's debuted its "hand-breaded" chicken tenders in 2010; in February 2012, KFC launched a social media promotion to spotlight the freshness of its chicken by claiming it's prepared fresh by real cooks in its restaurants.

According to Eric Le Blanc, director of sales development, Tyson Foods, Inc., Fayetteville, AK, "There's no question that an in-store breaded program delivers on freshness perceptions and the coating of the in-store breaded chicken is hard to duplicate in a pre-breaded, frozen product."

Christopher Oliviero, senior director of deli sales and marketing, Perdue Farms, Salisbury, MD, emphasizes the need for fresh, less processed chicken. "Many customers use fresh, raw chicken and prepare in-store with their own signature batter or breading and present this for sale. This product tends to perform better and delis that move to this more labor-intensive type of program tend to support it with signage and other types of marketing, thus sales increase."

Gold'n Plump Poultry, St. Cloud, MN, is riding the fresh trend by introducing a new deli tender product. "Years ago people thought tenders were just for kids," explains Jeff Stuczynski, retail/deli area sales manager for the eastern region, "but not anymore. Operators can take our tenders and bread them or fry them without breading and merchandise them 'naked' or in adult-flavored versions such as buffalo, ranch or barbecue."



## Handle with Care

Preparation, hold time and consistent availability, says Tyson's LeBlanc, has "much more impact on the volume of chicken sold than whether or not a retailer chooses to use a fresh product or frozen, pre-breaded."

"Cook your product in fresh oil at the correct temperature for the correct amount of time," he continues. "Calibrate your fryers regularly. Display your product in full displays. Hold the product to food-safe temperature, rotate, and dispose of product according to your procedures. It's a simple play, but execute it flawlessly every time and you cannot help but win."

Gold'n Plump offers deli operators an extensive fried chicken training program, says Stuczynski. "We go through the entire operation, hands-on, in their setting. It really increases quality and consistency in the product."

## Offer Hot and Cold

Fried chicken is sold in both the deli hot case and cold case at Publix. "This offers our customers the option to best meet their needs," says Brous.

The most popular sale is ready-to-eat fried chicken with approximately 70 percent of sales hot, says John Moore, marketing manager, Pilgrim's Pride, Fort Collins, CO. "However, cold takeaway comprises 30 percent of fried chicken sales. Retailers are turning their deli into a 24-hour grab-and-go operation with the use of takeaway self-service cold cases."

Some deli operators package hot fried chicken at the end of its hold time and sell it in a cold heat-and-eat program. However, says Stuczynski, "The optimal way to implement a cold fried chicken program is to fry the chicken, cool it right away and put it on the shelf. This will maintain the integrity of the chicken and breading, rather than risk the meat drying out and breading falling off as can happen after it's sat under a heat lamp for four hours."

Cold fried chicken should be a focus for retailers in addition to a hot program for an extremely good reason, says LeBlanc. "Cold fried chicken is a tremendous opportunity for incremental sales with relatively little increase in retail shrink exposure. The cold self-serve case is the most shopped area in deli, according to NPD DeliTrack data, and is the most frequently cross-shopped area, so the eyeballs are at the case already. The cold self-serve case is also a much higher impulse-driven merchandising area, so the odds of gaining true incremental sales in this area are good."

## Package To Go

Eight pieces of fried chicken — two each of breasts, drumsticks, thighs and wings — is

the most popular fried chicken pack in the deli.

To assist deli operators in merchandising, Gold'n Plump offers a branded treated cardboard box with a convenient carry handle and vent holes to prevent the chicken from losing its crispness. "Our box is designed to sit in a warmer island so customers don't have to wait in line at the deli counter during the big lunch or dinner rush," Stuczynski adds.

Earlier this year, Gold'n Plump introduced a 10-piece box designed to hold five each of

drumsticks and thighs. This value pack offers more product, but less expensive dark meat, and retails for \$1 less than the traditional 8-piece box.

There's no one perfect package type and design. In deciding the optimal solution for a particular deli operation, Pilgrims Pride's Moore recommends, "If you're displaying in the hot cases and packing to order, a box is fine and it's economical. Since consumers are picking and ordering their fried chicken from



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the deli associate, there's no need to use expensive packaging. If you're selling self-serve fried chicken, use a grab-and-go bucket. The reason is that consumers are very familiar with a bucket of fried chicken, and since over half of fried chicken is sold on impulse, this familiar icon will play to the impulse buying decision."

Additional decision points to consider, adds Perdue's Oliviero, "include how long the chicken will remain out, the quality of equipment to heat or chill, and if there is signage in the deli about the chicken. For example, a clamshell with a clear lid and small label on top must rely on in-store signage to describe the product, while bags or buckets offer more room for merchandising information about the chicken on the package."

### Make a Meal or a Party

Fried chicken products including pieces, wings, chicken tenders and popcorn chicken are sold boxed and priced by the pound at Publix, says Brous. "We also offer a combo meal that includes fried chicken, two cold salad sides and rolls as well as fried chicken drumettes and tenders in party platters."

Suggestive selling can add incremental sales, says Gold'n Plump's Stuczynski. "Ask customers if they'd like coleslaw or pasta salad on the side with their chicken. Or put together a meal program that combines fried chicken and two sides. You can do this with a hot program with potatoes wedges or mashed potatoes and coleslaw on the side, or with a cold program where two or three pieces of fried chicken are plated with sides such as green beans and carrots or potato wedges to heat-and-eat."

Some delis post a weekly hot-case menu with different entrée selections each day. This is a great place to list at the bottom: Fresh fried chicken every day.

In addition, notes Pilgrims Pride's Moore, "Have a 4 to 7 PM availability guarantee. Use a 'made in store' or 'made here' sticker on packaging to let customers know the fried chicken is made fresh on premises daily."

