

Make Sandwiches A Destination



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www.ColumbusCraftMeats.com

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ICONS *of* EUROPEAN TASTE

share generously. eat naturally.
live deliciously.

When you choose **Prosciutto di San Daniele PDO**, **Grana Padano PDO** and **Prosciutto di Parma PDO**, you show a passion for the Italian way of life that includes incomparably delicious, natural food that's never mass-produced or processed. Each of these products carries the Protected Designation of Origin seal, the European Union's guarantee of quality and authenticity, so 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.

Learn more about these icons of European
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Coronavirus Info from the NGA

The National Grocers Association is actively monitoring the growing spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) both internationally and domestically.

Supermarkets are on the front lines of emergency response both in preparation for an impending disaster and as one of the primary operations that must be up and running for a community to be able to recover after a disaster strikes. Federal, state and local government entities often will partner with local retailers, wholesalers and even trade associations, such as NGA, to coordinate response efforts after a disaster in order to quickly get basic necessities back into local communities. And while emergency situations can be fluid, grocers make contingency plans ahead of time, which involves coordination with their many vendors throughout the supply chain, especially those that provide items people tend to stock up on, such as milk, eggs, bread, and water.

Member Best Practices

NGA has compiled the following list of common practices that members have shared with us. Communication with customers and employees is paramount.

- Communicate with your customers the steps your business is taking to protect against COVID-19
- Educate employees and customers on CDC-recommended hygiene procedures and social distancing actions
- Institute additional mandatory cleaning or sanitizing schedules and directions around stores
- Increase or add hand sanitizing stations around your stores for customers and employees
- Update and communicate your sick leave and paid-time-off policies to your employees regarding COVID-19
- Encourage any employees who have flu-like symptoms to stay home
- Identify hard-to-cover positions and implement cross-training to prepare for coverage issues
- Assign employees to regularly sanitize

shopping carts and other high-traffic or high-touch areas

- Institute purchasing limits on high demand items and household staples (toilet paper, hand sanitizer, cleaning products)
- Stay in communication with local and state health officials and make sure your company is receiving regular updates
- Consider changing regular store hours to encourage grocery shopping at lower traffic times
- Expand remote shopping options if available (click-and-collect, delivery, pick-up, shop-by-phone)
- Consider temporarily closing salad bars, buffets and other ready-to-eat or sample offerings in stores
- In areas where community spread of COVID-19 has been identified, consider requiring your checkout employees to wear gloves and ask customers to implement social distancing (six feet per person) while standing in checkout lines

For more information and updates, visit the CDC's webpage at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus

COMING IN JUNE/JULY ISSUE

COVER STORY

15th Annual
People's Awards

FEATURE

Mediterranean Foods
Ethical Eating

MERCHANDISING REVIEWS

Deli Breads
Olives
Cross Merchandising
Pickles

PROCUREMENT STRATEGIES

Salads

DELI MEATS

Deli Supplement

PREPARED FOODS

Sushi

CHEESE CORNER

Appenzeller
American Cheddars

COMING IN AUG/SEPT

GRAB 'N GO

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love proudly. eat classically.
live deliciously.

When you choose **Prosciutto di San Daniele PDO**, **Grana Padano PDO** and **Prosciutto di Parma PDO**, you show a passion for the Italian way of life that includes incomparably delicious, natural food that's never mass-produced or processed. Each of these products carries the Protected Designation of Origin seal, the European Union's guarantee of quality and authenticity, so 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.

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TRANSITION



LIPARI FOODS NAMES LITTLETON CFO

Lipari Foods, Warren, MI, announced Dave Littleton has been named chief financial officer. In this role, he will oversee all company financial operations. Littleton succeeds Curtis Groves, who will be retiring later this year and has served as Lipari's CFO for eight years. He previously was responsible for hiring, developing and leading accounting and finance operations at Pet Supplies Plus for almost a decade. As CFO, Littleton will report directly to CEO Thom Lipari.

www.liparifoods.com



LITEHOUSE ANNOUNCES PROMOTIONS

Litehouse Inc., Sandpoint, ID, announced Brad Horn will serve as vice president of retail sales, produce and deli, and Chris Blanford has been promoted to senior director of marketing. Both bring extensive experience in consumer-packaged goods and retail to their posts. Horn has over 25 years of sales and marketing experience, including J.M. Smucker Co. and Kraft Foods. He will lead and oversee the Litehouse produce and deli sales team in his new role. Formerly Litehouse's director, consumer marketing and communications, Blanford will continue to build Litehouse's marketing strategy to support initiatives across all business channels.

www.litehousefoods.com

ANNOUNCEMENTS



FRIESLANDCAMPINA WINS BIG IN WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

FrieslandCampina, Paramus, NJ, won 22 medals in the 33rd World Championship Cheese Contest in Wisconsin, including seven gold, nine silver and six bronze medals. Gold medal winners include Holland Master, North-Holland Gouda Mild PGI; Lutjewinkel Noord Hollandse Gouda Big Wheel PDO; Rotterdamsche Oude 55 Weeks PDO; Kroon Edam Ball Mild PGI; Boeren Bonte Farmhouse Cheese Chimmi Churry; Milner 30+ Extra Matured; and Caprimera 50+ Met Pepper.

www.frieslandcampina.com



JASPER HILL WINS AT WORLD BEST CHEESES

Jasper Hill Farm, Greensboro Bend, VT, has taken two spots in World's Best Cheeses Championship's top 20. Highlander, Jasper Hill's newest cheese, was among the finalists. It is a mountain style cheese made with goat milk from Jasper Hill's new collaborative venture, Bridgman Hill Farm. The cheese has a rosy orange washed rind and a smooth, pliable texture. Also in the top 20, Lait Bloomer is a variation of Little Hosmer made by Jasper Hill Creamery, which is sent 'green', or unripened, to the Murray's Cheese aging facility then coated in dried flowers and herbs before letting the cheese's white flora 'bloom' through the coating. The World Cheese Championship Contest, held in Madison WI, had a record 3,667 international entries.

www.jasperhillfarm.com

ANNOUNCEMENTS



PLACON TEAMS UP WITH MILWAUKEE BREWERS AND SC JOHNSON

Placon, Madison, WI, has partnered with Major League Baseball's Milwaukee Brewers and SC Johnson to help reduce plastic waste. The Brewers identified a large source of waste in their stadium—more than one million plastic cups are used each season in the ballpark. SCJ contacted Placon to partner and help create a new market for this plastic stream waste. Placon will bring in the specially marked, collected cups from Miller Park, to then sort, wash and grind the cups into flake for SC Johnson. The flake will then go on to be made into an SC Johnson product.

www.placon.com



LAURA CHENEL CROTTIN WINS GOOD FOOD AWARD

Laura Chenel, Sonoma, CA, has announced Crottin, an aged goat cheese based on the traditional French 3-ounce disc, won top honors in the overall cheese category for the West Region at the 10th Good Food Awards. This win recognizes Crottin's outstanding flavor reminiscent of mushrooms with hints of citrus. The Good Food Awards celebrate the contributions of American craft food producers in creating a food system with a strong social conscience. The 219 winners honored at the 10th Good Food Awards in 2020 represent 38 states, Washington, D.C. and Guam.

www.laurachenel.com



BELGIOIOSO CHEESE WINS SEVEN MEDALS AT WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP CHEESE

BelGioioso Cheese, Green Bay, WI, took home seven medals at the bi-annual World Championship Cheese Contest in Madison, WI. These included 1st Place Gold – BelGioioso Sharp Provolone Mandarini; 1st Place Gold – BelGioioso Fresh Mozzarella, Prosciutto & Fresh Basil Roll; 2nd Place Silver – BelGioioso Parmesan; 2nd Place Silver – BelGioioso Fresh Mozzarella Snacking Cheese; 2nd Place Silver – BelGioioso Fresh Mozzarella; 2nd Place Silver – BelGioioso Burrata; and 3rd Place Bronze – BelGioioso American Grana.

www.belgioioso.com

NEW PRODUCTS



A WELL-CARVED LINE

Applegate Farms, Bridgewater, NJ, has launched Well Carved, a new line of burgers and meatballs combined with whole organic vegetables, legumes and grains. The company also has introduced product expansions to their portfolio of snacking and No Sugar products. Well Carved is a clean-label line that includes grass-fed organic beef burgers, organic turkey burgers and meatballs in Asian Style Pork and Mediterranean Style. Applegate Naturals No Sugar Slow Cooked Ham and Chorizo Charcuterie Plate also have been launched.

www.applegate.com

NEW PRODUCTS



HANDCRAFTED HUMMUS

Steve's Mediterranean Chef, Madison Heights, MI, has introduced savory handcrafted hummus crafted from a longstanding Lebanese family recipe. Four traditional flavors include Original, Roasted Red Pepper, Garlic and Jalapeño. These new products are made in the United States and are gluten-free.

www.stevesmediterranean.com



A CHARACTERISTIC APPEARANCE

Saputo Cheese USA Inc., Lincolnshire, IL, offers Vandersterre's Landana LAVENDER, a specialty with a characteristic appearance. This mild cheese features the addition of real lavender and seaweed. The spice mix provides a fruity and surprising mouthfeel. Produced within the Netherlands, Landana is free of lactose and ideal for vegetarians.

www.saputocheeseusa.com



KEEPING THINGS CRISP

Anchor Packaging LLC, St. Louis, MO, has added Fry Baby hinged containers to its Crisp Food Technologies container line. The 6-inch-by-3-inch size is designed for French fries, chicken strips, nuggets, wings and many other foods. Fry Baby containers integrate anti-fog in both the clear base and clear lid to keep food looking fresh on display for grab-and-go and to avoid order errors.

www.anchorpackaging.com



THREE INNOVATIONS, ONE BRAND

Lactalis' President brand, New York City, has announced three new cheese and snacking products—Creamy Brie with Truffles, French Pairing Plates in sweet and savory flavors and Snacking Cups in Pub cheese and rondelé varieties. Creamy Brie with Truffles combines simple ingredients with high quality milk and cream in the Old-World tradition. The French Pairing Plates and Snacking Cups combine accoutrements for the cheeses in one package, making it easy to enjoy a quick and easy bite on-the-go.

www.presidentbrand.com

NEW PRODUCTS



A TOPPING TWIST

The Perfect Purée of Napa Valley, Napa, CA, has introduced Red Jalapeño Aioli. Made with mature jalapeños that have been deseeded, brined and puréed with rice vinegar, Red Jalapeño is a bold and superbly savory combination of tangy heat. Whisked with mayonnaise, garlic, cilantro and lemon, it's a transformative addition to any sandwich and a great dip for sweet potato wedges, fried chicken and crudité.

