



BROCHURE

*Celebrate
good times,
come on!*



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Relentless, gruelling, uncertain, volatile and tragic. These are just some of the words that easily apply to the past year. Even for businesses that have prospered, keeping up with the peaks and troughs of demand has driven managers and staff to find reserves of energy and inspiration they were unaware they had. And to think I highlighted the environment as the issue set to dominate 2020 at last year's face-to-face Food Manufacture Excellence Awards ceremony. How wrong I was and how simple and carefree 2019 seems now.

And after the most disrupted Christmas in many people's living memory, we face the long, slow grind of another lockdown, feeling as if we have rewound time by almost 12 months. We have vaccines, but the timescale for full roll out and vaccination and the transmission rate of the current virus strain mean restrictions are unlikely to ease before Easter. And we are still contending with post-Brexit upheaval.

Yet the resilience of frontline people – not just NHS staff, but also food manufacturers – continues to amaze. That so many companies entered our awards last year, while keeping on top of business was astounding. What was even more staggering was that, despite the unusual times, they had still managed to exceed their own targets and aspirations. That's what these awards have showcased over 21 years: the ability to pull the unexpected out of the bag, to demonstrate true manufacturing excellence.

That's why pushing ahead with our virtual awards ceremony this year is so essential. Because, especially after 2020, everyone in food processing deserves recognition for their incredible achievements to keep the nation fed.



Rod Addy
Editor
Food Manufacture

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Geoff Eaton
Chairman of New England Seafood and Chair of Judges



Rod Addy
Editor, Food Manufacture



Jonathon Bayne
Technical Manager, Waitrose

Proceedings were expertly steered by chair of judges Geoff Eaton – chairman of New England Seafood – for the second year in a row, with the panel seamlessly adjusting to convening virtually, rather than face-to-face. All the independent judges, who together boast more than 150 years' experience working with and in the food industry, were struck by the number and calibre of entries in such challenging times.

It proved a tough task to whittle the mix of smaller and larger processing businesses down to 44 exceptional finalists across 12 categories, chosen for showcasing excellence in core fields of operation. The eventual winners were picked for their scores across a range of criteria, from environmental performance to business development. This cream of the crop represent powerful illustrations of how food manufacturers were able to transcend even a pandemic to chalk up impressive achievements and their stories are truly inspirational.



Simon Chattock
Head of Vendor Assurance, Compass Group UK & Ireland



Richard Clothier
Managing Director, Wyke Farms



Chris Jones
Director, Turner & Townsend Suiko



Craig Leadley
Head of Strategic Knowledge Development, Campden BRI



Jon Poole
Chief Executive, Institute of Food Science & Technology



Nicola Thomas
Director of Exportese and the Food and Drink Exporters Association



Amelia Cockran, Coca-Cola European Partnerships (CCEP)

Amelia identifies and reacts to breakdowns and conducts continuous maintenance at CCEP's Sidcup site. She has played a vital role at its Automated Storage and Retrieval System warehouse and is a key advocate for manufacturing and engineering, giving talks in her local community and at careers fairs. She hosts site visits and tours with external stakeholders to showcase the high-quality manufacturing happening locally in Sidcup.



Emily Chater, Pilgrim's Pride

As a technical apprentice, Emily has shown dedication to learning skills. She was recently promoted to technical service manager for a maternity cover, showing a hunger to grow, especially during her stint as a production operative when the pandemic reduced operations. Emily has been the spokesperson for Pilgrim's Pride's apprenticeship scheme at colleges and schools and talked about her journey from A-Levels to where she is now in front of over 200 students.



Gabrielle Freeman, Pilgrim's Pride

Gabrielle was keen to learn and evolve in the financial accounting team, asking to shadow seniors in meetings or take part in tasks outside her remit. She has been involved in the testing phases and implementation of new finance software, displaying dedication and commitment and contributing to its successful launch. She has supported finance teams at several sites during the testing phase, and also over the first month end.



Henry Greer, Finnebrogue Artisan

His manager trusts that, as an apprentice automation engineer, Henry can learn any task. His interest in, and grasp of, automation, passion for mechanical engineering and interpersonal skills have grown fast and engineering managers are confident he can man the department without a main engineer and tend to line issues himself. From March 2020, he has proved a big asset in the busiest months of his team's history.



Stephen King, ABP

As an apprentice electrical maintenance engineer, building cross-departmental knowledge and exposure to all areas of the factory and equipment, Stephen has shown a talent for absorbing training, and a proactive approach to learning. He has excelled as a team player, helping with any task, flexible with shift changes and covering staff holidays at short notice. His eye for detail in maintenance has been vital in helping to keep ABP's Perth factory running efficiently.

Site Team of the Year

Service Provider Partnership



Carr's Flour, Silloth

Three weeks after a phone call from a major retailer's head office in the midst of the pandemic, the team had signed off and implemented all commercial, technical & logistic criteria to supply its stores with Carr's branded flour. The process would usually take six to 12 months and was executed when retail flour was short due to unprecedented consumer demand during a UK-wide lockdown. The site also supplied bulk flour in the retailer's packaging to help with supply.

