

# [frozenfood]

ISSUE 1- 2021



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FROZEN FOOD  
INDUSTRY





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# A CLEAR FRONTRUNNER

**BOGDAN ANGHELUTA**  
web & digital editor

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ast year has been a challenging one for everybody involved in the food industry, especially for those in foodservice. While sales here plummeted due to lockdowns, restrictions, and general public fear of contracting the virus, higher-than-expected retail performances helped some producers come up ahead, when they drew the line at the end of 2020. Frozen food was a clear frontrunner here, as

consumers turned to it due to a series of factors. Firstly, frozen seems like the natural choice when visits to the store are rare and food needs to keep its qualities for a longer period of time. This also complemented the necessary, but still somewhat lacking desire to avoid food waste. Having products that one can use after weeks or months does help reduce the amount of food consumers throw away, and more people realize this is turning from "nice to do" to "must be done". As environmental issues become more pressing and as such more evident, minimizing food waste is now a duty we all share. Secondly, the abundance of products released in recent years, especially when referring to plant-based

or free-from foods, showed the enormous range that the frozen category has. Staying inside did more than just create the occasion to experiment with cooking, it also offered time to think about what and how we consume. As such, it accentuated the "eat healthy" trend. This is a change that I expect will become permanent. As for frozen food in 2021, although it's unlikely we'll witness the retail euphoria seen last year, the category stands

strong enough to generate even more growth, albeit a moderate one. The recovery of foodservice alone will not be enough to break new grounds, but it will help several manufacturers begin the climb back to pre-COVID-19 activities. Some may not be this fortunate, but the industry will balance itself, as it always does. How is your business coping with the so-called "return to the new normality"?

Feel free to send me your thoughts at [bogdan.angheluta@trade.media](mailto:bogdan.angheluta@trade.media). ●



The abundance of products released in recent years, especially when referring to plant-based or free-from foods, showed the enormous range that the frozen category has.



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# A CATEGORY THAT KEEPS ON GROWING



Despite the events that began a little more than a year ago, the market for frozen snacks and appetizers seems to be growing even faster than the overall frozen food market, which has been seen as one of the few categories that have thrived during the pandemic. An ever-expanding range of products seems to be one of the main reasons for this evolution, supported by innovation and close attention to the needs of the consumers.

T

he frozen snack food market is expected to grow by USD11.30 billion, progressing at a CAGR of over 6% until 2024, at the end of the forecast period. The data

comes from Technavio, which recently released its Frozen Snacks Market - Growth, Trends, and Forecasts (2020 - 2024) report. According to the study, the rise in the launch of products is one of the major factors propelling the market growth. However, factors such as frequent product recalls will hamper the market growth. Vendors are increasingly launching products in the frozen meat snacks segment, and these launches have a positive impact on the global market. Vendors operating in the global frozen snack food market are concentrating on introducing highly nutritious frozen snacks. Regionally, APAC will offer several growth opportunities to market vendors during the forecast period, as the increasing consumer demand for frozen snacks and the expansion of the distribution capability of vendors will significantly drive the frozen snack food market. 35% of the market's growth will originate from APAC during the forecast period, with China and Japan as the key markets.

## INNOVATION IS KEY IN THE CATEGORY

The market for deep-frozen finger food and snacks is growing rapidly, according to Frédéric Dervieux, CEO of the **Frostkrone Food Group**. Last year, too, the demand for snacks between meals was still very big and this trend will continue, he points out. "The market is driven by innovation with consumers incredibly open to new ideas and keen to try lots more – in terms of choice, tastes, and the way food is prepared. We are keen to fulfill the wishes of our clients in the trade and the needs of those in the foodservice sector. And as their partner, we aim to support them all with a stream of new ideas on finger food and snacks. And it is especially the free-from products that are riding high. Here there is huge growth potential. There is now such a varied choice – both in the trade and also in the

foodservice sector." Under the umbrella of Crunchy Homies, Frostkrone Food Group has brought together its popular snack range that stood on the shelves of freezer cabinets for years. With the advancement of new technologies and thanks to an improved recipe, the products of this range come out of the oven even crispier than ever before. "The Crunchy Homies range is made up of popular finger food and snacks that are much loved by the consumer – indeed these are our bestsellers. And all the variations with their extra crispy coating are on sale in shop freezers. In the case of these products, we are running with a new crispy coating, the production of which is made possible by a new and different state-of-the-art technology. The result is that the finger food variations come out of everyone's oven at home super crunchy. And the quick and easy preparation remains, of course, as quick and easy as it has always been." This year, the Crunchy Homie Collection will be steadily extended so that consumers can enjoy even more bestsellers perfected in this new kind of crispy coating. The range currently features the following products: Crunchy Cream Cheese Paprinos, which are red cherry peppers filled with the creamiest of cream cheese and accompanied by a spicy, aromatic red pepper dip; Crunchy Mozzarella Sticks, which are tasty sticks filled with melt-in-the-mouth

Photo: Frostkrone



The market is driven by innovation, with consumers incredibly open to new ideas and keen to try lots more – in terms of choice, tastes and the way food is prepared.

Frédéric Dervieux, CEO of the Frostkrone Food Group



Photos: Frostrkrone



mozzarella and enhanced with an aromatic and spicy red pepper dip; Crunchy Cream Cheese Jalapeños, Mexican jalapeños filled with truly creamy cream cheese and fine-tuned with an aromatic and spicy red pepper dip; and Crunchy Chilli Cheese Nuggets, which boasts a creamy composition of soft cheese with fiery chilies in the batter. Frostrkrone's latest innovation just launched on the market is Favorizza: the new pizza snack collection, which is available in so many different variations. "This collection superbly reflects our aspirations of creating new and exciting finger food and snack variations for the consumer,

products that are, at the same time, simple, straightforward, and fuss-free. The selection here is huge so that variations for every occasion and every taste are on offers, such as breakfast snacks, hearty delights with lots of cheese, vegan variations, and sweet bites." Among the products are „Early Bird” Buns such as

Bacon Omelette, which are small yeast dough bun loaded with scrambled egg, cheese, and belly bacon, perfected with parsley and sprinkled with Gouda cheese; "V-Style" Buns, which include Hummus & Olive, or small yeast dough bun filled with hummus, olives, and parsley; Sweet Bites such as Copenhagen-Style, which are sweet yeast dough filled with persipan and sultanas. "And one thing everyone is also still talking about is the «Green Date» range. Our free-from range, which is purely plant-based and gluten-free and which has no additives, no flavor enhancers, and no preservatives. Not only are all Green Date snacks bursting with vegetables but they are also incredibly crunchy. And that's all down to the tiger nut, which forms their basis," Frédéric Dervieux adds. These deep-frozen products are available in six flavors and various styles, e.g. coins, croquettes, balls, and burgers. They are available with a coating or naked. One example is the The Curry Kiss, a fresh and fruity Indian-style snack made of nutritious edamame beans in a composition of mango and tiger nuts and perfected with apples, carrots, coconut flakes, and onions. The variations are available as burgers or coins.



**30%**  
was the growth  
registered by  
vegetarian  
snacks in 2020.



# It's all about **POTATO**



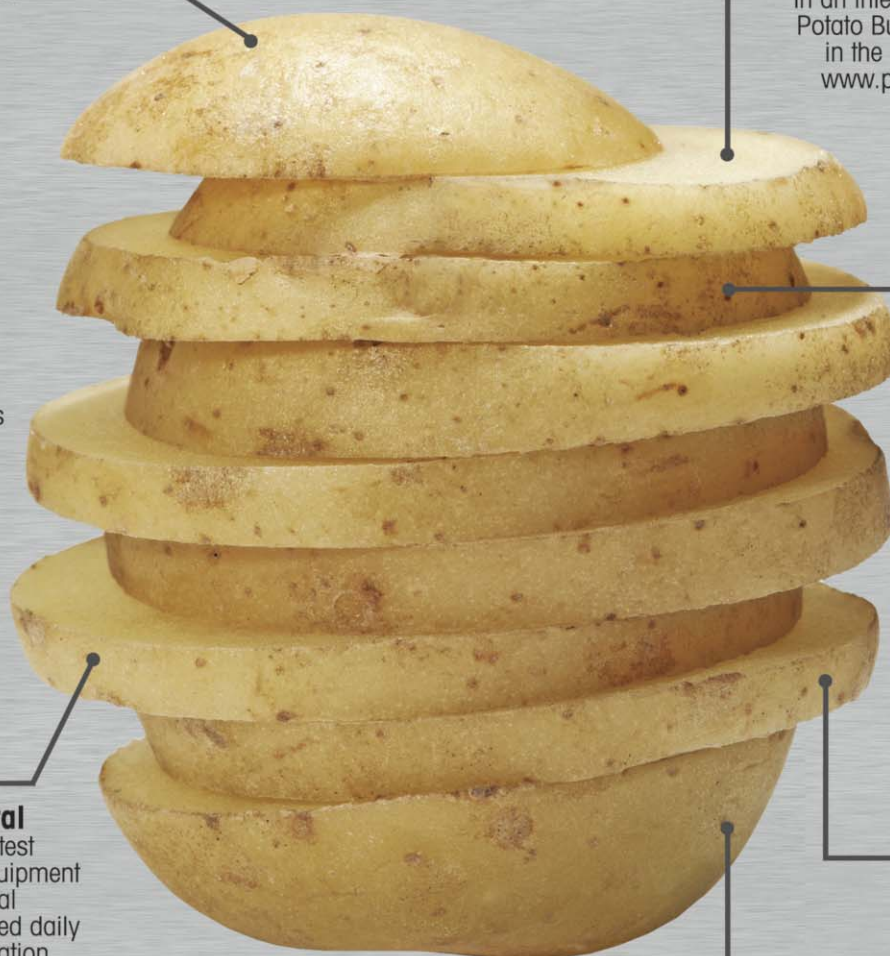
## **POTATO PROCESSING INTERNATIONAL**

Potato Processing International has been serving the global potato processing industry for 25 years and is regarded as a must-have information source for potato processors, equipments and ingredients manufacturers, as well as players in storage, retail and foodservice. This business-to-business magazine is published six times per year and continuously strives to be the most comprehensive publication, containing in-depth articles, expert views from some of the most respected companies in the industry, exclusive interviews, as well as news and trends.



