

# Frozen

**AT McCAIN WE  
DON'T JUST GROW  
POTATOES**

We've started planting wildflowers on our farms to encourage wildlife.



**Let's all  
CHIP IN**

It's part of our commitment to 100% regenerative farming by 2030.

## McCain Foods (GB)

# Community and farmer support

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**McCain Crispy French Fries**  
**McCain Jacket Potatoes**  
**McCain Roast Potatoes**  
**McCain Skin On Fries**  
**McCain Gastro Chips**  
**McCain Sweet Potato Fries**  
**McCain Naked Oven Chips**

↙ McCain has had a busy year, having kicked off a variety of exciting initiatives from amplifying its existing regenerative farming commitments to helping bring families together during the cost-of-living crisis. “We started the year by doubling a planned £300,000 donation to our charity partner Family Fund, which supports families raising disabled and seriously ill children,” it explains. “This new wave of support for Family Fund was revealed in response to the cost-of-living crisis, which research has shown disproportionately affects those raising seriously ill or disabled children.

“We also partnered with Girls Aloud star and host of Morning Live, Kimberley Walsh, on ‘Teatime to Talk’, creating a series of digital and audio conversations cards to help bring families together over mealtimes – something we care deeply about. We believe that throughout the good times and those that are more challenging, prioritising mealtime moments that matter is crucial.”

### Community shop opens its doors

In August, McCain and Company Shop opened the much-anticipated Community Shop in Eastfield, the North Yorkshire home of McCain GB for the last 50 years. The social supermarket provides people in the local area the opportunity to access deeply discounted products. Not only are members able to purchase their groceries and benefit from a heavily discounted café, but they can also access life-changing learning and



Roman Kemp visiting Rectory Farm to learn about regenerative farming methods

“Throughout the good times and those that are more challenging, prioritising mealtime moments that matter is crucial”

development programmes, explains the company. “At McCain, we have always been dedicated to giving back to the communities in which we operate and we are proud to have funded the opening of the Eastfield store,” it says.

### Regenerative farming campaign

“This summer we also revealed our latest campaign, ‘Let’s All Chip In’, marking our commitment to 100% regenerative farming by 2030. We partnered with Iain Stirling and Roman Kemp, bringing them to Rectory Farm in Oxfordshire to learn about the regenerative farming methods that McCain growers are implementing.

“We are supporting our farmers to adopt regenerative practices to help ensure the long-term viability of potato farming in the UK. Given the increasingly unpredictable climate, the shift towards regenerative agriculture practices is vital to future-proof the farming industry. The transition often requires up-front investments in new equipment and practices from farmers, which can hinder uptake, so this year we joined forces with NatWest to help reduce financial barriers for potato farmers who are looking to make a move to greener practices.”



**Analysis**

# Warming to frozen

**Growing interest in frozen continues, as cost, convenience and innovation help to ramp up sales**

Do you own an air fryer? Turns out that, if you do, you're right on-trend, as the number of air fryers being used in the UK has boomed, particularly since the onset of the cost-of-living crisis. And this is just one of several positive recent impacts on the UK's frozen food category.

With cost and convenience key factors in today's at-home cooking trends, the way that consumers prepare food is rapidly changing as they look to save on energy bills and cook more healthily, says Birds Eye marketing director Jim Shearer. "A trend that is here to stay is air frying – almost a third of UK households currently own an air fryer, with that rising to 51%

for households with three or more children<sup>1</sup>. A major factor converting consumers to using air fryers is the energy cost per year, which Utilita estimates is around £32 – a huge decrease in comparison to the £112 cost per year of running an electric cooker<sup>2</sup>. As well as this, air fryers can help decrease the amount of oil and time needed to cook a product, helping consumers to find even more efficient ways to create nutritious and balanced meals from frozen food."

VLAM promotions manager Katrien De Nul agrees, noting: "We have seen a boom in [social media] content showcasing air fryer recipes, which has helped to inspire different ways to cook

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## Analysis

frozen foods and experiment with how frozen potato products can be used.”

Convenience also remains a key purchase driver for frozen category shoppers, adds Shearer, as they look for meals that can be prepared quickly and easily. “Over the past five years, the average preparation time for meals has fallen continuously from 25.3 minutes pre-pandemic to 24.8 minutes post-pandemic<sup>3</sup>. Frozen... eliminates the need for lengthy preparation, leaving consumers to enjoy more time with their loved ones and create nutritious meals with minimum effort.”

