26 JULY 2025

The Grocer Guide to...

The Grocer

Protein & functional foods

Eatlean Protein Cheese

e: info@eatlean.com
w: Eatlean.com

Powering protein growth

DETAILS

Eatlean Protein Cheese
Crewe Rd
Hatherton
Nantwich, CW5 7PE
t: 01270 841500

KEY CONTACTS

George Heler
Founder
Melody Chapman
Business Unit Director
Bethan Lamont
Head of Brand

KEY BRANDS

Eatlean
– Grated 180g
– Chilli Grated 180g
– Extra Tasty Grated 180g
– Slices 160g
– Block 200g
– Block 1kg
– Cheese Bar 60g
– Snacking Net 6 x 20g
– Snacking Multipack 3 x 60g
– Cheese Spread
– Crunchy Bites 20g (Original, Chilli or Truffle)
– Red
– Smoked

Boldly going where cheese has never gone before – 2025 marks the most ambitious year to date for £10m high-protein cheese brand Eatlean.

Harnessing the success seen within the cheese category as a front-runner within protein, the brand is widening the reach of its unique cheese offering in 2026 and venturing into new, uncharted waters, while hero-ing the strength and potential of cheese as a natural, high-quality source of protein.

2025 has already seen significant growth and success for the cheese brand within the protein category, says founder George Heler. "Not only have we achieved various new listings across UK retail, but the brand is also listed in spaces where protein cheese would not typically be found," he notes. "Eatlean has also enjoyed exponential growth internationally as it entered another new market, Australia, which is already delivering well in excess of budget.

"We've backed the power of cheese as a functional product from day one, and created a unique product to make that possible – with 40% more protein and 90% less fat in our cheese than other full fat cheddar. At 37g protein per 100g, it ticks boxes cheese has never ticked before. Dispelling the misconception that cheese is 'unhealthy', we make cheese accessible by removing the high fat content, making it functional at a time when a return to whole foods, and away from UPFs, is prevalent.

"The power behind our brand comes from how we communicate, educate and amplify in markets, driving awareness and positioning cheese as a functional, natural source of protein."

The brand's 'on-the-road' Eatlean Cheese Machine tours the UK, sampling product at health, fitness and sporting events and helping to triple the brand's awareness in 2024. Further new partnerships in 2025, such as becoming the Exclusive Cheese Partner to endurance event brands Tough Mudder and Spartan, have widened its ability to target tens of thousands of core consumers who are looking for protein-rich products to enhance their diet."

Eatlean also took a significant step outside the category in 2024, launching the first-ever cheese protein bar into major UK and international retail. With 20g of protein per bar and only two listed ingredients, milk & salt, this must-stock product caters for those looking for alternatives to the highly UPF-dominated category. It is available in individual 60g bars as part of meal deals, or in a 3x60g multi pack in the main cheese fixture. "Our protein bar offers consumers protein in one of its rawest forms," says head of brand Bethan Lamont. "Delivering a great-tasting and uniquely savoury protein snack offering has opened new doors for us and marks a real turning point for our brand ambitions in the year ahead."

2026 will see the launch of Eatlean Protein, no longer simply a cheese brand high in protein, but a protein brand with cross-category extensions. Melody Chapman, BU director for Eatlean, says: "We are harnessing the power of protein to match the consumer need for convenient, healthy and macro-enhancing meal and snack solutions. This is our most ambitious move yet."

Eatlean has become the Exclusive Cheese Partner to Tough Mudder

> **"2026 will see the launch of Eatlean Protein, no longer simply a cheese brand high in protein, but a protein brand with cross-category extensions"**

Analysis

No longer niche

Protein-rich and functional food and drinks are going mainstream, with ranges honed to meet the appetites of a broader audience

Protein & functional foods are on a high and positively buzzing with innovation. The category continues to broaden out into the mainstream, as consumers' focus on health & wellbeing embraces personalised nutrition to a much greater extent. Whether it's satiety between meals, meal replacements, gut health, energy or simply healthier self-treating, suppliers are stepping up to offer consumers a much broader range of options, rapidly propelling the category into the mainstream in retail aisles. And suppliers maintain that this is not just a flash in the pan, but signals a long-term lifestyle trend, with recent performance bearing that out.

The protein & functional foods sector has seen strong growth in the UK with 75% of consumers increasing their intake year-on-year[1], says Melody Chapman, business unit director at Eatlean Protein Cheese. "We've also seen this trend across international markets we operate in – Germany and Austria in particular. As consumers look beyond fitness to benefits like satiety, energy and wellbeing... our snack bars are seeing exponential growth, indicating that consumers are looking for single sources of protein to meet the need for a protein boost post-workout and for protein builder options for lunch as part of meal deals."

Ellie Picton, brand manager at Bol Foods, says the functional nutrition space and, in particular, the 'smart food' category, has seen exceptional growth in the last year. "According to IRI data, the total smart food category is up +81% year on year[2]," she reveals. "Within complete nutrition ready-to-drink shakes are the standout

Contents

This supplement to The Grocer was published by: William Reed Ltd, Broadfield Park, Crawley, West Sussex RH11 9RT.
TEL: 01293 613400
EDITOR: Ellie Woollven
DESIGNER: Nick Figgins
PRINTERS: Walstead Peterborough

Analysis

performer, being the fastest-growing segment of complete nutrition overall, with projected growth at a CAGR of +8% between 2023 and 2028[3].” Bol Foods launched its Power Shakes range in March 2024 and has already secured listings in major UK retailers, including Tesco, Co-op, M&S and Asda Express.

“Meanwhile, UK sales of protein bars, powders and drinks surged 24.2% to £225.6m, with unit sales up 16.6%[4] as shoppers actively seek out functional nutrition,” adds Picton.

At Nutrabolt, VP EMEA marketing Paul Coppin says the functional and protein nutrition space has never been more dynamic, seeing strong growth in the UK driven by increasing consumer awareness of health, fitness and performance nutrition. “The UK protein powder market alone has expanded significantly, with a projected 7.5% CAGR from 2023-2028[5],” he says. “As one of the world’s leading sports nutrition brands, C4 is leveraging this momentum with its first-ever whey protein range, combining indulgent Reese’s and Hershey’s flavours with high-performance nutrition.”

Demand for protein-packed snacks has also continued to surge, with the protein bar category now worth £162.5m, up 5% vs the previous 52 weeks[6], confirms Rachel Austerberry, UK retail sales director at Grenade. Meanwhile, Empwr Nutrition Group’s UK sales manager Eliot Holmes also points to growth for the protein bar market over the past year in the UK, with lifestyle bars leading this charge and offering ‘better-for-you’ treats with functional benefits that align with trends in health, fitness, protein intake, convenience and even plant-based diets, he says.

The protein snacking market has seen a strong performance over the past year, agrees David Harriman, country director UK at LSI, owner of the Jack Link’s brand. He says jerky and biltong have been among the fastest-growing segments across crisps, nuts and bagged snacks, with the overall category now worth £40m RSV[7], and there is significant headroom for expansion in meat-based snacking.

However, while Quorn Foods UK agrees that more and more consumers are becoming aware of the importance of a protein-rich diet and acknowledges that “protein has typically been linked to meat”, head of brands Lucy Grogut says: “There has been a gap in the market for many shoppers who want to eat more protein but less meat, and Quorn is filling that gap,” she says.

According to Grogut, recent research has revealed that 56% of consumers now consider the protein intake in their diet[8], and 90% are interested in including new sources of protein[9]. “Mycoprotein, soya and tofu were all rated ‘highly appealing’ by those shoppers who are engaged with protein intake[10],” she says. This year, the company has a new category vision, which includes encouraging shoppers to make more simple swaps that fit into their day-to-day lives, as well as building on the success of its ready-to-eat range, so that more consumers will go to Quorn when grabbing a high-protein snack on-the-go.