Oliviero offers suggestions for turning fried chicken into part of a broader hot meal program. "For example, merchandise fried and rotisserie chicken and other center-of-the-plate selections so that deli shoppers can create custom meal combinations. Fried chicken tenders are great to merchandise as part of kids' meals while a boneless, breaded fried chicken sandwich is a good lunch opportunity that can be bundled with chips or a desert and beverage."

Whether fried chicken is sold by the piece or as part of a meal deal, Oliviero adds, "The important point is to get behind your product and your program and promote it." **DB**

## Is It Time for an Oil Change?

There's nothing like biting into a piece of tender, juicy, crisp-fried chicken. Health-conscious consumers who don't want to give up this favorite food are seeking out chicken fried with a heart-healthy oil. This not only offers deli operators a merchandising opportunity, but 'better-for-you' oils can also provide cost savings.

Since the discovery more than a decade ago that partially hydrogenated vegetable oil was much worse than saturated fat for risk of heart disease, explains Gerald P. McNeill, PhD, vice president of research and development, at Loders Crocklaan NA, Channahon, IL, "A large shift from partially hydrogenated oils to non-hydrogenated oils has occurred. Unfortunately, healthier oils such as regular soybean and canola oils are much less stable, and the oil must be changed more frequently to avoid off-flavor."

The best oils to fry chicken are the lowest in polyunsaturated fat, he adds. "Oils high in saturated and monounsaturated fat breakdown slowly and do not generate unhealthful breakdown products. These include high oleic acid oils and palm oil."

High oleic oils are great choices for frying chicken, explains Roger Daniels, vice president of technology for Stratas Foods, Inc., Memphis, TN. "Examples include high oleic canola, high oleic sunflower oil, and high oleic soybean oils. High oleic oils are highly fry-pot stable and achieve this stability without partial hydrogenation and trans fats. The stability is due to the oleic acid content level. Oleic acid is a monounsaturated fatty acid. Typically the greater the quantity of monounsaturated fat, the more stable the oil."

High oleic oils can have a higher case cost than conventional frying oils, Daniels adds, "but this is more than offset by the increased performance. High oleic acid oils will last 60 percent longer than standard frying oils made from soybean and canola oils. Therefore, greater fry life actually reduces the cost per day, making high oleic oils a better overall value."

According to Lloyd Watt, Western U.S. and Canadian sales manager for the industrial/bakery division of Richardson International, Winnipeg, Manitoba, "High-oleic canola oil has an excellent fry life, is functionally equivalent to or better than partially hydrogenated oils, and didn't even come close to the end of its fry life after 300 uses, according to a study commissioned by Texas A&M in

2006. In addition, there were insignificant differences in favor, taste, texture or appearance when compared to partially hydrogenated oils. This is the main reason Canada Safeway is our largest deli operator using high oleic canola oil today."

Palm oil has been used extensively all around the world for all types of frying including chicken for at least 20 years, says McNeill. "In Asia and Europe it has been found to be long lasting and imparts a rich flavor and crispy breading. Palm oil is the most abundant edible oil available in the world today and has the lowest cost per unit volume compared to other stable frying oils such as high oleic canola oil."

The higher level of saturated fat in palm oil has been considered a health negative, adds McNeill. "However, it's a balance of 50 percent saturated and 50 percent unsaturated and comparable in composition to the fat that's naturally present in chicken."

Training is the No. 1 issue when it comes to maximizing frying performance of an oil, explains Forrest Senter, national sales manager for Whole Harvest Foods, LLC, a Warsaw, NC-based maker of expeller pressed oils that retain their natural vitamin E and omega-3 fatty acids, rather than hexane extracted oils in which these natural substances are removed. "Proper frying techniques need to be practiced. Oil needs to be changed when the color/taste of the fried foods becomes unacceptable. Some operators use a formula of so many pounds cooked before filtering and or dumping. Filtering daily is recommended; the number of times you filter in a day depends on the types of food cooked and amount of breading accumulated per batch. Hand breading requires more filtering."

Deli operators who fry chicken in healthier oils should advertise the fact, Senter adds. "Folks that may not eat fried deli foods might if they knew they were prepared in the healthiest oils."

Richardson International provides a variety of point-of-sale materials to help operators advertise their choice of oil. "We offer customized posters, digital logos for printed deli menus and window clings for the deli display case that read 'Zero Trans Fat Canola Frying Oil, It's a Choice We Made with your Health in Mind,'" Watt notes. "The majority of operators like the window clings because customers can see it easily right where they order their chicken and money changes hands." **DB**



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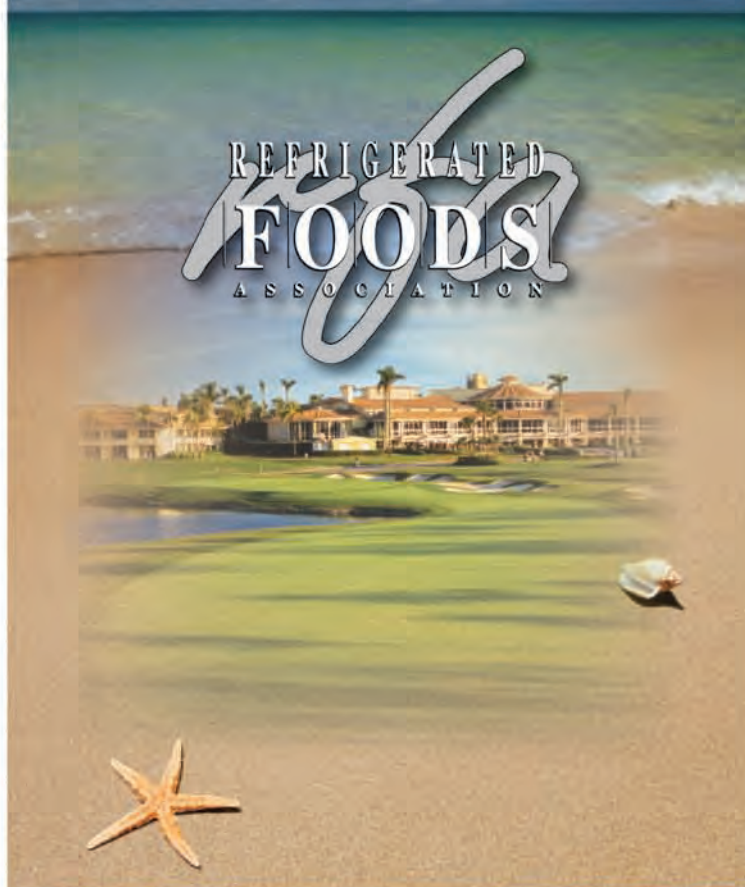
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# DIPS AND SPREADS No Longer Sinful