“Easy and convenient meat-free meal occasions are on the rise,” agrees Quorn Foods consumer director Gill Riley, who adds that more meat-free occasions are being enjoyed in the home. “Shoppers are looking for products that look and taste like their traditional meat favourites.” As grocery prices continue to rise in the UK, consumers are turning to frozen food as a cost-saving measure, she adds.

“While consumers strive for the nutrition offered by healthier products, often they are unable to pay a premium to purchase these products fresh,” notes McCain retail category director Naomi Tinkler. “Frozen products therefore offer a relatively low-cost alternative, lasting much longer than fridge-based products. Products like McCain Jackets are high in nutritional value, but low in cost, offering the whole family a way to eat nutritious food in an economically tough time.”

### Staying in trumps going out

As consumers tighten their belts, dining out and meeting with friends is becoming less frequent, says McCain’s Tinkler. “We still want to have these social interactions and they are happening in the comfort of our own homes,” she notes. In addition, more families are buying into the ‘fakeaway’ trend, choosing to replicate their favourite takeaway or fast food at home to save money and enjoy “relaxed but indulgent meals” as a family. This, she adds was one of the drivers behind the launch of the company’s Takeaway range “as it’s clear that shoppers in meat-free are still looking for food to capture their imagination”.

Although research shows that people are claiming that “in order to save money during the cost-of-living



crisis, they would reduce out-of-home eating”<sup>4</sup>, Birds Eye’s Shearer says the company is not actually seeing this. “People are instead trading down to cheaper eating-out alternatives<sup>5</sup>,” he says. However, that said, “in-home meal occasions are on the rise vs pre-pandemic times, with 2% more in the latest 12 weeks vs 2019<sup>6</sup> and this growth provides a great opportunity for the frozen sector to offer premiumisation options, as well as showcasing the versatility of the products in consumers’ freezers,” he explains.

Big Night In get-togethers remain more relevant than ever, especially as the nights start closing in, he adds. “Families are looking to categories such as frozen pizza to provide the takeaway experience at home or ‘fakeaway’ night in. We are seeing our Goodfella’s takeaway-style pizzas are consumer most on Fridays and Saturdays, times of the week when we might expect to see consumers enjoying a Big Night In.”


He notes that snacking, eating desserts and skipping main meals are on the decline<sup>7</sup>, “which could be interpreted as shoppers opting to save their money in these areas and could also be contributing to the reason why frozen food volume is currently outperforming total food volume<sup>8</sup>”.

“Naturally consumers will be feeling the pinch this autumn as the cost-of-living crisis impacts spend,” says VLAM’s De Nul. “The expectation is this will limit the amount consumers will be dining out, but will still be looking for at-home luxury by recreating restaurant-quality dishes. But when it comes to entertaining at home, consumers do look towards frozen for a level of ease without having to compromise on quality.”

### Health & sustainability

According to Birds Eye’s Shearer, health & sustainability are becoming long-term, deep-rooted values that

# Category performance and innovation



Birds Eye marketing director Jim Shearer confirms that the frozen food category has seen “impressive” double-digit growth (+15.6%)<sup>i</sup> over the past year, as more and more shoppers look to the frozen aisle for their meal options. “Not only are shoppers visiting stores more often, but the number of people buying frozen food is on an upwards trajectory (+0.7% YOY<sup>ii</sup>),” he says. In addition, frozen savoury foods are being used in 794 million more meals compared to five years ago<sup>iii</sup>, reaffirming the category’s position as a staple in consumers’ diets and the opportunity the category has to engage new shoppers.” Among other NPD,

Birds Eye kicked off this year with the launch of Aunt Bessie’s frozen meat joints range in Iceland stores, including Beef Topside Joint with Salt and Black Pepper and Bacon Topped Chicken Crown, among others. “The range also allows for a full roast dinner bundle that consist of one meat joint plus three sides or desserts to be bought for just £12,” he says.

In March, Birds Eye also launched Chunky Chip Shop Curry Fish Fingers, inspired by one of Britain’s favourite fish and chip toppings – curry sauce.

