

Food NPD - UK - November 2009

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What is this report about?

Innovation is one of the major drivers of the food market and innovation itself is driven by broader social and cultural trends. Two trends – towards convenience and towards healthier eating – have helped reshape the UK food sector over the past decade. UK eating habits have received massive attention, as has the manner in which food is produced – we are what we eat, and how we move our food from field to table has a real impact on the planet and on the lives of food producers. All these issues have affected NPD in the food sector.

What have we found out?

- Diet and health has become an urgent social issue in the UK and has transformed food NPD. 'Better-for-you' propositions are now effectively ubiquitous and no manufacturer can afford to be without its healthy credentials.
- With environmental issues making people more aware of their own impact on their surroundings, trends in ethical, responsible sourcing, Fair trade and sustainability have risen in prominence. People are more exercised about where their food comes from and the manner in which it is produced.
- Younger people - and the most affluent - are most open to new food products. However, an ageing demographic and the fact that older people have more disposable income than has been the case, means the food industry will need to address the over-50s more effectively.
- Ready meals have received most attention in terms of NPD, but they have also received most adverse publicity in terms of their 'healthiness'. The industry has tried to re-position ready meals as both 'healthy' and 'natural' – but with limited success.
- Interest in cooking is widespread in the UK and growing, boosted by cookery's high media profile and a legion of 'celebrity' chefs. The evidence seems to point to a huge latent desire to cook, but not necessarily from scratch. As a result, there is currently growth in part-prepared meals and in high quality ingredients.

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