The category now fits consumer demands for healthfulness

BY BOB JOHNSON



PHOTO COURTESY OF LA TERRA FINA



PHOTO COURTESY OF BLOUNT FINE FOODS

The age of healthy living and nutritional food has reached dips and spreads, a category once dominated by forbidden pleasures with high concentrations of fats laced with enough flavoring to set them apart. Producers are now offering an increasing number of interesting and highly nutritious dip and spread alternatives rich in protein, vitamins and other nutrients.

"We're seeing a lot of innovation using healthy ingredients in spreads. In the last 10 to 15 years people have wanted healthier food, but it's only in the last year to year-and-a-half that we've seen customers asking for more healthful and flavorful spreads and dips," says Stephanie Robbins, director of brand development at La Terra Fina, Union City, CA.

Hummus opened the door to nutritious spreads, and today an incredible variety of healthier, high-protein dips are marching through.

"Legal Seafood is a high-end seafood chain out of the Northeast, all the way down to Florida," says Bob Sewall, executive vice president for sales & marketing at Blount Fine Foods, Fall River, MA. "We do a smoked salmon dip for them. It has cream cheese but we use whole salmon sides and hardwood smoke them. We do a crab dip with high-end shrimp, crab and lobster. It's real quality protein."

Cheese-based spreads provide another source of high-end protein and, if the cheese is premium, the spread can be special. "Spreadable cheese is a growing category. I think the appeal is ease of use," says Neal Kolterman, vice president for sales & marketing at Pineland Farms, New Gloucester, ME. "For our business, people are interested in all-natural, real products. Our spreadable cheese is made out of our cheese. Our spreadable Cheddar cheese is made out of our Cheddar

cheese, and our spreadable Pepper Jack is made out of our Pepper Jack cheese. The base is actual cheese, rather than sour cream with flavors added. We emulsify it and add some butter."

A number of new, high-protein variations on the hummus theme are based on beans other than chickpeas. "Wasabi has been a big hit — and look for a few more exotic flavors based on white beans and lentils instead of traditional chickpeas," says Dominick Frocione, vice president of sales at Cedar's Mediterranean Foods, Inc., Haverhill, MA.

If any category is poised to take off, it could be Greek yogurt-based dips and spreads. "Greek yogurt-based dips should be the next big trend in retail. There have been a number of brands that are starting to show momentum, but consumers aren't embracing them as rapidly as [they embraced] hummus. We're launching a line of Greek yogurt-based dips under the TGI Fridays brand, which should help make these items more accepted as mainstream," Frocione says.

Other producers are also coming to market with a variety of interesting flavor profiles in Greek yogurt-based dips and spreads. "The biggest thing in dips and spreads is Greek yogurt products," Sewall explains. "We have three of them we do under the Panera Bread brand — Greek yogurt roasted red pepper Asiago, Greek yogurt spinach and artichoke, and Greek yogurt vegetable dill dip. We launched them in September 2011 and the reception has been terrific." Blount's fall offering for the Panera Bread brand was a seasonal pumpkin cheesecake spread.

Other producers are also offering interesting variations on the Greek yogurt-based theme. "La Terra Fina just launched a line of Greek yogurt-based spreads. They're tangy, creamy, and rich in flavor, but they have healthier fats and other healthy ingredients," Robbins says.



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## Full Service Nutrition

Good nutrition doesn't end with protein; the new wave of nutritious dips also includes a range of vegetables and other healthy ingredients with a minimum of chemicals and additives.

"More people are looking for all natural, without a heavy dose of things you can't pronounce or even know what they are," says Elizabeth Fugas, owner of Rising Sun Farms, Phoenix, OR. "Garlic, onion and spinach have been popular for years. We're using some new, exciting flavors. Our Asian is fresh tasting, not really heavy. We also have Natural Bacon with Cheddar."

Vegetables appear in many new, nutritious dip and spread options. "We've got dips with healthy ingredients," La Terra Fina's Robbins adds. "They include balsamic beets and white beans, creamy red lentil curry, and creamy roasted yellow pepper and lentil. They offer fiber and protein in a creamy, yummy experience. We've been able to put in fresh vegetables and mix them with yogurt or lentils."

In evaluating healthier dip and spread options, one of the most important factors is mouthfeel. "Our new products have great mouth appeal," Robbins says. "I'm excited to see the use of lentils and vegetables along

with Greek yogurt. We're going to continue to see innovation in areas where there haven't been healthy alternatives. But never compromise on flavor."

Gluten, artificial ingredients and GMO foods are all of concern to a significant and growing number of consumers. According to Cedar's Frocione, "Healthy callouts are being touted by a number of brands, but we've actually been certified gluten free and non-GMO. We've also moved the majority of our line into all natural. We're debuting a full line of items under the TGI Fridays brand, which will include restaurant theme-inspired flavors of Greek yogurt dips, hummus, bruschetta, flavored wrap bread, pita chips, and grab-and-go snack packs."

