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The Grocer Guide to...

The Grocer

# Cheese



## Analysis

# Brands begin to fight back

**While own-label has dominated the market in recent years, brands are rallying their forces**



“Isn’t it ironic, don’t you think?” The words of Alanis Morissette keep coming back when you consider some retailers’ controversial decision in recent years to close deli counters, due to what they cited as lack of demand.

Yet, along comes a cost-of-living crisis and, hey-ho, consumers ramp up their interest in at-home entertaining, due to the cost of going out. So, spurred on by ideas from social media and inspired by holiday experiences, they seek out products to create variety in home menus and/or impress their guests. And they discover 101 recipes they never considered previously – but which require that particular cheese from home shores or the continent. But the consultancy element of the deli counters has disappeared. In short, cheeses – and brands in particular –

are making a comeback and multiple retailers could be missing out.

With the cost-of-living crisis, inflation and Brexit impacting how frequently consumers bought cheese, the UK category was off to a slow start in 2024, says Heloise Le Norcy-Trott, group marketing director at Lactalis UK & Ireland. “However, with consumer confidence rising, monetary policy having its desired effect, and shoppers increasingly seeking out versatile and convenient food products, such as cheese, volume sales gradually picked up,” she says. “As a result, the total cheese market is currently worth £3.3bn and growing 2% and 3% in value and volume sales respectively<sup>1</sup>.

“Private-label represents the largest share of the market (£1.9bn), while branded cheese is worth £1.4bn.

However, despite its share, branded cheese is outperforming private label, growing 4% in value and 5% in volume sales, vs 1% and 2%<sup>2</sup>,” she notes.

Branded cheese sales have bounced back during the past year following a few years of “strong performance” from own-label, agrees Rich Clothier, managing director at Wyke Farms. “We have seen considerable success with our Ivy’s Reserve brand, as shoppers have increasingly been buying into quality, provenance and sustainability, he says. “Some of this brand bounce-back could be attributed to people buying more special cheese items to dine at home with friends.

“Increasingly, as consumer budgets tighten, it will be more important to differentiate brands from own-label. Brands without real depth – ie



## Contents

<b>Wyke Farms</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Emphasising its English heritage, tradition and quality	
<b>Bel UK</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Delivering another year of innovation for its iconic brands	
<b>Clawson Farms</b> .....	<b>10</b>
Showing why Stilton is gaining rapid popularity with younger consumers	
<b>Clawson Farms</b> .....	<b>11</b>
Putting plenty of personality into wax-covered Truckle cheeses	
<b>DalterFood Group</b> .....	<b>12</b>
Focusing on the sustainability and quality of Parmigiano Reggiano	
<b>European Union</b> .....	<b>14</b>
Explaining how EU cheeses can enhance retailers' offerings	
<b>Lactalis UK &amp; Ireland</b> .....	<b>16</b>
Using shopper-favourite brands to accelerate category growth	
<b>Mondelēz International</b> .....	<b>18</b>
Ensuring its favourite cheese brands appeal to all the family	

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promotional vehicles – will struggle more than brands with real points of difference,” he notes.

Brands are definitely back on the menu for British shoppers, says Bel UK&I managing director David Brandman. “For instance, Babybel continues to lead the snacking sector, boasting a 25% share<sup>3</sup> and sales nearly six times those of private-label snacking cheeses<sup>4</sup>. The shift sees shoppers putting the past couple of economically tough years behind them and looking to trade up from own-label, with flavour a strong purchase driver,” he notes.

Mondelēz International trade communications manager Susan Nash says that, amid ongoing economic uncertainty, consumers look for trusted brands in key categories such as cheese to provide familiarity and

consistency. As an example, she points to Dairylea Triangles, which have been “a shopping list staple for decades” and will celebrate their 75th anniversary this year. Elsewhere, she notes, Philadelphia’s first product dates back to 1880, yet the brand is still growing at 7.5% year on year<sup>5</sup> and is the UK’s No.1 cream cheese brand<sup>6</sup>.

DalterFood Group, which has been operating in the dairy sector for over 45 years, says it has become a reference point in the production of private-label cheeses. “By listening to our customers, we offer a wide range of cheeses that can be customised in terms of cut, packaging and recipe,” it says. “As regards the UK market, we supply the major retail chains.”

The company points to fresh cheeses such as mozzarella and ricotta again

amongst the most popular products appreciated by UK consumers, and representing 42.3% of all Italian cheese imported into the country<sup>7</sup>. Italian Protected Denomination of Origin (PDO) cheeses, such as Parmigiano Reggiano, Grana Padano, Pecorino Romano – and grated cheeses account for 31% of the entire foreign-made cheese market<sup>8</sup>, it adds.

“The UK is the home of own-label, which dominates the market, but it is understandable that brands are also now making their mark,” it says. “Thanks to our market knowledge and UK subsidiary, Dalter UK, we can offer customers who wish to expand their private-label range, high-quality and sustainable cheeses that meet consumer preferences.”

However, the cheese category is not

## Analysis

without its challenges. Both Wyke Farms and DalterFood point to various macro factors affecting cheese supply, including rises in milk prices, raw materials and labour costs “which have driven all manufacturing costs up, but especially food production”, says Clothier. “Latterly, we have seen drastic increases in the costs of employing people through government changes to National Insurance thresholds and rates announced in the Budget, it says. “This, combined with background labour inflation will create the need for dairy businesses to increase prices across the board. These changes affect the whole supply chain, from the farmers, raw milk suppliers, manufacturers and especially our retail customers. This will be a challenge that we will all have to work together to try to recover from the markets. This is a big blow to the sector when we are already seeing strong wage inflation and other environmental costs.”