Moy Park, Dungannon

This site embarked on a yield improvement plan using operational excellence management tools to fix a rapid and dramatic drop in fillet yield. The project helped develop several team members, while taking yield to the highest ever achieved at the site, as well as cutting production costs.

Continuing the work started in this project into the third quarter of 2020, Moy Park improved yield further toward its 2020 'gap up' objectives.



Ryecroft Foods, Ashton

The team's Project Symphony initiative delivered cost savings of £300k by looking at stock control of engineering parts, asset care, service providers, maintenance programmes and plant efficiencies. All the team gained the chance to work in different parts of the business, enabling a wider grasp of internal functions and. As a result, the company improved engagement within the team and increased the sense of achievement among all its members.

Winterbotham Darby, Clitheroe

The company set up a new production team to launch a premium pickles and ferments line under its Vadasz brand, transferring and training existing staff and closely managing stock to sustain customer order levels. The development of two team members made the site more self-sufficient. The other ten production staff learned cold brining, fermentation and processing, plus the packaging process. As a result, the new production facility was created rapidly.



Addo Food Group/Newton

In November 2018, chilled savoury pastry manufacturer Addo undertook a two-year improvement programme with operational improvement specialist Newton, saving millions of pounds across three plants.

The project focused on improving line efficiency and reducing waste. Through a rigorous assessment, the project identified gaps in accurate data capture as a key problem. In response, Addo and Newton created LineVision, a custom-built, 'internet-of-things' solution facilitating live data capture from factory lines.

A dashboard now shows live performance data, with a reason behind every 'micro-stop', accurate to the second. Issues such as pork pie tray-system jams, which happened frequently but for only a few seconds – aggregating to a huge inefficiency – were now visible. Over 18 months, the partnership together saved millions of pounds, surpassing original cost saving targets.



Future Food Solutions/Bird's Eye/Yorkshire Water

The collaboration between Nomad Foods brand Bird's Eye, Yorkshire Water and agrifood consultancy Future Food Solutions sought to encourage farmers within the vining pea supply chain to advance sustainable farming practices and to explore new technologies.

Based on an earlier pilot in the York area, which was funded by Yorkshire Water, the initiative has significantly changed the practices of those farmers involved.

An important part of its success was the introduction of cover crops that acted like a pop-up rainforest, before and after vining peas, improving soil quality, potentially boosting yield and cutting producers' carbon footprint.

The work was supported by knowledge sharing and access to technical experts who enable farmers to evaluate a cultivation approach focused on sustainability.



Kirsty's/DC Norris

Following a ten-year period of co-manufacturer agreements, Kirsty's invested £2m in opening the UK's first dedicated allergen-free read meal factory.

To support its goal of producing 20m free-from ready meals per year, the company turned to DC Norris (DCN), with which it had collaborated before.

DCN's product and process team converted the manufacturer's recipes from traditional jacketed processing methods to its own Jet Cook high speed cooking technology. Recipes such as Spanish Chicken, Ragu and Cottage Pie are now being cooked in reduced processing times and with excellent finished product colour and taste.

Kirsty's has since secured listings for its products from a number of national retailers thanks to the demonstration of its ability to cater for multiple allergies with a single product.

Award for Export

Training Award



Cranswick

Cranswick Country Foods moved into food production in the 1980s and was one of the first 'farm-to-fork' offerings in the UK.

The company has been quick to capitalise on export trends and has seen success across the globe, especially within its pork business. Early in 2020, the processor moved one step closer to pork exports to Mexico and on top of that agreed a supply partnership with Spanish producer Costa Food Group.

In what was an extremely challenging year for the meat industry, Cranswick still managed to report strong sales and growth across all sectors of its business and exports in particular helped fuel that performance.

The meat processor was also recognised as a global leader in animal welfare on the Business Benchmark on Farm animal Welfare's eight annual report last year.



Symington's

Winner of Food Manufacture's 2020 Award for Export, Symington's operates in the ambient food sector serving multiple grocers and convenience stores, both in the UK and internationally and employing a total of 900 people.

Based in Leeds, it operates four production sites, three of them in West Yorkshire, together with a wet meals & soups facility in Consett, County Durham. It was established in 1827 by William Symington, initially supplying tea, coffee and groceries before the founder invented instant soup and expanded into other dried foods.

Symington's has continued to build North American sales through Walmart stores, securing listings for six more products from its Naked range, with plans to roll out more lines under its Twistd brand with the retailer.



The Abergavenny Fine Food Company

Operating from its factory in the South Wales Valleys, Abergavenny Fine Food Company (AFF) produces more than 4m kgs of cheese and plant-based alternative products each year for retail, wholesale, quick service restaurants, B2B and club stores.

Reportedly one of the first manufacturers in the UK to produce gluten-free fried party food, Abergavenny Fine Foods has grown sales by 80% since 2016 and aims to move into the vegan market.

