

Healthier and posher options boost ready meals sales by £150m

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Ready meals have decisively left Horsegate behind as sales surged by another £151.1m last year.

Value sales of chilled and frozen meals grew 5% on volumes up 5.5%, thanks to healthier NPD and premiumisation [Kantar Worldpanel 52 w/e 8 November 2015].

This comes on the back of a £148.8m growth the previous year.

Chilled own label contributed the most to this year's growth (£135.4m) with new ranges such as Asda Good & Counted, and M&S's Balanced for You. This helped M&S, which massively overtrades in ready meals, to gain 10.3% value



Chilled own label meals contributed most to growth

growth, though this was dwarfed by Aldi and Lidl, which grew sales by 25.3% and 30.7% respectively. Slimming World's new range, launched in February 2015 exclusively to Iceland, proved to be the most lucrative brand, racking up nearly £30m [Nielsen 52 w/e 10 October 2015]. "This brand has been a great success as a result of

combining the Slimming World recipe skills with strong retail execution," said Iceland joint MD Nigel Broadhurst.

Premiumisation was key for brands in frozen, helping to hike average prices by 3%, with Bisto and Birds Eye adding to this through added-value NPD such as their respective Chef's Specials and Stir Your Senses ranges.

"Provenance and format development have lagged behind other categories in frozen, and manufacturers have been building quality into new propositions," said Nick Harris, marketing director at The Authentic Food Company.

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Tetley adds new trio to Super Green range

Tetley has added three more brews to its Super Green Tea range.

The new teas will roll out from March in a forest fruit with added vitamin B1 'Heart' variant, a 'Detox' mint flavour containing selenium



The additions will join the range's four other variants

and 'Beauty', an apple & cucumber-flavoured brew with added vitamin B7 (rsp: £1.59/20 teabags).

The teas join the existing Super Green Tea quartet, which was launched in January 2015 and has clocked up £1.4m in sales [Nielsen 52 w/e 30 January 2016].

The focus on health had created a "really positive" market, said director of customer & shopper marketing Andrew Pearl. "The functional benefits have really appealed and repeat purchase rates have been high."

Sunbites muscles in on popcorn

PepsiCo is expanding its Walkers Sunbites brand of healthier snacks with a range of three flavours of popcorn.

The launch follows last year's withdrawal of Walkers Sensations popcorn. Sunbites Wholegrain Popcorn rolls out from this week in 20g-30g single-serve bags of Lightly Sea Salted, Sweet Caramel and Sweet & Salty (rsp: 89p).

PepsiCo also supplies popcorn as part of the Walkers MixUps range, in Sweet & Salty and Sweet & Spicy.

Irwin's Easter buns for Tesco: Northern Irish bakery business Irwin's has secured a listing with Tesco for its three new Easter bun variants. The trio is being rolled into 450 of the retailer's stores across the UK from this week, comprising lemon & white chocolate, carrot cake and chocolate chip (rsp: £1/four-pack).



Aldi lists Peppa Pig drinks: Appy Food & Drinks has secured a listing with Aldi for its three-strong Peppa Pig range of 'healthier' stevia-sweetened kids' juice drinks. They are available in three-carton packs, and as special buys while stocks last in the discounters' stores nationwide from this week.

Salty Licktators: The Licktators has added a Cornish sea salt variant to its British ice cream line. Made with British milk and whipping cream sourced from 'family farms', the flavour will be launched with Ocado in April (rsp: £4.99/500ml).



Levi Roots' Carnival: Levi Roots has introduced a Carnival Flava to his sparkling drinks portfolio. The peach & papaya blend will be available from the beginning of next month in 500ml price-marked bottle format (rsp: £1).

Morrisons' Coconut collaboration: The Coconut Collaborative has secured a nationwide listing with Morrisons, which from this week is stocking three of the brand's 120g flavoured yoghurts alongside its 350g natural pot, across 280 stores. At the same time, the brand has broadened its range with Ocado and increased distribution with Sainsbury's from 191 to 387 stores.



Rockstar adds Punched Guava: AG Barr has extended its low-calorie Rockstar Pure Zero range with a Punched Guava variant. The new flavour will be available from 16 March in 500ml plain and 99p price-marked can format.

Budweiser has a Dream Goal: Budweiser has announced a raft of retail activity to tie into the launch of the second year of its football competition, Dream Goal. The campaign sees the beer brand hunt for the best goals scored by amateur footballers in the UK, with a top prize of £50,000 and an appearance in a 90-second TV ad with former Liverpool defender Jamie Carragher.



Bella Berry for Ocado: Beauty drink Bella Berry has won a listing with Ocado. The functional 'all natural' collagen drink, which comes in 'super fruit', tropical and summer fruit flavours, is available from the online retailer from this week and can be found both in the health drinks and beauty sections (rsp: £2.79/250ml).