The increase in all major cost items – such as milk, packaging materials, transportation and energy – has had a very heavy impact on our group as well as on all other operators in the industry, agrees DalterFood. “The grocery sector has been going through a period of great turbulence since the Covid pandemic due to global imbalances: the war in Ukraine, ongoing climate change, and the increase in incidences of health scares (both animal and human) have caused repeated negative impacts on product supplies.

“In recent years, we have worked hard to ensure the robustness of our supply chain and maintain a high standard of service,” it adds. “We cope with this situation by continuously engaging with our suppliers and partners, with whom there is an open dialogue and great cooperation.”

### Seeking out flavours and specialities

During Covid, the supermarkets quickly pivoted to stocking more basic block cheeses as consumers reduced their shopping trips and were eating more at home, says Patrick McGuigan, cheese advisor to the EU’s ‘More Than Only Food and Drink Campaign’. “It has taken them a while to pivot back to premium cheeses, but there has been strong growth in this area, with retailers stocking wider ranges of British and EU cheeses.”

With consumers staying in as



economic challenges drive up restaurant prices, they are choosing cheese as an affordable luxury, he says. “There’s an opportunity for supermarkets to promote more lines of geographically protected cheese as with PDO and Protected Geographical Indication (PGI),” he says. “Many consumers recognise these cheeses from their holidays and seek to recreate the gastronomic experiences at home.

“It is encouraging to see British retailers dedicating more shelf space to cheeses at different stages of maturation – such as two-year-old versions of France’s Comté PDO and

“It is encouraging to see British retailers dedicating more shelf space to cheeses at different stages of maturation”

longer-aged ‘curado’ cheeses under Spain’s Queso Manchego PDO.”

When it comes to flavours, there is a growing appetite for truffle, adds McGuigan. “Across the major retailers there are examples of real Italian truffle pieces and truffle flavours added to a range of European cheeses such as French Brie, Gouda Holland PGI from the Netherlands and Italian Pecorino, as well as in a range of sheep and ewe’s milk cheeses,” he notes.

Cheese products combined with naturally herbaceous flavours like chive, onion, garlic, truffle and dill are increasing in popularity, and more specific flavours like provolone, Gouda and cheddar are satisfying consumer demand, says Lactalis’ Le Norcy-Trott. That is why, in September, we expanded our Seriously Spreadable range with the launch of Seriously Spreadable Black Pepper, bringing a new and irresistible offering to the cheese spreads category.”

# Affordable indulgence and convenience



Affordable indulgence and better-quality cheeses are cited by EU advisor McGuigan as being key drivers in the UK market this year. Premium cheeses provide a big opportunity for retailers to offer affordable indulgence, he says. “Over the Christmas period... we saw a rise in speciality cheeseboards in supermarket premium ranges – which often included well-established and lesser-known EU cheeses. Throughout the rest of the year these ready-made cheeseboards tap into the trend for convenient yet indulgent at-home experiences.”

Lactalis’ Le Norcy-

Trott agrees that premiumisation is a key trend, which encouraged the company to launch Président Extra Creamy Brie in September last year. With more people opting for big nights in and indulging in cheese<sup>i</sup>, this offers an affordable yet luxurious option for at-home consumption with friends and family,” she says. “Its launch follows consumer research which found that brie shoppers are willing to pay extra for brie made in France (49%) and extra creamy brie (48%)<sup>ii</sup>.”

A knock-on effect from the Covid lockdowns are specialised home dining and baking,

where people look for higher-quality foods and wine to enjoy with friends at home, due to the increased cost of eating out, says Wyke Farms’ Clothier. “Cheese is also seeing a boost and renewed interest as people are starting to understand the value of lower sugar and higher protein-type diets.”

For Bel UK&I, latest research<sup>iii</sup> shows the majority of adults believe adding cheese, especially high-quality cheese, enhances the taste and specialness of a dish, notes Brandman. So, its Boursin brand appeals to shoppers looking for a little indulgence, he says.

DalterFood points to convenience as

a major driving factor as “modern and hectic lifestyles increase the attention on practicality and ready meals”. The group offers cheeses in various cuts and packaging suitable to enhance the flavour of a ready meal, such as single-serve packets of Parmigiano Reggiano shavings or single-serve packets of Grana Padano to enhance different meals.

In addition, the number of consumers pursuing a vegetarian lifestyle is steadily growing, it says. As such, it offers several cheeses suitable for this sector, including Spinoro, a 100% Italian-aged cheese made with a microbial coagulant.

The Black Pepper flavour tested very well among consumers, with 76% finding it to be very appealing or appealing<sup>9</sup>, she notes.

The permanent launch of Boursin Truffle is testament to the fact that consumers are seeking out more speciality and flavoured cheeses, says Bel UK&I’s Brandman. “It became an instant hit with shoppers: in the 12 weeks from launch as a limited edition, sales increased exponentially, hitting nearly £292k<sup>10</sup> with 133,360 units sold, making it the best-performing limited edition Boursin SKU to date.”

People are looking for stronger, authentic flavours, which fits with our Ivy’s Vintage Reserve and Ivy’s Somerset Red, both showing 20% YoY growth<sup>11</sup> across the world since our rebranding, says Wyke Farms’ Clothier.

Consumers are increasingly looking for cheeses that offer new taste experiences without compromising on quality, observes DalterFood. “Italian

cheese is celebrated worldwide for its remarkable diversity and rich flavours.”

## What does health mean in cheese?

Research<sup>12</sup> suggests that health concerns limit cheese consumption among 35% of consumers, which Bel UK&I believes underlines the need for healthier products, says Brandman. This also points to purposeful snacking as a key consumer trend and, at the same time, plant-based products – for both vegans and flexitarians – play an increasing role, he notes.