## **POTATO BUSINESS Portal**

From breaking news to the latest innovations in processing equipment and potato products, the portal [potatobusiness.com](http://potatobusiness.com) is updated daily with the most relevant information for all players in the potato processing and storage industries. Regarded as a trusted source of information, the website also contains exclusive blog articles and white papers on various current topics that concern the potato universe.



## **POTATO BUSINESS DIGITAL**

Tailored specifically to meet the needs of the busy professionals in the potato industry, Potato Business Digital is the first industry standardized digital magazine for tablets and mobile phones. This quarterly online publication presents exclusive articles on various processing topics, as well as information on ingredients, food safety and storage innovation, in an interactive and dynamic form. Potato Business Digital is available in the click-to-read format on the [www.potatobusiness.com](http://www.potatobusiness.com) portal.



## **POTATO BUSINESS Weekly Newsletter**

The latest news, exclusive articles and interviews are delivered directly to your inbox with our weekly newsletter service, containing pertinent information from trusted sources, as well as industry insights and updates.



## **E-BLAST**

- Custom e-blasts using specific segments of our e-database, depending on the client's needs, with measured results.
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## **SPECIAL PROJECTS**

- May - Potato Business Dossier 1
- November - Potato Business Dossier 2



# A **COMPLETE** COMMUNICATION **PLATFORM**





## HEALTHY LEADS THE WAY

Continuous innovation within snacks & appetizers is key to this market, according to representatives of **Le Duc Fine Food B.V.** "New veggie products and the way of presenting it to your clients stimulates consumption. Of course, during COVID-19 consumer needs were changing, like staying at home and deciding to eat less meat. Still, the consumers want to enjoy tasteful snacking and vegetarian appetizers offer a solution to these needs. Le Duc Veggie offers a lot of variety within vegetarian appetizers and finger food", representatives add. "Within the Nielsen figures, we saw a growth of more than 25% this year within frozen snacks and more than 30% within vegetarian snacks. As this growth is embedded in new consumer habits, we expect it to continue or speed up this year. The consumer worrying about their health and the effect of their consumption on the sources of mother earth is still growing," Le Duc representatives point out. Le Duc Veggie recently launched the Goat Cheese Bites, which are appetizers that fit in with current trends. Another new product is Le Duc Broccoli Cheese Nugget, which boasts vegetarian cheese combined with

fresh vegetables. "This product is fitting in very well in the trend of healthy appetizers. Within this product you can discover real chunks of broccoli and recognize our statement «Filled with nature»," company representatives say.

## SNACKING IN THE MORNING

**Tyson Foods** brand Jimmy Dean recently introduced its Breakfast Nuggets, which are made with premium, signature seasoned Jimmy Dean meats, eggs, and cheese, bundled into a crispy bread crumb coating and ready in two minutes. With 11 grams of protein per serving, Breakfast Nuggets are available in two varieties: Sausage, Egg & Cheese, and Chicken Sausage, Egg & Cheese. The new Jimmy Dean Skillet and Jimmy Dean Delights Skillet varieties feature Jimmy Dean signature seasoned meats, real vegetables, and cheese. With the simple addition of six fresh eggs, the Skillet divide 13 -14 grams of protein per serving when fully prepared. "We know it's important to people to have a variety of breakfast options to keep mornings delicious and fun," Scott Glenn, senior director of marketing, Jimmy Dean brand said. "We believe breakfast helps people have a great start to their day, whether on-the-go with our bite-sized Breakfast Nuggets or around a kitchen table enjoying the comforting flavors of a Skillet."

## BREAKING NEW GROUNDS WITH FRIES

At the start of 2021, **Simplot Foods** announced the launch of its SeasonedCRISP Delivery+ Fries, the first and only savory-seasoned fries with industry-leading 40+ minute hold time. The new line is designed to give operators four new seasoned-fry choices that stay crisp despite rigors of takeout, delivery, and drive-thru dining. According to a company statement, the unique batter of Simplot SeasonedCRISP Delivery+ Fries stays



# 6%

is the expected annual growth rate for the frozen food market, according to Technavio.





crisp even after 40+ minutes. They can even be reheated at home in a microwave in just 15-20 seconds further extending the delivery window for operators. "With the stress of the pandemic, our operators can't afford to disappoint their off-premise patrons," Mark McKellar, president of Simplot Foods said at the time of launch. "These products make it possible to deliver a satisfying, seasoned-fry experience no matter where their customers are." The introduction of Simplot SeasonedCRISP Delivery+ Fries comes on the heels of 2020's successful introduction of Simplot Conquest Delivery+ Fries, a line of six unseasoned cuts that also stay crisp 40+ minutes. Now, with seasoned and unseasoned options, Simplot offers operators 10 cuts of fries specifically for delivery and takeout. Like Conquest Delivery+ Fries, SeasonedCRISP Delivery+ Fries are versatile enough to use as a primary fry for off-premise or dine-in orders. This means operators don't have to stock a separate SKU of delivery fries for off-premise orders, helping them simplify kitchen operations and conserve freezer space. The new SeasonedCRISP Delivery+ line includes four popular shapes: Savory Battered Straight Cut 3/8", Skin On; Savory Battered Straight Cut 5/16" x 3/8", Skin On; Savory Battered Loops, Skin On; and Savory Battered Lattice, Skin On.

### PLANT-BASED, A TREND THAT SAVED THE DAY FOR READY MEALS

Unlike the overall frozen food category, frozen ready meals have had a challenging 12 months due to the pandemic, according to Amy's Kitchen representatives. "However,



During COVID-19, consumer needs were changing, like staying at home and deciding to eat less meat. Still, the consumers want to enjoy tasteful snacking, and vegetarian appetizers offer a solution to these needs.

Le Duc Fine Food B.V.

plant-based frozen ready meals have seen strong growth. We expect to see continued innovation and new entrants to the market. It is likely the overall category performance will start to improve when consumers start to go back to work and normality starts to resume." Amy's Kitchen has launched an organic frozen range in Carrefour last autumn, this being the company's first fully organic range. "Our focus is to transition all our frozen products in the UK and EU to fully organic in the future", representatives say. "With an increased focus on health and normality starting to appear on the horizon with the pandemic consumers are increasingly wanting convenience products which are also healthy. As such our emphasis over the last year has been on converting our frozen range to fully organic (in line with our soups) and focusing on plant-based innovation which we hope to launch in Q4 in the UK and France." In terms of new trends, company representatives say plant-based has grown impressively over the last 12 months in the frozen category. ●



# INNOVATION AT THE FOREFRONT

Frozen food technology has successfully adapted to the digitalized age we are currently in, benefiting from a large number of innovations which companies have brought to the market. This is particularly important now, as frozen food has seen tremendous growth in the past 15 months. In part, it is because people simply had more time to spend in the kitchen, and also due to a greater understanding of the benefits of frozen food. Regardless of the reason, technology played and will continue to play a substantial role in this process.



“T

he global response to the COVID-19 global pandemic is having a profound impact on how we consume food. From where we buy food, to the type of food we buy, the impact on food supply

chains is unprecedented,” according to Bob Petrie, president of **JBT Protein EMEA**. “At JBT, we are working incredibly hard to create a safe working environment for our employees so that we can support our customers’ response to these changes and ensure our communities continue to receive the food they need during this difficult time.” One of the ways JBT responds to the needs of its partners and consumers is the company’s Internet of Things (IoT) offering. JBT iOPS allows for connected equipment and operation monitoring, providing food manufacturers with new and unique possibilities to ensure sustainable and profitable growth through insights and proactive actions that would not have been possible to achieve in a profitable way before. Before iOPS we had to go out to the customer to get performance data, but now we are able to view the data on our laptops through the iOPS Dashboard, which shows straightaway what exactly is going on, instant access to this data is hugely valuable. The technology, he continues, also enables customers to gain a far clearer idea of the true state of their Overall Equipment Effectiveness (OEE). With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and greater numbers of companies moving to remote working as a result, an iOPS integration can provide an overall, accurate picture of food processing operations without always having to be there in person. Another way JBT is supporting is through its Food Technology Centers (FTCs) located worldwide, which have been employing innovative methods to help customers test new equipment and food applications. In recent times the FTCs have become innovators in remote testing, developing solutions that are proving so viable, they could become a semi-permanent feature in the post-COVID-19 world. JBT FTC’s remote testing services are offering customers the means to carry out testing – with effective real-time remote monitoring – without having the expense of international travel and hotel accommodation. „With the COVID-19 travel hazard and restrictions we have been able to turn the problem into a solution, and customers have been very thankful for the effort we have taken to do this and very complimentary about the time we have spent,” Bob Petrie adds. JBT also responds to the increased demand for automation in equipment-producing retail products to match the recent change in consumption patterns caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. With an uptick of retail demand and product types, combined with a decrease in available labor. In a time when a single positive virus hit can shut down a plant for multiple days or even weeks and cost a food producer millions of dollars, improving labor efficiencies through automation is an existential necessity for food producers.