## 'Tis The Season

During the holiday season consumers are looking for new and interesting foods for gatherings, which makes it an excellent time to introduce dips and spreads that become year-round favorites.

"Dips are consumed at almost every holiday and sports event, whether it's in the home, at a restaurant, or tailgating. Make sure the shelves are full and prominently displayed and try to tie in complementary items

such as chips or carrot sticks," advises Frocione. "Try to promote two-for instead of just a lower unit cost on a single item. As far as holidays go, people are typically going to buy more, especially if they're hosting a party. For the most part, what sells well for the holidays will probably be strong throughout the year. We tend to see bigger displays at retail, and in many cases, we have requests for bigger packages to promote during this time of year."

The holidays are the peak selling time, but the right product keeps consumers coming back. "We find the holidays have been a great time to introduce our spreads. We have a large account who kept the items for everyday placement after a successful holiday season last year," notes Pineland's Kolterman.

If the deli department is offering a premium, artisan product, it needs to be placed with related premium items. "Our philosophy is don't put our spreadable cheese over with the dips and spreads. Put them in the specialty cheese case; put them next to our cheese. We try to be competitive in the marketplace, but if you're a small producer, it costs more than if you produce 20 million pounds," Kolterman adds.

It's very important to present dips and spreads in an inviting way. According to Robbins, "To let consumers know there are these healthful ingredients, we went with clear packaging and colorful ingredients. Make sure they're well placed in the store — give people an opportunity to see they have an alternative."

The holidays are an excellent time to offer both information and a taste of new, inviting spreads. "We try to tell our story by distributing case cards with a QR code, educating deli managers. Most of all, sample," Kolterman advises.

Demonstrations are particularly important with these new, distinctive products. "The biggest thing is to get people to try them," says Blount's Sewall. "We've been aggressive about demonstrating. Once we get people to try top quality, repeat sales are terrific."

Demos are an excellent way to show multiple uses of these versatile dips and spreads. "You can use our Natural Bacon with Cheddar as a dip, a spread, or on potatoes or asparagus," explains Fugas. "People are looking for some versatility, so if there's something left at the end of the party, they don't waste it. They can freeze our products. I don't know if a lot of other producers are doing that."

"People want a size you can use at a party and not have a lot left over, like 8 to 10 ounces. People are watching their pocketbook so they want something that isn't wasteful," Fugas says. **DB**

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# Position Breads for Add-On Sales

## Prominent displays increase ring

BY KRISTINE HANSEN

While most deli trips begin with a mission to hunt down deli meats, sides, or prepared foods, consumers presented with bread — either dinner rolls or loaves — will often reach for the add-on. Whether those consumers are gourmet, health-conscious or in search of a one-stop shop for the next meal, it makes sense to feature breads prominently in a deli.

"We like our bread to be in the deli because that's where the stuff they're putting it with is [sold]," says Joan Rubschlager, secretary and treasurer at Chicago, IL-based Rubschlager Baking, which turns 100 years old in 2013. Since its beginnings, the company has crafted specialty breads (1-pound loaves of firm cocktail squares and Rye-Ola breads) for retail in delis. Its whole-grain breads are popular with health-conscious consumers. "Our breads are now 100 percent whole grain, either rye, wheat or oat, so if the deli shopper is looking for a true whole-grain bread, that's a plus," she adds.

Displaying breads in the deli reinforces their importance as impulse buys. Consumers "go there for the sliced roast beef or turkey breast," says Rubschlager, who stresses the importance of the add-on ring. She notes that consumers often visit the company website for recipes.

Bridgford Foods Corporation, Anaheim, CA, introduced its Monkey Bread — pull-apart bread in cinnamon or garlic Parmesan flavors — in 2010. While the company's biscuits — developed 30 years ago — have long been positioned as complementary deli add-ons, the Monkey Bread serves a different role. The wow factor attracts customers to take a chance on the product. "It's a tasty addition," says Lorene Salcido, director of advertising and public relations. "If a shopper tries it once, she wants to go back and buy it again — with an expectation of the same quality. If it's [from] a different baker, it's a different product."

King's Hawaiian Bakery, Torrance, CA, has been positioning its sweet dinner rolls (honey wheat, original sweet and savory





butter) and Hawaiian breads (including round breads, hot dog and hamburger buns, and mini sub rolls) as a draw for deli consumers since 1950. The company recommends front and center displays to lure people into the deli. "We work really closely with the deli and bakery management," says John Linehan, executive vice president of strategy and business development. "A lot of bakeries and delis are starting to realize this is not just something to stock and sell."

The company's market research reveals that 70 percent of consumers who bought King's Hawaiian biscuits went to the deli specifically to purchase the bread; 65 percent bought additional items in an average purchase of around \$15. Linehan believes distinctive breads with strong brand recognition draw consumers who may not otherwise shop the deli.

"King's Hawaiian is a brand people are passionate about," he explains, adding that the company did not advertise to consumers until 2010. Until then it relied upon word-of-mouth endorsements from consumers. The company recently exceeded the 100,000 mark for Facebook fans and shares recipes on its Facebook page.

Linehan suggests delis use King's Hawaiian purchases as leverage to increase ring. "There



PHOTO COURTESY OF FLATOUT FLATBREAD

may be an upsell opportunity," he adds. "This is all incremental. Things on the other side of the deli often don't move as fast."

Flatout Flatbread, Saline, MI, sells three products in delis: Foldits for preparing sandwiches and hamburgers, thin-crust flatbreads for making artisan pizzas, and flatbreads for wraps. The line, which offers versatility that straddles different ethnic bents, is strategi-

cally located next to premium meats and cheeses in many delis. Within the last two years, says Bob Pallotta, director of marketing, joint marketing efforts with major meat companies have drawn further attention to Flatout Flatbread products.