Healthier alternatives will continue to see growth, but to truly maximise the opportunity, we need to define what ‘healthy’ means, says Lactalis’ Le Norcy-Trott. “The most common answers from shoppers as to what they are looking for include a reduction in stabilisers and preservatives (60%), emphasis on calcium (57%) and protein (54%)<sup>13</sup>. Cheese is packed full of essential dairy nutrients, such as

protein, with it providing 15% of our daily requirement<sup>14</sup>,” she says.

Current health advice warning against ultra processed foods (UPF) could be beneficial to the cheese category, given the majority are made simply, using centuries-old production methods, says EU advisor McGuigan. “From a nutritional aspect, dairy cheese is already high in protein, calcium and tastes good – and in modest amounts can be enjoyed as part of a healthy diet. Plant-based alternatives do not have the same levels of protein or calcium, include less familiar ingredients and require more processing than dairy,” he notes.

## Achieving greater sustainability

“Consumers are increasingly concerned about the environmental impact of their purchases. We are committed to developing more sustainable packaging for our brands, which is why we introduced new flow-wrap packaging

Analysis



# If you had one message...

... to give to retailers, what would that be?

**Mondelez:** “Don’t miss out on staple sales; ensure your cheese range includes iconic favourites and the latest innovation from established category leaders.”

**Lactalis:** “We expect further recovery in market share for branded cheese as pressures on shopper spending ease. As part of this, embracing innovation to drive excitement back into the category in 2025 will be paramount.

Whether alternative flavours or formats, NPD allows brands to differentiate themselves. So, the next 12 months is an exciting opportunity for everyone involved to seize momentum, innovate and grow the UK cheese market.”

**EU:** “Cross-sell more. It’s a missed opportunity that there are rarely crackers, wine or chutneys near cheeses in supermarkets. I’d also recommend better merchandising with shelf-edge labels giving descriptions of

the cheese and usage suggestions, such as ‘Delicious paired with champagne’ or ‘Delicious melted on a burger’ – my top tip for Taleggio PDO.”

**Bel UK&I:** “Top brands bring shoppers to the category with their innovation, NPD and huge marketing budgets. That’s why it’s important to ensure top sellers are given plenty of chiller space in line with their rate of sale and category position.”

**Wyke Farms:** “Keep it real, keep it natural, keep it relevant.”

for Seriously and Galloway block cheddars, which use 40% less plastic,” says Lactalis’ Le Norcy-Trott. “And with consumers cutting down on the amount of single-use plastic they use, and increasingly recycling at home, our Seriously Slices Cheddar and Galloway Slices Cheddar recyclable trays contain 30% recycled material.”

Consumers are becoming more conscious of the sustainability aspects of the products they purchase, which is why the retail sector is keen on promoting products from short, transparent and integrated supply chains, says DalterFood. “The UK market, in addition to being one of the main importers of Italian cheeses<sup>16</sup>, is very sensitive to sustainability issues,” it notes, adding that it maintains full control of the entire supply chain for its flagship Parmigiano Reggiano, from milk collection, to production in mountain dairies all the way to distribution in various markets, it adds.

### Recipe inspiration and social media

Social media is certainly a core part of the marketing mix for established household favourite brands, says Mondelez’s Nash. “Philadelphia rolled

out a new campaign over the festive season last year, for example, which – as well as a festive pack design and TV advertising – featured social and digital activations to reach all types of consumers.

TikTok and other social media will increasingly impact people’s cheese tastes and usage, says Lactalis’ Le Norcy-Trott. “With the demand for affordable indulgence driving the category, we can expect a blurring of the distinction between speciality, every day and recipe cheese, with cheese lovers ‘mixing it up’ with treats like brie on toast.

Social media is responsible for encouraging a new wave of creativity in cooking, with a growing range of recipes available online, she adds. “This highlights the versatility and convenience of cheese, ultimately driving frequency of purchase. It also grows the market, as it unlocks new customers by highlighting to shoppers the recipe potential for cheese and the varieties available. So, we can expect greater creativity in its use in planned dishes, and in using up leftover cheese.”

Hot eating cheeses will continue to be popular this year and the diversity of

cheese from the EU lends itself well to the trend, since historically, many have been used in cooking, says EU advisor McGuigan. Retailers are responding to this and we are seeing plenty of innovation in the hot cheese category, with examples including Baking Burrata with ‘Nduja and Ciabatta Crumb and Baking Camembert with Italian truffle and hot honey.

Social media, especially TikTok, drives recipe trends and is definitely important in the cheese category, thanks to the influencers sharing new ways to eat cheese, he adds. “The Feta PDO pasta bake trend received more than 750 million views and reportedly helped increase sales of block Feta PDO by 300%<sup>15</sup>, demonstrating the impact that viral trends can have on the category.”

### Sources

- <sup>12</sup>IRI, Value Sales, All Outlets and online, excl discounters, 52 w/e 23.12.24
- <sup>3</sup>IRI, Total Grocery & Discounters, 52 w/e 30.11.24
- <sup>5</sup>Nielsen, Total Coverage incl Discounters, Value, MAT w/c 10.08.24
- <sup>6</sup>Nielsen, Total Coverage incl Discounters, w/e 05.10.24
- <sup>7</sup>CLAL, Jan-Sept 2024
- <sup>9</sup>OnePulse, September 2022
- <sup>10</sup>IRI, Total incl Discounters, Value, w/e 20.04.23
- <sup>11</sup>Wyke Farms internal sales data
- <sup>12</sup>Mintel, Cheese – UK, 2024
- <sup>13</sup><sup>14</sup>Dairy UK
- <sup>15</sup><https://tinyurl.com/3fnmajxa>

### Key drivers

- <sup>1</sup>CGA, New Industry Report, 2023
- <sup>11</sup>Toluna research, Nov 2023
- <sup>11</sup>See 12

# Wyke: a slice of England

## DETAILS

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## KEY BRANDS

**Wyke Farms**  
**Ivy's Reserve**

“Wyke Farms is a values-led, family-run business with a lot to be proud of, including our 160-year-old traditional family recipe, our ‘Green By Nature’ ethos and practices, our self-generated renewable energy, our geographical location – just 10 miles from the village of Cheddar where people have been crafting cheese for centuries – and the skill and expertise passed through the generations of our family,” says Rich Clothier, 3rd generation cheese maker and managing director. “Most recently we are proud to unveil our new branding and packaging that reaffirms our position as ‘England’s Cheddar Makers’ and showcases our commitment to the values that matter to us: quality, sustainability, and the tradition of the English countryside.”