From where we buy food, to the type of food we buy, the impact on food supply chains is unprecedented.

Bob Petrie, president of JBT Protein EMEA



Food Safety incident exposure & liability risks have exploded due to speed and reach of social media platforms, the company says. Incidents that were considered minor or acceptable in past are now transformed into major media reported incidents impacting customer sales and reputation. Customers are pushing for higher Food Safety hygiene demands onto manufacturers to protect their brands. „At JBT our range of equipment are all designed to match the toughest hygiene demands, while being sustainable, flexible and easy to handle and we continue to develop and push boundaries when it comes to setting new industry hygiene standards. In a changing world, safety and food quality have become the most important keywords in the food supply chain.”

Photo: JBT

## MONITORING SOLUTIONS - A WAY TO ENSURE SAFETY

**Ashworth Bros., Inc.** now offers the SmartSpiral®, which is a monitoring system for critical belt and system parameters. It continuously monitors parameters and outputs warnings when set limits are exceeded. This SmartSpiral System operates in freezers where frequent manual checks are uncomfortable and freezing temperatures pose safety concerns. “We have also released our PosiDrive Spiral® System which employs patented cage bar caps to positively drive the belt; limiting product movement and maintaining produce registry,” according to Jonathan Lasecki, director of Engineering at Ashworth Bros., Inc.. The Ashworth SmartSpiral® monitors belt tension, system temperature, motor power usage and uses the company’s patented bearing sensor to monitor bearing wear. The system operates independently of the system and sends system warnings to the users’ cell phone, tablet, or





Photo: Ashworth



The Ashworth SmartSpiral® monitors belt tension, system temperature, motor power usage and uses the company's patented bearing sensor to monitor bearing wear.

Jonathan Lasecki, director of Engineering, Ashworth Bros., Inc.

desktop when they occur. "Using our proprietary software users monitor a single or multiple system in the same plant or at multiple locations. The Ashworth PosiDrive® System uses a patented cage bar design to reduce belt tension and maintain product registry. The system benefits include extended belt life and helps to maintain product alignment through the discharge of the system. This provides ease of product handling into downstream packaging equipment," Jonathan Lasecki adds.

### IN DEMAND OF A SAFE FOOD SUPPLY

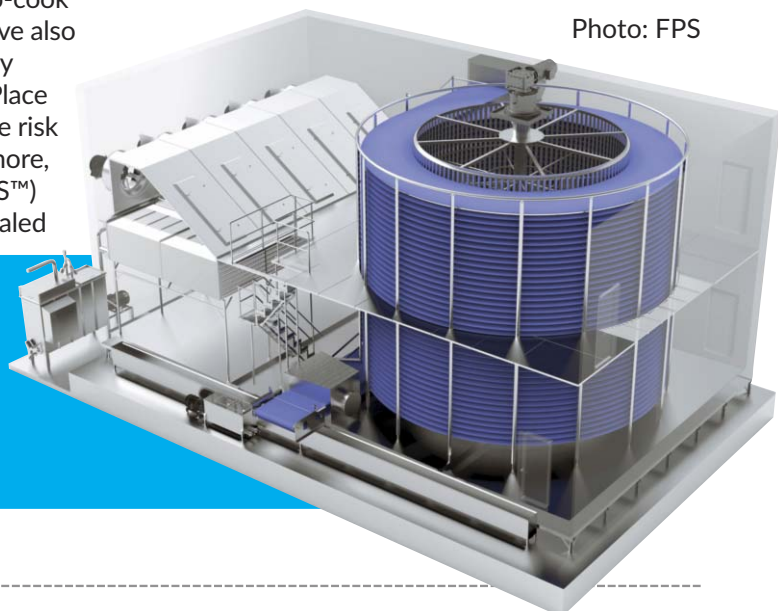
**Food Process Solutions** has a long history of experience in industrial freezing solutions, beyond the company's 10 years. Emerging technologies and customer expectations for safe, hygienic solutions in food production have consistently pushed FPS to go over and beyond. "In an age of social media and transparency, consumers are curious about how their food is processed and what they are feeding their families. Consumers demand a safe food supply. In terms of hygiene, we have a saying, «If you can lick it, would you lick it?» With a shift in many industries from ready-to-cook to ready-to-eat, food safety requirements have also increased dramatically," according to company representatives. FPS' recirculating Clean-in-Place (CIP) systems with pasteurization mitigate the risk of contamination before packaging. Furthermore, the company's Spiral Immersion System™ (SIS™) can cook, chill, and freeze products within sealed

vacuum bags to ensure no exposure to the environment throughout the processing cycle. "The food production industry as a whole is driven to set protocols in hygiene and food safety. We should not be anything less. We would consider our equipment to be set at the highest hygienic standards. This means ensuring our equipment is sanitary across a wide breadth and scope of food categories – meats and poultry, fruits and vegetables, bakery products, seafood, and a growing plant-based market. During COVID, we have seen an unprecedented shift to eating and cooking at home. From ready-to-cook and ready-to-eat (RTE), the onus is on food processors to adjust to consumers' need for convenience and safety. Trends in plant-based products or meat alternatives have also been experiencing greater interest due to global sustainability, providing more options to consumers. At FPS, we conduct continuous testing through our Food Innovation Hub, an R&D center that focuses on providing innovative and optimized freezing/chilling solutions," representatives add.

FPS explores innovative technologies to meet customer needs, and among these innovations are the first of its kind, 1.8m Spiral Freezer and the Spiral Immersion System™ (SIS™). In collaboration with Intralox, FPS developed the 1.8m wide belt spiral freezer to match larger processing lines. For food processors, this is a critical factor in being able to produce higher output. The SIS™ was developed to not only produce better quality food products but could also save on cost, time, and energy.

"Conceived almost two years ago, this is a revolutionary game-changing freezing technology that utilizes fluid instead of air to freeze products 20-80% faster. Not only that, the SIS™ can pasteurize, cook and sous vide, providing greater flexibility and options for customers. Developed in-house at FPS, the SIS™ takes advantage of the superior performance of water and brine immersion processing leading to energy savings, labor savings, higher yields, longer shelf life, safer, and better-quality food products," FPS representatives conclude.

Photo: FPS



The food production industry as a whole is driven to set protocols in hygiene and food safety. We should not be anything less.

Food Process Solutions



# Your partner for high-quality IQF-vegetable cutting

## *Dorphy*



**Dorphy™** is the answer to your small dicer needs providing a cost-effective solution for perfect cutting quality.

## *Volantis™*



**Volantis™** is perfectly suited for the transverse slicing and julienne-cutting of elongated or leafy vegetables.

## *Tridis 180*



**Tridis™ 180** is specifically designed to reach perfectly cut strips or dices at medium-high volumes.



## *Tridis 240*



**Tridis™ 240** is designed for very demanding high-capacity frozen vegetable, fruit and French fry processors.

FROZEN FLAT & CRINKLE SLICES, (JULIENNE) STRIPS, DICES, FLAKES, ...







New to the DiversaCut® line, the DiversaCut 2110A® with Conveyor Dicer provides batch and controlled discharge of product.



Urschel

Photo: Urschel

## CUTTING, A SEGMENT FULL OF INNOVATION

As the global leader in food cutting technology, **Urschel Laboratories, Inc.** remains the market leader in industrial food processing plants throughout the US, Europe, and all countries where food is commercially processed. The Chesterton, Indiana-headquartered company recently released five new dynamic models. New to the Affinity® line, the USDA, Dairy Division accepted Affinity Integra-D Cheese Dicer and the Affinity CD-L Dicer, focusing on dried fruits/bakery products and offering higher capacities compared to the CD-A and L-A dicers. New to the DiversaCut® line, the DiversaCut 2110A® with Conveyor Dicer provides batch and controlled discharge of product. In the DiversaCut® line, all 3 models offer cost savings by limiting the need for pre-cutting of products. Standard DiversaCut 2110A and Conveyor Discharge both accept products up to 10" (254 mm) in any dimension. Large Product Input machine accepts products as large as 14" (356 mm) in diameter. Another new product is the TranSlicer® 2520 Cutter, which is available in two models, standard or short length. This new slicer builds on the TranSlicer name and offers a newer design. Every facet of the machine focuses on time-saving, therefore cost-saving, sanitation practices. On average, customers incorporating the TranSlicer 2520 into their production line are saving 25 minutes per washdown/cleaning versus previously owned machines. Elements of the machine aid in visual inspections and assist with hygienic cleaning procedures.

