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The Grocer Guide to...

The Grocer

Cheese



England's Cheddar Maker

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KEY BRANDS

Wyke
Ivy's Reserve

“Wyke Farms is a values-led, family-run business with a lot to be proud of,” says Rich Clothier MBE, 3rd-generation cheese maker and managing director. “Our 160-year-old traditional family recipe, our Green By Nature ethos and practices, our self-generated renewable energy and our geographical location – just 10 miles from the village of Cheddar – continue to shape everything we do and ensure we stay true to the craft passed down through generations.”

As Wyke Farms moves into 2026, the business continues to build on progress in 2025, strengthening its identity and its connection with consumers. “Our updated branding and packaging have reinforced our position as England's Cheddar Maker, enabling us to express our values with even greater clarity and confidence,” says Clothier. “Our priority now is to deepen that relationship with consumers – championing quality, sustainability and the English countryside in a way that is true to our heritage yet geared towards the future.”

Alongside its strong performance, Wyke is evolving its offer for 2026 through premium format refinement and a heightened sustainability message for the Ivy's Reserve range. The brand is introducing clearer pack messaging with subtle design enhancements to reinforce its unique provenance and support premium trade-up. More notably, Ivy's Reserve will now lead with a differentiated and globally relevant sustainability narrative rooted in the natural world that shaped the brand's origins – championing countryside preservation, biodiversity and British landscapes as central to responsible cheesemaking.



“Our updated branding and packaging have reinforced our position as England's Cheddar Maker, enabling us to express our values with even greater clarity and confidence”

“At the centre of the Wyke brand's refreshed identity is our England's Cheddar Maker marque,” says Clothier. “It encapsulates our English cheesemaking heritage and expertise, supported by the founding date 1861 and our roots in Champflower, Somerset.”

Meanwhile, Ivy's Reserve Vintage Cheddar and Ivy's Reserve Somerset Red remain central to Wyke's premium offer, celebrated for their depth of flavour, signature texture and standout design. “The profile of Ivy's Reserve – a full roundness of flavour with a crunch on the end – gives it real distinction in the fixture,” Clothier says. “Somerset Red's creaminess, mellow nuttiness and savoury notes continue to impress.”

To sustain this momentum, Wyke Farms continues to invest in the growth of its most popular lines. “We've seen increased demand for Ivy's Reserve both in the UK and globally,” Clothier explains. “Our ongoing investment in the brand will help secure long-term growth for our flagship cheeses.”

Across 2026, Wyke is enhancing its marketing with deeper storytelling, more impactful partnerships and a more consistent expression of its refreshed brand. “By holding firm to our core values while responding to customer needs, we're not just crafting cheese – we're building a legacy that reflects our heritage and drives us forward.”

Analysis

Can cheese ride the health wave?

Cheese, with its protein-rich content, has an unrivalled opportunity to tap into the current focus on health & wellness



From whipped cheeses to spicy feta dips¹, and from lactose-free to hybrid dairy where the market is expected to reach global turnover of US\$25.1bn by 2035², there is plenty going on in the modern cheese category.

Melting cheese is still a hot topic³ and there's a resurgence in interest for blue cheeses⁴. However, with macro influences like climate change affecting pastures and winter feed, the category is not without its share of challenges. Plus, inflation in the UK market has prompted some consumers to cut back on purchases, with the result being an increase in value, but a notable flattening of volume, as budget-conscious shoppers look to save money.

That said, cheese has a remarkable opportunity within its grasp – the

popular protein trend – and this is already having an impact. Sales of cottage cheese, it appears, are spiking⁵, driven by rising interest in high-protein and gut-friendly foods, as well as consumer concerns over UPFs, and prompted by social media fever⁶.

Meanwhile, interest in high-protein, portion-controlled snacks is continuing to drive the cheese snacking market, giving suppliers plenty to shout about when it comes to cheese's functional and nutritional benefits.

Market assessment

Over the last year, the cheese category has shown stronger value growth underpinned by inflation, with volume performance varying by segment, says Heloise Le Norcy-Trott, group marketing director at Lactalis UK &

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Ireland. “According to Circana data, category value for total cheese has grown by 5.3% year on year, compared to unit growth of just 1.6%, indicating that higher prices and a shift towards higher-value products, rather than increased volumes, are driving growth⁷,” she reveals. “This trend is reinforced in everyday block cheese, where units are down 3.2% while value is up 2.7%, pointing to increased price sensitivity in staple formats⁸.”

While total cheese penetration remains extremely high, at 98.1%, volume is flat (+0.2%), while spend is up 5.4%⁹, confirming that shoppers are spending more without buying more, she adds.

“Private-label plays a crucial role within fixed weight cheese, accounting for over 55% of unit share and nearly

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59% of value share¹⁰, highlighting its importance to shoppers in an inflationary environment. While branded cheese has delivered modest unit growth, consumers are increasingly directing a greater share of their spend towards own-label products as a way of managing rising prices¹¹.

“This behaviour aligns with wider shopper sentiment, with recent Circana/Vypr research showing that 96% of shoppers have noticed price increases, nearly one-third are buying more private-label, and around a quarter are waiting for products to be on promotion¹². Together, this supports the view that shoppers are responding to inflation through trading down and more tactical purchasing, rather than leaving the category altogether¹³.”