This rebrand communicates Wyke Farms’ rich heritage while positioning it for future growth across our markets, he notes. “At the heart of the new look, a striking logo reaffirms our leading global position as ‘England’s Cheddar Makers’ and communicates the company’s proud English heritage and expertise in cheddar production. It also includes the founding date ‘1861’, highlighting our longstanding tradition of cheese-making excellence, as well as including our favourable location – ‘Champflower, Somerset’.”

Visual elements also bring the brand’s core values to life, adds Clothier. “Our packaging now includes a kingfisher and a fox, symbolising our deep connection to nature; the wyvern from the Somerset crest, representing our pride in English cheesemaking traditions; and a ferret, referencing a family story that highlights our personal touch. These icons reflect the care and craft that four generations of the Clothier family have poured into our farmhouse cheddar and butter.

“Above all, the brand now accurately represents the work we do here at Wyke Farms – doing things the right way, the way they should be done – naturally.”

The company’s new butter dairy provides freshly churned farmhouse butter with an extended shelf life, he reveals. “Ranging from unsalted, salted, sea salt and whey to sweet



“We are proud to unveil our new branding and packaging that reaffirms our position as ‘England’s Cheddar Makers’ and showcases our commitment to the values that matter to us: quality, sustainability, and the tradition of the English countryside”

cream butters, all are still made to Grandmother Ivy’s farmhouse recipes and are winning fans across the world.

“We’ve recently started work on our new cheese dairy to sustain the strong sales of our Ivy’s Reserve Vintage Cheddar and Ivy’s Reserve Somerset Red Cheese – both launched last year and gaining global popularity. The iconic design of Ivy’s outstanding vintage cheddar – with a full roundness of flavour with a crunch on the end – makes it stand out in the fixture. Ivy’s Somerset Red is bursting with creaminess, rounded off with a mellow nuttiness and savoury tones.

“We will support our brands throughout 2025 and beyond with multi-platform marketing campaigns.

“At Wyke Farms, we’re committed to our core values while adapting to meet the evolving needs of our customers. We’re not just making cheese – we’re crafting a legacy that honours our past and shapes our future.”

# Growing successful icons

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GoGo squeezeZ®)

**KEY BRANDS**

**Babybel®**  
**Boursin®**  
**Port Salut®**  
**The Laughing Cow®**  
**Nurishh®**  
**GoGo squeezeZ®**

Bel UK is on a mission to deliver blockbuster cheese brands backed by another year of innovation, and a focus on healthier<sup>1</sup>, responsible snacking, all underpinned by industry-leading campaigns, says the company.

Building on 2024's success, which saw Bel's iconic household names – including Boursin, Babybel and The Laughing Cow – hit sales of £166m<sup>2</sup> on the back of growth some 3x faster than the total cheese category<sup>3</sup>, it's set to be another milestone year, it notes.

Brand wins included Babybel, the No.1 cheese snacking brand, breaking the £100m sales barrier for the first time, taking its brand value to £102.7m – a value and volume increase of 6.8% and 5.5% respectively<sup>4</sup>. Boursin, the biggest-selling indulgent cheese brand, reached sales of £29m, with value gains of 7.8% and volume sales rising by 6.2%<sup>5</sup>.

**Innovative flavours and formats**

2024 was Bel UK's biggest year of innovation to date. Highlights included the permanent addition of Boursin Truffle to the Boursin portfolio, limited-edition Boursin flavours, Boursin Minis, and the much anticipated festive return of Maxi Babybel – the 200g and 10x bigger version of Mini Babybel.

For flexitarian shoppers looking to complement their diet with more plant-based choices, new Boursin Plant-Based joined Bel UK's plant-based portfolio. "With a superior taste and product texture, it is anticipated to persuade the 58% of shoppers who rarely, or never, buy plant-based alternatives to cheese<sup>6</sup>, as well as active flexitarian shoppers looking for flavour inspiration, to give it a try," notes Bel UK. "A fusion of garlic, parsley and chives ensures it is the perfectly creamy, plant-based alternative to cheese, and consumers<sup>7</sup> tell us it tastes just as good as the dairy version of Boursin. Stand by for more trend-led NPD."

**Purposeful snacking**

Babybel is already the top-selling cheese snacking brand<sup>8</sup>, with shoppers loving its simple portioned format, notes the company. The Laughing Cow



“2024 was Bel UK's biggest year of innovation to date. Highlights included the permanent addition of Boursin Truffle and the festive return of Maxi Babybel”



is the UK's No.1 cheese spread portion brand, worth £23.4m<sup>9</sup>, with 61% of its total consumption coming from its Light range<sup>10</sup>. "Responsible consumption will continue to be at the heart of Bel UK's business to ensure it aligns with evolving consumer expectations of smarter, healthier, portion-controlled snacking solutions, with a focus on cheese as a good source of protein," adds Bel UK.

**Industry-leading campaigns**

2025 will continue stand-out support for Bel UK's brands. Last year, Babybel's Summer of Sports encouraged people to get active while supporting grassroots sports clubs via a fully integrated 'Let the goodness begin' campaign, which included dramatic 3D billboards. It also celebrated 25 years of partnering with Comic Relief.