Tapping into consumer awareness of healthy breads — all Flatout Flatbreads are 100 percent whole grain — has also been instrumental. Recipes and nutritional values are available on its website. "People need to know that it's easy to make a wrap or an artisan flatbread," says Pallotta.

Thin-crust flatbreads were introduced in September. "They've been crazy successful. It's amazing the things you can make with them," he adds. The products tend to attract weight-conscious and health-conscious shoppers, says Pallotta. "In both cases, a deli benefits from that type of split personality."

Flatout has gotten a boost from consumers' online dialogues with their friends. "We've got lots of consumers who have been blogging about the products and creating pizza parties with the flatbreads," says Pallotta. "I think we're reaching younger people as far as the deli is concerned. Younger people today are willing to experiment with new foods and ingredients." **DB**

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# Taking Cheese a Step Further

## The importance of affinage

BY CHARLIE KALISH

The word *aged* on a label implies a product that has improved with time. What was harsh has mellowed, what was bland has bloomed. The word *affinage* — the aging or ripening of cheese — takes the meaning of aged to another level. It is derived from the verb *affiner* [AH-fee-nay], meaning to refine. A person who refines cheese is an *affineur*.

Describing cheese aging as affinage can be problematic if the fundamental assumption is aging equals better. If you've ever had a poorly aged cheese, you know describing the process where the cheese went from OK to terrible as "refining" is a misnomer. Conversely, if you've eaten a superbly aged cheese alongside its fresh equivalent, they might not even seem to be the same cheese. In the latter case, the process seems more like alchemy, a magical transformation. Between these two extremes lies enormous potential.

"Affinage," says Jeff Jirik, vice president and general manager natural cheese, Swiss Valley Farms, Davenport, IA, "is bringing a maturity to cheese that it would otherwise not attain." Swiss Valley owns the Caves of Faribault — sandstone caves in Faribault, MN, used for aging blue cheese since 1936.

The company is developing three new cheeses; the latest batches have been aging for six months and show wonderful promise, but the new line will require at least one more cycle of aging because, says Jirik, "A product's no good if you can't repeat it."

Technology cannot imitate the aging process, so developing an aged cheese must be done the old fashioned way, a process involving substantial R&D. "When you're trying to develop a cheese with potential, there are always critical junctures," says Jirik. "There are no textbooks that can guide you. The most important thing is knowing what you want to build. Consistency is everything. As cheesemakers, we're creative. Yet we're always trying to produce a consistent end-product."

"I'd define affinage as the process of selecting and maturing cheese — looking at



PHOTO COURTESY OF CELLARS AT JASPER HILL

and tasting them, reacting to what they need, and selling them when they're at their very best," says Bronwen Percival, buying and quality assurance manager, Neal's Yard Dairy in London, England.

Neal's Yard ages the cheeses it sells but doesn't play a direct role in their manufacture. "Our relationship with each of our producers is slightly different," she notes. "We're very interested in the technical side of cheesemaking but we try to limit ourselves to giving quality feedback rather than technical advice."

"The obvious problem," Percival adds, "is when cheese that has been purchased young doesn't turn out well. Was the problem with the base material or with its treatment over the ensuing weeks? The key is to have a good and trusting relationship between both parties. If everyone is on the same page, most problems can be solved without difficulty."

According to Michael Kalish, a San Francisco, CA-based cheese and food safety consultant who specializes in affinage, "The mystery of affinage lies in what the cheese will do over the course of the aging process, which is inextricably tied to the quality of milk and the

practices of the cheesemaker and affineur. Each step in the process of transforming milk into an aged cheese has an impact on the quality of the final product. Affinage is not good in and of itself. Like a stairway, each step can lead up as well as down."

Cellars at Jasper Hill, Greensboro, VT, founded by brothers Andy and Mateo Kehler, is an affinage company many consider a beacon of the artisan cheese movement in America. A consolidator of artisan cheeses, it also makes cheese, drawing milk from its herd of cows and a local dairy. According to Vince Rationale, sales director, affinage is "the science, art, and craft of turning a green, flavorless cheese into its highest instantiation [a word he coined to capture the exact moment, or instant, a cheese is at its best] and then bringing it to market in the most efficient way possible. It's a combination of experience, taste, environment, and human relationships."

"One of the most important pieces of affinage that never gets talked about," he adds, "is the sales and marketing side of the equation. If the goal for each piece of cheese



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being aged is to make sure it gets eaten when it's at its peak, then the sales, marketing, and distribution of a well-aged cheese have to be a critical part."

Diane Sauvage, USA branch manager for Trappes, France-based Interval, a French exporter of specialty cheeses, emphasizes the importance of handling. "The key to a successful affinage is what happens once the cheeses are in the stores. The cheese needs to be sold pretty quickly to make sure it stays at its best. The staff needs to be trained for that."

Technically, affinage is a process whereby a fresh cheese acquires a rind and matured flavors, texture, and aroma through the effects of methodical handling in a controlled, microbially rich aging environment. If the distribution and retail components are also considered, affinage is much more open-ended. The term is evolving, in large part because of the increasing number of reasons people are choosing to do affinage.

### Why Do Affinage?

All cheesemakers, excluding producers of fresh cheeses, age their cheeses, if only because some amount of time and care is necessary to bring out the flavors, texture and aroma that define a cheese. The need for a

minimum ripening period is the most basic reason why affinage is done, but there are others, some of which may be surprising.