Kerry Dairy Ireland Consumer Foods’ products sit within the cheese snacking category, which has “grown over four times faster than total grocery” through 2025 across both value and volume¹⁴, says the company’s strategy, marketing and innovation director Victoria Southern. She attributes this to consumers continuing to search for healthier, tastier and more convenient snack options. “Consumers want snacks that are nutritious, exciting and fit seamlessly into their busy lifestyles,” she notes, adding that the company understands the cost-of-living pressures shoppers are under and strives to deliver value across its full range of snacking products.

“Total cheese snacking grew by +14.5% in value and +15.9% in units in the latest 12-week reporting¹⁵, significantly outperforming total grocery growth. This is a clear indicator that cheese snacking is continuing to demonstrate strong growth prospects for the year ahead.”

Meanwhile, Bel UK&I managing director David Brandman points to new eating occasions, which see shoppers adding more flavours and formats to their repertoire, driving category sales and volume growth¹⁶. “Changing snacking habits in particular – mainly driven by growing interest in natural protein – see more people buying cheese snacks as demand for nutrient-rich snacking grows,” he says.

At Mondelez International, trade communications manager Susan Nash says consumers continue to look for trusted brands in key categories to

provide familiarity and consistency. She points to the company’s Dairylea and Philadelphia brands, which she says jointly have 230 years of experience in crafting creamy soft cheese, snacks and spreads. “Both brands have strong heritage and have built up trust among shoppers to consistently deliver on taste and quality,” she notes.

As for cheddar, Wyke Farms’ third generation cheesemaker and family member Richard Clothier says it has remained one of the most resilient

staples in the dairy aisle. “Over the past year, we’ve seen stable volumes with some value growth, largely driven by input cost inflation,” he says. “Consumers are more price-aware, but they continue to buy cheese because it delivers exceptional nutrition, versatility and satisfaction at a very fair cost per portion.”

That said, the cheese category operates in a “highly exposed” part of the food chain, “so climate pressures environmental regulation and volatile milk markets affect us directly”, adds Clothier. “But, as a regenerative, values-led family farm, we see these pressures as motivation as much as a challenge.”

The dairy sector continues to face significant challenges driven by persistent macroeconomic factors, agrees DalterFood Group general manager Andrea Guidi. “The volatility of milk prices, the effects of climate change and global geopolitical tensions

“Shoppers are increasingly looking for products that remove friction from everyday routines without compromising on quality or taste”



How cheese can tap the protein trend

With the increased consumer focus on health & wellness, protein-rich foods are occupying front and centre stage in shopping baskets. Under this umbrella, cheese suppliers are recognising they have an opportunity to rewrite perceptions of cheese as 'unhealthy' and play on their core credentials like never before.

"Health-led choices remain a key purchase driver, with protein now moving from a niche claim to an everyday expectation," says Lactalis' Le Norcy-Trott. "High-protein dairy continues to grow rapidly, and Lindahls Protein

is well placed at the heart of this trend, offering both high protein and low-in-fat options, which taps into two of the strongest shopper priorities simultaneously."

Protein is also front of mind for Mondelez International, where Nash says calling out protein credentials is vital to engaging consumers. The company has recently rebranded its extra low-fat Philadelphia as Philadelphia Protein, tapping into the growing protein trend and highlighting the product's offering in this space.

Consumers want minimally processed, naturally functional

foods, notes Wyke Farms' Clothier. "Our Cheddar, made using our traditional starter cultures and Ivy's original recipe, meets this need perfectly."

Health and nutrition trends, such as natural wellness, continue to shape the adult cheese snacking category, maintains Kerry's Southern. "This has increased demand for minimally processed and functional foods, with 50% of consumers now looking for smaller, smarter, high-impact snacksⁱ," she says.

With natural protein and calcium especially important for growth energy and bone healthⁱⁱ, consumers see it as

a marker of satiety and qualityⁱⁱⁱ, says Bel UK&I's Brandman. While snacking is often frowned upon, for kids, active adults and busy workers, snacks play an important role in topping up nutrients between meals, he says, particularly as snacking is increasingly replacing traditional meals^{iv}. "Babybel Protein is the newest variant in our portfolio, offering retailers incremental brand growth – complementing other Babybel variants in our line-up. With more than 15% more protein per 20g portion, since launch it has generated more than £1.5m in sales^v," he reveals.

continue to disrupt supply chains," he says. "DalterFood Group has worked hard to create a short and controlled Parmigiano Reggiano supply chain model, rewarding and incentivising all the actors involved to give their best to achieve a product of the highest quality."

Convenience and on-the-go

As consumers choose to snack more regularly throughout the day, Kerry has also observed growth in the food-to-sector, as shoppers take advantage of the variety and value on offer in meal deals. "Our recent Smug Cheese & Crunch launch is innovation that directly taps into these macro trends," notes Southern.

Speed, simplicity and ease of use continue to shape purchasing decisions, particularly for breakfast, desserts, hot drinks and family occasions, comments Lactalis' Le Norcy-Trott. "Shoppers are increasingly

looking for products that remove friction from everyday routines without compromising on quality or taste," she says. "Président Cream plays strongly into this trend, offering instant results with no whipping required and consistent performance across multiple uses."

At DalterFood Group, Guidi notes that retailers and food industries are increasingly faced with consumers' demands for practical solutions and products designed for dynamic lifestyles, without compromising on quality and taste. "Our wide selection of cheeses – aged, semi-aged, and fresh – available in various cuts and formats enables us to support our customers in meeting these requests and enhancing their offerings," he says. "For example, we offer 100% recyclable single-serving sachets of Parmigiano Reggiano flakes, ideal for pairing with pre-packed meat or fish carpaccio, or grated Grana Padano, perfect for

ready-to-eat soups. We also provide mozzarella pearls to enhance the taste of ready-to-eat salads, as well as handy single portions of cheese (such as Parmigiano Reggiano, Spinoro or Pecorino Romano) ranging from 20g to 50g, all in 100% recyclable packaging – perfect for a quick, tasty, and nutritious snack."