And, building on the success of Boursin's summer campaign, Christmas saw the launch of a brand new creative platform – 'Extraordinary begins with Boursin'. This included a partnership with the Food Network across its festive schedule, TV and extraordinary out-of-home executions including traffic-stopping 3D charcuterie billboards.

**Source**

<sup>1</sup> Mini Babybel Original and Light contain a good source of protein, which as part of a varied, balanced and healthy diet contributes to the maintenance of normal bones.  
<sup>2</sup> IRI, Total Grocery + Discounters, 52 w/e 30.11.24  
<sup>3</sup> IRI, Total Cheese 52 w/e 30.11.24 [6% value growth compared to 1.8% total category growth]  
<sup>4</sup> IRI, Total Grocery + Discounters, 52 w/e 28.12.24  
<sup>5</sup> Mintel, Winning with Plants Study, 2023  
<sup>6</sup> Bel Consumer testing 2023, Cheese & Plant Based Buyers  
<sup>7</sup> IRI, Total Grocery + Discounters, 52 w/e 28.12.24  
<sup>8</sup> IRI, Total Grocery + Discounters, 52 w/e 30.11.24  
<sup>9</sup> IRI, All Outlets, Volume Sales, 52 w/e 23.03.24





# GROW YOUR SALES



## No.1

indulgence  
cheese brand<sup>1</sup>



## No.1

cheese snack  
brand<sup>1</sup>



## No.1

cheese spread  
triangles brand<sup>1</sup>



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1 - IRI, Total Market, Value Sales 52 w/e 28.12.2024



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# Wider audience for blue cheese

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**KEY BRANDS**

**Silton**  
– Blue  
– Mature Blue  
– White  
– Blue Shropshire  
– Blue Stilton Slices

**Source**  
<sup>1,2</sup> Kantar, 52 w/e 29.12.24  
<sup>3</sup> Recognised by the International Cheese & Dairy Awards in 2022 as the best cheese of over 4,000 internationally

Blue cheese, particularly, Stilton has surged in popularity this year with younger consumers, says cheesemaker Clawson Farms. In the whole of the British Blue sector, value sales are up 7%, adding £4m in the last 52 weeks<sup>1</sup>. In particular, British Blues have also outperformed both the wider blue cheese category (+4% value, YoY) and the total cheese market (+2% value, YoY)<sup>2</sup>. The recovery is down to several factors including younger people embracing the artisanal quality and unique taste of stilton, and blue cheese shoppers switching their spend from continental to British Blues.

MD Bill Mathieson also attributes stilton's rising popularity to the younger generation's adventurous palate, as well as influencer creativity; TikTok recipes include salads, burgers and even cocktails to encourage more consumption of blue cheese, he says.

Another product driving growth in the category is Shropshire Blue, and



“We’ve seen a surge of interest in our Golden Blue, both in the UK and in export markets”

Clawson Farms has added its award-winning<sup>3</sup> 1912 Golden Blue. With mellow blue undertones, a rich orange colour and distinctive blue veining, this creamy cheese is an ideal introduction to blue, says Mathieson. “We’ve seen a surge of interest in our Golden Blue both in the UK and export markets, and we’re excited to introduce new cheese lovers to the expanded 1912 range.”



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▲ OTHER BRITISH BLUES (INCLUDING GOLDEN BLUE) ARE THE GROWTH ENGINE OF THE TOTAL BLUE CHEESE SECTOR (VALUE +24%, PACKS +20% YOY)

▲ STILTON IS GROWING AND BRINGING NEW CONSUMERS INTO BLUE CHEESE

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# Injecting personality into truckles

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## KEY BRANDS

### Truckles

- Captain Bulldog
- Truffle Seeker
- Dormouse's Delight
- Castaway
- Gunpowder
- Wizard's Fire

Clawson Farms has launched an innovative range of six new wax truckles, drawing on its 100-year history as a farming co-operative and master cheesemaker. The range aims to disrupt the growing and competitive category by combining punchy characterful branding with well-loved flavours, elevated by using premium ingredients or adding a twist.

The six products, from savoury to sweet, draw on Clawson's long history of cheesemaking and expertise in pairing and blending – all while injecting innovation and personality into the category. The company uses a wider range of cheese bases than most truckle ranges, including premium Cheddars, Red Leicester and Wensleydales. Individual cheeses include Captain Bulldog, a premium vintage cheddar championed by the illustrated character Bertie; Truffle Seeker, a truffle-laced cheddar with sweet honey, represented by foraging pig Fred; and Dormouse's



“There is a real desire for elevated flavours and distinct branding in truckles”

Delight, a tasty blend of Wensleydale, fruity cranberry, sweet elderflower and orange marmalade.

“There is a real desire for elevated flavours and distinct branding for truckle cheeses, particularly in delis and farm shops” says Clawson Farms MD Bill Mathieson. “We’re bringing something original in terms of taste and premium in terms of quality.”

## CHEESES OF CHARACTER (WITH CHARACTERS)

Introducing Clawson Farms deliciously characterful cheeses. A flavour packed range of six truckles each made from premium ingredients and represented by a unique personality.

For more information please call 01664 822332 or email [enquiries@clawson.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@clawson.co.uk)

[www.clawsonfarms.co.uk](http://www.clawsonfarms.co.uk)



# Quality, sustainability and tradition

## DETAILS

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## KEY CONTACTS

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Business Development  
Manager, Dalter UK Ltd

## KEY PRODUCTS

**Parmigiano Reggiano**

➔ DalterFood Group is a prime example of excellence, sustainability, and authentic Italian taste, says Andrea Guidi, general manager at the company. “With extensive experience in the selection, portioning and packaging of the best PDO and non-PDO Italian cheeses, our mission is to offer tailored solutions that reflect Italy’s culinary traditions while promoting environmental and ethical responsibility,” he notes.