> **“Yoghurt drinks, led by kefir, have surged in poularity, with a 96.7% increase in sales vs 2023[13]”**

In the dairy sector, yoghurt drinks – led by kefir – have surged in popularity, nearly doubling at a 96.7% increase in value sales compared to 2023[11], says Zack Cunningham, head of category & commercial planning (dairy) at Danone UK & Ireland. “High-protein yoghurts have also continue to rise, increasing by 30.7% over the same period[12],” he says. “Danone’s portfolio... has been central to this momentum, with innovation and health-forward positioning driving consumer engagement.”

However, today’s consumers demand more than ‘just protein’ – they want products that are naturally derived and delicious,” says Arla Protein MBB brand manager Amy Punchard. “What’s more, categories and semiotics are changing, and these have led the way for Arla’s transformational journey

Meeting a broad variety of demands

LSI's Harriman cites protein content, satiety, flavour and sustained energy as key purchase drivers, noting that consumers are looking for better-for-you snack options that keep them full between meals and support active, busy lifestyles, "especially younger shoppers focused on health, energy and convenience". He says Jack Link's meets this demand with a naturally lean, high-protein, low-calorie offering, at fewer than 70 kcal/25g serving.

Alice Verril, category & strategy lead at Bol Foods, says there has been a clear shift away from calorie-counting and portion control towards a benefit-led approach that genuinely supports health & wellbeing goals. "In fact, 81% of consumers now say it's more important for food and drink to be nutritionally balanced than simply low in calories[i]," she notes. Satiety has become the top purchase driver, with 47% of shoppers looking for food and drinks that keep them fuller for longer[ii], she adds. Shoppers are also motivated by a much broader set of wellness needs, including energy, immunity, gut health and cognitive function, with 43% of UK adults saying they actively choose products that support overall wellbeing[iii] rather than just weight management or muscle goals.

Meanwhile, protein bars are chosen by shoppers for all kinds of reasons, says Grenade's Austerberry: "The primary driver is the amount of protein the bar contains. This is seen as 20g or more by over 42% of consumers[iv]. Beyond protein, consumers are looking for healthy or 'better-for-you' alternatives that taste good, while the final driver is the amount of sugar in each bar."

Eatlean's Chapman says protein has evolved from niche to necessity. "Today's consumers seek benefits beyond fitness – such as satiety, energy, gut & brain health, and overall wellbeing," she says. "However, some keen fitness consumers seek out protein that fulfils the rebuilding of muscle requirement, which can be very specific - at around 20g."

What's really fuelling growth is the shift in how and when people consume protein, observes Empwr's Holmes: "As consumers become more aware of its benefits, they're incorporating it into everyday snacking, wanting to feel healthier while still enjoying a treat. Protein is extending beyond the gym, into more casual, lifestyle-based occasions, making healthy snacking a natural part of daily life."

to becoming the No.1 protein brand in dairy, worth over £75m[13]."

More personalised nutrition

Empwr's Holmes points to a clear momentum behind high-protein offerings becoming part of consumers' everyday routines. "Shopper missions continue to evolve with more demand for functional snacks that don't compromise on taste or texture," he notes. "While functional foods aren't replacing functional medicines, they are increasingly part of how people manage wellness through daily choices."

At Bol Foods, Picton says the shift towards personalised health and proactive nutrition is accelerating rapidly, especially among younger consumers. "According to Deloitte[14], over 60% of Gen Z and Millennials actively seek food and drink products that align with their personal health goals, whether that's gut health, immunity or mental clarity," she says. "We're also seeing the rise of digital health and wellness platforms like Zoe, Whoop and Lumen, fuelling demand for more targeted, everyday nutrition choices. People increasingly want food that works for them... supporting their goals in a measurable way."

This is translating into real behavioural change, she adds. "Functional foods are no longer just an add-on; they're replacing functional supplements or medicines in daily routines. A recent Mintel report found that 68% of UK adults prefer to get their nutrients from food and drink rather than from pills or powders[15].

Health is an overarching and growing consideration for consumers, agrees Quorn's Grogut. "Our research tells us the top drivers for protein consumption are aiding body repair function and increased energy (51%), followed by more strength and staying fuller for longer (39%)[16]. Alongside protein, fibre is key for satiety, energy and digestive health. Adults should be consuming at least 30g of fibre a day, but research suggests most of us manage less than 20g. Most sources of animal-based protein contain no fibre, versus Quorn mycoprotein, which has 6g of fibre per 100g, making it much easier for consumers to reach their recommended fibre target."

A growing focus on proactive health management – especially among Gen Z and younger adults – has significantly influenced consumer investment in protein and functional foods, observes Danone's Cunningham. "Gut health is a growing priority, with consumers increasingly turning to foods with added benefits to support their overall health and wellbeing. This shift is not only attracting new shoppers to the category, but is also being driven by existing yoghurt consumers expanding their repertoire to include protein-rich options. As a result, penetration has

Analysis

become the main growth driver, now reaching 24.1%, up +10.3% YOY[17].”

Both Nutrabolt’s Coppin and Eatlean’s Chapman agree that younger consumers are driving the shift towards personalised wellness, seeking products that “align with their fitness, muscle recovery and lifestyle goals”, says Coppin. “Our new protein range speaks directly to this demand, offering macro-friendly, muscle-supporting nutrition in flavours that are both nostalgic and craveable,” he says.

Younger consumers are … seeking functional foods that support energy, gut health and mental wellbeing, adds Eatlean’s Chapman. “As functional foods become more mainstream, they’re increasingly seen as proactive alternatives to functional medicines or even to complement – offering natural, food-based solutions for everyday wellness, often more accessible as more retailers make space on shelves for protein-led nutrition.”

However, Angie Turner, head of marketing at Lacka Foods, owner of the Ufit brand, says that growth in protein and functional nutrition isn’t just being driven by younger demographics any more. “Over the past year, we’ve seen increased appeal across genders, age ranges and life stages,” she says. “Protein is no longer niche or solely associated with fitness – it’s a daily nutritional tool for a wider range of lifestyles. At Ufit, we’re seeing consumers invest in functional products that deliver tangible benefits – especially those that support energy and help avoid a mid-afternoon crash.”

Flavour profiles: blurring the lines

Citing “indulgence with intent” as a key trend, Nutrabolt’s Coppin confirms that the line between confectionery and functionality is blurring and says his company is embracing that trend. “Our Hershey’s collaboration proves that flavour doesn’t have to come at the expense of health,” he says. “With clear labelling, no added sugars and trusted ingredients, we’re helping consumers to navigate this space with confidence.”

Bol Foods’ Picton points to “a clear tension brands must manage: balancing indulgence with health, novelty with familiarity, and delivering genuine functional benefits with great flavour”. She references an article from The Grocer[18] which reveals taste is still the No.1 driver for healthier snacking

How retailers can take advantage of in-store over online purchasing

“Retailers are leaning in to capitalise on the booming protein and functional foods space, investing in own-label innovation and in smarter, health-led merchandising,” says Bol Foods’ Picton. “We’re seeing clear evidence in ranges like Tesco’s High in Protein or M&S’ Brain Food, which compete directly with brands by delivering benefit-led, credible options at accessible price points.

“But to truly unlock growth, retailers need to move beyond traditional format-led aisles,” she says. “Consumers increasingly shop by benefit or outcome – they are looking for high protein, gut health or complete nutrition solutions. Creating clear, function-first zones with strong shelf-edge messaging can build trust and make discovery easy, especially when 49% of consumers says conflicting health information makes it hard to know what’s actually healthy[v].”

Physical stores also have a unique edge over online, she adds. “They can drive trial and trust through sampling, educational signage and discovery zones. While online suits repeat, convenience-driven shoppers (notably 25% of Bol Power Shake sales come from online), in-store merchandising can convert new shoppers and make functional nutrition feel accessible, understandable and credible.”