Snacking, convenience and engagement are cited by Mondelez International's Nash as standout drivers in the market. "Together they reflect how consumers are eating differently, shopping more intentionally and expecting more from trusted brands," she says. "Snacking continues to be a major growth engine, particularly as traditional meal occasions fragment and families look for flexible options throughout the day. Convenience is equally critical, as time-pressed households prioritise products that are easy to serve, portioned appropriately and require no

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preparation. Engagement is the third key driver, particularly in a family-focused category.”

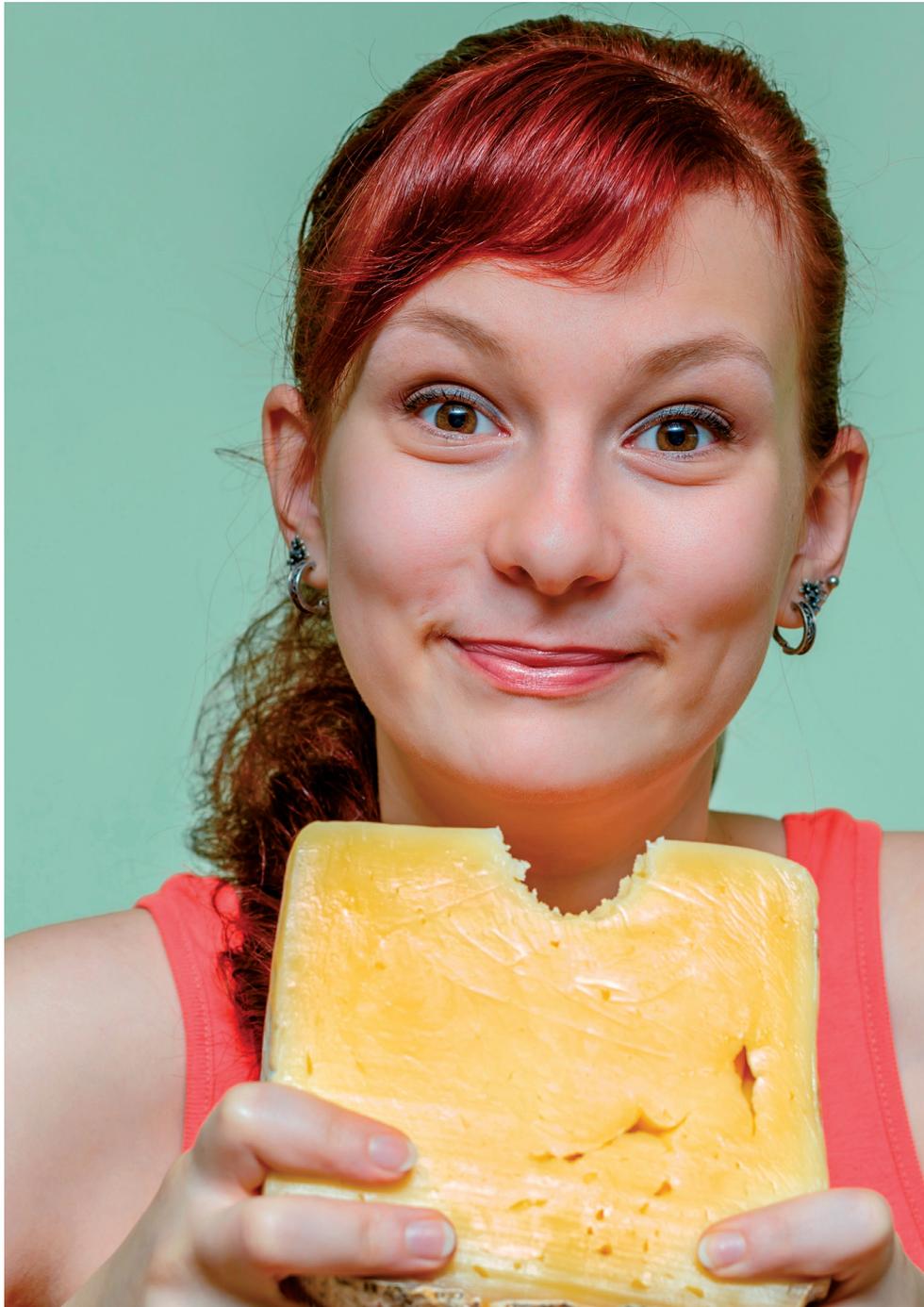
For all of these drivers, she says, Dairylea delivers, with a range design for everyday snacking moments, from lunchboxes to after-school and on-the-go occasions, and has playful branding that continues to engage families. Meanwhile, the company’s Philadelphia brand offers versatile products that can be spread, cooked or eaten straight from the pack, helping consumers create quick meals and snacks.

When it comes to convenience offers, retailers are reshaping and diversifying their front-of-store chillers with more space and variety built around missions: protein boosts, kids’ lunchbox fillers, in meal deals, and portion-controlled treats – creating more dynamic, experience-led displays to make healthier choices easier to find, says Bel UK&I’s Brandman. “Key for retailers is stocking the right formats in the right places – for instance, six-nets for grocery chillers or Babybel Grab & Go packs for food-to-go chillers.”