At the core of the group’s portfolio is Parmigiano Reggiano, a symbol of its commitment to quality and sustainability, he says. “Produced in two proprietary mountain dairies, this exceptional cheese is the result of a controlled, integrated and sustainable supply chain. The milk is sourced from 40 local farms, ensuring high quality and full traceability of the milk.”

DalterFood Group offers a diverse variety of Parmigiano Reggiano, each with unique characteristics, including the conventional Parmigiano Reggiano, the Organic variant, and the ‘Mountain Product’ certified Parmigiano Reggiano. One of the group’s most exclusive offerings is the Solo di Pezzata Rossa Italiana Parmigiano Reggiano, produced with milk from a single breed of cattle – the Pezzata Rossa – all sourced from one livestock farm. It is produced exclusively at the proprietary



“Our mission is to offer tailored solutions that reflect Italy’s culinary traditions, while promoting environmental and ethical responsibility”

Colline del Cigarello e Canossa dairy. This product – certified both ‘Organic’ and ‘Mountain Product’ – reflects the group’s commitment to biodiversity and sustainable farming practices.

### A sustainable future

Sustainability is integral to every aspect of DalterFood Group’s operations, starting with its Parmigiano Reggiano supply chain, which is entirely certified for animal welfare according to the Classyfarm protocol. “The group’s long-term commitment to reducing its environmental impact is demonstrated by the introduction of a solar system at the Colline di Selvapiana e Canossa dairy, with the goal of implementing this across all of our production plants to gain self-sufficiency in at least 20% of our energy consumption by 2025,” explains Guidi. “In addition, the group is committed to using more sustainable packaging: in 2022/23 new materials in recyclable plastics have been implemented on our single-serve range, and new solutions for all products are under development.”

Summing it up, Guidi notes: “In a world facing so many challenges, it is increasingly important for us to make a solid commitment to ensuring our business is economically, environmentally and socially sustainable, with projects that enable our products to be better for our customers, but also for the community around us.”



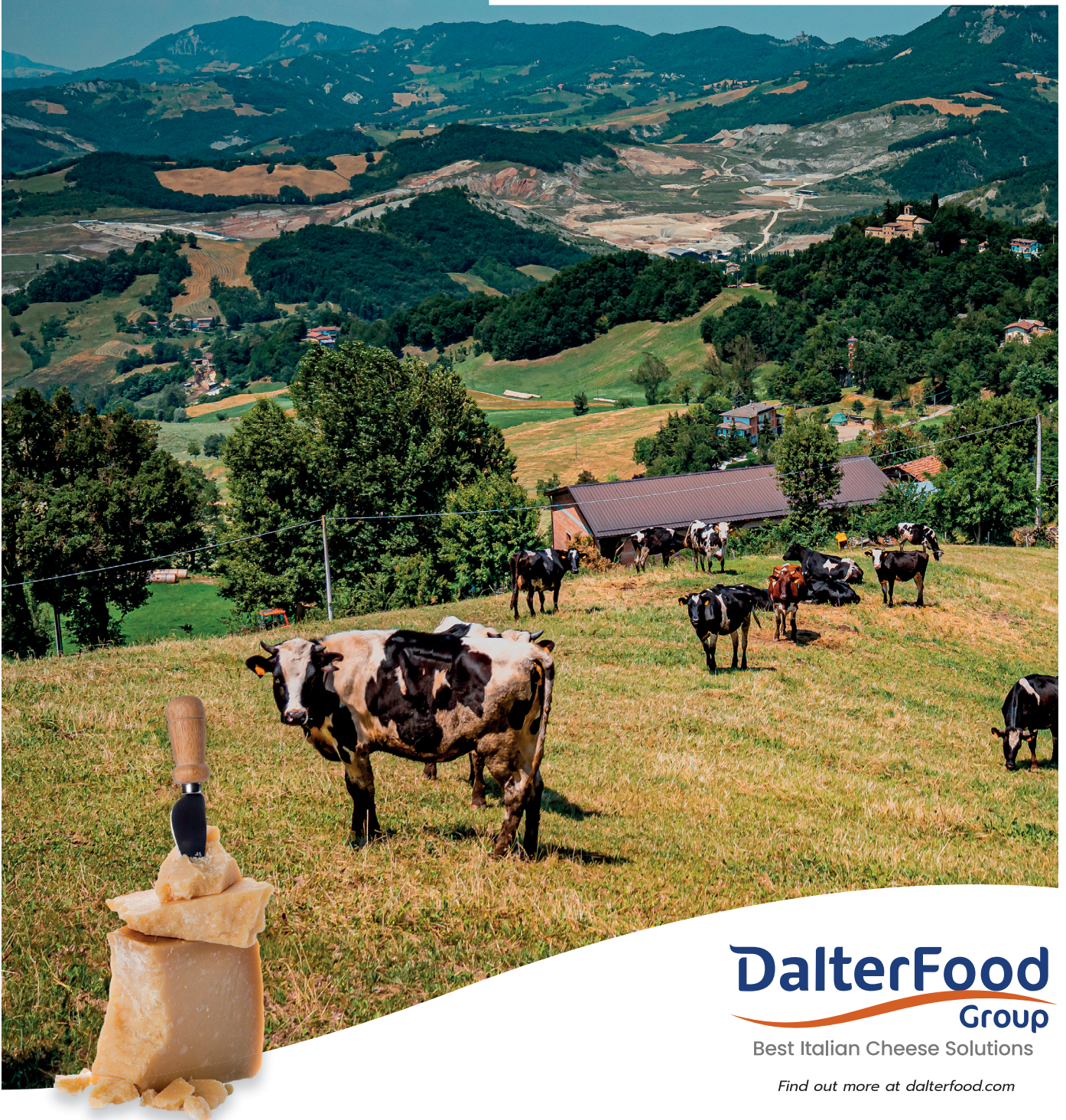


# FRAGRANT, FLAVOURFUL, MOUNTAIN.

## IT IS PARMIGIANO REGGIANO FROM OUR CHEESE FACTORIES

A **superior-quality**, long-matured cheese comes from our mountain cheese factories.