www.perfectpuree.com



MOZZARELLA IS CBD-INFUSED

Caputo Cheese, Melrose Park, IL has launched Elevated Cow, a new brand of CBD-infused crafted fresh Mozzarella. The new range of unique cheese is created with 100 percent organic hemp sourced in the United States, lab tested and verified. Cannabidiol is independently lab tested for potency, solvents and for any potential contaminants. Verified CBD is then infused into the cheese making process. Final product is then lab tested a second time for potency accuracy. Each Elevated Cow Fresh Mozzarella production run is specially lot coded for potency and traceability.

www.caputocheese.com



AUTHENTIC ITALIAN TOUCH

Veroni, Correggio, Italy, has introduced its new line of Enjoy Aperitime products. The Party Tray combines Veroni cold cuts, cheeses, olives, dried fruit and crackers for a ready-to-share charcuterie board. Neapolitan style pizza is served in a rectangular shape and features classic Veroni cold cuts. A new selection of snacks combines Veroni salami, with dried fruit and nuts (almonds and apricots), in addition to the classic mix of salami, Provolone cheese and crackers. Its Italian sandwich line is a made in Italy pizza-bread sandwich stuffed with salami and cheese, as per Italian tradition.

www.veroni.it



NEW CHEESES DEBUT

Emmi Roth, Fitchburg, WI has introduced a number of new cheeses. Emmi Kaltbach Gouda is the newest in its Kaltbach line of cave-aged specialties. Emmi Fondü Select is made with Emmentaler cheese for a richer flavor and reduces packaging with a convenient new foil pouch. Classic Raclette Slices are still made from the original recipe popular since the Middle Ages. Roth Flavor Ups Blue Cheese Crumbles is a grab-and-go blue cheese item. Roth Chèvre is now offered in garlic & herb and cranberry cinnamon flavors.

www.emmiroth.com

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

New American Heroes: Supermarkets And Their Suppliers



By
Jim Prevor
Editor-in-Chief

It is, of course, a terrible moment in time for our country and the world. Coronavirus is spreading, posing severe health risks, especially to the ill and the elderly. While most businesses move to required shut downs, supermarkets face record crowds. Which means, of course, that employees, especially front-line people, such as deli department staff who specifically are there to interact with customers, are all at great risk of getting the virus.

Of course, the exact risk is unclear. So far, it appears that young and healthy employees might get the virus and might infect others with the virus but, themselves, are quite safe. How one perceives all this is very personal. In Italy, a 34-year-old Italian nurse took her own life after testing positive, as she was terrified that she might have passed it on to her own patients.

In a time when unemployment numbers are about to reach records exceeding those of the Great Depression, the retail food industry booms. Executives tell us of sales 200 percent, 300 percent and more over last year as consumers, fearing they may be confined to their homes or that supplies will run out, try desperately to stock up.

There may be a retail disaster down the road... If the situation normalizes, consumers may find they don't need to buy toilet paper or hand sanitizer for years. Due to its perishable nature, the deli department will escape most of this, though overall consumption might drop as consumers realize they have a 10-year supply of, say, canned soup and so decide to eat it to save money and avoid waste. As a result, they might reduce their normal purchases even of perishables.

Many vendors of perishable foods will suffer as most foodservice operators—from restaurants and hotels to theme parks and airlines—are buying a tiny fraction of what they once did. In fact, foodservice distributors who lost most of their customers virtually overnight are scrambling to salvage things. Many have launched direct-to-consumer sales programs; others are approaching independent retailers, and a few have collaborated with large wholesale grocers to utilize their spare capacity to help the wholesalers deal with unprecedented demand.

Deli departments have had some special challenges. Most stores have closed salad bars and hot food bars. In many cases, even though the sales drop was not sufficient to meet pre-established protocols, it was a combination of an "abundance of caution" and not wanting to be liable or in the

public eye if someone caught the virus by cross contamination with the food.

When we get through this...and we will... there will be a time of reflection. Is "just in time" inventory the right thing to do—especially on health and-safety related products? Can we rely on international transportation networks, or do we need to store or produce more products in the U.S.? Many specialty deli products don't generally ride into the U.S. on dedicated cargo planes; they often ride in the belly of passenger jets.

How will this all be viewed? As a once-a-century interruption in commercial life, like the Spanish Flu of 1918 to 1920? Or as a new reality that we have to prepare for where global interconnections are so vast that we can expect these types of situations to pop up from time to time?

The implications are mind-boggling. Basing compensation on profitability, for instance, often makes sense—but how do you measure profitability? If a CEO puts a chain on "just in time" delivery and boosts profitability but exposes the chain to being without needed goods in some future outbreak, does it really make sense to say that CEO #1, who cut the inventory, is a genius and should get paid big bonuses, but CEO #2, who had to pay premiums to get inventory and disappointed customers when he couldn't, should get paid less just because of the bad luck of timing?

Our delis, more than most of the supermarket, depend on open trade, especially with many of the best cheeses, for example, produced abroad. Certainly, there will be some public reaction, as it is realized that about 4/5ths of active ingredients in antibiotics are produced abroad. Will there be a targeted response to ensure the U.S. produces the medicines we need, so the country is not as vulnerable to interruptions in supply? Or will this knowledge turn into a more jingoistic attitude that ultimately leads to interruptions in trade of all sorts?

For the moment, supermarkets and their suppliers are the new American heroes. Keeping people fed, making them feel safe with toilet paper and hand sanitizer... and with staff, although often not particularly well paid, willing to risk getting the virus themselves to do their jobs and help people stay fed.... it is a most beautiful thing to see so many work so hard and risk so much to help us all.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "James J. Prevor".

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and INCREASE SALES with
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Your deli customers can bring home our hot-to-go meals that are carefully crafted with wholesome ingredients, layered flavors and culinary expertise for a take-home meal experience that is quick, convenient and purely delicious.

Proven. Preferred. Profitable

blountfinefoods.com

For more information on a sales driven hot-to-go meals program, contact your Blount sales rep at 774.888.1300

A Round of Applause

I will refrain from pithy statements about the deli industry. Today, there is no need.

Today, I celebrate every person who is going to work to stock shelves and work registers; everyone who shows up day after day to keep our food operations running smoothly, who show up and know they are working in conditions that bring them into contact with the sick.

This challenge is unprecedented. With the stay-at-home orders and all restaurants closed except for take-out, the food dollar has moved from 50 percent foodservice to 99 percent retail, doubling the volume without taking into consideration the number of people who are stocking up for an uncertain future.

Retail workers are the unsung heroes. Every day, people assume shelves are filled and customers are checked out by anonymous beings who fly under our radar. Today, those same workers are putting their own and their family's health and well-being in jeopardy. Yet, they come to work every day.

To everyone involved, I applaud you. I celebrate your dedication. Most of all, I thank you.

Lee Smith
Publisher

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lee Smith', with a stylized flourish at the end.



Freshen Up
Your Cheese Case with

FRESH MOZZARELLA

Made with fresh, local Wisconsin milk, BelGioioso Fresh Mozzarella's consistent quality has made it "America's Favorite" brand choice. Customers searching for both convenience and quality will be looking for BelGioioso in your specialty cheese case, so keep it fresh with the variety, convenience and quality BelGioioso offers.

At BelGioioso, every cheese is a specialty.



rBST Free* | Gluten Free | Vegetarian | Award-Winning

*No significant difference has been found in milk from cows treated with artificial hormones.



BELGIOIOSO

belgioioso.com f i p y

Make Sandwiches a Destination

A versatile meal with widespread appeal.

BY BOB JOHNSON



The deli has a unique opportunity to make itself a destination for sandwiches, a multi-billion-dollar category in foodservice that figures to keep growing.

Whether the fare is conveniently packaged for grab-and-go convenience or skillfully made to order as the customer watches, the deli can inspire culinary respect

with ingredients that are a cut above the competition in flavor and nutrition.

And the sandwich is one traditional favorite that looks to fit just fine with the hectic pace of modern life.

"I still see the handheld food trend to be big and maybe still growing," says Warren Stoll, marketing director at Kontos Foods, headquartered in Paterson, NJ. "People are on the move and something they can hold

on to while they are on the move is preferred. We at Kontos continue to put out products that facilitate this."

Kontos Foods uses artisan hand-stretching to make more than 50 flatbreads including Pocket-Less Pita, traditional pita of the Eastern Mediterranean, Asian naan, Pan Plano infused with the spicy flavors of Mexico, 'better-for-you' Greek Lifestyle, Rustics Collection Naan and Panini.



CUSTOM SHIPPERS FOR EVERY SEASON

If you have the sandwich, we have the sauce.. and a shipper for every season! Increase deli sales with a Beano's custom made shipper program tailored to your customer's needs.

FLAVORS AVAILABLE

Honey Mustard | Pineapple Honey Mustard | Deli Mustard | Jalapeno Mustard | Cranberry Honey Mustard | Sriracha
Original Sub Dressing | Balsamic Sub Dressing | Olive Oil Sub Dressing | Chicken Wing Sauce | Peach Habanera
All American Sandwich Spread | Buffalo | Horse Radish | Wasabi | Roasted Chipotle | Southwest | Sweet Chili Pepper





"We've introduced a mini oval flatbread that is 4-inches-by-6-inches and is used by outlets offering a half sandwich and a cup of soup," says Stoll. "We also have a line of wraps. That is something people are eating more at diners and delis."

Show Them the Good Stuff

Sandwiches are a \$1.7 billion category in foodservice and growing, according to the Madison, WI-based International Dairy Deli Bakery Association's (IDDBA) *What's In Store 2020*, and one way to stand out from the crowd is to use the same quality ingredients in the sandwich program as are available in the cold case and nearby bakery, and let consumers know you are doing this.

"Meats and cheeses that reflect the health orientation and ethnic variety are catching consumers' attention and driving traffic," says Karen Toufayan, vice president for marketing and sales at Toufayan, Ridgefield, NJ. "If the sandwich destination allows consumers to feel it's an up-to-date location for healthy and adventurous eat-

ing experiences, it should be successful."

The Toufayan family has been baking breads for more than 90 years and takes pride in developing, along with an ever-increasing line of breads, a tradition of contributing to the community. The bakery delivers artisan baked goods, including naan, pita bread, tandoori flatbread, tortillas, smart pockets and sprouted whole wheat bread.