Frozen potato, like the wider frozen category, continues to deliver a strong performance, says Naomi Tinkler, retail category director at

McCain Foods. “Habits created during the Covid lockdowns, where shoppers rediscovered their love of frozen – its quality, variety and value are continuing to be displayed by shoppers, as they use frozen food to mitigate some of the pressure being put on household expenditure by the cost-of-living crisis.”

With the processed potato market estimated to be worth over £2.5bn in the UK, up from £1.5bn just 10 years ago<sup>iv</sup>, the UK market is naturally a key focus for Belgian producers, not only because of the evident growing appetite for processed potato products, but also the proximity, says VLAM promotion manager Katrien De Nul.

“Retailers should be prepared for customers looking to trade up as more people in the UK look to save money by celebrating big seasonal events such as Halloween or Bonfire Night at home.”

Meanwhile, frozen meat-free is currently worth £221m<sup>v</sup>, reveals Quorn Foods UK consumer director Gill Riley. In March this year, the company launched Quorn Vegetarian Chicken & Leek Family Pie, which she says is a “first of its kind” for the frozen meat-free category. Also, its most recent NPD, Quorn Mini Vegan Sausage Rolls is its first snacking launch in the frozen category, she adds.

consumers hold dear, so creating products that keep considering these is something brands should be doing as standard, when thinking about their innovation pipeline. “Whether it’s plant-based or sustainably sourced products, longer-term consumer trends are looking to positive, benefit-led food choices – defined as ‘adding goodness to a meal’ rather than ‘cutting out something bad’,” he says. “Positive health, convenience and taste is the fastest growing combination of needs<sup>9</sup> across both lunch and evening meal occasions; while health may be dropping down the shopper’s agenda more broadly due to perceived costs, there is room for healthy propositions if they’re positioned as part of a simple product or meal the shopper loves.”

Meanwhile, frozen food can help reduce food waste through its inherent benefits of a longer shelf life and being easy to portion, meaning consumers can use exactly how much they need

for a specific meal and put the rest back in the freezer, he adds. “In fact, sales that specifically come from consumers switching from fresh to frozen have increased by 2.7% vis a year ago<sup>10</sup>. Of these sales the frozen chicken sector has seen the most growth at +4.7% of value sales attributed to switching, followed by frozen pizza and frozen ready meals at 4.3% and 3.1% respectively<sup>11</sup>.”

Sustainability is an ever-increasing influencer on purchase from both trade buyers and the end consumer, says VLAM’s De Nul. “Developments have already been made within the production methods of the Belgian potato sector to tackle packaging and plastic, reduce carbon footprint and water usage to help create consumers’ confidence in a sustainable product with full traceability.”

As well as offering minimal prep time, frozen also provides those cooking for smaller numbers a control

in regard to their food waste, she says. “There has been a growing awareness of food waste, coupled with getting the most value from food purchases without having to compromise on quality. Frozen food offers a solution on both of these counts.”

Health and sustainability continue to be key drivers for shoppers buying into frozen meat-free, says Quorn Foods’ Riley. The company has big ambitions to reduce the impact that our diets have on the planet and health with the help of quick, tasty and sustainable meat-free options. “One of the key factors leading people into meat-free eating is simply fancying something different to their usual meat purchase,” she says. “We’ve brought a raft of innovation to the frozen aisle over the last couple of years to tap into this purchase driver.”

Meanwhile, Quorn was an early adopter of climate targets 10 years ago and, since then, has continued to be a pioneer for sustainability in the

## Analysis

meat-free industry. “Our iconic orange branding has become synonymous with sustainable eating and acts as a signpost for meat-free within the frozen category. Our products are made using Quorn mycoprotein, a super-protein that is high in fibre, high in protein, low in saturated fat and packed full of amino acids that our bodies need. As the main ingredient in all our products it uses 90% less land and water and produces 98% less carbon emissions than beef mince<sup>12</sup>.”

Gen Z are twice as likely as over-55s to be concerned about the environmental impact of the way products they buy at the supermarket are produced<sup>13</sup>, says McCain’s Tinkler. However, recent findings by McCain reveal that 68% of Gen Z<sup>14</sup> would like more informed choices about the food they buy but don’t know where to start, she says.