For example, producers of traditional European cheeses, such as Roquefort, have historically felt pressure to guard their cheeses from counterfeits so have adopted aging standards under their Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) labels, at least in part, as a means of protection and self-preservation. PDO law requires Roquefort cheeses to be aged a minimum of three months, at least 14 days of which are in the natural caves of Roquefort where they are exposed to the authentic blue mold, *penicillium roquefortii*, and benefit from the effects of the caves' natural ventilation. If a producer fails to satisfy any of these conditions, its cheese is legally prohibited from being sold under the name of Roquefort. This particular affinage prevents the cheese from being imitated and exploited.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration prohibits the sale of raw-milk cheeses, unless they've been aged a minimum of 60 days at a temperature of 35°F or above. In this case, affinage is not intended to protect cheesemakers but consumers. FDA has observed that these conditions kill any viable pathogenic microor-

ganisms in cheese that can be harmful.

FDA also mandates certain cheeses, such as Gruyere and "old" Asiago, be aged a minimum amount of time to develop its specific characteristics, 90 days for Gruyere, one year for the Asiago. FDA's recognition that affinage develops a cheese's identity — domestic producers of these cheeses have long been required by law to do affinage — is evidence affinage is a well-established practice in American commercial cheesemaking.

Over the last decade, affinage companies have played a role in supporting small rural economies by encouraging the revival of traditional dairying and cheesemaking. They pay a fair price for cheeses cheesemakers might not otherwise be in a position to sell.

Let's say a high-quality artisan cheesemaker has a facility capable of producing 40,000 pounds of cheese a year but makes only 20,000 pounds a year. Perhaps he/she doesn't have the money to build space to age additional cheese, or he/she may have the space but not the time, energy, money, or help to age more products, or he/she doesn't have the time to market and sell the products. Whatever the reason, he/she must produce half of what the facility can produce.

An affineur could identify the market

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value of those cheeses and agree to buy 20,000 pounds a year. The affineur would buy fresh cheeses and age them, so the cheesemaker could double production without investing in additional space or labor. Because the affineur would market and sell the cheese, the cheesemaker doesn't have to invest in selling the cheese or tie up money in inventory. The affineur negotiates a fair price with the cheesemaker for the fresh cheeses and the two mutually benefit.

Now imagine an affineur partnering with 20 or 30 cheesemakers. The transactions have the potential to impact entire communities; dozens of people's labor goes into cheese production, directly and indirectly, from sales and marketing teams to dairymen and farmers who grow feed for the animals.

In a real-life scenario, Cellars at Jasper Hill has levied big changes in the State of Vermont through its efforts to build "an economic future" in the Northeast Kingdom. In an interview aired on the program *Tend*, ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=aaub\\_VRYg4o](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aaub_VRYg4o)), Mateo Kehler explains how working with Cabot Creamery's Clothbound Cheddar has enabled Jasper Hill to create a unique model that benefits local cheesemakers and the local community. The cheese "provides the Cellars

with the weight, which we're using to build a distribution system for other cheesemakers in the region as well as the cash flow to maintain our organization and this piece of infrastructure. [It is] a core product for us. I like to describe it as cheese with a purpose, because...when you buy a piece of Cabot Clothbound, you're actually making a whole lot of other things possible. We are actually leveraging this one product to the benefit of the rest of the producers in the Cellars."

### Who Is Doing Affinage?

"The young generation representative," says Interval's Sauvage, "would be Rodolphe Le Meunier." He won the International Caseus Award in 2007 and is increasingly seen as one of the world's most promising affineurs. She also singles out Luigi Guffanti in Italy, Rolf Beeler in Switzerland and Beillevaire and Jean D'Alos in France.

Rising through the ranks of French affineurs isn't easy when competing with maestros such as Hervé Mons. Cathy Strange, global cheese buyer for Whole Foods Market, calls him one of the most famous affineurs in the world. "He's iconic in the cheese community," she says in her YouTube travel blog, *Cathy's Strange's Cheese Travels*.

Jasper Hill's Rationale puts Mons on his list of affinage pioneers, which also includes Marcel Petite in France, an ager of Comté; Giorgio Cravero in Italy, an ager of Parmigiano Reggiano; and Neal's Yard, which specializes in British and Irish farmstead cheeses.

The leading affinage enterprises in the U.S. are Caves of Faribault, Artisanal and Murray's Cheese in New York City, and Cellars at Jasper Hill.

WHAM, the local ABC news station in Rochester, NY, reports Wegmans, a Rochester-based supermarket chain, has "plans to build a facility to age cheese" next to the company's corporate headquarters.

Aging cheeses in house is becoming a retail fad. Gordon Edgar, cheesemonger at San Francisco's Rainbow Market and author of *Cheesemonger: A Life on the Wedge*, observes: "It sometimes seems as if everyone in the cheese business has a 'cave' these days."

"It has this tremendous marketing appeal," says Tim Smith, national sales manager, Swiss Valley's natural cheese division, "and is indicative of where we're going in this country. Things are moving so rapidly in terms of understanding affinage is important — people are [creating] caves in coolers or in restaurants." **DB**

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# Premium Deli Meats

Consumers have an extensive variety of options

BY BARBARA ROBISON

Supermarket delis are no longer vendors of just a select few deli meats. Today, the consumer choices seem boundless as marketers and distributors bring a wide selection of “old world” charcuterie to the delis.

Premium deli meats are among the artisanal foods that have become mainstream in America. Consumers are seeing deli meats used on food TV shows and popular blogs. Chefs are using them in pasta sauces, salads and other dishes. “Our products are an integral addition to charcuterie offerings in deli and cheese departments. This trend has migrated from the large delis in cities such as New York and San Francisco to forward-thinking supermarket retailers across the United States,” asserts Alberto Minardi, general manager, Principe Food USA, Inc., Long Beach, CA.