"The consumer is seeking both healthy options, like low carb, gluten free, oat driven and spouted grain varieties as well as breads that promise a new taste experience, like tandoori or naan," says Toufayan. "When retailers are selecting the breads for their sandwiches, it should not just be the basic 'same old' sandwich breads. While some of the staples will always be necessary, spice it up and recognize that the bread can and should be more than a mere carrier for the sandwich."

No one can compete with the deli when it comes to offering unique meats and cheeses that come with a story and a stamp of quality.

"Our products are made of high-quality meat and are the perfect ingredient to add to any sandwich," says Jaline Isidor Horta, marketing director at Cibao Meat Products, Rockaway, NJ. "We have Induveca Ham, which is gluten-free, 97 percent fat free and low in salt; and chicken and turkey breast, which are both gluten-free, have no MSG, zero allergens, are fully cooked and have zero grams of trans fat. We also came out with a Campesino Sharp Cheddar; it is aged for nine months to reach perfection and has a casing of a black wax, which adds a nice color to any plate of cheese."

Cibao began with its flagship Salami Campesino in New York City 50 years ago and continues to grow its facilities and its lines of Hispanic meat products.

"The products are as fresh as can be. Therefore, when receiving an order from our company, delis have a total of 120 days from manufacturing date until our product expires," says Horta. "We manufacture on a daily basis to ensure that everyone receives the freshest batch possible."

PICKLES AND CONDIMENTS SPICE UP THE PROGRAM

The sandwich program can help trigger sales of complementary items that are of quality and pique interest.

"The premium craft pickles are increasing in the deli," says Rick Field, founder and chief pickler at Rick's Picks, New York City. "The standard pickles with preservatives are static. We've recognized some of the things our jars can never address. A glass jar of pickles is heavy, expensive and can easily break. We've come out with a snacking pickle that is portable, shelf stable and reasonably priced. They are mini spears."

Rick's Picks specializes in artisan pickles, including the new snacking pickles that will soon be available in the deli at 250 Sprout's Markets.

"The traditional is garlic dill," says Field. "We've got garlic dill, sweet and sour, but the one we're trailblazing with is a cumin lime."

On top of an antipasti display or on a clip are the best places to display the portable pickles. If you've got individually-packed cheese or salami you can cross merchandise. We also recommend an individual beef jerky."

Individually-packed pickles or pickle slices are a trend served by several high-end artisan producers.

"Farm Ridge Foods is super excited to announce the launch of our grab-and-go single serve crisp pickles," says Patty Amato, senior vice president at Farm Ridge Foods, Islandia, NY. "A fresh, crisp, healthy snack. The best part is, besides the great taste and no juice, there's no mess. It's super simple to tie single-serve pickles into a sandwich program."

Farm Ridge Foods produces high end fresh pickle, olive and salad products with an eye toward culinary excellence.

"We are the fastest growing pickle company in the United States," says Amato, also known as Patty Pickle. "We go from farm to container in five days and are fresh packed, not pasteurized. Our pickles are hydro cooled to ensure crispness and vibrant color."

The general idea is to use the sandwich program as an anchor of an effort to respond to the growing consumer

interest in interesting and flavorful foods.

"The consumer is looking to eat more adventurous and opting for unique items and more dynamic flavor combinations," says Giuliana Pozzuto, director of marketing and product innovation at George DeLallo Co., Mt. Pleasant, PA. "DeLallo's assortment of deli complements is perfect to be used as condiments on specialty cheeses, sandwiches, hummus, grain bowls and charcuterie. Bold Mediterranean-inspired condiments add favorite flavors to everyday creations. To give you an idea, we love our Italian Olive tapenade on a grilled cheese panini. The sweet, tart and fruity flavors of our fruit spread lineup add a new dimension to deli cheeses. Bruschetta is an incredible condiment for Italian cold-cuts and cured meats."

Many traditional Mediterranean condiments can be merchandised as ingredients for sandwiches consumers will make at home.

"Chopped olive tapenade is an incredible condiment for turkey sandwiches," says Pozzuto. "Chopped cipolline balsamic onions are the perfect tangy-sweet complement to roast beef. Both colorful and irresistible, tri-color Pepperazzi relish adds a sweet vinegary kick to nearly any cold-cut creation."

The condiments can be a place to add zest to the sandwich and make a statement about quality.

"There's not a lot of flavor in the tomatoes and lettuce, but there can be in the mustard and mayonnaise," says Dominic Biggi, CEO of Beaverton Foods, Hillsboro, OR. "We make specialty mustards and sauces; we make it interesting. You have a nice sandwich on a ciabatta bun; why not have quality mustard and mayonnaise?"

Beaverton Foods makes a line of specialty condiments, including many zesty mustards, horseradishes and ketchups.

"It's about making your department as interesting and fun as possible," Biggi says. "Lately, it's also been about getting clean ingredients or organic. This has been coming up for about 10 years."

One small step toward making the

sandwich program interesting is to offer single-serve artisan pickles.

"Fresh pickles are the next best thing since hummus," says Amato. "Not only are they great compliments to sandwiches and burgers, they are a great anytime snack."

Some high-end pickles may even have the benefit of helping consumers improve their digestion.

"Depending on how the pickle is processed, something like a refrigerated lacto-fermented pickle will have probiotics, which is great for your digestive system as well as electrolytes for muscular cramps and energy," says Jon Drettmann, owner of The Palm Beach Pickle Co. LLC, Lake Worth Beach, FL.

Palm Beach Pickle uses fresh dill and garlic, hand packs each jar and powers the process with solar energy.

"I feel the trends are going towards a more naturally fermented pickle," Drettmann says. "Our most popular seems to be the Habañero Dill & Garlic, although we will be releasing a 'Local Sour' that has been newly tested in the market with great response."

There are also traditional high-end pickles that can be merchandised as providing a gourmet companion to join a sandwich on the plate.

"As an additional product, you can add something different with pickles," says Ada Desmond, marketing manager at Les Trois Petits Cochons, Brooklyn, NY. "Ours are small cornichons in both sweet and spicy. The traditional classical cornichons are the most popular."

Les Trois Petit Cochons, or the Three Little Pigs, has produced hand-crafted award-winning paté and charcuterie since the mid-1970s.

"We have seen cornichons with a toothpick through them into the sandwich," says Desmond. "We have a large foodservice program with our cornichons. It's good for businesses that want to add something. You could display the jars next to the cheese. Other than as a grab-and-go item, we've seen them displayed in olive sections, or you can have them with cheese, charcuterie and some bread."

These ingredients can appear on a board with the finest cheese or as the main attraction in a deli sandwich.

"Right now, the talk is all about charcuterie boards, and we are currently developing new items so we can have a nice mixture of different Hispanic-style sausages for the plate as well as different cheese. We are hoping to soon add pas-trami to our very popular deli items," says Cibao's Horta.

Only the deli can offer consumers connoisseur versions of the sandwich meats they are using at home.

"Our top-selling deli sandwich ingredient is applewood smoked bacon, but it's followed closely by applewood smoked ham and turkey breast," says Megan Dorsch, marketing manager at Nueske's Hillcrest Farms Meats, Wittenberg, WI. "Turkey breast and ham remain two top staples for sandwiches being made at home, and sandwiches being ordered outside the home are most often in the form of subs."

Nueske's produces a line of pork, poultry and beef with a special emphasis on gourmet smoked products.

"We are introducing a new applewood smoked pepper-coated boneless ham that we hand-rub with crushed black peppercorns before we slow-smoke it," says Dorsch. "We had a bone-in version available in the past, but after interest from our deli customers, we made the move in early 2020 to bring a boneless version to supermarket delis."

The deli can offer sandwiches made from ingredients that are different and simply better to complement the artisan meat, cheese and the breads to the spreads.

"To be a sandwich destination, retailers need to entice the consumer with something new and unique," says Giuliana Pozzuto, director of marketing and product innovation at George DeLallo Co., headquartered in Mt. Pleasant, PA. "Sandwich spreads are what it's all about. Due to the recent demand for this sector within the deli, we've been promoting our innovative sandwich programs as a way for stores to elevate their basic sandwich options and create something special."

DeLallo began as an Italian market in Jeannette, PA and has grown to be a major, but still family-owned, importer, producer, and distributor of specialty Italian and Mediterranean foods.

"Top off a sandwich of arugula, prosciutto and Brie with our fig spread for



some instant European flair," says Pozzuto. "Our nut-free pesto is the perfect topping for a vegetarian option like a caprese sandwich with fresh Mozzarella. An instant hit, our wild hot pepper spread features the trending hot, vinegary flavor profile in a creamy dressing."

A Healthy Trend

In building a supermarket deli sandwich program, it is worth keeping an eye on the growing demand for ingredients that are better for you.

"People want foods that are healthier and have fewer calories," says Stoll from Kontos Foods. "Our Greek lifestyle flatbreads have half the carbs and double the protein. We have a new thinner flatbread that has 40 percent fewer calories. It's starting to receive a positive reception in major retail outlets. People are always looking for healthier, better for you alternatives."

The interest in healthy ingredients goes beyond the sandwich breads, meats and cheeses to also include the vegetables.

"The biggest trend we've been seeing is actually in what's being paired with our smoked meats," says Dorsch. "It's the sim-

ple addition of things like fresh avocado, quick-pickled vegetables and slaw. These ingredients compliment a rich, smoky sandwich and consumers are interested in ways to introduce additional vegetables to their diets. Combinations like these allow customers to feel better about what they are eating but still give them something that feels a lot like comfort food."

As we grow more diverse as a people, our sandwiches are also growing more diverse to include wraps and flatbreads.

"The staples include wraps, pitas, flatbreads, rolls and bagels," says Toufayan. "Bread manufacturers are developing both healthier bread options as well as more ethnic bread varieties that provide enhanced taste and texture than the traditional breads. At Toufayan, we have introduced Toufayan gluten free wraps in five varieties, both Tandoori and Naan breads in various flavors, low carb smart carb pockets, which provide a low-calorie option to pita. They are meeting with both trade and consumer acceptance, and we will continue to innovate in 2020."

Other Growing Trends

One way to attract younger customers

is to use social media to let them know you have sandwiches that look really cool.

“Club sandwiches and BLTs/ABLTs (BLTs with avocado) are very strong in terms of popularity and BLTs are not only a perennial favorite but are also something we see tagged on Instagram frequently. So if your place is making a terrific BLT, make sure to get some good images and share them with proper hashtags,” advises Dorsch at Nueske’s.