Indulgence with accessibility

Alongside health and convenience, shoppers continue to seek moments of affordable indulgence, particularly for relaxed at-home meals, sharing occasions and the ongoing ‘Big Night In’ trend, says Lactalis’ Le Norcy-Trott. “Soft, creamy and spreadable cheeses that deliver comfort and flavour without a premium price point are performing strongly, as consumers look to elevate everyday eating with minimal effort. This demand for indulgent but versatile formats is expected to remain a key driver of value growth across the cheese category, as shoppers continue to balance quality, comfort and affordability. Spreadable cheeses, in particular, offer retailers an effective way to tap into multiple usage occasions while meeting consumers’ desire for accessible, everyday indulgence.”

Taste and indulgent moments remain important to shoppers, says Bel UK&I’s Brandman. “With its indulgent flavours and format innovation, Boursin continues to be the No.1 indulgent cheese brand by sales (6.9% market share) and No.2 in volume (5.8% market share)¹⁷,” he adds.



Deli counter vs in-aisle and beyond

In-aisle deli has taken a step forward and is doing the heavy lifting in helping consumers discover speciality British cheeses, says Matthew Hall, fourth generation owner at Butlers Farmhouse Cheeses. “The space and format allow for more brand storytelling, a broader mix of smaller producers and a more brand-led offer overall,” he says. “In contrast, deli counters have taken a step back. As retailers cut costs and

reduce staffing, the counters have lost that theatre and education that was always their point of difference. The opportunity to engage shoppers through whole cheeses, conversation and expertise – as you would see in a farm shop or cheesemonger – isn’t really there at the moment and that’s sad. It would be great for retail to bring some of that magic back at the counter.”

While deli counters still matter in some stores, much of the theatre has

Communicating nutritional advantages

“Cheese has a PR problem,” states Butlers’ Hall. “Consumers are actively seeking out natural, whole foods, yet too often cheese is framed as a guilty indulgence rather than what it really is – minimally processed, naturally nutritious, full of calcium and protein-rich.”

“Historic narratives of cheese as ‘fattening’, along with the new headline-grabbing health claims from trendy foods with ‘only four ingredients’ or ‘high protein’ have made it even more difficult for cheese to compete. “As producers, we need to talk boldly and proudly about cheese – a traditional, whole food that delivers nutritional value as part of a balanced diet. But that message will only stick and educate people when the entire market, from producers to retailers, tell it together.”

Wyke Farms’ Clothier says cheddar is naturally rich in protein, calcium and essential vitamins,

and, unlike many foods in the modern diet, it requires no additives or processing shortcuts. We communicate these advantages through on-pack clarity, digital content, recipe inspiration and partnerships that highlight cheese as a positive part of balanced diets,” he says.

At Bel UK&I, Brandman comments: “Shoppers have a good understanding of nutrition and are increasingly looking to products with fewer

ingredients, which plays directly to the benefits that cheese offers, but we need to do better at explaining and educating that cheese is a nutrient-dense food.” This year, the company will be working closely with retail partners and wider industry key opinion leaders to drive the healthier snacking message to more shoppers, as well as engaging in educational initiatives to encourage healthier choices for both children and adults.

Parents want snacks that their kids will enjoy, that are nutritionally rich and full of dairy goodness, maintains Kerry’s Southern. “In addition to signposting our nutritional benefits on our packaging in eye-catching ways – including that Cheestrings is real cheese, rich in calcium for healthy bones and contains vitamin D, B6 and B12 which supports immunity – we also reinforce our nutritional benefits

and credentials with parents via our advertising and brand communications,” she says.

Lindahls Protein communicates the nutritional advantages of cheese by keeping messaging clear, relevant and easy for shoppers to understand at the point of purchase, says Lactalis’ Le Norcy-Trott. “Protein is placed front and centre across packaging and communications for cheese and milk drinks, reflecting its growing importance to consumers seeking functional, everyday nutrition. This approach is designed to resonate with affluent, urban shoppers aged 45+, as well as people who exercise regularly and shoppers looking for convenient, high-protein foods. Protein is positioned as an inclusive benefit, linked to everyday wellbeing, satiety and muscle maintenance, rather than framed solely around sports or performance.”

“Cheese has a PR problem. Consumers seek out natural, whole foods, yet too often cheese is framed as a guilty indulgence, rather than what it really is – nutritious, full of calcium and protein-rich”

moved in-aisle as retailers optimise space and labour, agrees Wyke Farms’ Clothier. “That creates an opportunity for brands like ours to bring the ‘deli feel’ directly to the fixture,” he says. “Our provenance and our updated packaging help us stand out clearly on-shelf, giving shoppers confidence that they are choosing authentic, award-winning farmhouse Cheddar.”

Clothier also points to a real momentum in channels where

shoppers can connect more deeply with producers. “Farm shops, festivals and our own visitor experiences allow consumers to taste our cheeses, hear our story and understand the sustainable 100% green energy approach behind it,” he says.

For farmhouse, speciality cheeses, the story is a big part of the product you’re buying as a consumer, says Butlers’ Hall. “We know the quality has always been there, but as prices have

risen, consumers want reassurance that the what they’re spending is going into high-quality products with provenance and purpose from local or family-run businesses like ours,” he notes. “Direct-to-consumer, farm shops and events allow that connection to happen naturally. They give producers the space to tell their story and create a more immersive experience, and that is, of course, much harder to do in a retail fixture.