Eatlean’s Chapman believes retailers are stepping up in the functional space, but clearer in-store navigation is needed. “Dedicated protein zones, shelf-edge messaging, and digital POS can help bricks-and-mortar stores compete with online and drive shopper engagement. There is proliferation on-shelf in some categories – potentially confusing consumers – and retailers do have the opportunity to use targeted branded products to fit particular consumer needs, such as protein shakes and yoghurts.”

Retailers increasingly recognise the growth potential of protein and functional snacking and are taking a more strategic approach to in-store merchandising to stand out and compete with online, says LSI’s Harriman. “In a category where convenience, taste and functionality are front of mind, strong in-store execution can create real standout and drive shopper conversion, giving bricks-and-mortar a clear edge over online in this fast-moving space,” he notes.

Nutrabolt’s Coppin acknowledges that retailers are increasingly

recognising the potential of this space with more dedicated bays, cross-category merchandising and education-led POS occurring. However, he says: "There's still room to grow. Functional products deserve prime placement, not just a corner in the chiller or supplement aisle."

Arla Protein has worked with retailers since 2023 to introduce protein bays, both online and in-store, says Punchard. These are designed to help shoppers on a protein mission find what they are looking for and navigate what can be a complex category, more easily. "In-store, we continually refresh our bright and colourful protein bays within the dairy aisle to signpost shoppers towards the bay and attract new shoppers," she adds.

At Grenade, Austerberry notes: "With the most common occasions for a protein bar or shake coming around a workout or simply as a snack, it's vital retailers make protein ranges easy to find in-store, to allow consumers to pick them up easily. This includes having protein within wider snacking ranges in-store where consumers expect to find their snacks, either traditional or protein-packed and better-for-you."

With one-fifth of consumers saying they cannot see protein bars where they shop[vi], retailers must help these potential customers to pick up a protein snack, with point-of-sale and key brands to signpost the range, she adds.

As the focus on protein has skyrocketed over the past couple of years, it is now more widely understood as an essential macronutrient in everyday health, says Quorn Foods' Grogut. "As a result, many shoppers are already on the lookout for high-protein products. "Retailers can harness this attention to protein and the unique strengths of offline shopping to drive in-store sales," she says. "Shoppers have the benefit of being able to more carefully consider a range of products when making a physical purchase, comparing protein content and other nutritional attributes easily.

"Consumers are also more likely to make impulse protein purchases and try something different when shopping in-store. By stocking brands that clearly highlight the protein benefits through packaging and POS, retailers can drive penetration in this category."

Analysis

choices. However, flavour trends show an interesting split. Indulgent, dessert-inspired profiles – chocolate, salted caramel, cookie – continue to grow, blurring the lines with confectionery and making it harder for consumers to identify genuinely healthy, protein-rich options, she adds. "At the same time, there's rising demand for fresher, more natural profiles," she says. "Kerry's 2025 Taste Charts[19] highlight citrus as an enduring favourite and pistachio as making a strong comeback, while classics like strawberry remain versatile and popular in functional beverages."

While natural flavourings and types of protein are becoming increasingly important to consumers, the 'candification' of protein bars seems to be the most prevalent trend… getting closer to replicating the flavour trends, taste states and textures of traditional confectionery, says Empwr's Holmes. "This will continue in the future, as most of the growth potential in the category sits within lifestyle bars that offer consumers a 'better-for-you' guilt-free treat, while still having the high protein and no added sugar claims. As the lines with traditional confectionery blur further, expect to see more brand crossovers like Grenade Oreo and Trek Biscoff, as well as more high-protein snacking products competing with traditional confectionery in more parts of the store – new formats within impulse confectionery, meal deals, biscuits, snack bar multipacks and confectionery hanging bags," he says.

Arla has introduced two new Protein Milkshakes in two dessert-led flavours this year: vanilla fudge and chocolate brownie. "We hope these flavours will excite consumers by offering something new and different to the category, more suited to the afternoon and evening snacking occasions," says Punchard. "However the health credentials of these products are made clear on the front of pack, with 20g protein and no added sugar." Arla has also introduced two new protein mousses in chocolate fudge and banoffee pie flavours, as well as adding a peach & raspberry flavour to its protein yogurt pouch range.

At Danone, Cunningham points to a "clear trend towards 'permissible' treats" – health-driven snacking but choosing products that offer indulgent flavours like chocolate or dessert-inspired profiles. The combination of functional foods and confectionery is creating exciting opportunities for innovation, but it's also creating a challenge for brands to help consumers navigate what's truly healthy. At Danone, with a portfolio of 98% non-HFSS products, we're addressing this buy ensuring our indulgent offerings, such as chocolate-flavoured yoghurts, are a healthier alternative to traditional confectionery snacks."

Flavour remains a key driver in proteins snacking, with consumers gravitating towards bold, globally inspired profiles, says LSI's Harriman. He points to the strong performance of the Sweet & Hot and Teriyaki varieties of Jack Link's, offering a balance of soy, ginger and a subtle sweetness. However, he agrees that "as flavour boundaries blur, especially with sweeter profiles entering the category, nutritional clarity becomes more important than ever".

> **"The combination of functional foods and confectionery is creating exciting opportunities, but also a challenge for brands"**

Savoury-sweet hybrids, global spice blends and gut-friendly ingredients are gaining traction," says Eatlean's Chapman. "But as confectionery-inspired flavours blur the lines, consumers can struggle to identify truly nutritious options. Eatlean stays focused on clean, savoury-led innovation – delivering high-protein, low-fat cheese with bold flavours and clear functional benefits."

Gone are the days of a chalky, bad-tasting protein bar, says Grenade's Austerberry. "With the increasing blurring of lines between protein-packed treats and confectionery,

more consumers have entered into the category for the first time through using recognisable brands and iconic flavours, such as Grenade Oreo. This is a positive for the category, helping to increase penetration and broaden the appeal of a once-niche choice of snack confined only to fitness fanatics.

"Creating a home for healthier snacks in-store is the sustainable way to grow the category alongside traditional confectionery while providing a better-for-you tasty alternative," she adds.

On-the-go drives basket spend

Convenience continues to be one of the most important purchase drivers in the protein and functional foods category, observes Lacka Foods' Turner. "With increasingly busy lifestyles, consumers are seeking quick, accessible formats that can slot into their day. Ready-to-drink protein shakes and high-protein snacks are particularly well-placed to meet these needs. Their portability and ease of use make them ideal for impulse and food-to-go occasions. While meal replacements and shakes may both be growing, they fulfil distinct roles – consumers tend not to substitute one for the other, but rather engage with both depending on the occasion and desired outcome."

Danone's Cunningham maintains convenience is particularly key for under-35-year-olds, as 35% of this group are regular gym-goers[20] seeking quick, nutritious options. Drinkable formats like yoghurt shots, protein drinks and functional beverages are among the fastest-growing segments[21] – especially popular as a healthy addition to breakfast. "As 20% of consumers say products that are easy to eat/drink on-the-go are the most important factor for breakfast[22], we're expanding our range of convenient, on-the-go options to meet this demand," he says.

Convenience is vital to the success of the protein sector with consumers snacking more than ever before, says Grenade's Austerberry. "One in six consumers are replacing a meal with a snack and 71% of consumers snack twice a day[23], so there's lots of opportunity for protein bars to be the solution for health-conscious snackers," she says.

Arla Foods' Punchard points to strong growth in on-the-go formats. "Snacking is a highly relevant occasion across yoghurts, drinks and other protein categories, while meal replacement is an important and fast-growing part of the protein drinks category, rapidly evolving into its own subsector, with many products now available for consumers to choose from. Both snacking and meal replacement have a role to play in the future growth of protein and functional foods.

"Shoppers will choose where to shop for their on-the-go occasion based on what the store range looks like," she adds. "We've seen some retailers start to promote breakfast in-store by providing on-the-go breakfast deals."