## TURNING INFORMATION INTO KNOWLEDGE

Powered by Industry 4.0 methodologies, **Key Technology's** VERYX® digital sorters equipped with Key's Information Analytics software enable customers to turn information into knowledge that can be harnessed to better manage incoming raw materials and optimize processes to achieve higher operational efficiencies. The sorter continuously collects, analyzes, and shares data about the sorting process and every object flowing through the line at the same time it sorts, revealing patterns and trends via real-time data or batch reports. These reports,

combined with the ability to monitor and control the sorter remotely, enable a processor to better manage their product quality, increase yield, reduce downtime and minimize labor to improve profitability. „At Key, our ability to engineer optical inspection systems as well as material handling and other processing solutions allows us to deliver integrated solutions to address our customer's needs. We recently designed an integrated system for processing green beans that separate incoming products into several streams. In addition to removing foreign materials, we're separating easy-to-snip green beans from hard-to-snip green beans before snipping, so each stream can be handled with optimized settings. This new approach improves case recovery to reduce the processor's cost per ton, while also producing more consistent product quality with less equipment required in the downstream process,” says Marco Azzaretti, director of Marketing at Key Technology. „Our best-selling equipment includes our VERYX family of digital sorters and our Iso-Flo® line of vibratory shakers – the world-class performance delivered by these systems improves product quality and food safety, increases yield, and reduces operating costs. On the wet end of frozen food production, our belt-fed VERYX sorters inspect product entirely in-air to see every facet of each object in the product stream while eliminating the pitfalls of viewing products while they are sitting on a belt,. Compared to other belt-fed sorters, which suffer from contamination of optical surfaces that degrade sort performance over time, VERYX belt-fed sorters feature sensors, light sources and optical backgrounds positioned away from product splatter zones, so the all-sided surface inspection can be sustained throughout long production cycles without operator intervention.” For frozen product inspection, the company's chute-fed VERYX is usually preferred because it takes up less space than belt sorters. Here, immediately before packaging, the sorter's ability to ensure a product is in-grade and free of foreign materials is



For frozen product inspection, the company's chute-fed VERYX is usually preferred, because it takes up less space than belt sorters.

Marco Azzaretti, director of Marketing at Key Technology

Photo: Key Technology





critical. To maximize product quality and yield, VERYX sorters can be equipped with our unique Pixel Fusion® inspection technology. Pixel Fusion combines pixel-level input from multiple sensor types to create a unique 'signature' that identifies each type of substance in the product stream, ensuring foreign material and defect removal while virtually eliminating false rejects.

## A STRONG FOCUS ON EFFICIENCY

The frozen food sector is very diverse with many different products, each requiring very specific cutting solutions. It's also a very demanding industry with often high peak capacities and a strong focus on efficiency and yield. It's with these requirements in mind that **FAM** continues to innovate in cutting equipment that offers hygienic solutions with the superior cut quality and efficiency at minimal TCO. "One of the most important elements in offering successful cutting solutions is our in-depth knowledge of the product to be cut. Texture, composition, and temperature are all important parameters that contribute to efficient cutting. While many products, such as vegetables, that eventually end up being frozen are cut fresh, other products such as strawberries, specific meat products, or cheeses benefit from a tempering process getting the product in the perfect cutting condition, which for certain applications can even be slightly frozen," FAM representatives say. FAM offers frozen food processors a broad range of cutting machines throughout the IQF food categories. For cutting vegetables and fruit, FAM's Tridis family features two very robust cutting machines specifically catered towards heavy-duty IQF process environments. They are among the most versatile and reliable cutting machines on the market, and your guarantee for minimized production downtime. With a Tridis 180 and 240 version available, both medium- and high-volume processors can benefit from a consistent high cut quality on a broad range of cut sizes and shapes at capacities up to 15t/hr. The Volantis™ is the company's latest innovation and a preferred cutting solution for slicing elongated and oblong vegetable products such as carrots, zucchini, green beans, etc. into uniform slices with minimal waste. But also elongated meat products such as sausages are cut to perfection in a split second by the Volantis. "The USDA-certified Hymaks cutter is our premium cheese strip-cutting and dicing solution and next level when it comes to cutting performance and sanitary design. The Centris machine range is your high-capacity solution for top-quality cheese shredding, also available with USDA certification. For meat processors, the CMD.2 is FAM's continuous heavy-duty dicer, dedicated to perfectly cutting large chunks of frozen meat into strips and dices at temperatures as low as -10°C. FAM's Yuran Hytec in turn is hygienic belt dicer for meat and poultry processors looking to cut hand-pulled-look shreds, dices, and strips," FAM representatives add.



For meat processors, the CMD.2 is FAM's continuous heavy-duty dicer, dedicated to perfectly cutting large chunks of frozen meat into strips and dices, at temperatures as low as -10°C.

FAM



Photo: FAM

## SORTING TECHNOLOGY: A CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

In **TOMRA Food's** case, one example of a recent product update is the Blizzard, an optical sorter for IQF fruit and vegetables which was designed to narrow the gap between cost and efficiency. Unlike other camera-based sorters, Blizzard's cameras are combined with pulsed LED light, which greatly improves the contrast in photographic images of the fruit or vegetables moving down the line. This gives the Blizzard an accuracy closer to laser-based sorters at a more affordable price. And to make this machine even more effective, a recent update to the optical system has given it better contrast in green and yellow products. This improves the result, quality, as well as significantly reducing losses in rejected products to improve yields. TOMRA Food always strives to offer industry-leading sorting and grading performance, says Frank De Brauwier, sales manager at TOMRA Food. „We continuously review and improve our existing technologies to enhance customer benefits. As part of this ongoing process, we work closely with our customers to understand their needs. TOMRA Food's technologies are flexible, offering different sorting solutions for different stages of the line. This means we offer a wide range of sorting solutions: for pre-sorting, freshly processed fruit, and vegetables, and finished IQF. Many things set our equipment apart from competitors'. Our most important differentiators are superior sorting efficiency for food safety and product quality, accurate grading to keep customers happy, and minimal food waste for improved yields and profitability." Another key difference that De Brauwier points out is that all of the company's sorters can be connected to TOMRA Insight, a cloud-based data system. This subscription-based service turns sorting machines into connected devices, accessing information that can unlock machine performance improvements. Acting on this data pays off in many ways. Downtime is reduced by





Photo: TOMRA



Sorting to target quality is enhanced by having accurate material-composition data that enables decisions to be based on more detailed information.

Frank De Brauwier, sales manager at TOMRA Food

monitoring machine health near real-time, supporting the management of predictive and condition-based maintenance, and preventing unscheduled machine shutdowns. Throughput is maximized by evaluating throughput variations to optimize sorting equipment. „Operating costs are reduced by identifying gaps in production and analyzing potential root causes. Also, sorting to target quality is enhanced by having accurate material-composition data that enables decisions to be based on more detailed information. Intelligence in a production environment enhances efficiencies and profitability,” Frank De Brauwier concludes.

### CONNECTIVITY AS A REQUIREMENT

Since its inception, **Bühler** has operated with innovation at its core, states Stefano Bonacina, head of segment Fruit & Vegetables at Bühler. “This innovation stems from our close customer collaboration. We pride ourselves on the open and ongoing dialogue that we maintain with our customers which have allowed us to develop new, desirable products and technologies and adapt quickly to changing market needs. This is the principal reason why our frozen fruit and vegetable business has thrived for over 75 years. Through direct communication, we can gauge our customers’ most pressing challenges and work out ways to resolve them. As of lately, these pain points have included

connectivity and ease of use,” Bonacina adds. Joel Chase, product manager Fruit & Vegetables says that the ProSortX 4.0 software has been developed in direct response to Bühler’s customers’ feedback, as the previous software presented challenges to some untrained operators and that plant connectivity was becoming an increasingly common requirement. “The issue of ease of use has been resolved with our new EasySim user interface with TrueColor, which allows the operator to easily pinpoint gross and subtle defects and FM on screen. The operator can make intuitive adjustments to the machine’s sorting parameters as all frame captures are now shown as they are in real life, allowing intelligent improvements in efficiency and yield. Frames, including those showing FM, can also be stored and recalled for further analysis. EasySim also offers a new adjustment for defect sensitivity. Ultra-precise adjustments to sorting settings can be made and simulated on the frame capture without affecting running product, minimizing product loss and sorting downtime.” The problem of connectivity was addressed by SortexConnect, an Industry 4.0 ready feature that allows connection to services such as SORTEX’s AnywarePro remote data package offering offline analysis of sorter performance based on a historical log of throughput and ejection rates and connection to plant PLC control systems via the SortControl range of installations. “While our competitors use the approach of «one solution fits all», for both fresh and frozen, we offer our customers one platform dedicated entirely to doing the job of sorting frozen F&V,” says Bonacina. “With Bühler, the processor can depend on a reliable solution to work continuously for many years. Stable performance and less wearable parts than other detection technologies also mean lower overall maintenance and operating costs. Ultimately, we trust in the fact that our commitment to our customers’ needs and unrivaled performance are of superior value to the machine owner. Our dedicated Bühler sales and service organization operates in all key regions of the global frozen fruit and vegetable market – meaning peace of mind for our customers with experienced engineers just around the corner for any issues relating to maintenance, product testing, training, or digital services. Our overlying aim is to boost our customers’ production performance and ensure unmatched quality of the final product for their customers,” he concludes. ●



The issue of ease of use has been resolved with our new EasySim user interface with TrueColor, which allows the operator to easily pinpoint gross and subtle defects and FM on screen.