IDDBA’s *What’s In Store* advises that the trend toward more eating events with smaller portions may bring a market for sandwiches made with artisan or whole grain breads because they are more nutrient dense.

This trusted annual survey also revealed some changes in trends of what is hot and what is not among deli sandwich products.

Sandwich combo meals in the deli declined more than 20 percent in a recent year, and more than 40 percent in three years, according to IDDBA’s *What’s In Store 2020*.

But sandwiches in top line foodservice

sales increased 1.5 percent in a year, and nearly 4 percent over three years.

Breakfast sandwiches were also up \$10.4 million in the year ending in Nov. 24, 2018, according to statistics compiled in the IDDBA’s *What’s In Store 2020*.

This is a potentially strong growth area, as IDDBA statistics show a 39 percent increase in breakfast sandwich sales in foodservice in a recent year.

Another important trend is toward offering a greater selection of convenient grab-and-go items.

“It’s our experience from working with retailers across the country that the demand for prepared foods is growing exponentially,” says Pozzuto. “Many retailers are expanding these once-modest sections in their deli departments and making room for more convenient grab-and-go and ready-to-eat items. We want to help our deli partners to stand out in this market. Along with bold and colorful Mediterranean-inspired sandwich spreads and toppings, we host ideation sessions helping to create and to craft new and

signature sandwiches based on these best-loved ingredients.”

Ethnic meats, cheeses and flavor profiles are also becoming more important in deli sandwich programs.

“Our newest addition Induveca ham has become one of the most popular items amongst our deli brand,” says Horta. “Right now, our current staple items are the popular Campesino salami that has over 50 years in the market as well as our Induveca salami that has over 30 years in the market.”

Demand for Hispanic meats is increasing so quickly that Cibao upgraded both its production capacity and its logistics.

“Keeping up with the demand has been a big challenge, and that is why we purchased a brand-new building that consists of over 50 acres so we can hopefully supply enough for the demand,” says Horta. “We have a logistics department where we are trying to handle all my deliveries on a timely basis to ensure that our customers in the tri-state area received the products in time.”

DB



BENEFITS OF SINGLE-USE PLASTIC PACKAGING

A look at how single-use plastic packaging is used in supermarket delis.

BY KEITH LORIA

In 2020, consumers see plastic packaging used in a variety of methods and functionalities within the supermarket delis, ranging from fresh cut fruit to sandwiches to convenient, ready-to-eat take home entrée meals.

Mark Marinozzi, vice president of marketing for World Centric, based in Petaluma, CA, says single-use packaging is expanding rapidly, driven by changing lifestyles of busy U.S. consumers and their increased consumption of on-the-go food.

"They are willing to pay more to do the right thing if they know they are getting their food in an environmentally-friendly, disposable packaging solution—made from rapid renewable molded fibers or plant-based plastics—versus a non-green—wood tree fiber or petroleum-based plastic—package," he says.

Derek Skogen, senior product manager

for Placon, headquartered in Madison, WI, says with consumers looking for more convenient products, stores are having to cater to provide more on-the-go choices and meal ready options, but making sure these stay fresh, and appearance on the shelf is important to the customer.

"Nobody wants to pick up a container with everything mashed together—appearance does help sell," he says. "Many of the plastic packaging options found in the deli section today will provide customers with a cold or hot application option. In most cases, the hot application options will be packaged in a material type that can be placed in an oven or microwave, truly making that food choice and package option a one-stop-shop that the consumer can purchase, prepare and dispose of in the package once dinner is complete."

Zach Adams, global product line man-

ager for Milliken, a package manufacturer in Spartanburg, SC, says consumers shopping the deli departments at supermarkets are interested in clarity first and foremost.

"People want to see the quality of the food and transparency in the package," he says. "People are on the go, so convenience is key today. If they want something hot for lunch, they want to be able to microwave it, and there are some single-use plastic packaging that is good for that."

Polypropylene packaging, he explains, is the best for that, as it's the most heat resistant and microwavable of all the major plastic types.

"As retailers become more sophisticated with fresh-serve offerings, there will continue to be a big demand for this sort of packaging," says Adams.

Peggy Cross, founder and CEO of EcoTensil, based in Corte Madera, CA,



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recently took her annual month of travel in the EU and UK researching the fast-pasted shifts in plastic packaging for grab-and-go products, and delis in particular, and saw some significant trends and changes.

"At the packaging innovation conference in Birmingham, after much vigorous debate, it is acknowledged that perfect solutions do not exist, but everyone is clearly and energetically striving for improvement," she says. "Much of the demand is coming from the retailers, also present at the show, who are responding to vociferous outcry from their customers."

She revealed there is a shift towards using much less plastic, with an understanding that some plastic use is necessary and important. This shift includes light-weighting plastic by combining with paperboard for strength, using a molded paper fiber salad tray base combining it with a plastic lid for viewing or incorporating a paperboard tray with a removable plastic window.

"Recycled and recyclable plastics are being heavily pursued, including transparent and active work with stakeholders in reclaiming these materials," says Cross. "It was clear that most wanted some government regulation to keep the playing field even, such as a tax on using virgin plastic to create more value for recyclers to collect this material."

The Evolution

Increased legislation in the past five to 10 years banning polystyrene, single use petroleum-based plastics in packaging and heightened consumer awareness have fueled the rise of using compostable packaging and reusables. One indicator is



that U.S. plant-based plastics demand has grown by over 20 percent.

Over the past decade, the deli section has expanded significantly with on-the-go convenience options, meal ready and grab-and-go sandwiches or snack options.

"As consumers continue looking for ready-made meals and convenience type foods, we are seeing the appearance of the food within the package and shelf life be very important when it comes to products and the sell through of these products," says Skogen. "We are seeing retailers ask for extended shelf-type barrier packaging products, to help extend product shelf life and reduce product waste."

He explains most barrier materials simply absorb oxygen within the package to help keep the product fresher longer.

"We expect to see continued growth in the snacking and convenience type products arena, as more brands and products continue to enter this space based on market demand with consumer on-the-go lifestyles," says Skogen.

New and Improved

Placon has introduced a variety of products in the single-use category over the past few years that directly influence and impact this deli space.

For example, its HomeFresh Entrée product line caters to ready-made meals.

"You have a variety of single-, two- or three-compartment base options that can be placed directly in the microwave to heat the food, and consumers can eat from the container and recycle it," says Skogen. "Each base option incorporates a vented lid to release steam and moisture from the product during heating and also offers a post-consumer recycled PET lid that gives you a clearer view of the product and is 100 percent recyclable."

In 2020, the company introduced its reFresh Parfait Cups focused directly on consumer convenience. Each cup has a built-in tamper-evident feature to ensure products are kept fresh and not tampered with prior to consumption.

"These cups come in three different lid options (dome, flat, pedestal) and include a three insert options to help retailers keep ingredients fresher longer on the shelf," says Skogen. "It gives the retailers stability with portion control and the ability to showcase a better product by having your blueberries





in the insert tray, which keeps them looking fresh so that the consumer can add them to the yogurt when ready to eat.”

Each cup is made using 75 percent or more post-consumer recycled PET plastic and are 100 percent recyclable.

World Centric offers more than 350 SKUs of rapid renewable (sugarcane bagasse, bamboo, wheat straw) molded fiber products, including plates, bowls and containers as well as plant-based plastic (PLA) deli containers, cutlery, cold cups and waste bags. It also offers a complete line of sustainably-produced paper hot cups, cold cups and soup bowls.

“Our newest packaging products include the NoTree 100 percent plant-based paper hot cups, bowls and cold cups, molded fiber lids, plant-based molded fiber PizzaRounds and FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certified kraft paper straws,” says Marinozzi. “World Centric products are made from annually renewable plants like wheat, sugarcane and corn, use less energy to manufacture, are approved for food use by the FDA and, most importantly, are 100 percent compostable and break down into healthy soil in a commercial composting facility.”

Top Materials

Today’s retailers are asking for sustainable packaging materials, as they try to achieve and promote corporate sustainability initiatives.

Skogen notes Placon has been using post-consumer content since the early ’90s

and opened its very own recycling process facility in 2011 to bring this entire process on site at its Madison location.

“In most cases, any of our food products made using PET are produced using our EcoStar, post-consumer recycled PET that is curbside collected bottles and thermoforms that we bring back to our facility to process back in PET flake, turned into PET plastic sheet and made back into reusable plastic packaging for food and retail,” says Skogen. “If it came from Placon, chances are it was made using post-consumer recycled PET material and can be used again and again if recycled correctly.”

It’s no secret that consumers are drawn to items that are recyclable and are even willing to pay a bit more for packaging that is good for the environment. Adams notes that has led to a shift from some polymers like polystyrene or foam polystyrene, which are not recyclable at all.

“Consumers are demanding retailers and brands make the shift into more sustainable plastics,” he says. “Additionally, a new trend is making the single-use packages reusable. This is packaging that is dishwasher safe while keeping the recyclability. Consumers can decide whether or not to reuse or recycle.”

Many throughout the chain have begun this necessary journey towards a New Plastics Economy. At most packaging manufacturers, the “reduce, reuse, recycle” ethos is at the center of its sustainability thinking and technological innovation.

“We are developing new partnerships

and solutions to help converters manufacture more sustainably,” says Adams. “Our solutions reduce energy use, enable the substitution of more environmentally friendly materials and promote the recyclability of resins, such as polypropylene (PP) or the use of a higher percentage of recycled PP in end products.”

Pros of Single-Use Containers

There are a variety of studies in the market today exploring the benefits of single-use plastic packaging, and the demand for this packaging is higher than ever.

“Studies we have found and used to support that plastic packaging has a lower carbon footprint to produce, recycle and remake than bags, glass or other corrugated and sustainability (corn, pulp) type packaging products,” says Skogen.

He notes that by using plastic packaging, it results in longer-lasting product shelf-life (may have to use barrier materials in some cases depending on the product) and a better appearance when compared to bags or cardboard box type packaging.

“The consumer can see the product better and view the freshness of the items,” he says. “It can also help increase product sell through.”

For example, Placon had a customer using a corrugate muffin container and the consumer could not see the product well so it switched them to its plastic muffin tray. Within the first month, the retailer saw an increase of 50 percent in muffin sales using the new container that was also made using post-consumer recycled content, and the product was 100 percent recyclable.