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“So, we’ve taken the learnings from events and how we engage with our customers directly through our online cheese store and applied that to evolve how we work with independents, building a new trade site that helps customers connect with us directly at the dairy. As retailers and consumers continue to be more conscious of where their food comes from, I think that the demand to get closer to source is only going to grow.”

Future opportunity

Cheese has always been a household staple, but with cost-of-living pressures as they are, shoppers are being very deliberate about how and where they spend their money, says Butlers’ Hall. “They are looking for products with quality and integrity, and when it comes to that weekly cheese purchase, it’s about satisfying more eating occasions and delivering joy with every bite. We’re still in the stage of people waking up to the quality, flavour and variety of British farmhouse cheese,” he adds. “The biggest opportunity for retailers is to encourage exploration of speciality by making it easier to shop and educating and inspiring consumers at the fixture.”

DalterFood Group’s Guidi says: “Looking ahead to 2026, the main opportunity for retailers in the sector lies in focusing on products that embody authenticity, quality certifications and a commitment to sustainability. By selecting and promoting Italian excellence from short and controlled supply chains – such as our Parmigiano Reggiano – retailers will be able to ... meet the expectations of an increasingly discerning and knowledgeable customers. This approach strengthens consumer trust and loyalty over time, offering a refined, responsible and distinctive assortment that can adapt to new market trends.”

“Our mission to drive cheese snacking on the back of our nutrient-dense proposition is part of our wider ‘Snack Healthy and Live Fully’ mission,” says Bel UK&I’s Brandman. “We’re going to be working more closely with retailers to help them help their shoppers to better understand the role cheese snacks can play in providing frequent, accessible and convenient opportunities to eat more of the ‘right’ things.”



High-protein dairy represents the single biggest opportunity for retailers in the cheese category in 2026, maintains Lactalis’ Le Norcy-Trott. “Protein has moved from a niche trend to a mainstream expectation, with shoppers actively seeking functional products that deliver clear health benefits without changing everyday habits. Within cheese, products carrying a clear protein claim have surged 184% in value over the past year, adding almost £6m in sales, making it one of the fastest-growing areas of the category¹⁸.

“For retailers, the opportunity lies in ranging and clearly merchandising high-protein dairy as an everyday solution rather than a specialist product.”

As cheddar is the hero ingredient in countless affordable meals, the biggest opportunity for retailers lies in placing cheese at the centre of meal solutions – whether that’s toasties, pasta, jacket potatoes or everyday cooking, says Wyke Farms’ Clothier. “Retailers who connect cheese clearly to these simple, comforting high-value dishes will unlock real growth,” he notes.

At Kerry, given the recent positive

performance of cheese snacking, Southern believes it’s vital retailers continue to develop the category to realise its full growth potential. “One of the most critical growth levers will be ensuring product ranges are in tune with emerging consumer macro trends, such as health & wellness, including the demand for protein and functional foods, while offering greater variety for shoppers,” she says. “Retailers supporting the fastest-growing brands in the market across both back-of-store and food-to-go fixtures will also be critical in enabling the category to power forward and sustain its current growth rates into 2027 and beyond.”

Sources

- ¹ <https://tinyurl.com/5n855p7r>
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- ³⁻⁴ <https://tinyurl.com/bp5dfkyn>
- ⁵ <https://tinyurl.com/4e9um4a6>
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- ⁷⁻⁸ Circana, 52 w/e 27.12.25
- ⁹ Kantar, 52 w/e 28.12.25
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- ¹⁴ Kantar, Cheese Snacking Category Scorecard, 12 w/e Dec 2025
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Tapping the protein trend

- ⁱ Innova, 2025
- ⁱⁱ Calcium, as part of a balanced, varied and healthy diet contributes to normal energy-yielding metabolism, as well as being needed for the maintenance of normal bones, and the normal growth and development of bones in children
- ⁱⁱⁱ The Grocer Vision Webinar: ‘What will healthy eating look like in 2025?’
- ^{iv} Waitrose Food & Drink Report 2025/26
- ^v See 17

Flying the flag for British blue

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Tunworth

↙ Contemporary brand Blacksticks Blue, with its distinctive orange colour and blue bite, is one of Britain's best-known and most versatile blue cheeses. Since launching over 20 years ago, Blacksticks has firmly established itself as a modern British classic with strong recognition among both shoppers and chefs, says Matthew Hall, owner at Butlers Farmhouse Cheeses.

“As the industry looks to differentiate menus and add value for retail customers, named ingredients are playing a growing role – and Blacksticks Blue delivers instant recognition,” he says. “It melts beautifully, and its creamy texture and balanced flavour work just as well in burgers, pies and sausages as they do on a cheeseboard. This versatility helps drive usage occasions and purchase frequency. On-shelf, the brand’s bold packaging, with its clear messaging around quality and provenance, is as fresh today as it was 20-years ago.”



“Blacksticks Blue’s versatility helps to drive usage and purchase frequency”

Across 2026, Blacksticks Blue will continue to be supported through a mix of marketing, digital engagement and strong in-store focus, he adds. “Growing engagement from online creators and influencers is also helping to introduce the brand to new audiences. Heritage, versatility and a confident image offers retailers a dependable brand with broad appeal that proudly flies the flag for British blue.”

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4TH
GENERATION
CHEESEMAKERS

*Source: Circana, All IRI Outlets, Pre-Packed Cheese, Latest 52 weeks to w/e 27th Dec 2025

The cheese snack revival

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Boursin®
Port Salut®
The Laughing Cow®
GoGo squeeZ®

↙ Ninety-five percent¹ of consumers snack daily, with 76% eating two or more snacks per day². Yet 40% feel guilty about it³. However, as eating habits change, snacking can offer a vital nutritional top-up between meals. And as shoppers increasingly focus on snack choice, cheese – with its naturally occurring protein and calcium – can play an important role in supporting energy⁴, satiety and bone health⁵.

