

Ready Meals - Ireland - October 2013

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“The ready meal market is expected to experience steady growth in the years ahead until 2018, boosted mainly by its convenience status amongst time-scarce consumers. Brands should look to enhance the nutritional credentials of meals and adopt a more transparent approach to the sourcing and origin of ingredients.”

– Sophie Dorbie, Research Analyst

This report looks at the following areas:

- What impact did the horsemeat scandal have on consumers' attitudes towards ready meals?
- How can ready meals improve their health credentials and appeal to health-conscious consumers?
- Are consumers favouring chilled, frozen or ready-to-cook meals?
- What impact is the scratch cooking resurgence having on the ready meal market?

The ready meal category is continuing to perform well in a challenging grocery market, with year-on-year sales increasing between 2010 and 2013.

With Irish consumers becoming increasingly 'time-scarce' due to the pressures of work and family life, the ready meal market is well positioned to strengthen its appeal as a quick and convenient evening meal option. The market is set to also benefit from a decline in average household size in which chilled, frozen and ready-to-cook meals all have strong appeal, due to their single-serve portions.

Overall, NI consumers are purchasing prepared meals more often than their RoI counterparts suggesting an increased reliance on convenience options and perhaps lack of cooking skills amongst NI consumers. Within the ready meals sector, frozen meals are suffering from negative perceptions, with NI and RoI consumers associating such meals as unhealthy, less trustworthy and more processed than chilled and ready-to-cook options.

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