It is **mountain Parmigiano Reggiano** with a deep straw-yellow colour that stands out for its bold flavour and marked fragrance. Coming from milk of cows living in observance of **animal welfare**, our Parmigiano Reggiano is a certified **mountain product** and preserves the authenticity of **artisan production**.



**DalterFood**  
Group

Best Italian Cheese Solutions

Find out more at [dalterfood.com](http://dalterfood.com)

# A taste for cheese

## DETAILS

For more information on the EU's 'More Than Only Food & Drink' campaign, visit <https://enjoy-its-from-europe.campaign.europa.eu/united-kingdom/en>

To find out more about the campaign, contact: [morethanfood\\_uk@agripromotion.eu](mailto:morethanfood_uk@agripromotion.eu)

## WRITTEN BY

**Patrick McGuigan**  
Cheese Advisor to the EU's 'More Than Only Food & Drink' campaign

➔ Retailers should be looking to the EU to satisfy UK consumers' growing taste for new and adventurous cheeses, says Patrick McGuigan, cheese advisor to the EU's 'More Than Only Food & Drink' campaign.

"The rising cost of eating out seems to be leading to increased sales for the premium cheese category, as shoppers seek affordable indulgence to enjoy at home!" he explains. "There is lots of scope for retailers to diversify their offering with new cheeses that appeal to shoppers looking to create an elevated dining experience.

"The European Union (EU) offers hundreds of high-quality Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) cheeses that have stood the test of time. This dedication to craft and authenticity appeals to UK consumers who enjoy seeking out new flavours when holidaying abroad and look to replicate these dishes at home."

Social media is also inspiring people to get creative in the kitchen, providing an opportunity for retailers to show customers how they can use EU cheeses in their cooking, notes McGuigan. "A great example is the viral baked Feta PDO pasta recipe which has inspired more people to cook with Feta PDO from Greece, and led to sales increases of up to 300%<sup>2</sup>," he says.

"Other cheeses, such as Italian Pecorino Romano PDO are also more commonly used in home-cooked pasta dishes."

In addition, consumers are becoming more focused on texture<sup>3</sup>, he says, and EU cheeses provide the 'creamy and smooth' textures people seek in



Feta PDO Greece

“Cheeses from the EU provide an abundance of options for retailers seeking to meet both adventurous tastes and fulfil the demand for more authentic, traditional flavours”

comfort food, with some really exciting cheeses from Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands are coming through.

"Fromage de Herve PDO, one of the most popular cheeses in Belgium, is a cow's milk cheese with a soft, washed-rind, pungent aroma and a creamy texture. The flavour is buttery and tangy with sweet undertones. Another good Belgian cheese is Cabriolait, an organic goat's cheese. The milk for this cheese, from Saanen Alpine cross goats, is delivered to the dairy each day, and its washed rind lends it earthy and caramel, malty notes. These are great examples of how retailers can excite customers with new additions to supermarket shelves."

Greece also has a huge influence on UK tastebuds and, as shoppers become more adventurous with Greek wine, they will look to a wider variety of Greek cheeses as an ideal accompaniment, he notes. "Ripe for discovery are: Cretan Graviera Kritis PDO, a sheep's milk cheese matured for up to two years; and Galotyri PDO, a creamy and spreadable goat and sheep's milk cheese, which is highly-awarded<sup>4</sup>, and is fantastic drizzled with honey, used as a dip or smeared over bread.

"Cheeses from the EU provide an abundance of options for retailers seeking to meet both adventurous tastes and fulfil the demand for more authentic, traditional flavours."



Fromage de Herve PDO Belgium

## Source

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/cost-of-living/ried-aldis-premium-range-nicer-29999159>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/articles/social\\_media\\_trends\\_2021](https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/articles/social_media_trends_2021)

<sup>3</sup> Regina Maisieviciute, principal analyst Mintel Food & Drink (<https://www.foodnavigator.com/Article/2025/01/22/flavour-trends-2025/>)

<sup>4</sup> The cheese was named Great Taste Supreme Champion in 2023

# MORE THAN ONLY FOOD & DRINK

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# Accelerating category growth

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**Heloise Le Norcy-Trott**  
Group Marketing Director

**KEY BRANDS**

**Galbani**  
**Président**  
**Leerdammer**  
**Seriously Spreadable**  
**Seriously**  
**Galloway**  
**Orkney**

As a leading cheese producer in the UK and around the world, Lactalis UK & Ireland has a number of iconic and recognisable household brands in its portfolio, says group marketing director Heloise Le Norcy-Trott. “From Président and Galbani, to Seriously and Leerdammer, our cheeses are firm favourites with consumers,” she says.

Worth £27m, the No.1 French continental cheese brand, Président, has driven growth into the category with a 2% value sales rise year on year (YOY)<sup>1</sup>. The No.1 Italian cheese brand and No.1 mozzarella brand, Galbani, worth £30m, grew by 11% in value sales YOY<sup>2</sup>. Meanwhile, with its unique mild and nutty flavour, Leerdammer, made with authentic Dutch cheese, is now worth £21m and, as the No.1 cheese slices brand in the UK, continues to grow, with value sales up 7%<sup>3</sup>.

Seriously Spreadable, which is the No.1 in value, penetration and loyalty, for processed cheese spreads, is made with award-winning Seriously cheddar and is growing by 8% in value and 16% in volume sales YOY<sup>4</sup>.