“Through our portfolio of blockbuster brands, Bel UK is demonstrating how cheese can balance fun, flavour and nutrition, while driving incremental category growth,” says David Brandman, MD, Bel UK & Ireland.

Babybel is a standout snacking choice, he notes. Already enjoyed by 96% of UK households⁶, cheese is increasingly being chosen for lunchtime, afternoon and evening snacking⁷, and Babybel leads the way as the UK’s No.1 snacking cheese, worth £115.6m and growing at +8.8% in value⁸. Its portion-controlled convenient format fits seamlessly into everyday routines.

An increasingly important factor in snack selection is protein, particularly among Gen Z and Millennials, the UK’s most prolific snackers⁹. “Consumers see protein as a marker of satiety and quality, but they want it from natural sources,” says Brandman. “This insight underpins the success of Babybel Protein, which contains more than 15% more protein per 20g portion than the original and has generated over £1.5m in sales¹⁰ since launch, becoming last year’s No.1 snacking NPD.”

Great things in small packages

Portion control is a key driver of healthier snacking, and both Babybel and The Laughing Cow triangles are ideally suited to meet this need through perfectly portioned, individually wrapped formats, notes Brandman. Building on this, Babybel’s Original and Protein Grab & Go packs, each with two 20g portions are ideal for on-the-go moments or as an easy meal-deal snack. The Laughing Cow Light



“An increasingly important factor in snack selection is protein, particularly among Gen Z and Millennials, the UK’s most prolific snackers⁹”

accounts for 42%⁸ of the brand’s total consumption with each portion containing 23 calories. Innovation continues to fuel relevance, from the launch of Spicy Chilli to a refreshed Dips range, with The Laughing Cow Dip & Crunch now growing at +50.3% in the year to date¹¹.

No-compromise indulgence

Health-focused eating doesn’t have to mean compromising on taste, says Brandman. “This Fibre February, Boursin is encouraging consumers to discover how indulgent flavour can elevate fibre-rich foods, striking a balance between enjoyment and wellbeing,” he notes. “Paired with wholegrain or seeded crackers, crudité or vegetables, Boursin adds depth of flavour that makes healthier choices more appealing.

“Yet shoppers still want moments of indulgence. As the biggest-selling indulgent cheese brand, growing ahead of the category at +9% in value¹², Boursin continues to innovate, most recently launching its Blue Cheese Flavour and bringing a subtle hint of blue to the brand’s signature creaminess. It also acts as a versatile on-trend ingredient in cooking. “With strong brand equity, exciting innovation and marketing-led momentum, Bel UK is well placed to help retailers drive growth by meeting demand for snacks that balance health, indulgence and convenience in the year ahead.”



Source

- ^{1,2} Statista, May 2024
³ European Journal of Nutrition, September 2023
⁴ Calcium contributes to normal energy-yielding metabolism as part of healthy, varied balanced diet
⁵ Calcium contributes to the maintenance of normal bones as part of a healthy, varied and balanced diet
⁶ Cheese consumption per capita per year in kg, 2020-2024
⁷ NIQ Report: Total Cheese Consideration per CO (%), 52 wks to 14.06.25
⁸ Circana, All Outlets, 52 w/e 29.11.25
⁹ Circana SnackTrack 2024
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¹¹ Power BI Volume LA11
¹² Cassiopea, P13, Full year 2025
¹³ Circana All Outlets 52 w/e 27.12.25



Snack healthy live fully

No.1 Snacking
cheese¹



The fastest
growing
dips brand¹



No.1 indulgent
cheese brand¹



Authentic and sustainable Italian taste

DETAILS

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KEY BRANDS

Parmigiano Reggiano

➔ DalterFood Group represents Italian excellence founded on quality, sustainability and authenticity, says Andrea Guidi, general manager. Specialising in the selection, portioning and packaging of both PDO and non-PDO Italian cheeses, the group offers tailored solutions that enhance Italy's culinary tradition, combined with a strong sense of environmental and ethical responsibility, he explains.

At the heart of the offering is Parmigiano Reggiano, produced in the company's two dairies – Colline del Cigarello e Canossa and Colline di Selvapiana e Canossa – located in the heart of Reggio Emilia Apennines. Among the various types of Parmigiano Reggiano, DalterFood Group produces conventional, organic and 'Mountain Product' certified Parmigiano Reggiano, as well as the exclusive 'Solo di Pezzata Rossa Italiana' – made in a single mountain dairy with milk from a single cattle breed and certified both organic and Mountain Product, reflecting its commitment to biodiversity and sustainable farming practices.

Sustainability: tangible results

Sustainability is integrated into every phase and aspect of DalterFood Group's operations, notes Guidi. "This commitment is evident along our Parmigiano Reggiano supply



“Every day, 225 wheels of Parmigiano Reggiano are produced, and over 39 million litres of milk are processed per year, collected from 40 local farms. This fosters local employment and helps preserve the territory's historic and cultural traditions”

chain, which is short, controlled and responsible, with particular attention to animal welfare and supporting local production,” he says. Every day, 225 wheels of Parmigiano Reggiano are produced, and over 39 million litres of milk are processed per year, collected from 40 local farms. This fosters local employment and helps preserve the territory's historic and cultural traditions.