Marinozzi says World Centric can play a part in any retailer’s sustainability efforts, while helping its employees and customers minimize environmental impacts.

“Purchasing responsibly produced, plant-based foodservice products from World Centric has an immediate positive impact on a retailer’s brand, including being able to show support of our donations of 25 percent of pre-tax profits to grassroots global social and environmental causes,” says Marinozzi. “Using plant-based, 100 percent compostable packaging products helps a retailer minimize waste throughout their locations.”

Adams adds that plastic is not a bad thing and should be the future of single-serve packaging.

DB



Building A Breakfast Destination

The morning day part offers lucrative opportunities.

BY CAROL BAREUTHER

Early birds can get everything from scrambled eggs and bacon to breakfast burritos and croissant puffs on the breakfast hot food bar, served from 7 to 10 a.m., at nearly every one of the 27 Lunds & Byerlys locations. What's more, deli employees at the upscale retailer, owned by Minneapolis-headquartered Lund Food Holdings, Inc., set up the salad/cold food

bar immediately after breakfast fixings go out. Ditto for store locations that have Mediterranean food and taco bars as part of its Creations Café food-court style concept. This means customers can customize to their taste buds' content, whether it's comfort, indulgent or somewhere in-between. Fresh spinach on baked eggs, roasted veggies atop hashed browns, and fresh-cut fruit over French toast or waf-

fles are just a few everyday examples. Even a trendy Greek omelet, with tzatziki from the salad bar and gyro meat from the Med bar or breakfast tater cakes topped with taco bar fixings like salsa and guacamole, is possible. The huge opportunity for deli operators, as Lund Food Holdings' director of deli retail and foodservice, John Stueland, has found, is the ability to attract customers at a non-traditional time of day

via a self-serve buffet sold by the pound, while adding no additional labor or fixtures, and only stocking a dozen or so additional ingredients.

"Sit down restaurants used to be popular for breakfast, and especially so in our Byerlys stores' history. Now, life is at a much faster pace. At the same time, the day of the \$3.99 breakfast of two eggs, bacon and toast is long gone due to labor costs. In the last 20 years, diners and other restaurants have repurposed and changed their menus and day part orientation to more lunches and dinners. Thus, it was four or five years ago now, when we were experimenting with the menus in our Creations Café concept, where our hot and cold bars are located, that we decided to introduce breakfast. We got traction almost immediately," says Stueland.

Breakfast used to be the most skipped meal of the day. No longer. Eight in 10 consumers say breakfast is an important part of their day, according to the *2019 Breakfast Keynote Report* by Chicago-headquartered food industry market research firm, Datassential. What's more, convenience store and quick serve restaurant (QSR) operators have especially taken advantage, and their breakfast revenues are up 64 percent and 46 percent, respectively.

"Supermarkets are well-positioned to capture breakfast traffic—their in-store bakeries already put out a wide variety of donuts, coffee cakes, etc. Bundling those items with a coffee drink could compete with QSRs for morning traffic. One key would be to make a supermarket deli breakfast just as convenient, i.e. positioned near the front of the store with a dedicated register, a seating area or a condiment bar. They also can leverage convenience by merchandising grab-and-go items not only for breakfast but for shoppers to pick up for lunch, as well," says Jackie Rodriguez, Datassential's senior project manager.

Here are four ways operators can turn delis into a breakfast destination.

CREATE A BREAKFAST SANDWICH PROGRAM Sandwiches are synonymous with the deli, and breakfast sandwiches have quickly become one of the most popular of the morning staples. To confirm this, deli operators need only take a cue from QSRs. For example, Columbus, OH-headquartered Wendy's, which is rolling out breakfast to all its 6,700-plus units nationwide this year,

offers nine sandwiches, including its signature Breakfast Baconator and Honey Butter Chicken Biscuit.

"Not much beats a classic bacon-egg-and-cheese served on any good base, be it bagel or biscuit. The simplicity of this sandwich lets the ingredients shine, so choose top quality meats and cheeses, especially. These sandwiches are also easy for customers to order and opt out of an item that doesn't fit their diet, like dairy or meat, and still get a hearty sandwich," says Megan Dorsch, marketing manager for Nueske's Applewood Smoked Meats, in Wittenberg, WI.

The company introduced its boneless Applewood Smoked Pepper-Coated Ham in early 2020. This smoky, peppery ham is a memorable ingredient in breakfast sandwiches or wraps, according to Dorsch, and the ham can stand on its own as a unique breakfast protein choice, too.

"We're seeing all-day breakfast continuing to trend upward, and offering high quality breakfast solutions like our Premium Breakfast Sandwiches all day long can bring in sales beyond the breakfast daypart," says Craig Yoder, senior associate brand manager for Johnsonville, LLC, in Sheboygan Falls, WI. "These sandwiches are made with our premium sausage, real eggs, cheeses and vegetables, and use on-trend bread carriers. We've had operators sell our products cold as well as hot and ready in warmers where consumers can grab what they want and move on with their day."

The line of sandwiches, which are

pre-packaged and individually wrapped, include flavor profiles, such as the Spicy Sausage Bagel, Andouille Scramble Wrap, Italian breakfast Panini and Savory Breakfast Croissant. This line launched in 2017.

STOCK HOT BARS EARLY

Protein is the most common breakfast choice, usually in the form of eggs and bacon/sausage, according to Datassential's *2019 Breakfast Keynote Report*. Accordingly, eggs are the number one item on the hot breakfast bar at Lunds & Byerlys' stores.

"We've recently switched to cage-free eggs and offer an egg bake, egg nests, fried eggs, scrambled eggs, spinach eggs, and eggs in quiche, breakfast sandwiches and breakfast burritos. As for meats, we offer links and sausage patties both pork and turkey selections as well as a beef kielbasa," says Stueland.

Sweet items also are popular, whether baked goods like muffins or platters of pancakes, according to the Datassential report.

"Our stores have a strong bakery program, and the bakery, both full service and shelf service, are near the deli. Sometimes, especially if they are introducing a new item, they will cross merchandise a product over with us. However, we recently developed what we call a Boosted Donut, or a protein-enriched donut made with pea protein powder."

Donuts are what over three-fourths (76 percent) of consumers surveyed said they would like to see more of on breakfast/brunch menus, according to *Restaurant*





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Breakfast and Brunch Trends, U.S., published in September 2019 by London-based market research firm, the Mintel Group Ltd., with offices in Chicago and New York City. Other items desired include burgers/pizza (72 percent), portable options like smoothies and breakfast sandwiches (67 percent), high-protein dishes (59 percent), and seasonal fruit (46 percent).

"We're seeing a lot of daypart blending with breakfast foods, with items like breakfast burgers or breakfast pizza appearing on more menus. If a supermarket has a pizza program, that might be a good place to pick up incremental sales. Bowls also are enjoying the spotlight at breakfast—perfect for customizing ingredients and nutrition profiles, while easy to transport, as well," says Datassential's Rodriguez.

MAKE THE MORNING MEAL GRAB & GO Convenience is a main factor for away-from-home breakfast purchases, according to Amanda Wolff, marketing manager – direct to retail for Kerry, an Irish-based food and ingredient company with North American headquarters in Beloit, WI. "We're seeing retailers respond with new foodservice offerings. For example, Whole Foods now offers made-to-order breakfast and brunch options, such as oatmeal kits, quiche, morning yogurt parfait bowls and coffee-to-go."

"The breakfast day part is largely not a supermarket deli occasion. However, bringing in ready-to-eat grab-and-go oats will enable operators to drive another occasion in that space," says Aimee Tsakirellis, director of marketing for Ward Hill, MA-headquartered Cedar's Foods, which early this year acquired brekki, a Carlsbad, CA-based company that manufactures a line of dairy-free, ready-to-eat Overnight Oats. Flavors in this line include Vanilla Cinnamon, Banana & Maple Brown Sugar and Acai Berries.

Traditional breakfast foods, such as eggs and sausage, are now available as grab-and-go.

"Hard cooked eggs are seeing double-digit growth at retail, in c-stores and grocery channels, because they are easy to eat, supply a good source of protein and are satiating," says Brian Sowal, vice president of sales and marketing for Sauder's Eggs—R.W. Sauder Inc. in Lititz, PA.

The company offers two- and six-count hard-cooked eggs in stand-up pouch bags. Flavors include Regular, with a salt and pepper packet included as well as eye-catching



Red Beet and Buffalo varieties. Future flavors may include Dill, Honey Mustard and Sriracha.

Demand for unique flavors are driving sausage innovation. For example, Caprese, Aloha-style with pineapple and ginger, and the latest, Fig & Feta, are among the nine-item line of chicken sausages manufactured by Gilbert's Craft Sausages, in Wheaton, IL.

"People look for flavor, nutrition and convenience, and these products hit all three. They are highly portable, since each sausage is individually-wrapped, are fully-cooked so you can eat right out of the package, and taste better and are better for you than a breakfast protein bar," says Chris Salm, founder and CEO. "Some retailers put our product in the set next to the hummus. We suggest cross merchandising with other handheld foods like hard-cooked eggs and fruits like bananas or apples for a nice breakfast on the go."

OFFER BREAKFAST MEAL DEALS Bundle together bakery items and beverages with other breakfast foods either in one location for ease of purchase or as part of a meal-deal price promotion.

For baked goods, Blueberry, Chocolate Chip and Banana Nut rank at the top in muffin flavors. However, bakers should augment their selection with relevant, regional seasonal flavors throughout the year, says Jayne Kearney, director of marketing for North Andover, MA-headquartered Bake'n Joy Foods, Inc. "Muffin of the Month programs as well as quarterly rotations of flavors that capture the best of what Mother Nature has to offer are solid ways to appeal to consumer tastes. Cross promotion also increases product movement, such as merchandising bakery items

at in-store coffee shops."

Coffee rules beverages at breakfast, according to Datassential's *2019 Breakfast Keynote Report*.

"Delis can pull in breakfast customers by offering coffee with on-trend flavors and creamers. Hot espresso and iced coffee are the most popular types of away-from-home coffee and 75 percent of consumers love to try seasonal flavors, based on Kerry Proprietary Research. Offering premium coffee drinks with preferred flavors, such as white chocolate and sea salt caramel, as well as seasonal flavors like pumpkin spice and peppermint mocha, can draw in consumers," says Kerry's Wolff.

Lunds & Byerlys stores have Caribou Coffee shops near the store's bakery and deli's Creations Café area where breakfast is served.