Joel Chase, product manager Fruit & Vegetables, Bühler

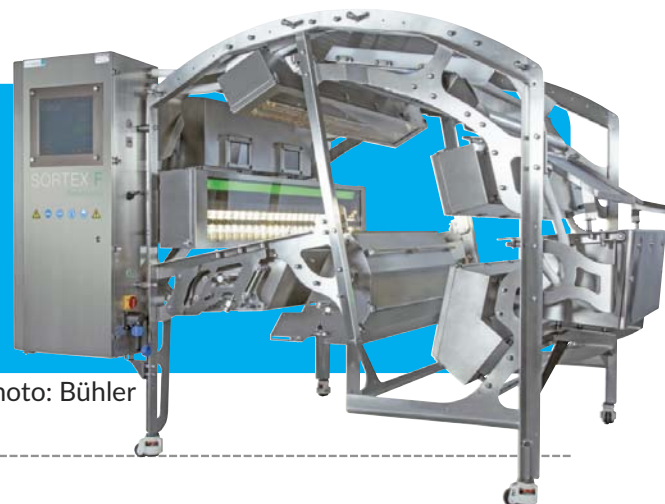


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**Time to cook and rediscover ingredients was all it took to give frozen vegetables a spike during 2020. An impressive two-digit year-on-year growth shows that consumers have increased their purchase of frozen vegetables and will most likely keep following this direction.**

**T**

he global frozen fruits and vegetables market reached a value of USD24.6bn in 2020, as frozen fruits and vegetables were rapidly gaining traction among

consumers as they offer a wide range of advantages over the fresh produce. According to the Centre for the Promotion of Imports from developing countries (CBI), in the long term, the European market for frozen vegetables is expected to show stable growth of 1-3% annually. This growth is likely to be driven by changes in the consumption patterns of European consumers, including 'ready to eat' or 'easy to prepare' meals and the replacement of food of animal origin with vegetable alternatives. Especially Germany, France, Belgium, the UK, Italy, and the Netherlands offer opportunities for developing country suppliers. Europe is by far the world's largest importer of frozen vegetables, accounting for around half of global imports. European imports of frozen vegetables have increased annually by an average of 3% in volume in the period of 2014-2018. The largest share of imports is intra-European trade, while only 11% of imports come from developing countries. To be more precise, internal European trade accounts for 92% of all imports and import from developing countries for the remaining 8%. Europe is the largest producer of frozen vegetables in the world, which explains the large share of internal trade in total imports. European import from developing countries increased by 3.2% in quantity over the last 5 years, reaching 275 thousand tonnes in 2018.

### **BRITS LOVE THEIR VEGETABLES**

"In the first part of the pandemic, we saw high sales across the whole frozen food", says Richard Harrow, CEO of the British Frozen Food Federation (BFFF). "We were seeing growth rates of 20% for the category, which was quite phenomenal, and it carried on pretty much all the way through a large part of last year. I think we've seen a trend of people shopping less frequently and buying bigger baskets, that's been identified by all the market research companies. You can also see that with the growth of online, quite often online shopping has a bigger basket size than in any store because if you have to pay for a delivery, you tend to make sure you get a lot for

that charge. All of that contributed to helping all frozen food categories see very strong growth throughout 2020. I was talking to retailers quite often and they were saying that the market was up by 20%, and it was the fastest-growing food category." In terms of frozen vegetables, latest data from Kantar shows that in the 52 weeks leading to the 1st of March, the segment was up by 8.1% in value and 13.3% in volume. Overall, the total UK frozen food market added around GBP930m in the past 12 months, while frozen vegetables added over GBP42m, according to Harrow. „The interesting thing is that the volume growth is higher. I think that's a good indication that retailers are battling it out on price. We're in a strange situation at the moment, we have a market that is very buoyant in retail, but the retailers are trying to grab share from one



For frozen vegetables, the private label is quite strong. If you look in most supermarkets' cabinets, there is definitely a bias towards the private label. And not necessarily just the basic products, they do a lot of mixes, a lot of value-added products.

Richard Harrow, CEO BFFF

another. Last year we saw Tesco launch the Aldi Price Match, and then we've seen Sainsbury's do the same thing, so they literally copied Tesco, but chosen different products." Private label is another area where frozen food exceeded the overall grocery rate, 53% vs 52%. "In vegetables, the private label is quite strong, if you look in most supermarkets' cabinets there is definitely a bias towards the private label. And not necessarily just the basic products, they do a lot of mixes, a lot of added value products." Over the last five years two trends have emerged, Harrow says: a lot of mixes in easy, convenient packaging, and also a big rise in produces used for cooking. "If you look at ready meals, the market is actually down year-on-year. And it's not surprising, because we always talk about ready meals consumers in the UK, saying they are cash-rich and time-poor. But the one thing most consumers have had in the last few months is time. So we see





people switching away from buying ready meals to cooking. At the end of last year, the category of ingredients for cooking was up by 20%. So people were buying ingredients to cook themselves, things such as sliced mushrooms or corn." Lastly, there is definitely a trend of people moving towards healthier products, especially with the pandemic, the BFFF CEO says. But that trend stretches to other frozen food segments, especially meat substitutes.

### GOOD FIGURES ALL AROUND

**Bonduelle**, one of the leading European producers of frozen vegetables, published its first half year 2020-2021 financial results, showing that long life operating segments (canned and frozen food) in the retail business activity posted robust growth over the 1st half of the year and even more so in

the second quarter, particularly in the branded products (Bonduelle and Cassegrain), due to the sanitary crisis and its related measures

(curfews, etc.) leading to a renewed interest in these product categories with long shelf lives, a company statement reads. This phenomenon has made it possible to absorb the sharp drop in activity in the food service business segment, particularly noticeable in frozen food, still at a standstill over the period (closure of commercial catering, home-working, etc.) and in fresh food, this market declined significantly, in the 3 related countries (France, Italy, Germany), as a result of lower in-store traffic, the driving force behind the purchasing act. Another example comes from **Nomad Foods**, whose portfolio includes brands such as Birds Eye, Findus, Iglo, or the recently-purchased Fortenova. Nomad's revenue increased 8.2% to EUR2.51bn, while organic revenue growth of 8.7% was driven by a 7.2% growth in volume/mix and a 1.5% growth in price. Gross profit increased 9% to EUR763m. **Conagra** also posted impressive results: the results for the second quarter of the fiscal year 2021 highlighted a 6.2% increase in net sales to USD3bn. The volume increase was primarily driven by consumers increasing their at-home food consumption as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which benefitted the Company's retail segments but negatively impacted the Foodservice segment. The price/mix favorability was primarily driven by a favorable sales mix, according to the company. Gross profit increased 11.4% to USD889m in the quarter, and adjusted gross profit increased 11.4% to USD895m. As data above shows, it's been a good year for frozen vegetables, and even if the circumstances that led to this growth might change, the trends that gave it steam will not. It's unlikely to see consumers giving up on frozen fruits and vegetables, especially since knowledge of their benefits have had time to sink in. The movement against food waste should and will also play an important role here, as fresh produce is extremely susceptible to spoilage. ●



# 13.3%

was the volume growth registered by the frozen vegetables segment in the past 12 months.



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# PLANT-BASED IS HERE TO STAY





As people suddenly had time to spare on their hands, they become more interested in the way they eat and what they could turn to for healthier options. Plant-based was already riding the wave, so it seemed like the easiest trend to adopt. As such, companies that had still not entered this segment found themselves compelled to do so, while major players simply upped their pace.

T

he plant-based meat market was estimated to be valued at USD4.3bn in 2020 and is projected to reach USD8.3bn by 2025, recording a CAGR of 14.0% in terms of value.

The data comes from a study presented at the end of last year by the research company Marketsandmarkets. The plant-based meat market is primarily driven by factors such as growing vegan and flexitarian population across the world. North American region is forecasted to grow tremendously owing to factors such as rising investments and consumer demand for vegan and clean-label products in the region, the study, also pointing out that one of the major restraints that is expected to hinder the growth of plant-based meat market is higher price of plant-based meat products as compared to traditional meat products. The burger patties segment of the plant-based meat is dominating the market, even though the plant-based burger patties have been there in the market for a while now. All the major players operating the plant-based meat market are constantly expanding their distribution network in order to make the plant-based burger patties available in the market and cater to the rising demand of consumers.

## AN UNPRECEDENTED DEMAND FOR PLANT-BASED

**Impossible Foods** is one of the companies with a strong expertise in developing ingredients and methods that give plant-based meat the entire sensory experience of animal-derived meat, including how it tastes, cooks, sizzles and smells. "We take a «worst first» approach to product development: In other words, we roll out products that replace the most urgent threats to our planet's ecosystems -- particularly beef and pork", a company spokesperson says. Impossible Foods fully intends to eliminate the need for animals in the food chain by 2035. "That means we need to make a wide variety of products that we currently get from animals -- including ground meats, «whole cuts» like steak, as well as milk, eggs, seafood and many more products. Our food tech

platform enables us to understand and reverse-engineer many animal products - including meat, dairy, and fish - from plants." The company's goal is to produce a full range of meats and dairy products for every region in the world. „In January 2020, we announced Impossible Sausage Made From Plants and Impossible Pork Made From Plants. We are working on a variety of next-generation products including milk and steak, but are not announcing the specific details of our product roadmap at this time. Impossible Burger and Impossible Sausage are uniquely appropriate as a take-out, drive-through and delivery menu item - and like ground beef from cows and pork sausage, our products are versatile, convenient and unusually resilient even in the face of economic swings. Our customers are recovering as more cities reopen and people begin to head back to work."