Convenience remains a major growth driver for protein and functional foods, agrees LSI's Harriman, who adds that snacking and on-the-go formats are now more relevant to consumers than traditional meal replacements. "Shoppers want quick, no-prep options that deliver functional benefits without slowing them down," he notes.

Meanwhile, Nutrabolt's Coppin sums it up: "Convenience is the new essential. It remains a top priority with snacking and functional drinks gaining traction. Consumers want quick, effective nutrition, whether in ready-to-drink shakes, protein bars or meal replacements."

Shoppers are almost equal in their preferences when it comes to high-protein ingredients and snacks, with 51% of shoppers stating they prefer protein-fuelled food they can eat straight away, over that which requires cooking[24], reveals Quorn Foods' Grogut. "Consider this alongside the 29% of shoppers reporting that they are actively trying to eat more protein[25], and we can see there's a demand in the market for both options."

While she agrees that convenience remains one of the strongest drivers of growth in the protein and functional foods sector, Bol Foods' Picton says the picture is evolving. "While snacking and on-the-go formats have traditionally dominated, meal replacements – and in particular meal replacement drinks – are playing an increasingly important role in the category, she says. "The UK meal replacement products market is forecast to reach US$1.34bn in 2025 and projected to nearly double by 2035 to nearly $2.5bn[26]," she reveals. "This growth is being fuelled by more health-conscious consumers, rising interest in weight management and the shift towards plant-based nutrition."

Empwr's Holmes, meanwhile, notes that crisps/chips is one area where products with protein are beginning to emerge, with brands like Novo starting to share fixture space with Walkers and McCoys, for example. "We are also seeing the emergence of high-protein water and soft drinks. For all of these products there is still a huge opportunity to fill the hole left at our checkouts and queue lines by the HFSS legislation," he observes.

Protein & functional: no longer niche

Retailers should recognise that protein and functional foods are no longer niche – they are mainstream essentials, says Nutrabolt's Coppin. "To grow the category in mainstream channels, it's crucial to list leading sports nutrition brands that drive consumer engagement. Allocating more shelf space and online focus to these products will ensure they meet

Analysis

the growing demand for performance-driven nutrition."

At Danone, Cunningham notes that health is not just a trend but a long-term consumer priority. "As shoppers increasingly seek out foods that support their wellbeing, the demand for protein and functional products will only grow," he says. "Retailers who invest in this space, through shelf space, online visibility and strategic merchandising, will stand to benefit from sustained category growth."

For Empwr's Holmes messaging and educating consumers is paramount. "Although many consumers in the UK are adopting protein and better understanding the benefits it can offer, there are still a large number who think that 'high protein' means 'only for athletes and gym users'," he says. "A huge proportion of the headroom will be unlocked by bringing these consumers into the protein and functional foods categories. Softer and more inclusive brand styles with very clear missions and messages will be key to helping people transition."

At Grenade, Austerberry says: "Protein bars and shakes continue to grow, with the expectation that, by 2030, the protein bar category will be worth £422.5m (currently £162.5m[27]) and shakes are half the size but in faster growth, up 21%[28] and giving lots of exciting opportunity to brands and retailers. Providing an easy-to-find high protein range alongside typical snacking products will help consumers to opt for a better-for-you option when they feel like it and, given the high POR and value of such protein ranges, this provides a lucrative opportunity for savvy retailers. Also, for protein shakes, finding space in a retailer's busy chiller can be a rewarding exercise given the consumer demand, high value and rich POR vs other similar soft drinks."

Protein snacks represent one of the most exciting and profitable growth opportunities in the functional foods space, says LSI's Harriman. "As more shoppers prioritise high-protein, low-calorie, great-tasting snacks, demand for beef jerky is accelerating. Retailers who allocate more shelf space, increase online visibility and deliver strong in-store execution stand to benefit from a category that's rapidly moving from niche to mainstream."

List now, ready for January on-shelf, advises Eatlean's Chapman, who adds: "The protein category is alight with growth, focus and opportunity for sales. All age groups of consumers are engaging in all the convenient and value-added products brands can offer and can get on to shelves immediately. Protein foods are no longer niche – they are everyday essentials. Retailers who give these products more space and visibility will win shopper trust – and basket spend.

Protein opposites: mycoprotein for meat-avoiders and biltong for meat-eaters

Almost a third of people are actively trying to eat more protein[29], says Quorn Foods' Grogut. "There is a place in the market to cater for those shoppers who are trying to reduce consumption of animal products but want to increase protein in their diets, and they are open to trying different sources. Mycoprotein has been rated highly by those shoppers who are engaged with protein intake[30]," she notes. "At Quorn we're focused on making meat alternatives a truly positive protein choice and driving universal appeal. As an industry, we need to make sure consumers don't think they are missing out by choosing an alternative protein, when it's actually the opposite."

This category continues to see strong, consistent year-on-year growth – and it shows no sign of slowing down, says Lacka Foods' Turner. "As shoppers increasingly prioritise health, convenience and functional benefits in their everyday choices, protein and functional foods are no longer a niche – they are becoming core to the grocery mission. Retailers have a real opportunity to capitalise on this by giving more space and visibility to protein products in-store and online. With consumers across all ages now understanding the role of protein in energy, satiety and overall wellbeing, this isn't a passing trend – it's a lasting behaviour shift."

Bol Foods head of marketing Toni Ehrnreich agrees that functional food is becoming a daily habit. "The modern shopper is actively seeking products that offer more than calories," she says. "They want convenience with benefits – whether that's protein, fibre, energy or gut support. Functional formats, particularly on-the-go drinks and nutritionally complete meals, are now serving new missions like breakfast, snacking and active recovery – and are doing so across demographics, from Gen Z to young families.

"To meet this demand, retailers need to allocate more shelf space and digital visibility to clearly signposted, benefit-led zones – and prioritise brands that combine clean-label ingredients with real nutritional function. Giving these products more space, both physically and online, isn't just about premium price points; it's about catering to a health-savvy consumer base that's growing fast and expects more from every aisle. In short: functional food is the new staple – and shelves should reflect that."

Sources

1 HRA Global Protein Survey, https://tinyurl.com/55mjwzd8
2 IRI, All Outlets, Smart Food, 52 w/e 17.05.25 vs prior year
3 The Business Research Company
4 IRI/Kantar, as featured in The Grocer, Focus on Healthier Snacking, May 2025
5 'The Booming Market of UK Protein Powder', https://tinyurl.com/2ytx54cd
6 Circana, Protein Bars, Total Market, Value Sales, 52 w/e 08.06.25
7 Nielsen, MAT to June 2025
8-10 Toluna, Fieldwork, June 2024
11-12 Circana, All IRI Outlets, L52 w/e 28.06.25
13 Nielsen, 52 w/e 14.06.25
14 Deloitte, 2024 Future of Consumer Survey
15 Mintel 2024
16 See 8-10
17 See 11-12
18 The Grocer, Bags of Goodness report 2025, https://tinyurl.com/3x58w8zd
19 https://explore.kerry.com/taste-charts-2025.html
20 Mintel x Danone RTD research, Feb 2025 n=2000 respondents
21 Circana, 52 w/e 28.12.24
22 See 20
23 MDLZ 'International State of Snacking – 2022 Global Consumer Trends Study (MDLZ/The Harris Poll/Ipsos)
24-25 See 8-10
26 Future Market Insights 2025
27 Circana, Protein Bars, Total Market, Value Sales, 52 w/e 08.06.25
28 Circana (as in 31), data ending October 2024
29-30 See 8-10

Broad variety of demands

i Mintel, The Evening Meal at Home 2025
ii Mintel, Lunchtime Foods in Retail, 2025
iii Mintel, 2025 Global Food & Drink Trends
iv Market Measures, Consumer Research 2024

How retailers...

v See iii
vi See iv

BOL Foods

e: hello@bolfoods.com
w: bolfoods.com

A whole food revolution

DETAILS

Powder Bowl Trading LTD
BOL Foods Ltd
WeWork
5 Merchant Square
London W2 1AY

KEY CONTACTS

Paul Brown
Founder & CEO
Toni Ehrnreich
Head of Marketing
Elle Picton
Brand Manager
Alice Verril
Senior Category Lead

KEY BRANDS

BOL Power Shakes

Born out of innocent drinks in 2015, Bol has spent the last decade championing health and wellness with a simple mission: to help busy people eat well without compromise. Since going 100% plant-based in 2018, Bol has stayed true to its promise of delivering high-protein, fibre-rich meals made from natural, whole-food ingredients – not artificial shortcuts, says founder Paul Brown.