“Understanding what drives our customers to purchase is how we ensure our brands stay relevant – and 2025 is set to be no different,” says Le Norcy-Trott. “The key trends impacting shopper behaviour this year are: premiumisation and product provenance; enjoying cheese as a convenient source of protein; the growth in hot products and unusual flavours; as well as using cheese in recipes and as a meat alternative.

“Consumers are increasingly concerned about the environmental impact of their purchases, and



“From **Président and Galbani, to Seriously and Leerdammer, our cheeses are firm favourites with consumers**”

we’re working hard to reduce our environmental footprint, by introducing new packaging, for example, on our Seriously and Galloway block cheddars (now with 40% less plastic).

“In 2024, we tapped into the trend for unusual flavours with the launch of Seriously Spreadable Black Pepper,” she adds. “Made with a delicious blend of 50% award-winning cheddar and a pinch of black pepper to give an extra kick, it is highly versatile and ideal spread on crusty bread, crackers and bagels, or served warm on baked potatoes and stirred into pasta.”

The company’s Président Extra Creamy Brie continues to capitalise on the trend for premiumisation, gaining a new listing in Sainsbury’s in September, she reveals. “This premium brie encourages new usage occasions with its versatility in hot and cold dishes.

“And, this year, Leerdammer’s new ‘Incognito’ TV advert, alongside new-look packaging, taps into its ‘Deliciously Different’ positioning.”

The next 12 months are set to be exciting for the UK dairy market as consumers’ love for cheese continues to thrive, says Le Norcy-Trott. “We’ll harness this growth opportunity by driving investment and innovation into our award-winning brands throughout the year to ensure they stay front of mind with consumers, right up until the point of purchase.”



**Source**

<sup>1,4</sup> IRI, 52 w/e 23 December 2024

<sup>5</sup> IRI, All Outlets 28.10.24



STILL  
**MILD & NUTTY,**  
WITH A FRESH  
**NEW LOOK**  
FOR YOUR **BUTTY**



**No.1\*** BRAND IN NATURAL  
CHEESE SLICES

**LEERDAMMER**

**DELICIOUSLY DIFFERENT**

\*IRI, 52 w/e 23 December 2024

# Favourites for all the family

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Trade Communications  
Manager

**KEY BRANDS**

**Dairylea**  
**Philadelphia**

Amid ongoing economic uncertainty, consumers look for trusted brands to provide familiarity and consistency. Between them, the UK's No.1 processed cheese<sup>1</sup>, Dairylea, and Philadelphia – the No.1 cream cheese brand<sup>2</sup> – have over 170 years' experience in crafting creamy soft cheese, spreads and snacks.

“Dairylea Triangles have been a shopping list staple for decades,” says Susan Nash, trade communications manager at brand owner Mondelez International. “In fact, we are looking forward to celebrating this iconic snack's 75th anniversary milestone in 2025. Elsewhere, Philadelphia's first product dates back to 1880 yet the brand is still growing at 7.5%<sup>3</sup> year-on-year – highlighting its established position in the nation's fridges. Families have loved and trusted our cheese brands to deliver good-value, delicious snacks for generations – and can continue to do so in the future.”

**Winning at mealtimes... and beyond**

The versatility of both Philadelphia and Dairylea makes these brands an essential part of any retailer's range, says Nash. “Shoppers can enjoy Philadelphia Original's delicious soft white cheese by itself or paired with a multitude of enticing accompaniments. And Dairylea – with products in the spreads & portions, slices and snacking segments – meets a range of consumer needs and occasions.

“Both brands will invest significantly in marketing activities in 2025,” she reveals. “Dairylea's ‘Set Them Free with



“Families have loved and trusted our cheese brands to deliver good-value, delicious snacks for generations – and can continue to do so in the future”

Dairylea's campaign, celebrates letting kids be kids, to reach new and existing shoppers and help retailers drive sales in the cheese category. Meanwhile, Philadelphia's ‘You've Got a Friend in Philly' campaign inspires consumers to spread friendship around them. Both brands tap into occasions such as lunchboxes, brunch, seasonal hosting and family days out, offering year-round opportunities for retailers.”

**Plant-based power for your chillers**

Many consumers continue to look for plant-based alternatives to their favourite cheese snacks, and last year, Mondelez International responded with new Dairylea Plant-Based Dunkers, adds Nash. “Bursting with the well-loved taste of Dairylea in a creamy plant-based dip, the new snack has no added preservatives or colourings and is a great source of calcium, making it an ideal alternative for shoppers to enjoy on-the-go or at home,” she says.

“Philadelphia Plant Based combines oats and almonds into a delicious and creamy spread, seeking to appeal to younger adult shoppers following flexitarian lifestyles. The brand has quickly become the UK's No.1 soft cheese alternative<sup>4</sup>, with a 37% repeat rate<sup>5</sup> demonstrating its ability to attract and win over plant-based consumers.



**Source**

<sup>1</sup> Nielsen IQ, Total Processed Cheese, Total Coverage, 52 w/e data to 28.12.24  
<sup>2</sup> Nielsen, Total Coverage incl Discounters w/e 05.10.24  
<sup>3</sup> Nielsen, Total Coverage incl Discounters, MAT Value, w/c 10.08.24  
<sup>4</sup> Nielsen, Total Coverage incl Discounters w/e 05.10.24  
<sup>5</sup> Kantar Media, w/e 29.09.24

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**#1 PROCESSED  
CHEESE BRAND  
IN THE UK\***

**dairy\*lea**

**You've GOT A  
FRIEND  
in PHILLY**



**#1 CREAM  
CHEESE BRAND  
IN THE UK\***

\*Nielsen, Total Coverage incl Discounters W/e 28-December-2024

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