

Potatoes - UK - November 2009

Report Price: £1500 / \$3000 / €2250



What is this report about?

The potato market has experienced strong growth over the last two years with value growth of around 7% and volume growth of around 3% per year. The industry itself has worked hard to reposition the potato as a healthy food, whilst celebrity chefs have reignited consumer interest in the market.

Mintel last assessed the potato market in March 2007.

What have we found out?

- The chilled potatoes sector is showing strong growth, now accounting for 2% of the market. Not only do consumers want potatoes that require minimal cooking, but they are also responding to the health/ freshness position of chilled potato products. Fresh potatoes still account for two-thirds of the market.
- Suppliers are repositioning potatoes as a healthy and natural option. Four out of the ten top positioning claims are health-related.
- Potato manufacturers have an opportunity to tap into trends such as nostalgia and indulgence. As the recession has progressed, British consumers have been turning to classic comfort foods, many of which use potatoes as a key ingredient, such as fish & chips, bangers & mash and shepherd's pie.
- Overall consumption of fresh and processed potatoes is declining. Consumers may be substituting potatoes for other vegetables as potatoes don't count towards the government's recommended "5-a-day" fruit and veg consumption: potatoes cannot be promoted in this way.
- Branding and provenance could help to drive the market forward in the future as over a third of consumers buy named varieties of potato.
- Frozen foods in general have benefited from the recession, with consumers buying frozen goods to save money and reduce wastage. Frozen potatoes appear to have overcome their unhealthy image, with value and volume sales rising in the last two years.

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