In March 2024, Bol launched its Power Shakes, disrupting the smart food category with a range of ready-to-drink, nutritionally complete meals. As Brown notes: "We wanted to bring everything people love about real food to this space – ridiculously tasty, naturally nourishing shakes made from the best of Mother Nature."

As consumers push back against ultra-processed foods, Bol is doing things differently, he adds. "The Power Shakes range now spans multiple recipes and our disruptive innovation, has already won over major retailers like Tesco, Co-op, M&S and Asda Express. As a result, the brand is now the UK's fastest-growing RTD nutritionally complete meal: up 202% in the last 12 weeks alone[1]. This category is booming, and our ambition is to deliver £25m in sales over the next two years while growing our share in a space that's worth hundreds of millions."

"With nutritionally complete RTD meals, Power Shakes are disrupting the category"

Source
[1] IRI, Major Multiples, 12 w/e 14.06.25 vs previous year

Arla Foods UK

e: arlafoods.co.uk/contact-and-help
w: arlafoods.co.uk

Where protein meets pleasure

DETAILS

Arla Foods UK
Arla House
4 Savannah Way
Leeds Valley Park
Leeds LS10 1AB
t: 0113 382 7000

KEY CONTACTS

Verity Richardson
Head of Milk Based Beverages at Arla Foods

KEY BRANDS

Arla Protein

Arla Protein is the No.1 protein brand in dairy, worth over £75m and growing year on year (YOY)[1], and has celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2025.

In the past few years, the company has cemented its Arla Protein brand positioning and broader target audience into the market. “Protein is no longer ‘just protein’; there is a shift towards naturally derived, delicious protein among consumers,” says the company. “What’s more, categories and semiotics are changing, and these have led the way for Arla’s transformational journey.”

Arla Protein’s indulgent milkshake

Arla Protein has launched its first ready-to-drink indulgent protein milkshake (200ml), especially for busy on-the-go shoppers,it reveals.

“Arla Protein Milkshake offers a thick and creamy texture and provides 20g protein, is lactose free, has no added sugar and is 182 calories or lower per cup. Available in two decadent flavours – Vanilla Fudge and Chocolate Brownie – this indulgent milkshake makes the perfect afternoon snack or evening reward. The convenient cup-and-straw packaging means you can simply extend the straw, insert and enjoy anytime, anywhere.”

Arla Protein Food To Go

Arla launched its first ready-to-drink (RTD) meal replacement shake in September 2024, with Arla Protein Food To Go. “Arla Protein Food To Go is an easy and tasty meal replacement drink that can be enjoyed on the move, as part of a healthy, varied diet and active lifestyle,” it says. “One bottle of Arla Protein Food to Go equates to one meal – and is lactose-free, gluten-free and contains no sweeteners.

“Our brand-new range, launched in September 2024, is available in a 500ml bottle in two delicious flavours – chocolate caramel and vanilla hazelnut. The convenient RTD format is perfect for those on-the-move consumption moments throughout the day, and a great alternative to meal deals when space is tight in-store.”

> **“There is a shift towards naturally derived, delicious protein among consumers”**

Growing milk-based protein offer

Milk-based beverages are typically purchased as an impulse item, so ensuring shoppers can get the product they want, whenever they shop, is key for increasing sales in the sector, says the company.

“This is because shopper missions are more diverse for milk-based beverages, in comparison to the rest of dairy, with purchases taking place across different channels.

“We would recommend optimising space available by placing best-selling single-serve milk-based beverages at a front-of-store location. As a secondary location, we would recommend placing multi-serve milk-based beverages within the dairy aisle. This appeals to bigger basket shoppers on a take-home mission, who can collect multi-serve products alongside other core dairy items.”

Source
[1] Nielsen, 52 w/e 14.06.25


THE UK'S NO.1 DAIRY PROTEIN BRAND*
Arla PROTEIN
STRAWBERRY & RASPBERRY FLAVOURED SHAKE
26G PROTEIN PER BOTTLE
NO ADDED SWEETENERS
Arla PROTEIN
MANGO YOGURT
20G PROTEIN PER POUCH
LOW FAT
Arla PROTEIN
CHOCOLATE FLAVOUR PUDDING
20G PROTEIN PER POT
NO ADDED SUGAR
Arla PROTEIN
BLUEBERRY
20G PROTEIN PER POT
0% FAT
200G
*NIQ Scantrack Data | Total Coverage Inc. Discounters
| Protein Total Value Share - Total Dairy | L52WE 14/06/2025
Arla®
STRENGTH COMES FROM WITHIN

Danone UK & Ireland
e: danone.co.uk/contact-us.html
w: danone.co.uk

Reshaping the yoghurt aisle

DETAILS

Danone UK & Ireland
Chiswick Business Park, 7
566 Chiswick High Road
London W4 5YG
t: 020 8799 5800

KEY CONTACTS

Zack Cunningham
Head of Category
& Commercial
Planning (Dairy)

KEY BRANDS

Actimel
Activia
Alpro
Danone Skyr
Aptamil
Cow & Gate
Evian
Harrogate
Volvic
GetPRO

The yoghurt aisle is undergoing a revolution. More than just a staple, today's consumers are reaching for products that deliver more – on function, nutrition, and support for their health goals. "At Danone, we believe it is not just a trend, but a fundamental redefinition of what people expect from everyday food," says Zack Cunningham, head of category & commercial planning (dairy) for Danone UK & Ireland.

"The rise of protein and functional foods is a clear reflection of this. Whether it is high-protein yoghurts, kefir drinks, or plant-based alternatives, shoppers are seeking out products that support gut health, muscle recovery and fitness. Health is the second most important factor influencing yoghurt purchases, reflecting a broader shift in consumer mindset where they are actively looking for products that add nutritional value and health benefits."

This shift is fuelling strong category growth. Yoghurt drinks, particularly kefir, have surged, with value sales almost doubling since 2023[1], led by new shoppers to the category, as well as converting current yoghurt shoppers looking to meet their daily protein needs, he notes. High-protein yoghurts have also piqued interest, up 22.5% over the same period[2]. These formats are especially popular with younger, health-conscious consumers, with pre-family demographics now accounting for 21.9% of total volume sales[2].

"With 98% of our portfolio being non-HFSS, we are committed to offering products that are both nutritious and accessible," says Cunningham. "From Activia's Kefir, to high-performance protein with GetPRO, our brands are designed to meet the needs of health-conscious consumers, whether they are looking for a protein boost post-workout or a healthy way to start to the day.

> **"Today's consumers are reaching for products that deliver more – on function, nutrition, and support for their health goals. We believe this is not just a trend but a fundamental redefinition of what people expect from everyday food"**

"Despite economic pressures, consumers continue to prioritise health and functionality. Kefir and high-protein formats have seen strong growth, and recent launches like Alpro's High Protein range and Danone Skyr, are delivering impressive results – clear evidence of the growing demand for plant-based, protein-rich options."

To fit busy lifestyles, drinkable formats – such as yoghurt shots and protein drinks – are among the fastest-growing segments, particularly in breakfast and morning snack occasions. "Here, consumers are prioritising health and functionality over indulgence, and we are responding with products that deliver on both," reveals Cunningham.

"This is not a phase, but a long-term transformation of how people approach food, as the lines between food, function and lifestyle continue to blur, and as people seek products aligned with their goals and values.