Meanwhile, 99.5% of the company's electricity comes from renewable sources, while solar systems at its three production sites reduce environmental impact and indirect emissions. Packaging has also been converted to recyclable materials for single-serve sachets and single-portion packs, with plans to extend this to its entire range.

DalterFood Group's sustainability commitments also encompass the social sphere as it looks after the wellbeing and growth of its employees through a positive and motivational working environment, and by actively supporting the local community. In fact, the company promotes initiatives that enhance human capital, and supports projects dedicated to young people and vulnerable groups, thereby strengthening ties with the territory and fostering sustainable and inclusive growth for the whole ecosystem.

“In an environment full of new challenges, it's essential to strengthen our commitment to concrete and transparent sustainability,” adds Guidi. “We plan to continue along this path in future, aiming for significant and lasting results that benefit both customers and community.”



PARMIGIANO
REGGIANO

PARMIGIANO REGGIANO: TRADITION BECOMES INNOVATION

From the heart of the **Reggio Emilia Apennines** comes a product of the finest quality. At **our mountain cheese dairies** we follow the artisan method to offer a **complete range in all its different ageing properties.**

In doing this, we always push ourselves one step further, seeking **innovation in tradition**, with a deep commitment to **animal welfare**, partnering with local farmers to promote healthier environments and more respectful farming practices.



DalterFood
Group

Best Italian Cheese Solutions

Find out more at dalterfood.com

Powering cheese snacking

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KEY BRANDS

Strings & Things
Attack a Snak
SMUG Dairy

 Cheese snacking is one of the most dynamic growth areas within grocery, and Kerry Dairy Ireland Consumer Foods sits at the heart of that momentum, driving both category growth and retailer value through its diverse portfolio of brands.

“The cheese snacking category grew over four times faster than total grocery in 2025,” says Victoria Southern, strategy, marketing and innovation director at Kerry Dairy Ireland Consumer Foods. “A key driving factor was the continued success of our much-loved portfolio of brands, including: Cheestrings – the most frequently bought cheese snack¹, Attack A Snak – the fastest-growing brand within the category², and Munch Mix – the most successful snacking NPD of 2025³.”

The snacking opportunity is booming: 91%⁴ of adults now snack daily and 96% practice mindful snacking⁵. These behaviours speak directly to the strengths of real cheese snacks that deliver taste, satisfaction and natural nutrition. “Younger consumers are snacking more regularly than a year ago,” says Southern. “They are drawn to playful and bold formats, textures and flavours – themes guiding our category-defining NPD pipeline.”

Combining fun with nutrition

Across the category, driving variety while presenting clear nutritional advantages can be a challenge for retailers, and leading brands can play a role. Cheestrings remains a trusted lunchbox staple, offering reassurance to families while still having fun. “Cheestrings is a favourite within the food-to-go space, illustrating the role that popular, protein-rich snacks can play in driving meal deal engagement by offering a more balanced choice to shoppers,” notes Southern.

With the cheese snacking portfolio also expanding in back-of-store, the new addition to the Strings & Things stable, Munch Mix, has significantly outperformed other launches within the category in 2025, she adds. “Munch Mix was developed to help parents avoid lunchbox fatigue by



“Younger consumers are snacking more regularly than a year ago, and are drawn to playful and bold formats, textures and flavours”



pairing real cheese with crunchy accompaniments,” she says. “It brings freshness to the fixture while staying rooted in a popular and trusted brand.”

Innovation for success

As adult snacking accounts for almost half of all cheese snacking occasions⁶, the demand for innovative new products that speak to this audience could not be clearer for brands.

“Keeping pace with ever-changing consumer tastes lies at the heart of our NPD,” notes Southern. “Our newest launch, Smug Dairy Cheese & Crunch is a portion-controlled, high-protein snack. At under 150 calories, it caters to those consumers looking for smaller, smarter, high-impact snacks to enjoy throughout the day.

“As we move into 2026, the opportunity for retailers is clear: support innovation that spans all ages, occasions and formats to allow cheese-based snacking to continue doing what it does best – powering the cheese category forwards,” she adds, and concludes: “At Kerry Dairy Ireland Consumer Foods, we are very much looking forward to yet another successful year of helping the category grow.”

Source

¹ Worldpanel by Numerator, Total UK Cheese Snacks, MAT to 28.12.25
² Circana Total UK Cheese Snacks Value & Units % Change vs YA MAT to 27.12.25
³ Circana Total UK Cheese Snacks UROS, Calendar YTD to 27.12.25
⁴ Mintel 2024
⁵ Bord Bia
⁶ Kantar, 52 w/e 29.12.24

GROWING

DAIRY SNACKING THROUGH
GROUNDBREAKING INNOVATION



CRUNCH ME!
MUNCH ME!



HIGH IN PROTEIN

LESS THAN
150
CALORIES



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FEEL SMUG

Indulgence, protein and innovation

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KEY BRANDS

Lindahls Protein
Galbani
Président
Leerdammer
Seriously Spreadable
Seriously Galloway
Orkney

Over the past year, Lactalis UK & Ireland has continued to play a leading role in driving growth across the UK cheese category, with a portfolio that closely reflects how shopper needs are evolving. As consumers balance affordability with added value, functionality and quality, Lactalis' brands have benefited from clear positioning, sustained investment and a strong innovation pipeline.