“Sustainability-conscious consumers are one reason McCain has committed to 100% regenerative farming by 2030,” she adds, explaining that the company is training and funding farmers in regenerative practices, including rotating crops to keep the soil healthy, planting wildflowers to attract birds and insects and moving the soil less to release less carbon.

### An eye to the future

Three main factors will impact the frozen category over the coming year: where food is sourced, sustainable farming and household finances, says McCain’s Tinkler. “The cost-of-living crisis has exposed the UK’s reliance on imported food, with the war in Ukraine and extreme weather across the continent severely impacting food prices in the UK. As we all experience the impact of climate change, supporting the UK’s farming industry to be more sustainable should be a key concern of the frozen food market, moving forward.”

Consumers will be mindful when it comes spending and will look to get the best value from their food items without needing to compromise on quality, says VLAM’s De Nul. She also believes that practical items that pair well with a wealth of other food items will continue to be popular and says that frozen potato products tap into this trend perfectly, remaining and adaptable crowd-pleaser and a staple of many British dishes. In addition,



“consumers will remain mindful of ensuring their consumption habits are sustainable, but will be looking to brands and retailers to make these choices easier and clearer”, she adds.

Taste will remain one of the key trends and considerations for shoppers when deciding which products to purchase, particularly in frozen meat-free, says Quorn Foods’ Riley. “In a competitive market, taste is such an important factor, driving repeat purchase and ensuring trust in and loyalty to our products.”

She also expects value and affordability to remain key, as inflation and cost-of-living pressures continue. Meanwhile, she says, easy and convenient meat-free meals are on the rise.

Birds Eye’s Shearer highlights the opportunity brands have to influence shopper decisions before they get to the supermarket. “Recent data from July shows that 26% of shoppers are planning their meals in advance, up 5% since last July<sup>15</sup>,” he says, noting that the use of social media and bold campaigns that champion NPD and resonate with consumers can influence them at an earlier stage.

There is “a real opportunity for frozen food manufacturers and retailers to proactively promote in-home eating occasions by showcasing their premium and quality offerings that cater to both restaurant and takeaway tastes, but which consumers can quickly and easily put together at home”, he notes. “Frozen pizza is an obvious choice for many, due to its convenience, as well as fakeaway offering such as Birds Eye’s Chicken Shop range, but there is also an opportunity for roast dinners or fish centrepieces as consumers look to replicate different dining experiences at home.”

### Sources

- <sup>1</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/44nr2r4z>
- <sup>2</sup> <https://utilita.co.uk/campaigns/iceland>
- <sup>3</sup> Kantar Usage Panel, Prep time for main meals (lunch, evening meal) total food/drink, 52 w/e 25.12.22
- <sup>4</sup> Appinio research, April 2023
- <sup>5</sup> Kantar Usage, April 2023
- <sup>6</sup> Kantar UK, Usage Panel, 4 w/e June 2023
- <sup>7</sup> Kantar UK, Usage Panel, 24 w/e 11 June 2023 vs June 2022
- <sup>8</sup> Kantar, Usage Panel, Total food/drink, servings % chosen for health, 52 w/e 25.12.22 vs 52 w/e 29.12.19
- <sup>10-11</sup> Kantar L12w/d w/e 19.03.23 vs YA Meal Centres Universe
- <sup>12</sup> Quorn’s Footprint Comparison Report (The Carbon Trust, 2022), <https://tinyurl.com/2p8jeehe>
- <sup>13-14</sup> OnePoll research, commissioned by McCain as part of its ‘Let’s All Chip In’ campaign.
- <sup>15</sup> IGD Shopper Vista Research, 2023

### Category performance

- <sup>i</sup> Kantar, excludes ice-cream L52 wks, July 2023
- <sup>ii</sup> Kantar, total defined frozen 10.06.22 vs 09.06.23
- <sup>iii</sup> Kantar Usage Panel, Frozen Savoury Meal Occasions, 52 w/e 19.02.23 vs Feb 2019
- <sup>iv</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/26kzadtd>
- <sup>v</sup> Circana Total Meat Free, Grocery Multis, incl all outlets 52 w/e 15.07.23

**Eskimo Ice t/a Ice Club**

# Ice Club: born to chill

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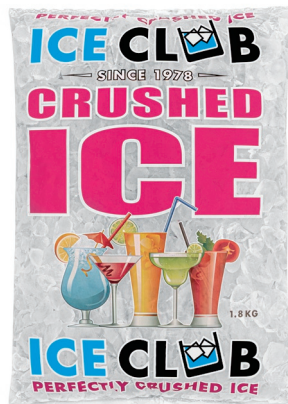
**KEY BRANDS**

**Ice Club Classic Cubes**  
**Ice Club Crushed Ice**  
**Ice Club Supersize Cubes**  
**Ice Club Diamond Collection**

Although the UK weather in summer 2023 was disappointing, the UK's packaged ice sector has seen sustained growth since 2010<sup>1</sup>.