"At Danone, we're not just responding to these changes, we're helping shape them. With a portfolio rooted in health, a commitment to prioritise non-HFSS innovation, and a deep understanding of consumer behaviour, we are leading the next chapter of growth in the yoghurt category."

Source

[1] Circana, All IRI Outlets, 96.7% value sales % change 2YA, L52 w/e 28.06.25
[2] Kantar, L52 w/e 16.06.25 / Circana L52 w/e and L12 w/e 14.06.25


Feed your progress†
STRAWBERRY-RASPBERRY
IMPROVED RECIPE
25g PROTEIN
+ MAGNESIUM
+ VITAMIN B9
0% ADDED SUGARS*
0% FAT
BUILD & RECOVER MUSCLES
+ REDUCE FATIGUE
DANONE
GetPRO
Now with Magnesium & Vitamin B9
†Protein contributes to the maintenance & growth of muscle mass. Magnesium & vitamin B9 contribute to the reduction of tiredness & fatigue. Enjoy as part of a balanced diet & healthy lifestyle. *Contains naturally occurring sugars.

EMPWR Nutrition Group
e: eliot.holmes@empwrnutrition.com
w: empwrnutrition.com

The lifestyle shift in protein

DETAILS

EMPWR Nutrition Group
Sluisweg 2
9000 Ghent
Belgium

KEY CONTACTS

Eliot Holmes
UK Sales Manager
e: eliot.holmes@empwrnutrition.com
+44 7534 193987

KEY BRANDS

EMPWR Nutrition Group – Powering the future of protein bars
EMPWR Nutrition Group is a global leader in co-developing and producing high-quality protein bars for top healthy snack brands and retailers. With advanced facilities in Europe, the US, and Canada, EMPWR delivers global reach with local market know-how.
From concept to launch, the company fuses R&D, consumer and market trends, and operational excellence to create bars with standout taste, texture, and appeal. EMPWR helps partners scale fast and lead in a competitive market.

Source
[1-3] Circana, Total Internal UK Market, March 2023-March 2025

The protein bar is no longer a niche product for gym-goers; it has become a daily essential, a convenient indulgence and a powerful wellness tool. In the UK, the category is well established and continues to grow strongly in the past 12 months[1]. What's driving this momentum? A clear shift in consumer needs and behaviours.

To sustain and capitalise on this growth, brands and retailers need to recognise the evolution of the shopper mission and identify and meet these new consumer needs and occasions

Recent data reveals that bars with lower levels of protein and more alignment with confectionery have grown 24.6% year-on-year[2] and will continue to bring new consumers into the category. Also, with 81% of total category growth coming from multipacks[3], more of these will appear on shelves as existing consumers make protein bars 'store cupboard' items at home.

In addition, credible private-label bars will emerge to offer consumers great taste and texture alongside great value. Alongside taste, texture, and ingredients, price remains a top driver for consumers and an essential lever for brands and retailers looking to unlock the next phase of category growth.

As a global leader in co-designing, developing, and manufacturing superior protein bars, Empwr partners with the world's top brands and retailers to create products that push boundaries, says Eliot Holmes, UK sales manager. "With facilities in Europe, the US and Canada, our global reach is matched by deep local market expertise, enabling us to respond to regional trends while delivering consistent quality and standout shelf appeal," he notes.

Innovation with purpose

Today's protein bars must do more than fuel workouts; they must satisfy a growing number of diverse lifestyle needs, he adds. "Consumers want options ranging from indulgent, nut-based, and energy-boosting bars to plant-based products that deliver both functional benefits and remarkable taste," he says. "At Empwr, taste is non-negotiable. Every bar we develop is grounded in pioneering R&D, premium ingredients, and innovative formats crafted to delight diverse palates, from crispy and crunchy to soft and airy."

"Recent data reveals that bars with lower levels of protein and more alignment with confectionery have grown by 24.6% year-on-year, and will continue to bring new consumers into the category"

Private-label, reimagined

Private-label protein bars present a major opportunity for retailers to win with credible, great-tasting offerings at competitive prices, he adds. "Empwr delivers retailer-exclusive concepts, premium packaging, and a holistic end-to-end partnership, combining market insight, ingredient expertise and operational excellence. Our partners benefit from a seamless process that brings concepts to shelf without sacrificing innovation or taste."

As protein consumption moves beyond gym routines into everyday snacking occasions, Empwr is at the forefront of this evolution, helping brands and retailers capitalise on new shopper missions focused on indulgence, convenience, and wellbeing. "Consumers demand bars that fit seamlessly into their lifestyles, combining nutrition with a guilt-free treat experience," says Holmes.

Empwr fuses innovation, taste, and market strategy on a global scale. "We're not just manufacturing protein bars we're powering the future of protein," Holmes concludes.

Grenade

e: orders@grenade.com
w: grenade.com

Great-tasting protein range

DETAILS

Grenade HQ
Bournville Lane
Birmingham B30 2HP

KEY CONTACTS

Tom Murphy
CEO
Rachel Austerberry
UK Retail Sales Director

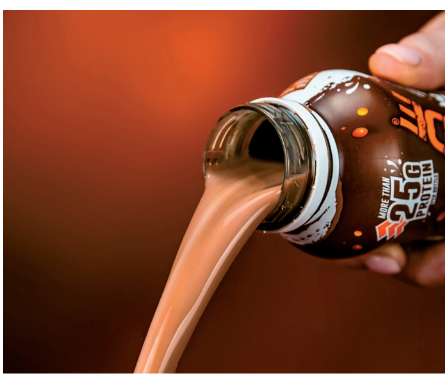
KEY BRANDS

Grenade

The demand for protein-packed snacks has continued to surge, with the protein bar category now worth £162.5m, 5+% vs previous 52 weeks[1]. Grenade's 43.5% share of the total market[2] continues to prove that the range is the best-selling and nation's favourite, says UK retail sales director Rachel Austerberry. "With consumers changing how and where they pick up their protein snacks, Grenade's varied range of delicious bars and shakes continues to deliver on what customers are searching for," she notes.

Recognising the importance of bringing great-tasting protein-packed solutions to customers, Grenade has championed its range of low-sugar, high-protein bars through its 'Revolutionary Snacking' campaign. And it continues to drive its low-sugar, high-protein message to consumers through digital media, in-store activations and new partnerships with Gen Z favourite, Baller League, along with fitness fanatics taking part in Tough Mudder. "With such a seriously tasty range, Grenade is on a mission to ensure consumers know there is a healthier, protein-packed alternative available," adds Austerberry.

Grenade Oreo remains the best-selling protein bar with £2.4m of sales in the last 12 weeks[3], achieving a £ROS of £8.10[4]. "With eight of the top 10 best-selling protein bars in the UK[5], including HFSS-compliant flavours such as Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough and White Chocolate Cookie, it's important retailers continue to stock these best-sellers to give consumers choice of the popular flavours," says Austerberry.



"Grenade Oreo remains the best-selling protein bar, with £2.4m of sales in the last 12 weeks[3], achieving a £ROS of £8.10[4]"

The best just got better

Not satisfied with already holding the best-selling range, Grenade has recently reformulated four of its favourite bars – Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough, Fudged Up, White Chocolate Cookie and Caramel Chaos – with a softer texture and richer flavour. "By doing so, the Fudged Up flavour has become HFSS-compliant making it another perfect protein solution for health-conscious consumers, still wanting a sweet treat," says Austerberry.

Entering into the top 10 best-selling protein bars is the 35g Oreo variant[6]. "This snack-sized bar is the perfect protein treat alongside a meal or for a lighter bite," she adds. "Retailers can maximise this opportunity by including the 35g alongside the core 60g range to help introduce more consumers into the protein category at a lower price point."