"Customers may be able to order by app and can stay in their cars to pick up their breakfasts through a QSR drive through. However, a breakfast program like ours at retail lets them multitask at one of the busiest times of the day and a previously underutilized part of the day for us. That is, they can grab a customized breakfast to go or eat in. If eating in, they can enjoy our free Wi-Fi or maybe hold a quick meeting with clients or co-workers in our seating area where they don't have to wait for wait staff, each person can get exactly what they want, and there's no need to split a bill. We have a separate register in the café area and a three-tier basket of seasonal fruits by this check-out. At the same time, with our cold bars open, it's possible for customers to pick up lunch or snacks for the office or after work. Indeed, breakfast has become one of our best meals of the day." **DB**



HALLMARKS OF EFFECTIVE FOOD SAFETY

Delis can take a number of steps to help ensure food safety.

BY LISA WHITE

The numbers are staggering. According to the World Health Organization, an estimated 600 million—almost one in 10 people in the world—fall ill after eating contaminated food and 420,000 die every year, resulting in the loss of 33 million healthy life years (DALYs). Children under five years of age carry 40 percent of the foodborne disease burden, with 125,000 deaths internationally every year.

In the U.S. alone, one in six Americans or 48 million people get sick, 128,000 are hospitalized and 3,000 die of foodborne diseases, according to the Center for Disease Control (CDC).

Knowing the risks and how to mitigate them should always be top of mind at the retail level in delis. Also, being aware of new

developments and having the appropriate protocols in place are key in keeping a safe environment and protecting customers.

Knowing the Risks

Listeria is the biggest risk in supermarket delis, so it is imperative that a program to control this pathogen be in place.

"This includes utilizing equipment with a sanitary design; appropriate product handling, including time/temperature controls; cleaning and sanitizing; environmental monitoring plans; incoming ingredient management; and team member training," says Rade Jankovic, senior account manager of retail services at NSF International in Ann Arbor, MI.

Because human-borne bacterial pathogens and viruses, like norovirus, hepatitis

A and shigella, are transmissible through food, there are some controls that help reduce risk.

"These include exclusions and restrictions policies related to sick employees as defined in the FDA Food Code; personal hygiene policies and procedures, including hand washing; no bare hand contact with ready-to-eat foods; and training for all team members," says Jankovic.

Also, there are controls in place that help reduce the risk of toxin-producing bacterial pathogens that may thrive in ready-to-eat foods exposed to excessive time/temperature abuse.

"Delis should be sure to have adequate time/temperature controls during receiving, storage, preparation and display," says Jankovic. "Also, cooling procedures

that meet the FDA Food Code standards should be utilized.”

With Salmonella, E. coli and other pathogens that can be found in raw animal products, cross contamination prevention procedures should be utilized.

“These include safe product handling; separating raw meats from ready-to-eat foods during receiving, storage, preparation and display; cleaning and sanitizing; and adequate facilities that promote safe product handling,” says Jankovic. “In addition, there should be adequate cooking temperatures of raw animal products, as well.”

There are hot spots in the deli that

should be the focus of every deli’s food safety program.

“There is a possibility of getting Listeria into the deli case, whether through slicing machines or deli boards, and develop a harborage,” says Marty Mitchell, technical director at the Refrigerated Foods Association (RFA) and director emeritus of Certified Laboratories, Melville, NY. “If you’re not reducing it to zero, you’re recontaminating product every day.”

New Developments

There are constantly updated regulations, requirements and information on

food safety that are important to keep abreast of.

“Retailers should be aware of the FDA’s recently announced New Era of Smarter Food Safety initiative, which strives to develop a new approach to food safety, emphasizing the use of technology and other tools to strengthen the country’s food safety system,” says Jankovic at NSF International. “Also, FMI recently updated its Listeria Action Plan for Retailers to assist stores with the development of Listeria control programs in their operations.”

Much of the focus this year will be on the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), which was signed into law in January of 2011. This grants the FDA more authority over product recalls as well as additional regulations. It was prompted after an outbreak of foodborne illnesses in the early 2000s.

“FSMA is one of those topics we should focus on for 2020,” says Eric Richard, education coordinator for the Madison, WI-based International Dairy Deli Bakery Association (IDDBA). The association has planned a FSMA Summit in Washington, D.C. for its members. “FSMA is a large, encompassing policy, and there are lots of questions with it. It is one of those food safety areas that continues to be important for our industry and will continue to be.”

He says supermarket delis need to do what they can to stay in compliance, not just from a food safety perspective, but also for transparency.

“Manufacturers and retailers require tracked sources of contamination,” says Richard. “The consumer can get the story behind a food’s origin, whether from a farm or manufacturing facility where the product was created.”

He predicts this will become more commonplace with blockchain technology, which provides consumers with access to labels through their smartphones and supermarkets and the means to access large amounts of data traveling through the supply chain. This in-depth tracking helps ensure food quality.

“We will see more interest in blockchain technology, as it’s a trend that’s continuing to grow,” says Richard. “Another thing we’re seeing in the food safety realm is labeling continues to be important. People who have food allergies and cannot ingest ingredients are checking labels.”

Expiration dates also fall into the food

USDA’S FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE’S BEST PRACTICES GUIDANCE FOR CONTROLLING LISTERIA MONOCYTOGENES (LM) IN DELIS

- If all refrigerated RTE foods are stored at 41°F (5°C) or below, as the 2013 FDA Food Code (3-501.16(A)(2)) recommends, approximately 9 percent of predicted listeriosis cases caused by contaminated deli products prepared or sliced in the retail deli could be prevented.

- If all deli products that support Lm growth were reformulated to include growth inhibitors, approximately 96 percent of predicted listeriosis illnesses caused by RTE products prepared or sliced in the retail deli could be prevented. While this finding is significant, the actual benefit may be smaller in part because the concentration of the growth inhibitor used may not be sufficient to be effective throughout the shelf life of a food or may not be used in high enough concentrations because the inhibitors can adversely affect the flavor of the product.

- The predicted risk of listeriosis dramatically increases in retail delis as a result of cross contamination. In particular, slicers are key sources of cross contamination in retail delis. Eliminating all points of cross contamination in the deli (including slicers) would decrease the predicted risk of illness from the consumption of RTE products prepared or sliced in the retail deli by approximately 34 percent. Cross contamination is particularly difficult to control completely; however, the risk assessment shows that proper product handling, cleaning,

sanitizing and glove use help prevent cross-contamination.

- Increased levels of Lm from incoming products and the environment (including potential niches), directly increases the predicted risk of illness. Therefore, elimination of environmental niches in the deli area will reduce the predicted risk of listeriosis from the consumption of RTE products prepared or sliced in the retail deli. Additionally, if levels of Lm on RTE foods (including foods that do not support the growth of Lm) that the retail deli receives from processing establishments were reduced by half, approximately 22 percent of the predicted listeriosis illnesses caused by contaminated deli products could be prevented. This finding suggests that continued efforts to prevent low levels of Lm contamination during processing, even on products that do not support growth of the pathogen, reduces the predicted risk from these products and other RTE foods that can be subsequently cross contaminated in the retail delis.

- Sanitation practices that eliminate Lm from deli food-contact surfaces reduce the predicted risk of illness. Cleaning and sanitizing food-contact surfaces reduces the predicted Lm levels in the deli area. Employees not wearing gloves while serving customers increases the predicted risk of listeriosis from the consumption of RTE products prepared or sliced in the retail deli by approximately 5 percent.

safety arena, and ensuring product is not expired is key.

Proper food handling at the store level cannot be overstated.

The Right Steps

There are a number of steps that are hallmarks of an effective food safety program for supermarket delis.

"This includes a strong food safety culture; food safety policies and procedures based on risk assessment and sound science; an effective, on-going training program for all team members; active managerial controls; and well-maintained facilities and equipment that promote safe product handling, such as NSF International-certified food equipment," says Jankovic at NSF.

He emphasized that it's important for company leaders to establish a food safety culture to ensure all team members in the supermarket deli buy in and stay engaged with the program every day.

"Design your program based on risk assessment to help you identify critical food safety areas in your operation and prioritize efforts and resources," says Jankovic. "Whenever possible, utilize the latest technology available to the industry to augment your food safety efforts (e.g. wireless temperature monitoring systems, technologies that improve traceability and outbreak responses, wearables...)."

New technologies significantly increase the speed at which food system failures can be identified, issues addressed, and pertinent warnings and alerts disseminated where needed.

"Re-enforce food safety knowledge through on-going training and daily monitoring of employee practices," says Jankovic. "Food handling in a retail deli poses numerous challenges that, if not managed properly, could lead to serious consequences with public health implications."

It's the food manufacturers' job to make sure what they're providing is pathogen free, but it's up to deli operators to ensure they're not contaminating these products.

"Slicing machines haven't gotten better in terms of maintenance," says Mitchell at RFA. "Dismantling equipment, cleaning and sanitizing mid shift, while keeping food at proper temperatures [is key]."

In terms of display cases, these need to be refilled in a way to keep old product from contaminating new product as well as being washed down and sanitized.

Fifteen years ago, RFA established its



Shelf Life Protocol, which it presented at its convention last February and is available on its website. Originally established in 2002 and updated and revised in 2009, this is a standardized protocol for determining the shelf life of refrigerated foods and enables individual manufacturers to compare their stated shelf life with the shelf life of similar products produced by other manufacturers.

"Aside from explaining the science behind food shelf life, it covers the standards and how to assure safety," says Mitchell. "Using this protocol standardizes practices and compares apples to apples."

Product recall also is a concern, although he says this is on the downswing.

"Everyone is embracing FSMA, asking what they can do to make sure food is safe," says Mitchell. "Listeria is the focus of a USDA study and what a lot of our members concentrate on, but salmonella and e. Coli also are a concern."

The key is to seek and destroy Listeria so if it does get into the deli area, it is eradicated during cleaning and sanitizing. This should include periodic swab testing to ensure cleanliness and using instruments to measure residual proteins or ADP.

"There are ways to verify that the cleaning program is working properly," says Mitchell. "It involves development of a cleaning program that is scientifically valid."

At IDDBA, food safety is a focal point. Although it doesn't have a certification program, the association will reimburse its retail members \$2,000 annually to cover

food safety certification program costs.

"We've been conducting almost annual initiatives focusing on food safety," says Richard at IDDBA. "We created our first initiative about five years ago—Safe Food Matters, which addressed Listeria and food allergens, among other topics. Our online library includes food safety training videos."