When the weather is hot, consumers are unwilling to compromise on the temperature of their cold drinks, driving sales of classic ice cubes. Also, discerning ice consumers are seeking high-quality premium SKUs year-round. Ice Club – the branded product range from Eskimo Ice – meets all of these growth trends, says MD Stuart Bean.

“Over the last two years, we have rationalised our range of products under a single, strong brand identity,” he explains. “Our Supersize premium offering is perfect for those consumers who want to cool their drinks while minimising dilution, while our free-flowing Perfectly Crushed Ice is a huge hit with those who make smoothies and cocktails at home. Finally, the Diamond Collection of crystal clear, craft ice is in demand with top UK bartenders.”



“Over the last two years, we have rationalised our range under a single, strong brand identity”

With current concerns over the increased cost-of-living, the Ice Club range has also been designed with value in mind. Bean says: “Our main SKU size – the 1.8kg – has been a basic, but powerful innovation. It enables optimised palletisation, which has created end-to-end supply chain savings for our retail and wholesale partners, helping them to maintain a competitive RRP for the consumer.”

**Source**

<sup>1</sup> Internal and customer sales data, plus anecdotal evidence

# Born to Chill



**ICE CLUB** The UK's **coolest** ice brand.

**Bannisters Yorkshire Family Farm**

# A twist on the humble potato

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 – Cheese & Jalapeño Potato Skins  
 – Cheese & Bacon Potato Skins  
 – Cheese & Onion Potato Skins  
 – Farmer's Roasting Potatoes  
 – Hasselback Baked Potatoes

Never to be underestimated, the original frozen baked jacket potato consistently delivers and, with its recently launched Hasselbacks, Bannisters has added interest to the potato aisle with a twist on the classic.

Hasselbacks are a baked potato, cut into crisp slices with soft fluffy middles. Originating in Sweden, this recipe has been brought to Yorkshire and, with Bannisters' baking expertise, has been turned into truly fabulous spuds.

Joint managing director Marie Medhurst explains: "They're quick to prepare, extremely versatile, and can be a bit of fun, too. Hasselbacks enable creativity to surface in the kitchen and add a bit of lightheartedness to mid-week cooking, and even better, in terms of toppings, literally anything goes."

This Swedish dish has been making waves on social media for a while now. Hasselbacks are very Instagrammable and have been featuring in celebrity chefs' recipes for some years. "Creative cooking at home brings a bit of the 'wow' factor into home kitchens," says Medhurst. "It's great to be able to be adventurous without too much time or faff involved... Hasselbacks are a great option for a whole variety of reasons."

**Back to basics...**

In the current uncertain economic and geopolitical climate, consumers are looking to their food choices as a way of finding stability, looking back with nostalgia to childhood memories and days of old, says Medhurst. "Going back to basics is now – and always has been – at the core of the Bannisters Farm range," she explains.

"Bannisters has a down-to-earth ethos and a very real connection to farming and food production. We love



**“We’re a farming family business with a love of good wholesome home cooking, which is hearty, nourishing and good for the soul”**

wholesome home cooking, which is hearty, nourishing and, essentially, good for the soul. Our products contain no strange ingredients and are still in a near-to-natural form.”

This fits perfectly with consumers' needs for simple and reliable food and increasing interest in the food chain and British farming, she adds.

**...but with interest and intrigue**

Despite this, in shoppers' search for basic staples, there is still room for experimentation and a desire for interest and intrigue, she notes.

"Frozen cabinets offer significant opportunities to consumers in terms of reducing food waste and managing household budgets," she says. "Bannisters offers trusted staples, but with a twist. Our range includes the original Ready Baked Jacket Potato (we were first to launch a frozen baked spud into retail back in 2007), roast potatoes (with a difference) and potato skins with a range of fillings. Hasselbacks are proving an essential addition to the range. A humble spud? We think not!"