Seriously creamy shakes

Returning to Grenade's range are its new ready-to-drink protein shakes. " "Available in five delicious flavours, including Fudge Brownie, White Chocolate Cookie and Salted Caramel, with over 25g protein per shake and low in sugar and fat, they offer a refreshing treat," she says. Stored ambient but always best sold chilled, Grenade expects consumers to be going crazy for the range through the summer months.

Source

[1-2] Circana, Protein Bars, Total Market, Value Sales, 52 w/e 08.06.25
[3] Circana, Protein Bars, Total Market, Value Sales, 12 w/e 08.06.25
[4] Circana, Protein Bars, Total Market, CROS, 12 w/e 08.06.25
[5+6] Circana, Protein Bars, Total Market, Value Sales, 12 w/e 08.06.25

Jack Link's

w: jacklinks.eu
w: peperami.tv

Driving profitable growth in snacking

DETAILS

LSI Netherlands BV
Moermanskkade 101
1013 BC Amsterdam
The Netherlands

KEY CONTACTS

David Harriman
LSI Country Director UKI
e: David.Harriman@jacklinks.com

KEY BRANDS

Jack Link's
– Beef Jerky Original, Sweet & Hot and Teriyaki
– Biltong Original
– Original Beef Bar
– Ham Snack 25g
– 100g Clipstrips (Beef Jerky Original and Teriyaki)

Peperami
– Chicken Tikka Skewers
– Chicken Bites Roasted & Tikka
– 5-pack & singles: Original, Hot, Firestick and Chorizo.
– Original new BIG 10 PACK

Original Lunchbox Minis, BBQ Lunchbox Minis, Snack Boxes (Salami & Cheese) & Pizza Buns

Source
1-4 Nielsen, MAT June 2025

Jack Link's continues to drive strong growth in the UK protein snacking market, with sales up over 15% in value and 12% in volume over the past year[1]. As the jerky and biltong category surpasses £40m RSV[2], Jack Link's has more than tripled its UK retail sales over the past five years[3], reveals LSI country director UKI David Harriman. "Fewer than one in 10 UK households buy jerky[4], so there is significant headroom for further category expansion," he says.

In 2025, Jack Link's is investing in attracting new consumers and expanding usage occasions, he reveals. "A game-changing global partnership with the world's No.1 social media creator, MrBeast, which we have started to activate globally this year, will land in the UK with exciting products and packaging in 2026 – combining Jack Link's trusted quality with MrBeast's unrivalled digital reach," he says.

Jack Link's supports its range with insight-led campaigns and packaging improvements based on shopper research, enhancing standout on shelf and reinforcing core health credentials: 100% lean beef, high in protein, low in calories and fat. Merchandising strategies focus on dual placement with crisps and snacks, clip strips, and cross-merchandising to drive impulse sales.

"With strong consumer appeal and robust commercial performance, Jack Link's is a must-stock for retailers looking to tap into growing demand for healthier, high-protein snacks meeting today's functional snacking trends."

Quorn Foods UK

e: quorn.co.uk/contact
w: quorn.co.uk

Why choose the alternative?

DETAILS

Quorn Foods UK
Station Road
Stokesley TS9 7AB
t: 0345 602 9000

KEY CONTACTS

Lucy Grogut
Head of Brands

KEY BRANDS

Quorn

"We're on a mission to make Quorn the only positive protein choice for shoppers," says Lucy Grogut, head of brands at Quorn Foods UK. "Whether it's a picnic, lunch box or easy midweek dinner, we have a range of delicious and desirable go-to products; with all the benefits and no compromise."

With 90% of consumers interested in including new sources of protein in their diet[1], Quorn is encouraging shoppers to make simple swaps that fit into their daily lives. The brand has been building on the success of its ready-to-eat range as shoppers look for convenient ways to reach their protein goals.

"More consumers are now choosing Quorn when grabbing a tasty, high protein snack on-the-go," says Grogut. "To keep up with this demand for convenience, we launched two larger pack sizes of our snacking superstars – Quorn Cocktail Sausages and Picnic Eggs – and continue to build momentum by disrupting shoppers on their path to purchase.

> **"More consumers are now choosing Quorn when grabbing a tasty, high-protein snack"**

"We're focused on reaching shoppers at all the crucial touchpoints, including unmissable in-store and off-shelf activation. Using the fabulous puppet pals in our 'Mission Snack Swap' drive, we encourage consumers to make the simple swap and ask the question: 'So tasty, why choose the alternative?'."

Source
1 Toluna, Fieldwork, June 2024

Lacka Foods – UFIT

e: customerservice@lackafoods.com
w: ufitdrinks.com

The UK's No.1 protein gulp

DETAILS

Lacka Foods Limited
Park House, Mere Park
Dedmere Road
Marlow
Buckinghamshire SL7 1FJ
t: 01628 488966

KEY CONTACTS

Angie Turner
Head of Marketing

KEY BRANDS

UFIT 25g High Protein Shake Drink
UFIT 50g High Protein Shake Drink
UFIT Loaded High Protein Bar

Born in 2014 to challenge the idea that protein was just for a niche audience, Ufit is now the UK's No.1 ready-to-drink protein brand[1], delivering high-protein, low-sugar shakes that fit into everyday life, reveals Angie Turner, head of marketing at brand owner Lacka Foods. "What used to feel niche is now in aisles everywhere, and Ufit's mission to make protein more inclusive, accessible and enjoyable has helped reshape the category," she says.

With a 30% share of the ready-to-drink (RTD) protein category and the highest product loyalty across the sector[2], retailers benefit from Ufit's scale and its stickiness. "With repeat rates well above the category average, Ufit helps drive basket value and return footfall, particularly in convenience and top-up missions," notes Turner.

A bold new look

Ufit's recent packaging refresh brings the brand's bold personality front and centre. Rolling out now across its core shake range, the new design strips back the clutter to spotlight great taste, nutrition, and lifestyle appeal – helping the brand cut through as protein goes mainstream. "The vibrant colour palette and simplified on-pack communication reflect Ufit's confident yet approachable identity," says Turner. "Supported by a £150k marketing push across ATL and in-store media, the relaunch is already resonating: 58% of consumers prefer the new look[3], praising its clarity and shelf standout."

Protein for all kinds of doing

While much of the category still targets gym-goers, Ufit remains proudly inclusive – creating convenient protein products that fit around real lives, she explains. "The brand's lifestyle-led approach is a key differentiator, driving loyalty and helping broaden the category beyond traditional protein consumers. Whether it's a shopper looking for a healthier snack, a quick breakfast, or a midday recharge, Ufit delivers with flavour, format and function, all wrapped up in packaging that's built for standout in chillers."

"What used to feel niche is now in aisles everywhere, and UFIT's mission to make protein more inclusive, accessible and enjoyable has helped reshape the category"

Innovation that hits the sweet spot

Ufit continues to lead the category through relevant, insight-led innovation, she adds. Most recently, the brand expanded its portfolio with Ufit Loaded Protein Bars – combining real chocolate, natural flavours and 15g of protein to re-energise the category with a mainstream appeal. Tackling taste barriers and price perception head-on at just £1.29 RRP, Ufit Loaded was recently named The Telegraph's 'Recommended Best Buy' in its 2025 roundup of the best protein bars.

Last year, Ufit also introduced a £1.79 price-marked pack (PMP) range across 310ml shakes, simplifying shopper choice, providing a clear entry point for new consumers, and driving growth in the impulse and convenience channel[4].

"With a clear lifestyle positioning and mainstream flavour appeal, Ufit delivers high protein, great taste and everyday value – whenever and wherever shoppers need a boost," says Turner.

