

## Organic Food and Drink - UK - October 2013

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*"It is important for organic brands to communicate to shoppers in a more effective way the tangible, concrete benefits their products offer them. Given the vast amount of product information that is already competing for shoppers' attention, clear, dynamic labels that can be understood at a glance are needed."*

– Emma Clifford, Senior Food Analyst

### This report looks at the following areas:

- What impact has the horsemeat scandal had on the organic food market?
- What barriers does the market face in capitalising on the predicted growth in consumer spending?
- How can brands more effectively communicate the benefits of the organic label?
- Will a change in EU organic regulation benefit the market?

The post-recessional landscape in the UK remains a challenging one for the organic label. While people are adopting a more positive outlook and consumer spending is tentatively picking up, the organic market is undoubtedly marred by perceptions of organic food being overpriced and the related scepticism over the palpable benefits it offers consumers. Therefore, overturning negative attitudes and justifying price points will be key in order for the market to reap the rewards from shoppers starting to loosen their purse strings as the economy regains momentum.

Nonetheless, the first green shoots of recovery are evident. After four years of successive decline – with the value of the market sliding by 27% between 2008 and 2012 – retail sales of organic food are forecast to edge up in 2013. This is expected to be driven by growth in both the dairy and baby food sectors and helped by sales of organic fruit and vegetables stabilising.

The extent of the impact the horsemeat scandal, and the spotlight it put on sourcing integrity, had on organic sales is difficult to gauge in real terms. However, a quarter of organic shoppers agreed that the scare made organic produce more appealing to them, indicating a tangible boost in interest.

Organic food sales are forecast to increase marginally over the 2008-13 period, according to Mintel's estimates. This highlights that the road ahead is likely to remain a challenging one for the market in the mid-term at least. However, the younger generation's affinity for the organic proposition and their expansive repertoires inspire optimism for the long-term future of the market.

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