# BANNISTERS

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Birds Eye

# 100% sustainably sourced fish

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KEY BRANDS

**Birds Eye**  
**Aunt Bessie's**  
**Goodfella's**

Are you serious about sustainably sourced fish? Birds Eye launched the country's most loved fish fingers in 1955 and, ever since, how we catch our fish has been of the utmost importance to us, says the company.

“Our ‘Fish for Good’ initiative captures our belief that ‘good food’ means more than just good for your health,” explains Birds Eye. “Good fishing means looking after the nature that looks after us and, when you choose Birds Eye fish, you no longer have to decide between a better diet or sustainable seas.”

Overfishing is a major global challenge which threatens ocean wildlife, livelihoods and seafood for future generations and, with more than a third of the world's fish stocks now fished beyond their sustainable limits<sup>1</sup>, it is vitally important to protect our ocean ecosystems and only eat seafood from sustainable sources, it notes.

**Benchmark for sustainable fishing**

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) was co-founded by Birds Eye (as part of Unilever) and has been an independent non-profit organisation since 1997. The MSC works with scientists and the seafood industry to set a globally recognised benchmark for sustainable fishing and only puts the blue MSC label – the world's most recognised mark for sustainable seafood<sup>2</sup> – on wild fish or seafood from fisheries that have been certified to the MSC Fisheries Standard.

“Birds Eye sells more MSC certified Fish than any other British frozen brand,” reveals the company. “Furthermore, our commitment to the organisation has been recognised by the MSC, with Birds Eye winning Frozen Brand of the Year for nine consecutive years.

“We are also proud to support the work of the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) and our range of farmed fish has 100% ASC certification. Similar to the MSC, the ASC is an international non-profit organisation that runs a certification and labelling programme, dedicated to responsibly ‘farmed’ fish & seafood.”



“If all fishing globally was sustainable, an additional 16 million tonnes of seafood could be harvested every year<sup>3</sup>”

**Impact of sustainable activity**

NHS guidelines state that ‘a healthy balanced diet should include two portions of fish a week’<sup>3</sup>. However, data suggests most people in the UK are still only eating around half of the amount of seafood recommended by health professionals<sup>4</sup>.

The MSC briefing on the role of sustainable fishing in feeding a growing global population shows that if all fishing globally was sustainable, an additional 16 million tonnes of seafood could be harvested every year<sup>5</sup>, reveals Birds Eye.

“Therefore, by managing our seas and fisheries better, a greater quantity of healthy, sustainable fish and seafood can support more nutrient-rich diets, helping to prevent deficiencies in important nutrients such as zinc, calcium, iron and vitamin B12,” it says.

**Future-proofing fishing**

“Birds Eye is proud to be working with those who share our sense of responsibility for marine resources, habitats, and ecosystems,” adds the company.

“When shoppers buy Birds Eye Fish they can rest assured in the knowledge they have made a positive choice to support well-managed, sustainable fisheries that have minimal impact on the environment.”



For more information on the MSC please visit [www.msc.org](http://www.msc.org)

**Source**  
<sup>1</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/hm82tf2k>  
<sup>2</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/yuypphnp>  
<sup>3</sup> Fish and shellfish – NHS ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk))  
<sup>4</sup> [www.seafish.org](http://www.seafish.org)  
<sup>5</sup> [msc-blue-foods-report.pdf](http://msc-blue-foods-report.pdf)



**serious about**  
**sustainably**  
**sourced fish?**

**it better be**

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[www.msc.org](http://www.msc.org)



\*100% MSC certified, 100% ASC certified

## Quorn Foods

# Fulfilling shoppers' needs

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## KEY BRANDS

**Quorn Mince**  
**Quorn Pieces**  
**Quorn Sausages**  
**Quorn Crispy Nuggets**

Shoppers associate Quorn, the UK's No.1 meat-free brand<sup>1</sup>, with quality, great taste, health, and sustainability – attributes that have become synonymous with the brand, as it continues to be a beacon in the category, says Gill Riley, consumer director at Quorn Foods.