2020 was always going to be a year of massive expansion for Impossible Foods, but COVID-19 accelerated the company's scale-up to meet unprecedented demand: In March 2020, Impossible Burger was available in about 150 grocery stores in the US. As consumers began flooding into grocery stores, the company pulled up its launches with Albertsons Companies, Kroger, Walmart, Trader Joe's, Target and many more. As such, Impossible Burger is now available in close to 20,000 grocery stores nationwide, or more than a 100x increase in its retail footprint over the last year. „It's worth noting that our



To drive new levels of trial and repeat purchase, we recently cut suggested retail prices by 20% for grocery stores throughout the United States. The price cuts are the direct result of growing demand and economies of scale for Impossible products.

Impossible Foods





expansion came exactly at the moment that America faced its first meat shortage since World War II. Just as Americans found that they couldn't get animal-derived meat, Impossible Burger began debuting in grocery stores - and people have been trying it in record numbers as a result. Consumers are more interested in plant-based ingredients than in previous generations. They're buying Impossible Burger because it rivals ground beef from cows for taste, is packed with nutrients, and has a tiny fraction of the environmental footprint of animal-derived beef," company representatives say. In September 2020, 72 cents of every dollar spent on Impossible Burger came at the direct expense of animal-derived products— a "displacement rate" of 72%. By March 2021, Impossible Burger's displacement rate was 82%. Impossible Foods' goal is 100% displacement. "To drive new levels of trial and repeat purchase, we recently cut suggested retail prices by 20% for grocery stores throughout the United States. The

price cuts are the direct result of growing demand and economies of scale for Impossible products. The company plans to keep cutting prices until it undercuts the average price of commodity ground beef from cows." As far as new products go, last year the company launched Impossible Sausage Made from Plants, its first all-new product since the 2016 debut of Impossible Burger. Within six months, the savory patties have become available at thousands of locations globally (including about 15,000 Starbucks in the US and nearly 200 Starbucks in Hong Kong). In September, Impossible Burger debuted for the first time in Canada at some of Canada's most cutting edge, high-credibility culinary establishments, and it's now available at nearly 200 additional restaurants across the country. "In October of 2020, we announced plans to double the size of our research and development team over the next 12 months - expanding our multifaceted technology platform and accelerating product development in the process."

## CHANGING THE LANDSCAPE IN FOODSERVICE

**Beyond Meat** is another company that makes significant investments in plant-based product development. Founded in 2009, it is now one of the fastest growing food companies in the United States, offering a portfolio of plant-based meats made from simple ingredients without GMOs, bioengineered ingredients, hormones, antibiotics, or cholesterol. At the end of February, Beyond Meat announced the establishment of a three-year global strategic agreement with foodservice giant McDonald's. As part of the agreement, Beyond Meat will be McDonald's preferred supplier for the patty in the McPlant, a new plant-based burger being tested in select McDonald's

**3bn**  
USD is estimated to be the value of  
plant-based meat market in 2025.



markets globally. In addition, Beyond Meat and McDonald's will explore co-developing other plant-based menu items – like plant-based options for chicken, pork and egg – as part of McDonald's broader McPlant platform. The agreement will bring together McDonald's iconic global brand with Beyond Meat's leading expertise in plant-based protein development to create and market innovative new plant-based menu offerings. The relationship between McDonald's and Beyond Meat began in 2019 with the Canadian test of a sandwich made with Beyond Meat's plant-based patty.

In June 2020, Beyond Meat announced the opening of its first co-manufacturing facility in Europe in partnership with Zandbergen World's Finest Meat in Zoeterwoude, as well as the acquisition of the company's first manufacturing facility in Enschede. This will work together with the Zandbergen co-manufacturing facility to allow for end-to-end manufacturing capabilities in Europe. Together, the facilities will increase the speed, scale and efficiency with which Beyond Meat can produce and distribute its latest product innovations to its retail and foodservice customers across Europe, the Middle East and Africa. The effects became visible this April, when the company announced a significant product distribution expansion within thousands of European retail locations starting April. As Beyond Meat has grown its retail presence in the region, the European plant-based foods market has seen aggressive growth with sales increasing by 49% over the last two years. Beyond Meat products

are currently available at approximately 122,000 retail and foodservice outlets in over 80 countries worldwide. "These new and expanded retail partnerships throughout the continent serve as strong proof points that Europe's appetite for plant-based meat and Beyond Meat products in particular is on the rise," Chuck Muth, Chief Growth Officer, Beyond Meat said. "In fact, because of our strict ingredient guardrails, we've been able to more easily enter global markets including the EU to make plant-based meat options that are better for people and the planet more accessible to all."

While North America does seem to lead the way as far of plant-based goes, other territories are following on its footsteps. The European plant-based food and beverages market, for example, features global players such as Nestle SA, Hain Celestial, Conagra Brands, and Danone SA. According to a recent study by Mordor Intelligence, the forecasted evolution is impressive: the European plant-based food and beverage market is projected to grow at a CAGR of 8.87% until 2025. Germany has a growing vegan and vegetarian population, with nearly 10% of the population sticking to a vegetarian diet – one of the highest rates in Europe. Germany has gone so far as to create legal definitions of vegan and vegetarian for food labeling. And others will soon follow. All in all, plant-based foods and leading products such as burgers will become more visible and, even more important, accessible for all, regardless of region. That, at least, is the plan. ●



**14%**  
is the estimated  
CAGR of the  
plant-based  
meat market  
up by 2025.



# TASTE IS KING



In this exclusive interview, Food Union Europe CEO Normunds Staņēvičs talks about the process of innovation in ice cream, the importance of local brands, emerging trends, and the difference between tastes at a regional level.

By Dan Orehov and Bogdan Angheluta

W

hat other frozen food products, besides ice cream, are you focusing on and how much of Frozen Food Union's portfolio do they represent?

Ice cream is the main focus of our group and it also comprises the largest part of our revenue. However, one-third is also comprised of dairy products, high value-added dairy products such as snacks, yogurt, and bars. And then we also have frozen products and pastry, so in total, the non-ice cream part of Food Union comprises approximately 40%. This is a significant part of our business because it complements the local brand, high value-added development strategy that we have in particular countries, and equally important, it also capitalizes on the relationship with our consumers, with our partners, where we can provide these products. Ice cream is of course a seasonal business, and there is an increased level of sales during the summer.

If we refer to the strategy behind Food Union concentrating on developing strong, local brands, how does that differentiate Food Union from other market players?

We have the advantage of global access to knowledge, trends, and development that we experience in the international market of ice cream and desserts. Very importantly, in all the countries we have supported local management and local marketing teams. As such we can see, for example, that a particular flavor or taste needs to be enriched, and that is how we differentiate.

How do you get from an idea to the final product, when you come up with a new type of ice cream, for example?

The biggest part of ice creams sold globally features three flavors: vanilla, chocolate, and strawberry. I would like to think that we are one of the leading innovators of ice cream in Europe by coming up with different flavors and packaging solutions, and of course, that requires that we have internal systems and processes which are supported and developed for such things. As for the process, we first look at global trends, so we would be monitoring what are the most recent innovations, what would people like to see, and what kind of flavors or formats are required. We

will always pay attention to the developments and see if we can embrace any local flavors or packages. The second phase of the process needs to be data-driven, so regardless of how much we want to be a romantic or, trendy, we would always be looking at the market analysis and seeing how a particular flavor is performing in this market or another. We would be looking at the economics of a certain product, and based on that we would go on and discuss with our partners, retailers, traditional trade, distributors, exporters and say "We have this idea for a product, do you think that you can sell this much? Because based on our analysis, we think that this is what you should be able to sell." And then you develop the sales, marketing, and distribution program, and after that, it is basically incorporated in the production process and, the budget, and then offered for the production of next year as a novelty of a particular country. There needs to be a balance between the "head up in the clouds" and the "foot down on the grounds."

You are active in both Europe, including Russia and China. How much do consumer preferences differ between these two regions?

Food Union Global consists of three large geographical territories: one is Europe, the other is Russia and CIS, and the other is China. If we talk about taste preferences and habits we don't need to go as far as Europe and China, the ice cream taste is very personal and very emotional. As a Latvian, I can tell you that preferences differ



A little over half of our European sales is going through modern trade, and for us, it is very important to cooperate with them because modern trade is one of the main segments where people go to buy their food.



even between European countries. The capital of Estonia, Tallinn, is 300 kilometers from Riga, and the tastes are different. The Lithuanian consumers will always prefer desserts richer with honey and nuts, whereas the Estonians will like to have an ice cream more with a taste of Nordic berries.

We had a very popular launch of ice cream here in the Baltics, it was a sugary-crunchy waffle with vanilla ice cream in it. And we have started exporting it from Europe to Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore, selling it in convenience stores. It is becoming a very successful project because consumers in those countries also appreciate this flavor. At the end of the day, the taste is the king. You can go out, have super aggressive marketing, but the consumers will always come back if you can give them this fantastic taste that they really crave for. And that's what makes the difference between the consumers returning to your product at the shelf or a one-time sale, with them saying "Very nice, but no, thank you."



Please discuss the distribution and target regions of Food Union.

A little over half of our European sales is going through modern trade, and for us, it is very important to cooperate with them because modern trade is one of the main segments where people go to buy their food. However, there is another part of our business which is equally important, traditional trade. A good example is Romania, where we work with over 20.000 little stores all across the country. This gives us unique, direct access to consumers, as you can really feel and see what is the feedback of the consumer to a particular product. Another example of traditional trade is Denmark, where we are practically serving all of the kiosks along the coast. Those are owned by families and individual entrepreneurs. A third channel, which was outperforming all the other ones during the pandemic, is what we call the doors to delivery business. We own 500 trucks in Scandinavia - Norway and Denmark, and those would be driving around the country playing music next to your home and selling ice cream right out of the truck. Because we digitalized this business, having it all based on artificial intelligence - route planning, mobile apps where consumers get a push notification when the truck is entering their



**20K**

small stores  
from Romania  
are working  
with Food Union.



village - this was very convenient and very safe during the lockdown. On the back of this channel, last year we started to develop e-commerce. Just as the first pandemic wave hit, we started to launch new e-commerce shops in Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Denmark, Hong Kong.