One of the most significant growth drivers in cheese has been protein-led innovation – now a mainstream expectation rather than a niche trend, notes group marketing director Heloise Le Norcy-Trott. Products carrying a clear protein claim saw a 184% surge in value over the past year, adding almost £6m to the category¹, with growth driven by rapid innovation, strong shopper appetite for new formats, and an increase in consumption occasions across breakfast, snacking and food-to-go. “As the UK’s only protein dairy brand spanning cheese, milk, yoghurts and desserts, Lindahls Protein – now worth £49m RSV² – is uniquely positioned to anchor this growth, helping retailers unlock incremental value, frequency and trade-up across multiple everyday occasions,” she says.

Alongside functional nutrition, premium and indulgent cheeses have continued to perform strongly. “Galbani



“One of the most significant growth drivers in cheese has been protein-led innovation – now a mainstream expectation rather than a niche trend. Products carrying a clear protein claim saw a 184% surge in value over the past year, adding almost £6m to the category¹”

has benefited from sustained demand for fresh Italian cheeses, as shoppers increasingly seek restaurant-quality experiences at home,” reveals Le Norcy-Trott. “Galbani Burrata remains the leading branded performer in the category, now accounting for more than a third of the total burrata market³. Its versatility across salads, pasta dishes and simple sharing occasions has made it a reliable trade-up option.”

Président has also driven growth by combining its premium positioning with innovation and major brand investment. In 2025, the brand delivered its biggest-ever ‘Enjoy Paris’ campaign, featuring high-impact ATL ads, limited-edition packs, digital engagement and standout merchandising.

Meanwhile, Lactalis has also invested heavily in its everyday brands to maintain visibility and relevance. Seriously Spreadable returned to TV and VOD, with a light-hearted campaign supporting its position as the No.1 processed cheese spread brand by value, penetration and loyalty⁴. And Leerdammer’s ‘Deliciously Different’ campaign used humour and strong product insight to drive trial, underpinning momentum in the sliced cheese segment.

Lactalis enters 2026 with a clear view on where category growth is heading, says Le Norcy-Trott. “By translating consumer insight into focused, purpose-led NPd, and supporting this with continued marketing investment and clear in-store execution, Lactalis is well positioned to help retailers drive value while keeping its brands visible, relevant and front of mind.”



Source

¹ Circana, 52 w/e 06.09.25
² Kantar, 52 w/e 10.08.25
³ Circana, 52 w/e 27.12.25

NEW

LINDAHL'S PROTEIN



GOOD MOVE

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Trade Communications
Manager

KEY BRANDS

Dairylea
Philadelphia

Shoppers continue to gravitate towards brands that deliver familiarity, consistency and quality. Cheese remains a staple of the British shopping basket, and few names are as firmly established as Dairylea and Philadelphia. The two bring together more than 140 years of combined expertise in crafting creamy, soft cheeses, spreads and snacks. That heritage has helped both brands earn shopper trust, which is underpinned by a proven ability to deliver great taste and reliable quality time after time.

“Our long-standing success comes down to understanding what shoppers value most in the cheese fixture,” says Susan Nash, trade communications manager at Mondelez International.

Nothing beats the original

Philadelphia, the UK’s No.1 cream cheese brand¹, recently rebranded its extra low-fat Philadelphia to Philadelphia Protein, tapping into growing shopper demand for high protein. “Shoppers see protein as a key purchase driver, and calling this ingredient out on-pack allows us to communicate this product’s quality credentials,” says Nash.

While Original Philadelphia cream cheese is the top category seller, flavours help to recruit new shoppers, she notes. The current range includes Sweet Chilli, Chives, Salmon, and Garlic & Herb, and segment innovation will continue to be a focus for the brand this year.

The snacking staple

As the UK’s No.1 snacking kit brand with 67.6% share², Dairylea is a staple of the lunchbox, says Nash. With products across the snacking, spreads



“Our long-standing success comes down to understanding what consumers want from the cheese fixture”

& portions and slices sub-sectors, the brand meets a range of consumer needs. “Dairylea has been an iconic fridge staple since 1950,” she adds.

Dairylea Dunkers is growing +3% value year on year³ while Dairylea Lunchers is the No.1 product in snacking kits⁴, growing +12.6% in value sales⁵.

Dairylea Triangles, which celebrated its 75th anniversary last year, has also been a shopping list staple for decades. From lunchboxes to after-school and on-the-go snacking occasion, Dairylea offers families flexible options throughout the day.

“Dairylea is a fun brand and, this year, it has some exciting innovation planned, bringing something new to snacking for families,” teases Nash.

‘Spreading’ the word

Philadelphia and Dairylea are investing significantly in marketing activities and promotions that build on 2025’s successful campaign momentum. “These include Dairylea’s ‘Set Them Free with Dairylea’ campaign and a new Dunkers-focused campaign, highlighting those snacking moments that occur every day. Meanwhile, Philadelphia is continuing with an equity campaign, reminding shoppers that it is the trusted brand they know and love,” concludes Nash.



Source

¹ Nielsen 19.04.25 – 52.7% MAT Value Share, Cream cheese in snacks w/e 19.04.25
² Nielsen, Total Coverage, Value Sales L12W –w/e 27.12.25
³ Nielsen, Tot Cov, MAT w/e 27.12.25 vs MAT w/e 28.12.24
⁴ Nielsen, Tot Cov, Snacking Kits, L12W - w/e 27.12.25
⁵ Nielsen, Tot Cov, Snacking Kits, L12 w/e 27.12.25

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FRIEND
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**#1 CREAM
CHEESE BRAND
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* Nielsen, Total Coverage, Value Sales L12W -w/e 27/12/25
** Total Cream Cheese w/c 27th December 2025

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