Frozen meat-free is currently worth £221m<sup>2</sup> and a host of brands have come and gone from the category over the past 12 months, she reveals. Meanwhile, Quorn's frozen range is growing ahead of the frozen category<sup>3</sup>, boosted by its fulfilment of many shopper needs: value for money, reduced waste, convenience and 'locked in' freshness.

"Budget-conscious shoppers focus more heavily on frozen foods as affordable meal solutions," explains Riley, "Quorn's frozen centre plate staples remain a key penetration driver.

"Consistent great-tasting innovation is important, which is why we have a sustained programme of frozen NPD to help drive sales. New products allow us to excite new and existing shoppers with a delicious and enticing entry point to the category."

The brand recently expanded its frozen range with two delicious new innovations: Mozzarella and Tomato Escalopes (RRP: £2.65, 240g) – an expansion to its convenient centreplate protein option; and Mini Vegan Sausage Rolls (RRP: £3.50, 500g) – its first entry into frozen party foods.

Over the last 12 months, Quorn has also expanded its Takeaway, family mealtime options and 'Big Bag Great Value' ranges to offer shoppers more great-tasting and affordable solutions for family mealtimes, reveals Riley.



## Source

<sup>1</sup>5 Circana Total Meat Free, Grocery Multis incl. all outlets 52 w/e 17.06.23



**“Consistent, great-tasting innovation is important, which is why we have a sustained programme of frozen NPD to help drive sales”**

The Quorn Takeaway range includes products such as Spicy Buffalo Fillets (RRP: £2.50, 200g) and Crunchy Fillet Burgers (RRP: £2.50, 190g), designed to appeal to those seeking better-value 'fakeaway' style options that can easily be recreated at home. The range has delivered close to £4m-worth<sup>4</sup> of sales for retailers in the last year.

Quorn Vegetarian Chicken & Leek Family Pie (RRP £4, 680g), a first for the frozen meat-free category, launched in March this year, providing an easy and delicious family mealtime option, adds Riley. Quorn 'Big Bags Great Value' range allows shoppers to stock up their freezers with bestselling Quorn staples such as Quorn Pieces (RRP: £3.50, 500g) and Quorn Mince (RRP: £3.50, 500g) and Quorn Crispy Nuggets (RRP £3.50, 476g), she notes.

"In January this year, Quorn brought in over half a million new shoppers to the category following its 'So Tasty' campaign featuring its bestselling Crispy Nuggets," she says. "One of the biggest barriers to trying meat-free products can be taste perceptions. We hit that head-on with this campaign.

"As the UK's No. 1 meat-free nugget<sup>5</sup>, Quorn's Crispy Nuggets are a strong entry point into the meat-free category."



**SO TASTY,  
WHY STOCK THE  
ALTERNATIVE?**



**No.1  
MEAT FREE  
NUGGET\***

\*Circana data 52w/e 17.06.23, Total Market incl. Ocado



**VLAM**

# Sustainable option for the UK

**DETAILS**

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**KEY BRANDS**

**Processed potato products**  
(fresh, chilled, frozen)



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**Source**  
1+2 British Frozen Food  
Federation 2022, compared  
to pre-pandemic levels

**↙** Naturally, consumers will be feeling the pinch this autumn as the cost-of-living crisis impacts spend. The expectation is this will limit the amount consumers will be dining out but still be looking for at-home luxury, by recreating restaurant-quality dishes.

“Retailers should be prepared for customers to be trading up as more people in the UK look to save money by celebrating big seasonal events such as Halloween, Bonfire Night and Christmas get-togethers, at home,” says VLAM promotions manager Katrien De Nul. “Quick and convenient potato variants from Belgium – such as fries, mashed potato, duchess, potato waffle, hash brown, wedges and sliced potatoes – are ideal serves for entertaining at home.”

Belgium is the world's No.1 exporter of frozen potato products, with 90% of its production exported to over 100 countries. In the UK alone, the frozen food category has grown by 13.5%<sup>1</sup> and over 400,000 more shoppers are now purchasing frozen products and the average household is spending an additional £25 a year on the category<sup>2</sup>, reveals De Nul. “The UK market is naturally a key focus for Belgian producers, not only because of the evident growing appetite for processed potato products but also the proximity.”