#### Please comment on the manufacturing of private label.

We do some strategic partnership projects, we try to seek opportunities where we act as the R&D center for the partners who want to produce ice cream. For now, it is clearly not the main focus of our business, but if the partners come to us and ask that, if we see that we can add value through this activity, we will proceed. One thing that we will always try to avoid is going into price wars. Usually, the problem with private label is that it has been always focused on the price.

#### Food Union ended 2020 with a 5% increase in sales, despite the pandemic. Please comment on the company's performance and the countries that are most profitable.

I think it's fair to say we were one of the first companies in Europe who started very strict safety measures because of COVID-19, as we had experience from China. The measures that we implemented also for our trucks played a big part in keeping our employees and our consumers safe. Another part that played a significant part in the growth of this segment was the very agile refocusing of our operations because early on in 2020 we understood that there was no point in having massive outdoor adverts, as people were not going outside. We redirected all this money to sales, and we made sure that the stores or channels that were opened got the highest service possible so that the consumers could get access to all of the products they wanted. Another thing we did was allocate resources of the company to serve the around-the-corner and convenience stores so that they could be able to provide to their consumers. As a result of all these, we were rewarded with very good financial results for 2020. What we also learned during the pandemic is that all of the countries were affected in the same way, but what made the difference was how you operate. So the countries where we had strong e-commerce and delivery, in particular in Scandinavia, demonstrated substantially better performance than countries that focused only on modern or traditional trade.

#### When you expand, do you usually go greenfield or brownfield? What is your strategy for the future?

We have been a very acquisitive company in the past, and of course, it is reasonable to assume that we will seek to grow in the future in the same manner. If we look at how we developed the basis of such a strategic expansion, it's always been



The biggest part of ice creams sold globally features three flavors: vanilla, chocolate, and strawberry. I would like to think that we are one the leading innovators of ice cream in Europe by coming up with different flavors and packaging solutions.

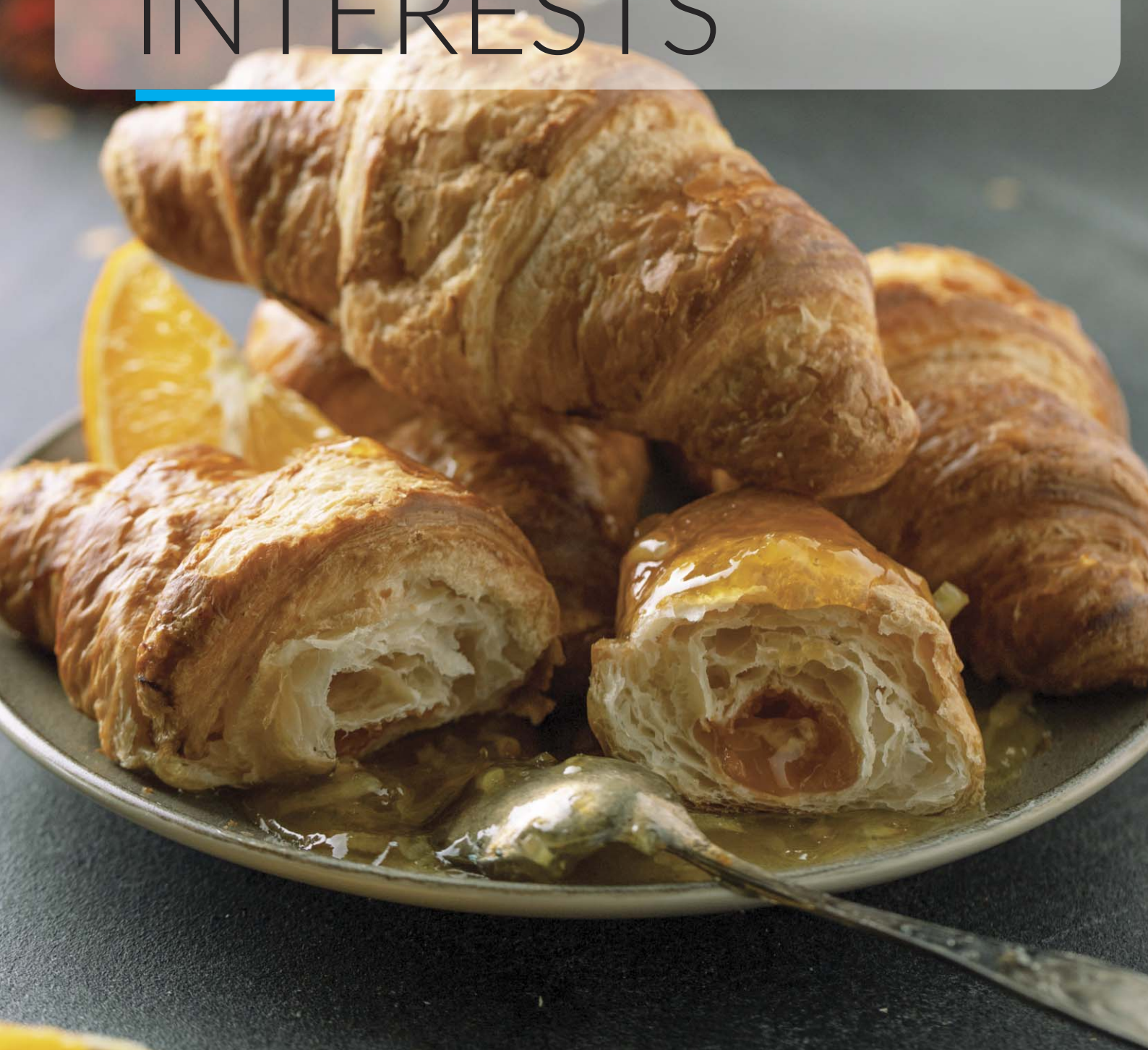


based on the brands, and we always try to seek a local presence. If we enter a particular market, we want to have a strong brand that we can capitalize on. We believe that the story that we started to tell has a huge potential because especially during a pandemic people get a hyper-local perception, they want local produce. If you're a Romanian, you want to have Romanian ice cream, whereas two years ago it was more preferable to have a foreign one. Going forward, I think this trend will be there, in many countries, it's been taken to a very high extreme. That plays to our advantage because we want to be local, we believe this is the right thing to do, and going forward this will be one of the criteria when looking at our strategy. ●

Photos:  
Food Union



# ADAPTING TO THE CONSUMERS' INTERESTS





**Bakery and pastry have been and will remain two of the segments that drive forward the growth of frozen food. Even during difficult times, such as now, the demand for such products stands high. This is due to a number of factors, none more important than the familiar taste.**

**T**

he frozen bakery market is anticipated to record a CAGR of 5.6% during 2020 – 2025, with retail expected to be the largest segment through the forecast period,

whereas catering & industrial is projected to be the fastest growing segment. A study from research company Marketsandmarkets shows that some of the key factors that have contributed to the growth are a rising preference toward convenience food and the popularity of specialty frozen bakery products. The ready baked & frozen segment is projected to grow at the highest CAGR, according to the research company. On the other hand, the global baking ingredients market is estimated at USD16.6bn in 2021 and is projected to reach USD22.3bn by 2026, at a CAGR of 6.0% until the end of the forecast period. It should also be noted, according to the research company, that due to the increase in instances of health issues among consumers, the need for finding alternatives in food products that have lower fat and sodium content has increased. Salt and sugar reduction has become one of the key challenges in the food industry. Nearly 33% of the consumers in the world have "low salt" as one of the primary criteria when making purchasing patterns, a study by French company Biospringer shows. Due to these factors, the demand for bakery products, which are rich in fats and sugar, might reduce significantly. This will definitely cause an impact on the demand for various baking ingredients required in the manufacturing of these items.

### **CATERING TO MANY TASTES**

**Evoiki Zimi S.A.** has been in the export business for more than 20 years and expands every year its geographical distribution. One of its major products is fillo kataifi, which is distributed in Europe (Austria, Germany, Belgium, United Kingdom, Italy, Baltic States), Asia (Japan, China, Taiwan, Singapore), and Middle East (Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman). Fillo kataifi of Zimi Psachnon is very easy to use; its fibers are elastic and absorb the syrup very well. "Our new Arabic range is accompanied with baklava fillo and pioneer product «Sambosa Leaves». Sambosa Leaves are ready country style fillo pastry cut into strips. They give great ease to modern housewives to make many tasty

handmade mini pies, for example mini triangles or mini rolls, simply by selecting the appropriate filling," Evoiki representatives say. Sambosa Leaves are chilled product and the package contains 50 leaves are distributed in Germany, United Kingdom, Iraq, Bahrain, Kuwait, UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar.