Source
1 Nielsen Total Coverage, w/e 17.05.25
2 Kantar, 52 w/e 23.03.25
3 Vypr, April 2025, n=254 category buyers
4 Nielsen, Total Impulse, w/e 17.05.25

PROOF'S IN THE PROTEIN

UK'S #1 GULP*

BIGGEST GROWTH DRIVER

BIGGEST GROWTH DRIVER**

FOR EVERY KIND OF DOING

* UK's Number 1 RTD Protein Drink Brand with a Market Share of 30% (Source Neilsen: Total Coverage RTD Protein Drinks 52 w/e 10th August 2024)

**Largest contributor to growth of all brands in the last quarter (Source: Neilsen RTD Protein Drinks Total Coverage 13 w/e 17th May 2025)

Nutrabolt

e: support@c4energy.com
w: instagram.com/c4energy_eur/

Stellar performance for C4

DETAILS

Nutrabolt Distribution UK Ltd
1 Bartholomew Lane
London EC2N 2AX

KEY CONTACTS

Paul Coppin
VP EMEA Marketing

KEY BRANDS

C4 Performance Energy 500ml
C4 Pre-workout
– C4 Original
– C4 Sport
– C4 Ripped
– C4 Ultimate
C4 Original Pre-workout shots 60ml
C4 UltimatePre-workout shots 60ml
C4 Whey protein

Over the past year, C4 has cemented its leadership in functional energy, growing its Performance Energy 500ml range by 31% in symbols and independents in the last 52 weeks[1], reveals Paul Coppin, VP EMEA marketing at Nutrabolt.

"Building on that momentum and for our traditional sports nutrition business, we launched C4 Whey Protein – in partnership with The Hershey Company – just weeks ago," he says. "Consumer demand has far exceeded projections: sales have rocketed, and we've accelerated production runs to keep up with this unprecedented demand."

NPD & innovation pipeline

"The company's debut protein powders deliver 25g whey per serve, zero added sugars, and the indulgent taste of Reese's Peanut Butter & Chocolate, Hershey's Milk Chocolate, and Vanilla Bean," says Coppin.

"Early consumer feedback has been amazing, with them highlighting the perfect balance of macro-friendly nutrition with indulgent flavours they recognise and trust, at an affordable price."

Marketing and merchandising

To ensure C4 Whey Protein stands out, the company is investing across multiple touchpoints:

- **Retail support:** prominent fixture placements, branded POS and early listings in Boots, Costco and Holland & Barrett to secure brand visibility at shelf and online.
- **Digital and social media:** a full-funnel campaign leverages athlete ambassadors, fitness micro-influencers, TikTok challenges, and user-generated content to drive trial, reviews, and social proof.
- **Sampling and experiential:** tasting activations in gyms, events and festivals help build the consumer demand with the events reinforcing the product benefits.

> **"Early consumer feedback has been amazing, with them highlighting the perfect balance of macro-friendly nutrition with indulgent flavours they recognise and trust at an affordable price"**

The road ahead

"C4 Whey Protein's explosive debut demonstrates that flavour-led, scientifically-backed nutrition that continues to resonate powerfully with consumers and this is what underpins the total C4 brand, whether that be as the No.1 global pre-workout brand[2], in the fast-growing C4 Energy drinks or now with C4 Whey Protein," says Coppin. "Aligning the C4 credentials with flavours consumers recognise allows us to grow category users, and it's also a no-brainer for retailers to get behind.

"For retailers, this means one thing: prioritise performance nutrition," he adds. "Allocate dedicated space, back it with impactful point-of-sale, and partner with brands that fuse innovation, taste and purpose.

"In today's market, functional is fundamental – and C4 is the blueprint for success."

Source

[1] Circana, Symbols & Independents, L52 w/e 14.06.25, Sports & Energy
[2] Based on cumulative global sales of C4 branded pre-workout products


NEW
C4® WHEY PROTEIN
Reese's
SINCE 1894 HERSHEY'S
THE WHEY YOU WANT IT
STOCK UP NOW
PEANUT BUTTER & CHOCOLATE Flavour
Reese's
C4 WHEY PROTEIN
MUSCLE SUPPORT & REPAIR^
25g HIGH PROTEIN
ZERO
13 SERVINGS
milk chocolate Flavour
HERSHEY'S
C4 WHEY PROTEIN
MUSCLE SUPPORT & REPAIR^
25g HIGH PROTEIN
ZERO ADDED SUGARS
13 SERVINGS

Tetra Pak

w: tetrapak.com

Making functional compelling

DETAILS

Tetra Pak Ltd
5 Merchant Square
Paddington
London W2 1AY

KEY CONTACTS

Tetra Pak Northern European sales enquiries
e: NE.enquiries@tetrapak.com

KEY BRANDS

Tetra Top® carton packaging
Tetra Prisma® Aseptic carton packaging

Functional foods and beverages represent significant growth potential for brands. In 2023, the UK category generated £7.4bn and analysts predict it will almost double to £13.6bn by 2030, while Europe's meal-replacement segment alone is forecast to surge past 7% between 2024 and 2033[1].

"Today's consumer is not defined by age or lifestyle, but by mindset," says Tetra Pak. "Whether for immunity, gut health, cognitive support or energy, shoppers are actively seeking food and beverages that offer functional benefits as part of a health-conscious lifestyle."

Seventy-four per cent of consumers seek out active health claims when purchasing food or drink[2], and 88% say they're willing to pay more for products that support their wellbeing[3].

"At Tetra Pak, we've seen how quickly this market can accelerate, but success requires more than a good idea," says the company. "It demands innovation across formulation, processing, packaging, and market strategy."

Unlocking value

Functional beverage formats such as ready-to-drink (RTD) solutions offer convenience, portability and targeted health benefits, ideal for on-the-go lifestyles. "That's where packaging becomes a key differentiator," says Tetra Pak. "Tetra Top is the ideal solution for this category: a sleek, beverage package that's perfect for premium chilled products. It offers brand owners a 360-degree printable surface, ideal for bold, impactful messaging. For consumers, its ergonomic design aligns with active lifestyles, making it easy to grip, carry, and reclose on-the-go. For ambient products, Tetra Prisma Aseptic's distinctive prismatic shape ensures a secure and comfortable grip for hands of all sizes and ages, while the cap is engineered for optimal flow, making it perfect for on-the-go.

> **"We've seen how quickly the market for functional food and beverages can accelerate. But success requires more than a good idea. It demands innovation across formulation, processing, packaging and market strategy"**

"We also support manufacturers with advanced processing technologies, such as controlled mixing, cross-flow membrane filtration and aseptic dosing, to help protect sensitive nutrients and improve product stability."

Formulated for your taste

How a product is received is often determined by subtle sensory factors, with mouthfeel and flavour just as critical as nutritional claims. "Whether it's a clear, refreshing protein drink or a smooth, indulgent shake, Tetra Pak can help fine-tune the sensory profile to meet consumers' preferences," it says. "Our teams can help you achieve the right product balance – whether that means lighter, smoother or sweeter."

"At Tetra Pak, our decades of product development experience, industry-leading processing technology, and strong track record in packaging innovation help F&B businesses bring functional products to market faster and more efficiently. Get in touch with a member of the Tetra Pak team."

Source

1. UK Functional Foods Market Size & Outlook, 2023-2030, Grand View Research
2. Ipsos for Tetra Pak Quantitative Survey on Health & Nutrition 2023 – Brazil, China, Germany, India, Kenya, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, the UK and the USA
3. Nielsen, Global Health & Wellness Survey, 2015; CleanEating WGSN 2016

The functional beverage market is growing fast.

Are you ready?

From protein to postbiotics, today's consumers want more from every sip, and they expect convenience, nutrition, and a beverage package that stands out.

Tetra Pak's Food Supplement & Nutrition solutions help you formulate and scale your product with precision. Pair your drink with **Tetra Top®** for chilled products or **Tetra Prisma® Aseptic** for ambient products. Our sleek, on-the-go packages protect your product's contents, elevates your brand, and meets modern demands.

Unlock your potential for functional beverage innovation.

www.tetrapak.co.uk

Tetra Pak®
PROTECTS WHAT'S GOOD

William Reed LTD.
Broadfield Park, Crawley, West Sussex RH11 9RT
Tel: 01293 613400 Fax: 01293 610380
www.thegrocer.co.uk