IDDBA also provides job guides—one-page pdfs with food safety information for retail associates at the store level.

"We've tried to build awareness around the importance of food safety at the store and company levels, because this subject is universal," says Richard. "Even though IDDBA doesn't have a program, we've come up with other ways to educate members and build awareness. This includes campaigns with documents and videos on our website."

The association also has worked with the FDA in conducting webinars for its members on legislation and regulations.

"We have a great relationship with the FDA and have worked to educate members primarily through webinars about FSMA," Richard says. "We also have members who offer guidance and services in helping companies become compliant and have worked with them on webinars that are offered to everyone, not just IDDBA members."

IDDBA has received positive feedback on its food safety initiatives and constantly emphasizes the importance of this issue.

"The more awareness we build around food safety, the stronger our industry will be," says Richard.

DB



CELEBRATING AMERICAN BLUE CHEESE

There are a wide range of flavors and varieties
for differing consumer tastes.

BY LINDA BROCKMAN AND LEE SMITH

During these difficult times for imported cheese, it is important to remember that American blue cheeses rival the best the world has to offer. They range from completely original to cheeses made with techniques borrowed from the best of the European cheesemakers. While European blues are amazing and unique, American blues can fill any niche in the cheese case with remarkable ease.

When it comes to the best of the blues, Rogue River Creamery out of Central Point, OR, comes to mind. Their iconic Rogue River Blue recently achieved a monumental first—winning the coveted title of World Champion Cheese at the World Cheese Festival 2019 in Bergamo, Italy.

Rogue River produces more than just Rogue River Blue. When Rogue River is not available, many retailers rely on Caveman Blue to fill the gap. Available year round, this stunning blue has many advocates in the cheese community.

In fact, Rogue has more than a dozen different blue cheeses. “I’m not going to stop creating new recipes of blue,” says Gremmels. “I haven’t hit 24 recipes yet, but I’m working toward it. I am always experimenting with new blues.”

The most popular deli blues from Rogue Creamery are Oregon Blue, Smokey Blue and Caveman Blue, says Gremmels. Caveman is a natural rind cheese, while Oregon Blue is rindless.

Rogue’s original Oregon Blue, artisan-made since 1957 in Central Point, OR, was modeled after Roquefort. “We have a legacy here of nearly seven decades,”



he says. “Satisfying a range of palettes, Oregon is the more approachable, sweet, savory, fruity, creamy blue that we offer at deli level. It is great as stand-alone wedge or crumbled in a potato salad or atop a portobello mushroom.”

Focusing on French Styles

Based on a French style of cheese-making, Original Blue from Point Reyes Farmstead Cheese Co. is distinctly American, says Jill Giacomini Basch, co-owner and chief marketing officer for the company, which is headquartered in Point Reyes, CA. “It is a rindless blue and has an ultra-creamy texture, almost like butter, when served at room temperature. The flavor is full of sweet milky notes up

front with a peppery finish.”

Each of Point Reyes’ blue cheeses has its own personality, flavor and texture, says Basch. She recommends Bay Blue as a good first blue. “With its mild blue mold pungency and sweet finish, we often refer to it as a gateway blue. People that think they don’t like blue cheese try it and can’t believe how much they love it. Before they know it, they are moving on to stronger blues, like Original Blue.”

Winning first place for blue-veined cheese at the 2019 U.S. Championship Cheese Contest in Green Bay, WI, Original Blue is a good choice for consumers who love classic blue cheese flavor, says Basch.

In addition to whole-wheel formats that are great for cut-to-order environments, Point Reyes’ Original Blue and Bay Blue come in pre-cut and wrapped 6-ounce wedges that are perfect for the cheese case in any deli grab-and-go environment, says Basch. Original Blue also comes in crumbles in No. 5 Cryovac bags, which work in foodservice departments and can be put in cups for customer convenience.

Great blue cheese varieties can be found in packaging convenient to retailers without extensive cheese departments and to customers who may be intimidated by cut-to-order departments.

Moving to Italian

Italy’s Gorgonzola is the classic Italian blue cheese from Italy, but the United States has rivals that are as good—or better—depending on who you talk to. They certainly are very popular and a must-have



for an American retailer. They also are much less expensive and affordably priced.

American Gorgonzolas have been responsible for introducing many Americans to this Italian style of cheese. While Italy's own Gorgonzola is amazing, it is also expensive and difficult to ship to the U.S., putting it out of reach for many American consumers.

Once such company is Green Bay, WI-based BelGioioso Cheese, Inc., a cheesemaker that produces a wide range of Italian-style cheeses, including a classic Gorgonzola Dolce—the creamier and sweeter version of Gorgonzola.

According to the Jamie Wichlacz, BelGioioso's marketing manager, "We actually craft four different types of blue. A favorite is CreamyGorg, a Gorgonzola Dolce that is aged 90 days, which has a natural rind and creamy interior. It is easily spreadable and ideal for melting into sauces.

"Our Crumbly Gorgonzola (aged 90 days) and Blue Cheese (aged 60 days) have a firmer texture that makes it easy for customers to slice for sandwiches or crumble on salads. We also have a Crumbly Gorgonzola that is made with cow and sheep milk (aged 90 days), giving it a slightly smoother texture and a deep rich flavor."

All of BelGioioso's cheeses come in whole wheels and packages that make it easy for supermarket deli retailers to sell in self-service cases and in sizes that work for customers. What is never compromised is the quality of the product.

Another recent winner recognized in the global arena is Roth Gorgonzola cheese, made at the Emmi Roth plant in Seymour, WI. It just received the Best-in-Class award at the 2020 World Championship Cheese Contest held in Madison, WI.

Other award-winning Roth blue cheeses, such as Buttermilk Blue and Smoked Moody Blue, are made "to be bold, yet approachable," says Abby Despins, director of communications for Emmi Roth. "They are tangy and earthy to appeal to blue cheese lovers, but also have a mellow creaminess to be enjoyed by anyone."

Roth Buttermilk Blue is sold in wheels, retail cuts and crumbles. Roth Buttermilk Blue Affinee is aged for more than six months, "for consumers who want an even more rich, piquant and earthy flavored blue cheese," says Despins.

This year, Emmi Roth will be introducing new packaging and labels for its Roth



Blue Cheese line. Also new is Roth Flavor Ups Blue Cheese Crumbles, being marketed to both retailers and foodservice operators. "It's ideal for salad bars but can also be used in retailer-made meal kits or in the convenience/snack area of the deli for shoppers," says Despins.

"We believe in the blue cheese category and see individual blue cheese crumbles as new way for consumers to enjoy blue cheese," says Despins. "Our Flavor Ups Blue Cheese Crumbles are designed to give today's busy consumer a convenient way to upgrade their meals, whether they are dining at home, at their desk or at grab-and-go lunch areas."

The cheese experts at Emmi Roth have invested in learning and understanding cheese buyers and consumers, and what they need when shopping the deli, says Despins. "We know the deli cheese case can be confusing and overwhelming to consumers, and we've taken steps to help them navigate buying cheese by adding pairing and serving tips on the front of all of our packaging."

Uses in the Deli

The consumer options are endless, says Basche at Point Reyes Farmstead Cheese Co. Bay Blue is a great topper for a succulent steak or burger, shaved onto poached pears or grilled peaches or melted into mushroom risotto. Original Blue can stand alone and be used to top salads, melt onto burgers and steak and mix into pasta, risotto, scrambled eggs or mashed potatoes.

Delis can use blues to enhance their own offerings by adding blue cheese options to made-to-order sandwiches or take-out salads. Salad options are endless. For example, a spinach salad topped with fresh pears and crumbled blue cheese is a refreshing example of a typical restaurant offering. Berries and blues are also favorite pairings for topping mixed greens.

The meat case is an excellent option for cross merchandising. Crumbles can be displayed next to steaks and burgers for added options. During these times, consumers will be looking to add variety to family meals and replicate favorite restaurant dishes.

Ultimate Pairings

Basch suggests pairing Original Blue with a vintage port and savoring Bay Blue alongside a glass of vintage port or barrel-aged scotch.

In the Pacific Northwest, home of both California's Point Reyes and Oregon's Rogue Creamery, locals love to pair their tasty blues with northwestern IPAs and craft beers. Smokey Blue, for example, pairs well with a chocolate stout.

Gremmels is enthusiastic when describing the combinations that blend beautifully with blue, such as Oregon Blue with pinot noir or burgundy, and "the mind-blowing pairings of bergamot teas and blue cheese."

"We always suggest pairing our Roth Blues with honey and dark chocolate," says Despins of Emmi Roth, who also likes to match blue cheese with pears, figs, a full-bodied red wine or gin.

DB

THE ART OF **ARTISAN SALAMI**

Salami's popularity in deli shows no signs of waning.

BY DIANA CERCONI



Salami has a long and rich culinary history pre-dating the Roman Empire. The word's origin is rooted in the Latin word *salumen*, meaning to salt. Just about every region or town had its own recipe, with pork usually as the main meat ingredient, along with local spices and salt as a natural preservative. Roman legions on campaigns often found salami among their rations as well as sampled varieties of salami as they marched through towns and villages, often bringing the recipes home.

Fast-forward to today. If you've ever gone truffle hunting in Italy, you were most likely treated to a picnic lunch of salami (the plural of the singular *salame*), cheese, crusty bread, some fruit and wine by the hunters. The tantalizing mix of flavors, aromas and textures has become a favorite among Americans here—whether on a picnic to enjoy the splendors of nature or as an impromptu gathering in the comfort of our homes. And no mountain climber or backpacker would hit the trail without packing a stick or two of *salame* for a protein punch.

Distinguishing Factors

True, salami's popularity might rest in its no need for refrigeration, having been

smoked and/or dry-cured. But anyone who has tasted the seductive sweetness of its meat mingled with specks of creamy fat and its heady swirl of spices such as garlic, peppercorns or fennel—or, perhaps, from the added delicacy of a rosé or the robustness of a chianti—knows where the attraction lies. It's in salami's taste. Rich, satisfying and comforting—a celebration of flavors.

Though all salami are a mix of ground meat (usually pork or beef) and spices and then stuffed into a casing and cured until a desired hardness, not all salami in the deli are created equal.

So what's the difference between artisan salami and traditional?