Prosciutto is probably the most recognized of the premium deli meats. Italy is known for its salted and air-dried prosciutto crudo, with its delicate, sweet/savory flavor. Giovanna Varricchione, marketing manager for Jan K. Overweel Limited, Woodbridge, ON, Canada, a distributor for Colombo Importing US, Inc., also located in Woodbridge, notes, “Our Italian Emma Parma Prosciutto is a favorite. The product is aged to perfection. It is regulated by the Parma Consortium, which has strict processing rules for consistent quality. We also distribute prosciutto di San Daniele and Italian prosciutto.”

“We market three types of Italian prosciutto — San Daniele, Parma and Bora, with San Daniele the top of the line,” states Minardi. “We also offer dry roasted hams, with no water added, as compared to most hams produced in the United States. Our patented oval packaged, presliced prosciutto is unique in that it is thinner and fresher tasting than thicker presliced prosciuttos, interleaved with wax paper.”

Italian prosciutto is not smoked, but is salt-cured, air dried and aged naturally. Air-drying is a long process involving cool and somewhat moist air. The pigs from which the



PHOTO COURTESY OF DANIELE FOODS, INC.



ham is made must have just the right amount of surface fat and marbling. Prosciutto di Parma is from the Parma region, where Parmigiano Reggiano cheese is also made. The pigs in the region are fed on the whey left over from the cheesemaking process, which gives the flesh a mild, sweet flavor. The combination of specially raised pigs, sea salt, ideal air and humidity levels for drying and curing, plus time honored techniques, provides a top quality prosciutto. Thin slices are excellent served with ripe fruit such as melons and figs.

Prosciutto di San Daniele comes from the San Daniele del Friuli area. The region's natural climate is responsible for the meat's delicate flavor and aroma. It has a limited and controlled production; only 27 producers are located in this small region of Italy.

### Beyond Prosciutto

"Prosciutto is by far the best selling of our wide selection of deli meats," reports Esther Galan, marketing director, Campofrio Food Group America, a South Chesterfield, VA-based deli meat importer. "We also offer sausages, such as salami and pepperoni, as well as whole-muscle cuts, such as coppa and lomo. We feature Italian meat specialties and are in the process of launching Spanish

meats into the market."

The company has had tremendous success with snacking innovations. Paninos are finger-sized pieces of Mozzarella cheese wrapped in three types of cured meat — prosciutto, salami or pepperoni. Kirkland, WA-based Costco is experimenting with Mozzarella wrapped in chorizo, sopressata or prosciutto.

"We began with a few items, such as prosciutto, but have increased the variety of deli meats we offer, including pancetta and mortadella," says Davide Dukcevic of Pascoag, RI-based Daniele Foods, Inc. "We've found that sales of the newer selections now almost equal those of the more traditional meats we originally marketed." Pancetta — or Italian bacon — is made from pork belly meat, air-cured with added spices. It's moister and has mellower flavor than regular bacon. Mortadella is a finely ground, heat-cured Italian pork sausage, with or without pistachio nuts.

Variations of roast beef are popular in delis catering to Hispanic demographics. According to James Johns, marketing director, Pocino Foods Company, City of Industry, CA, "Roast beef, [known as] asada beef in Spanish markets, is the most popular, but our navel pastrami [the cut used for traditional



PHOTO COURTESY OF VOLPI FOODS

New York-style pastrami] is a favorite in hot sandwiches. In Hispanic markets headcheese [defined as a jellied loaf or sausage made from edible parts of the head, feet, and sometimes the tongue and heart especially of a pig] is the leader. We also market corned beef and a beef-based bacon product."

"For the self-service deli area, we offer our shelf-stable, all-natural salumi," notes Adisa Kalkan, marketing manager, Volpi Foods, St. Louis, MO. "The products range from wine-flavored salami to Spanish chorizo and French herbes de Provence. In the full-service deli our specialty salumi, such as prosciutto, Genova salame, pancetta, and coppa, illustrate the many deli meat choices today's consumer has."

Redondo Serrano deli loaf, which is

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pressed, pre-trimmed Serrano ham, is another option, says Kate Whittum, sales and marketing, Redondo Iglesias USA, Garden City, NY. It does well in supermarkets because it's a high-yield, low-labor format, perfect for high turnover operations. "We're introducing a log-shaped Redondo dry-cured chorizo that complements the Redondo Serrano ham. Customers will be able to get a selection of Spanish deli meats for Spanish dishes and gatherings."

Les Trois Petits Cochons, Brooklyn, NY,

offers jambon de Paris and jambon de Paris fumé. "This ham is special because of our unique cooking process," explains Camille Collins, marketing director. "Made according to the traditional French charcuterie recipe, the French-style ham is delicately spiced, slowly cooked in its own juice and wrapped in its own skin. We use three whole muscles and never add water."

Piller's Fine Foods, Waterloo, ON, Canada, offers a variety of its deli meats to retailers across Canada and the United States.

"Black Forest ham is our best-selling deli meat and Westphalian ham, known as smoked prosciutto, is one of our specialty products. We're also known for our air-dried salamis," states Rita Weigel, marketing director.

### Knowledgeable Staff

All the premium deli meat importers and domestic producers realize that training deli employees about the products is extremely important for continued sales growth. "For a product launch, we place heavy emphasis on training for delicatessen managers, providing training manuals plus handy one-sheet references. All materials provide product information and also serving suggestions. This encourages usage, as well as complementary product and wine pairing," observes Campofrio's Galan.

Volpi Foods provides merchandising tools, such as wooden crates to help supermarket delis with product placement, display and storage of the salami. Product labels have serving suggestions and pairing ideas for the consumer.

Redondo Iglesias offers a countertop holder with takeaway serving suggestions, which frees up deli team members if there is a lot of turnover.

Piller's hosts training programs in a deli school located at its Wismer Street facility. Invited customers are given an educational tutorial on processes involved in processed meat production.