### **INNOVATION THROUGH INSPIRATION**

**Neuhauser** is another major player, this time in the baked goods sector in France. It develops, manufactures, and distributes a wide range of products, including bakery, viennoiserie, and pastry. Interestingly, while the company has 1,900 staff across 11 production sites in France and one in Portugal, nearly 30% of its revenue comes from foreign sales. Among new products launched by Neuhauser are Inspirations Pâtisseries Short bread tart with strawberries, strawberry filling, Topping crispy sugar and biscuit crumbs; Inspirations Pâtisseries Lemon Meringue Tart, filled with vanilla and caramel made with salted AOP butter from Isigny with a topping crispy crepes flakes; and Inspirations Pâtisseries Crème Brûlée, filled with vanilla and caramel made with salted AOP butter from Isigny, topping crispy crepes flakes.

Photo: Arabatzis



As we expand globally, we aim to increase our presence in new consumer segments and grow new partnerships with retailers, by providing high quality products adapted to their tastes.

Sakis Ignatidis, Exports director  
of Arabatzis Michail S.A.





## HIGHER DEMAND FOR FROZEN DOUGH PRODUCTS

Sakis Ignatidis, Exports director of **Arabatzis Michail S.A.**, one of the leading producers of frozen dough products in Europe, says he observes an increased global demand for frozen dough products fueled by urbanization, consumers eager to buy ready meals and the new generations trends for quick and easy solutions on daily basis. "They are also seeking high quality food at the lowest possible price. Products with spinach and feta cheese continues to have high sales demand worldwide and this is a «trend» we

have to follow," he adds. "Our consumer proposition is unique as we produce high quality products with Greek – Mediterranean recipes. Products like, filo Rolls, bougatsa with

cream or hazelnut Praline, traditional country-style pies with spinach and Feta cheese (P.D.O.), puff pastries sheets and many more." Each year, the company introduces new products worldwide, having a variety of more than 700 different products. Generally, its Export and R&D departments operate globally, searching and focusing on each country and by localizing the inquired products. The company's flexibility also ensures that it can provide custom-made products when required, serve and satisfy consumers worldwide. Today, Arabatzis Michael SA 'Hellenic dough' produces many deep frozen products like Filo Rolls, Puff Pastry sheets Filo dough, Croissants, , Traditional Pies, Pizzas etc. which can be found in food stores, bakeries, hotels, supermarkets, and other retail outlets as well as restaurants worldwide. "Our company Arabatzis Michail S.A. "Hellenic Dough" is reaching globally consumers with our products through our business partners. In order to fulfil the increased demand, the company recently built a new factory, the fourth in the row, by increasing production capacity and covering future increased demand. With the expansion of extra 30.000m2 of land our strategy is to use it as a platform for further international growth. As we expand globally we aim to increase our penetration in new consumer segments and growing new partnerships with retailers, by providing high quality products adapted to their tastes. Our Strategy is very simple. We want to place our products where the shopper shops. So our Route to Market, highlights that both Mass Food Retail stores and Food Service are key to reach our consumers," Ignatidis says. Last year, due to the pandemic, the company had to find new ways to sell frozen dough products, according to its Exports director. "2020 was a challenging year for many. At the same time, e-commerce grew like never before. First of all, many platforms now offering frozen dough products delivery , this a couple years ago wasn't possible for the frozen products. Also the last 12 months many things change like we stopped to travel. A new way of communication started to be a must for everyone, with new or existing chats platforms – applications. It's now more than a year that we don't participate in exhibitions with physical presentation but we started e-exhibition shows, Of course e-communications or e-shows cannot be the same compared to physical presentation to a meeting or a show," he concludes. ●



# 5.6%

is the projected  
CAGR for the global  
frozen bakery market  
during 2020 – 2025.



Photo: Evoiki



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## JANUARY/FEBRUARY

Ad closing 01.02  
Publishing 12.02**Frozen Pasta for Catering and Foodservice**

product innovation, manufacturers, suppliers

**Bakery and Pastry**

key market players, producers, suppliers

**Frozen Desserts**

market dynamics, new product development

**Bio and Organic Products for the Food Industry**

clean label and energy saving products

**Frozen Potato Market**

innovative products and European overview

**Frozen Potato Technology**

cutting, slicing, peeling, dicing

**Technology & Logistics**

conveyor belts, spiral ovens, IQF freezers &amp; chillers

**Packaging Technology**

state-of-the-art equipment and solutions

**Smart Industrial Kitchens**

trends and digital solutions

**Ice Cream Market in Europe**

evolution and estimates

**Nutrition & Ingredients**

for frozen bakery and potato products

**Frozen Food in Germany**

recent developments, review, estimates

**Trade fairs:** Biofach, Gulfood, FoodEx JAPAN, FoodExpo Greece, M.A.D.E., Sandwich & Snack Show, Parizza, FoodEx Birmingham

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## MAY/JUNE

Ad closing 28.05  
Publishing 14.06**Frozen Food from Italy**

market overview for retail and foodservice

**Frozen Pasta & Sauces Market**

trends, new product development, producers, suppliers

**Frozen Pizza Market**

major producers, suppliers, country breakdown

**Technology and Innovation for Frozen Pizza**

processing machines, toppings, portioning and forming

**Ingredients for the Food Industry**

for pasta, pizza, ready meals (herbs, rice, vegetables, mushrooms, processed meat)

**Frozen Finger Food, Fried or Baked Mix Balls**

trends and successful products

**Frozen Burgers**

new products, producers and suppliers

**Frozen Snacks and Pastry**

innovative products for retail and foodservice

**Optical Sorting Technology**

innovation and latest equipment

**Deep Freezing Technologies, Proofing, Baking, Cooling**

for bakery applications

**Frozen Food in the US**

evolution, challenges, opportunities &amp; major players

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## SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

Ad closing 10.09  
Publishing 24.09

## ANUGA SPECIAL EDITION 2

**Key Exhibitors Road Map and Event Agenda****Anuga Trends**

special report

**Bakery & Pastry**

new product innovation, suppliers, producers

**Frozen Vegetables, Fruit, Mushrooms, Green Herbs**

solutions for retail and foodservice

**Technology Innovation for Frozen Vegetables and Fruit**

cutting, slicing, peeling, dicing

**Technology & Logistics**

trends and solutions in packaging equipment

**Technology Automation & Artificial Intelligence**

applications in professional kitchens

**Meat and Poultry Products**

market overview in EU vs USA

**Frozen Food in France**

key players, product innovation, suppliers

**Global Retail Market**

consumer behavior, new products, processors, suppliers

**Nutrition & Ingredients**

for pre-baked and ready to bake foods

**Trade fairs:** Anuga, Process Expo Chicago, iba, INTERPOM/Primeurs, Alimentaria FoodTech, Gulfood Manufacturing, PLMA Chicago

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## MARCH/APRIL

Ad closing 26.03  
Publishing 12.04**Appetizers, Snacks and Pies**

high convenience, filo pastry products, pizza, ready meals

**Frozen Vegetables, Fruit, Mushrooms, Green Herbs**

trends and market overview

**Technology Innovation for Frozen Vegetables & Fruit**

cutting, slicing, peeling, dicing

**BeNeLux Market Review**

major players and new products

**Cooked & Pre-Cooked IQF products for the Food Industry**

rice, pasta, sauces, cereals, noodles, vegetables

**Technology & Logistics**

industrial freezing equipment

**Technology and Equipment for Frozen Bakery**

proofers, ovens, coolers, freezers

**Meat Alternative Products**

plant based substitutes

**Thermal Equipment & Chillers**

technological flexibility in professional kitchens

**Private Label Food**

innovation, new products, producers, retailers

**Frozen Fish & Seafood**

sustainable practices, market overview, major processors

**Nutrition & Ingredients**

vegetables, fruit and herbs

**Frozen Food in the UK**

market overview

**Trade fairs:** PLMA, Cibus, Sirha, Snackex, CFIA, Alimentaria

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## JULY/AUGUST

Ad closing 30.07  
Publishing 16.08

## ANUGA SPECIAL EDITION 1

**Coated/Breaded/Batter Foods**

new products, market evolution

**Ethnic Foods - Greek, Mexican, Italian, German, French & Asian Food**

product trends, producers, markets overview

**Potato Market Update**

frozen fries market overview in retail &amp; foodservice

**Potato Technology Innovation**

new equipment for frying, cooking and seasoning

**Vegetarian and Vegan Food**

product trends, innovations

**Technology & Logistics**

trends in cold storage and warehousing

**Frozen Food in Spain and Portugal**

latest market developments

**Technology & Logistics**

industrial freezing equipment

**Dishwashing Machines for Professional Kitchens**

highly efficient and environmentally friendly

**Nutrition & Ingredients**

trends for coated and breaded products

**Trade fairs:** Anuga, Polagra Food-Tech

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## NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

Ad closing 26.11  
Publishing 10.12**Ready to bake & Pre-Baked Foods**

market innovation, producers, new products

**Convenience Food for Retail & Foodservice**

European market evolution, category breakdown

**Frozen Products for Catering & Foodservice**

suppliers, producers, processors

**Meat and Veggie Burgers**

innovation and trends

**Technology & Logistics**

freezing and chilling equipment

**Quick Service Restaurants & Bar and Snack Channel**

market evolution, leading operators in Europe

**Front Cooking Devices, Bakery Stations and Take-Away-Counters**

equipment innovation &amp; hygienic requirements

**Nutrition & Ingredients**

ethnic food innovation

**Frozen Food in Scandinavia**

producers, suppliers, consumer trends

**European Retail Market**

suppliers, major retail categories, food trends

**Trade fairs:** Fruit Logistica 2022, MARCA, Gulfood 2022



# Frozen Food Europe

on social media