**Potatoes for the planet**

Sustainability of ingredients will become an ever-increasing influence on purchase and Belgian processed potatoes can certainly cater to this demand, explains De Nul. “Developments have already been made within the Belgian potato sector's production methods to tackle packaging and plastic, reduce carbon



**“Quick and convenient potato variants from Belgium – such as fries, mashed potato, duchess, potato waffles, hash browns wedges and sliced potatoes – are ideal serves for entertaining at home”**



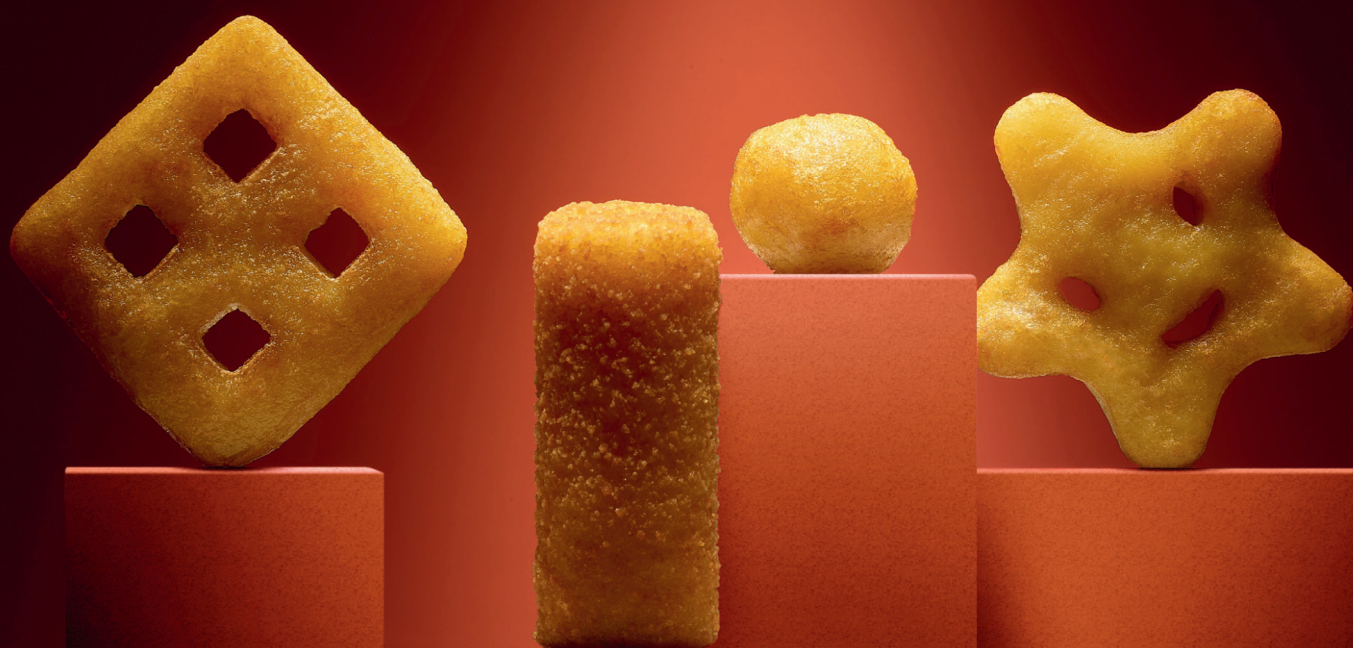
footprint and water usage, helping to create confidence in a sustainable product with full traceability,” she says. “This includes initiatives like the Farm to Fork Strategy, which addresses the challenges of sustainable food systems and recognises the link between people, planet and profit. A range of activity is enabling the Belgian potato industry to contribute towards positive targets, such as the European Commission's goal to be the first climate-neutral continent by 2050.”

**Supporting retailers**

Last year, VLAM launched a new two-year marketing campaign to promote Belgian processed potatoes in the UK retail and foodservice sectors. The ‘Loved in Britain, Made in Europe’ campaign highlights the growth of the potato category and the opportunity for retail and foodservice to build their business with a good quality and innovative frozen, chilled and fresh potato category offer.

The ‘Flourish and Grow’ Campaign also highlights the significant investment made by growers and processors in production methods to ensure sustainable products with full traceability.

# Let your customers discover the art of potatoes



Belgian Potatoes

Loved in Britain  
Made in Europe



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