According to Deanna Depke, St. Louis-based Volpi Foods' marketing manager and fourth generation family member, "The more appropriate contrast would be the artisan versus the conventional/industrial salami." Artisan salami follow the traditions passed down for generations, she explains, while industrial-processed salami are based on efficiency, with most of the time at a sacrifice to the overall taste, texture and eating experience of the product. "At Volpi, we're committed to doing all things old-school. We use only fresh, never frozen, Midwest pork, and produce in small batches with

hands-on expertise." In addition, she says, "We use gentle processing methods and allow the time for flavor development."

Marketing analyst for Fiorucci Brand salami from Colonial Heights, VA-based Fiorucci Foods, Stephen Docherty describes what sets Fiorucci salami apart from regular salami centers on its meat and recipe. "Our specialty meats use a treasured family recipe and process that has been perfected since 1850. We still hand trim all of our premium, select cuts of pork, use only the finest spices." In addition, he says, they carefully age all of their products.

Carefully selected ingredients, low-temperature fermentation, slow-timed dry-curing and having the patience to produce artisan salami have been the hallmark of Fratelli Beretta, a company begun in 1812, and still family-owned with the eighth generation of the Beretta family running the business. President and COO of Mt. Olive, NJ-based Beretta USA, Simone Beretta says, "We are using the same traditional recipe that has been in the Beretta family for generations. All our salami are 100 percent pork with no additional filler or additives."

To Dave Brandow, director of international sales for Piller's Fine Foods, headquartered in Ontario, Canada, the

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terms ‘artisan salami’ and ‘traditional salami’ “are one and the same, especially as it pertains to Black Kassel salami.” Black Kassel salami, he says, “are very traditional, authentic salami that originated in Central Europe. The recipes are centuries-old and handed down through the generations.” The salami are cold-wood smoked for a minimum of six days and then further dry-aged for a minimum of 28.

To further explain, Depke likens artisan salami to fine wines. “The bouquet of a good artisan salami is pleasant and fragrant,” she says, “the mouthfeel, gentle to the palate (not salty, not acidic).” The undeniable flavor comes through even in the thinnest of slices, she says, leaving an aftertaste that is clean and fully satisfying. Another mark of artisan salami is in its shape. Because they are often handmade, unlike industrial-produced salami, they’re often not uniformly round.

What’s Available

All Veroni salami are still made in Italy, says Alan Adelson, vice president of sales at Veroni USA, based in Logan Township, NJ. Due to the American growing demand



for Veroni salami, the company recently expanded production for the U.S. with a newly-remodeled plant near the Adriatic Sea. The mark of a true artisan salame, he says, is not only found in its flavor and texture, but also in how it is made: “less acidic, slow-cured, use of fresh ingredients and handcrafted.”

Each of the companies produce a variety of artisan salami, ranging from traditional flavors and styles to more modern-influenced ones. For example Volpi

makes 15 in various sizes and flavors, ranging from traditional favorites like Genoa (a medium-grind garlic salame with a smooth, rich flavor and clean-finish) and Sopresetta (a mix of pork and spices, including paprika) to the company’s more innovative flavors like Prosecco-infused salame. All are synthetic nitrate- and nitrite-free. Veroni salami include Salame Milano, which is characterized by long-aging, finely ground fat, an intense red color and sweetness on the palate; Salame Di Parma, a mild salame seasoned with salt and pepper; and Salame Calabrese, a spicy salame made according to the traditions of Calabria.

In addition to its Genoa and Sopressata salami, Fiorucci also produces others such as Hard Salami, a firmer, dryer salami, with a robust smoke flavor and peppery aromas containing fine specks of flavorful fat and spices. Its Abbruzzese salami shows vibrant, rosy hues from the variety of pork used and hot, spicy flavors, imparting a firm, chewy texture for a full flavor profile of paprika and aroma of crushed red peppers. Fiorucci also produces 100 percent natural salami, which are antibiotic-free in Hard, Italian Dry and Genoa varieties.

More than 25 salami are produced at Fratelli Beretta, ranging in traditional flavors, such as Milano, and sweet and hot sopressatas to more culinary-creative ones such as black truffle, fennel and chorizo to healthy-minded low-sodium, Natural (no nitrates or nitrites), antibiotic-free and organic salami. Their best seller, Beretta says, are their antipasto trays. “They give the opportunity to the consumer to try several variety of salami, prosciutto and coppa in one package.”

Black Kassel salami come in 10 varieties, such as Mustard Seed, Old Forest and Picante Salami, and in assorted packag-

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ing, such as Whips. Introduced in 2017, Whips, which look like its name with ½-inch widths and 8 inches long, come in resealable packs. They quickly gained in popularity, so much so that Whips now come in personal portion-size packages for those times you need a quick hit of protein. Two new Whips with the American palate in mind will be launched this spring for a limited time, including Honey Bourbon in May and June and Hatch Chile Pepper in July and August.

Look also for an exciting array of new products coming from Fratelli Beretta, Volpi, Veroni and Fiorucci.

At this year's IDDBA Show, Fratelli Beretta will launch its full line of entertainment trays that combine the company's artisan salami with complimentary items, making them ideal to bring directly to the table. On-the-go individual snack packs and charcuterie trays are already trending at Fiorucci, Volpi and Veroni. For example, Fiorucci offers 2-ounce packages with salami, cheese and artisanal crackers for snacking or as a meal replacement as well as a Keto-friendly 2-ounce Spicy or Mild Salami Protein Packs with Aged Cheddar.

According to Adelson, the salami category continues to grow in the U.S., so you'll see more products, flavors, sizes and combination packs—even salame blended with spirits like whiskey. "The snacking and protein diet trends have created a whole new category of small artisan salame sticks, bites and snack packs," he says. This June, Veroni will roll out several new individual snack packs and sharing trays. Like charcuterie boards, the Veroni Aperitivo (Aperitivo Time) trays offer an array of artisan products, such as combining salami with cheese, nuts and dried fruit.

Merchandising Salami

Merchandising dry-cured meats offers a myriad of possibilities, Depke says. Salami pairs well with so many different grocery items like wine and beer, cheese, fresh and dried fruits, nuts, crackers and artisan breads. The list is practically endless. "Deli retailers can add value for customers by merchandising salami next to these displays."

Today's salami also come in a myriad of forms. From behind the deli counter for fresh slices to reach-in deli refrigerators for snack packs, salame and cheese roll-ups/paninos, and charcuterie/antipasto trays to shelf-stable salami that are perfect for free-standing

floor and shelf displays. Because of shelf-stable salami's pairing power, Docherty says, they can be placed with complementary items, like crackers. "Or my personal favorite," he says, "next to the red wine section."

In addition, consumers want to know more about the food they eat, Depke says, and sees this as a continuing and widening trend in the food industry. "They want to know about the company making the product, what its values are and how they

connect to the community. They want authenticity and transparency in the production, sourcing and packaging of these salami products.

"Artisan salami is made by real people who care about the products they produce," she says, "are sourced from real family farms that care about their animals and real communities that care about the food they enjoy and their environment."

DB

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Rogue Creamery's ROGUE RIVER BLUE

A Coveted Blue





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

Rogue River Blue Cheese is an organic, cave-aged blue that is wrapped in Syrah grape leaves that are soaked in pear spirits. It is made exclusively with milk from Rogue Creamery's Certified Organic Dairy Farm in Grants Pass, OR, where cows graze on pastures bordering the Rogue River. A seasonal product, Rogue River Blue is only made for a few months each year beginning on the autumnal equinox, when cooler temperatures bring renewed growth to the pastures and the cow's milk becomes richer and higher in butterfat. Rogue Creamery president David Gremmels considers this to be the best milk for expressing the unique attributes of their region.

This cheese was first envisioned by Gremmels himself. "When I purchased Rogue Creamery in 2001, I already had in my mind the idea that I wanted to create a blue cheese influenced by the traditions of Europe, but with flavors and texture unique to the Creamery's home in Southern Oregon," says Gremmels.

"I launched the new recipe in 2002 using Rogue Creamery's classic Oregon Blue Cheese recipe as its inspiration, creating an American original and extending its aging to capture the distinct molds of our historic cheese caves," he explains. "We sampled local grape leaves and ultimately decided that the Syrah leaf gave us the flavor and texture we were looking for. These leaves soaked in pear liqueur for nearly a year to soften and add a nuanced, fruity flavor, then were used to wrap the aged cheese wheels."

Rogue River Blue 'bottle-shocked' the world just the following year, taking

Reserve Champion and the title of "Best Blue Cheese in the World" at the 2003 World Cheese Awards. Now, 16 years later, it has received the only distinction that could surpass this original honor: Grand Champion. It is the first time an American-made cheese has received this top honor.

Each purchase of Rogue River Blue helps Rogue Creamery fulfill its goal of, "using cheese as a force of good." As Oregon's first social benefit company, Rogue Creamery is committed to using business to build a better future; and they are making this possible with every wheel, wedge and crumble.

Though Rogue River Blue has sold out for the season in nearly every retail store, the persistent may still luck upon some at specialty cheese counters. Those planning ahead can visit RogueCreamery.com and put their name on the list to preorder Rogue River Blue when it is released again in September 2020.

DB

An Artisan Treasure

The La Panzanella story is one of sharing, and it all began over two decades ago in the Capitol Hill area of Seattle, when an Italian immigrant opened the La Panzanella Italian Bakery and Deli to supply bread to local restaurants in the city. For years, the small business flourished as an artisan bakery. In 1997, the owner's mother came to visit him from Italy. While she was visiting, she recreated her own authentic flatbread recipe to bake the very first Croccantini ("crunchy little bite" in Italian) cracker.

Croccantini became a local hit at the bakery and was quickly noticed by hotels and specialty stores around the area. In 1998, retail packaging for the Croccantini was developed, and it soon began showing up in specialty food stores around the Northwestern United States. By 2000, La Panzanella decided to formally introduce the Croccantini to the rest of the country by presenting it at trade shows



across America.

Ten years later, the beloved, smaller sized and now top-selling specialty cracker, Mini Croccantini, were created. Over time, the packaging has evolved with market needs, but today and always the passion has been to make the very best ar-

tisanal foods. Now operating as La Panzanella Artisanal Foods Co., it is still family-owned and continues to craft products using only the finest ingredients—the same simple, wholesome grains and pure flavors you use in your kitchen. Baked in small batches and hand-packed, La

Panzanella crackers are uniquely crafted and singularly special. Throughout their history, it has been their passion and pleasure to share their crackers with you, their friends and family. Look for them wherever you buy your favorite cheeses. La Panzanella. Sharing life, love and food. **DB**

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