"Sampling is key to the food business. 'Tasting is believing' is our motto. We support retailers by offering demonstrations to our distributors/retailers and have a sales team that is very well informed about each product," explains Overweel's Varricchione.

### Stressing Safety

Deli meat suppliers, retailers and consumers are all concerned about the safety of the food products. "We feel we need to go above and beyond the government requirements in assuring customers the safety of our products," reports Daniele's Dukceovich. "We have independent testing of our products by the IEH laboratories in Seattle. We send our products to their laboratories for sampling and they swab our plants daily for safety assurance. We also have invested in an expensive high-pressure pasteurization machine, which pasteurizes without raising the temperature of the product and changing the flavor."

Piller's holds an SQF (Safe Quality Food) 2000 Level 2 Certification. It also has a CFIA (Canadian Food Inspection Agency) inspector on-site because it is a federally registered establishment with a quality assurance department.

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# Healthy Living at the Deli Counter



By  
**Jeffrey Spear**  
President

Studio Spear  
Jacksonville, FL

It's hard to miss. Consumers are becoming much more aware of the foods they eat and demonstrating an undeniable preference for healthier ingredients. There's also a growing concern about environmental impact and sustainability.

From a packaging and merchandising perspective, it's no longer good enough to simply place a seal reading all natural, organic or recycle on the box or wrapper. Consumers are taking time to read labels, have a good understanding of ingredients and nutrition facts and are making decisions based on the desire to embrace and maintain a healthy lifestyle for themselves and the planet. While an emotionally appealing package and brand image are still influential, consumers are expecting more.

According to New York, NY-based National Association for the Specialty Food Trade (NASFT), natural food stores are the fastest growing retail channel in the United States. In addition, and based on a recent report from JWT, New York, NY, consumers are becoming increasingly concerned about the environmental impact of their food choices. While product attributes linked to reduced calories, better and more interesting flavors and higher quality ingredients are still popular and powerful driving forces, we're also noticing an undeniable relationship among consumers, the causes they support and their pursuit of healthier lifestyles.

Recognizing these dynamics, brand owners and retailers are rethinking their marketing and communications strategies and developing ways to better communicate the healthfulness, sustainability and community impact of their products. Unfortunately, it seems the deli department is not being included when these decisions are being made.

One of the main reasons for this oversight is that deli departments rely heavily on customer service and hand packing — practices that rarely allow customers to handle, inspect and learn about the products prior to purchase. While some companies might indicate all natural, low salt and/or low fat on the front portion of their meat wraps, these callouts are frequently difficult to see and/or read. From a recycling perspective, this information tends to appear on back panels and would be impossible to see in a deli display case. Other than these few attributes, coupled with the fact that deli staff are not terribly chatty, there is very little communication about the products offered at the counter.

The net effect is that, unless buyers are shopping in healthy lifestyle retail environments such as Whole Foods, Earth Fare, Lazy Acres or Native Sun, they're forced to make uninformed purchasing decisions. Fortunately, there

are things you can do to help customers make selections with something more than blind faith.

**Segmentation:** Typically, products are organized in the deli department either by variety or by brand. If the goal is to assist with more healthful choices, why not collect and display all of the healthier products together, in one place, and under a healthy living banner? This would be equivalent to practices applied to natural and organic products in the center of the store.

**Promotion:** Most of the promotions that appear at the deli counter are price based. In response to growing trends and preferences for healthier products, why not provide discounts exclusively for healthy lifestyle oriented products? In addition,

you can make promotional items such as serving tips, recipes and nutrition information available with every purchase. While you may not have a budget to produce all of these items in house, manufacturer reps should be able to assist.

Tasting programs are also worthwhile. Plus, you have an opportunity for cross-merchandising, featuring shelf-stable products with healthful attributes. This could be as simple as making all-organic sandwiches, using a featured product from the deli case along with organic produce, condiments and bread. Going one step further, and thinking about sustainability, you can also feature recycled napkins and paper plates.

**Merchandising:** If you cannot implement tastings and find reorganization of product placement fraught with challenges, other viable options are signage and themed displays. In this regard, you can utilize price pins, color coded displays and signage that designates certain items as healthy choice options. While products may still be organized by variety or brand, these callout mechanisms will help shoppers identify and consider healthier options before placing their orders.

**Get Talking:** If all else fails, the deli counter is one of the few environments where retailers and shoppers meet face to face. Rather than limiting conversation to "Can I help you?" or "Would you like anything more today?" there is an opportunity to discuss healthy living, sustainability and community impact with your customers.

It goes without saying that responding to consumer preferences has always been the No. 1 objective with brand owners, marketing executives and retailers. Understanding that healthy lifestyles are more than a passing fad, the time has come for deli managers and counter staff to act. When you take the time to understand your customers, respond accurately to their needs and demonstrate empathy with their lifestyle preferences, the relationships that emerge will be treasured.

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We're noticing an undeniable  
relationship among consumers, the  
causes they support and their pursuit  
of healthier lifestyles.



# Blast From The Past

# B

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Blount Fine Foods has been part of the New England seafood industry since Eddie B. Blount started an oyster packing plant in West Barrington, RI, in the 1880s. Today the company's corporate headquarters is in Fall River, MA, and the manufacturing facility is in Warren, RI.

This picture was taken around 1985 at the Rhode Island plant, before the plant was completely modernized. Today it makes a variety of seafood soups, salads, finishing butters, sauces, dips and spreads sold under the Panera, Legal Sea Foods, Blount Fine Foods and Offshore Delights labels.

Billy Duarte is seen filling tubs of chowder for foodservice. Farthest left (in shirtsleeves and tie) is Ted Blount, currently chairman of Blount Fine Foods. The other folks in the picture are part of a public relations team.



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](mailto:DeliBusiness@phoenixmedianet.com). For more information, contact us at (561) 994-1118

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