

Protected Food Name group plans consumer promotion

Food and farming minister Jim Fitzpatrick has welcomed the formation of a new trade group for producers of Protected Food Name products and those still seeking protected status.

The Protected Food Names Association (PFNA) aims to "represent the best of the country's gastronomic heritage" and promote PFN products to consumers.

Only 40 UK speciality foods currently hold one of the three levels of PFN protection: Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) or Traditional Speciality Guaranteed (TSG).

They range from widely-available products like Melton Mowbray Pork Pies and Stilton cheese to scarcer products like Manx Loaghton lamb.

Britain ranks seventh in Europe in the number of PFN products it can boast, but fourth in terms of value, with sales of around £1bn.



Most shoppers know little about PFN foods such as Arbroath Smokies (above)

The association says that while the PFN scheme is "widely regarded in the food industry as indicating quality as well as guaranteeing provenance", it is largely unknown or misunderstood by consumers.

At a meeting of PFN producers to form the new trade body last month, Matthew O'Callaghan, chairman of the Melton Mowbray Pork Pie Association, was elected chair of the PFNA steering group.

"We represent the best of what the country has to offer," he said. "The nation lists its famous and historic buildings to protect our architectural heritage; likewise we need to do more to protect the nation's rich food heritage."

Jim Fitzpatrick described the creation of the PFNA as "great news for the UK's culinary heritage".

farm shops

Ex-Innocent boss called in to stem losses at Daylesford

The former MD of Innocent smoothies, Jamie Mitchell, has been appointed chief executive of Daylesford Organic

Mitchell faces a tough job: Daylesford's latest accounts showed the upmarket farm shop chain made a pre-tax loss of £10m in 2008.

Mitchell plans to use his experience of building the Innocent brand to help grow the Daylesford business, highlighting the benefits of organic food, including health, British farming and sustainability.

Daylesford saw sales rise 17% to £8.5 million in 2008, but the opening of its store in Notting Hill contributed to a £10 million loss, with owner Lady Carole Bamford forced to pump her own money into the business. In 2007, the company made a loss of £7.5m.

Lady Bamford said: "The business has continued to grow both through wholesale and retail channels, including the opening of a new store in London. The directors expect this growth to continue."

Daylesford has shops in Gloucestershire, Pimlico and Notting Hill, as well as concessions in Harvey

Nichols and Selfridges in London.

In October 2009, it opened its first store outside the UK with a 180 sq m shop and 40-seater café in Munich, Germany.



Daylesford: still a drain on Lady Carole Bamford's resources

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR editorial@finefoodworld.co.uk

DELIS MUST HELP US TO HELP THEM

Sir, I was delighted to see the letter from David Elsworth last month (Deli buyers 'must be more approachable', *FFD* Jan-Feb, p4).

We are newcomers to fine food and independent retailing. Our products are genuine, artisan chutneys and preserves from Cornwall. We have an excellent reputation in Cornwall for interesting products and first-rate customer service. Our independent shops here, be they farm shops, delis or specialist cheese shops, are supportive and enthusiastic. It comes as a shock to find a different attitude East of the Tamar.

We are totally dedicated to the independent sector – a choice ensured by our previous experience of supermarkets when we were farming. We have worked hard to understand the independents' needs for point-of-difference products, personal service and good business practice.

Last Autumn we were visited by a specialist in this sector, who confirmed our approach was exactly what was required to grow our business among independents beyond Cornwall. We had things to improve – who doesn't – but still, the lack of interest from some deli owners has amazed me. We send samples, we chase a couple of times, try to arrange visits but often get no response at all.

From the producer perspective, independent retailers need to regard us as an important part of their chain, as colleagues all together in this 'non-supermarket' world.

Retailers need to respond well to producers, or producers cannot grow their own businesses, engage in product development, generate new and dynamic ideas or afford interesting marketing.

We have amazing support from our Cornish retailers, with offers to taste new things and source unusual ingredients, and in return we offer unique products and excellent service. In addition, we have had support and help from some of the very largest and best in our sector. Everyone needs a slice of this cake.

Businesses all want to grow and thrive, and responding well to something new, or nurturing someone new, ought to be a characteristic of this dynamic, non-supermarket environment.

Many a time the first question a retailer asks is 'are you in supermarkets?' If this is what they really want then they need to encourage and trade fairly with small producers. They are, after all, cash-facing businesses themselves. They do not need to whinge at me about those producers who have given up and moved into supermarkets.

Deborah Richards,
Crellow Preserves
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Last-minute bid saves Wilts store

Britford Farm shop near Salisbury has reopened under new ownership after nearly closing forever in January.

Previous owners Giles and Gale Gould, who had run the shop for five years, started to close the business down in January after failing to find a buyer. The couple no longer had time to run the shop because of other business commitments such as stables and holiday cottages on the farm. However a last-minute bid by Aileen Frizzell, who had worked at the shop since 2005, meant the business was saved. Frizzell and her husband Barry have now refurbished the outlet and are back open for business. "It was such a shame to see the business close that we thought we would step in," she said. "We already have new products, such as Ghurka curries, which are flying off the shelf, and we are looking at getting permission to serve tea and coffee."

Britford won golds in the Wiltshire Retail Outlet Category of the Taste of the West Awards in 2008 and 2009.