As well as supplying branded products to the main UK supermarkets, it also produces its own private label products branded as Rodeo Joe's and Glorious Foods.

AFF now boasts a truly global reach, with exclusive export partners from North America to Australasia.



Hovis

Hovis made a single point of access for learning and development initiatives via laptops, tablets, or mobiles, improving reporting functionality and enabling faster booking. Hovis can provide content covering personal development needs and fostering learning recommendations, and engagement with and promotion of a culture of personal development. It will also provide Hovis with a holistic view of their employee's learning and career development.



PepsiCo

PepsiCo's 'Grow our own' training initiative offers accredited educational apprenticeship programmes to all frontline UK staff. It aims to nurture technical talent and inspire them to start a food industry career. It was designed to create structured and sustainable talent pipelines to progression within the company's operations function, with several apprenticeship programmes carefully designed to focus on the needs of the business and the industry.



Moy Park

Moy Park's 'Accelerate' senior management development programme promotes health and safety, animal welfare and food safety. It hopes to grow high performing managers by tasking candidates to identify improvements linked to employee engagement survey results, allowing them to identify and promote new talent within the business. The programme is structured with both internal and external content, with a focus on employees developing their own plans.



Whitworths

Whitworths was one of many food and drink companies stepping up to help the nation cope with the fallout of the pandemic, supplying the NHS with free healthy snacking and recipe bundles. The Whitworths brand has seen underlying growth in the last financial year. Now in its 13th consecutive quarter of year-on-year growth, the brand continues to grow in the market, driven by new channel distribution, promotional plans and NPD.

Business Leader of the Year

Ambient



Alex Whitehouse

Chief executive officer, Premier Foods
Whitehouse joined Premier Foods in July 2014, becoming MD of its grocery strategic business unit later that year and UK MD in April 2017. He has spent over 20 years in senior and general management roles, substantially with Reckitt Benckiser. Since he became Premier Foods's CEO in 2019, it has significantly cut longstanding debts, clinched a deal to sell Hovis and reported strong financial growth.



Cassandra Stavrou

Co-founder, Proper Snacks
Proper Snacks claims to be the UK's biggest independent snack company. Founded in 2011, it sells over five million bags a month, claiming 20% of the UK 'better-for-you' market. Stavrou is a leading voice in Europe for young female entrepreneurship. She received an MBE for services to the food industry in 2019 and represents small to medium-sized enterprises on the Government's Food & Drink Sector Council.



Kirsty Henshaw

Founder, Kirsty's
Kirsty Henshaw was inspired to found Kirsty's by her son, who has several allergies. BBC show Dragon's Den granted her funding in 2010. Ten years later, Kirsty's is worth £15m, selling gluten- & dairy-free chilled ready meals, frozen pizzas and frozen desserts via all major UK supermarkets. In July 2020, Kirsty's announced a £2M investment in an allergen-free factory to help double its size within three years.



Lakeland Artisan

Run by husband and wife team Geoff and Mary Monkman, Lakeland Artisan has been producing hand-crafted artisan products from its headquarters near Kendal since 2006.

The business prides itself on its reliance on local ingredients to highlight the flavours of Cumbria and the Lake District while using no artificial colours, flavours or preservatives.

Lakeland Artisan produces a range preserves, chutneys and prosecco syrups – made to be added to glasses of fizz – under the Cumbrian Delights brand.

A 'lite' range is also available, offering products suitable for diabetics and people watching their sugar intake.

The company has since branched out into the drinks market in 2015 with the acquisition of Mawson's Original Drinks.



Princes

For more than 100 years, Princes has been a major player in the world of tinned fish, fruit and meat.

Aside from manufacturing under the Princes name, the company also makes products under brands such as Napolina, Batchelors and Branston Beans. Last year it allocated £5m to encourage 'rapid growth', with a focus on innovation in brand creation, product design and development, packaging, commercialisation and channel strategy.

Princes also invested in boosting the traceability of its products, launching on-pack quick response (QR) codes on its Napolina canned tomatoes, enabling smartphone users to view their quality and sustainability credentials as part of a broader blockchain-enabled transparency drive.



Skinny Tonic

Skinny Tonic debuted its range of organic flavoured tonics containing no sugar or artificial ingredients last year, following a soft launch in 2019.

The manufacturer recently signed a lease on a site in Aintree to expand production in what constitutes phase one of the £20m Mersey Reach industrial development programme. In addition, it has invested £5m in a new canning and bottling production facility.

Development plans for the tonic supplier have been supported by a highly successful round of crowdfunding, which has enabled the business to generate more than £1m within less than 24 hours.

Skinny Tonic currently employs 11 people, with plans to create a further nine jobs through its expansion programme.



Lindsay Boswell

Chief executive officer, FareShare
Since Boswell joined FareShare in 2010, it has grown the number of charities receiving surplus products from 600 to over 11,000. This work has ensured over 50 million meals were delivered to vulnerable communities since the first lockdown. He was previously chief executive of the Institute of Fundraising, doubling its income and membership and establishing the world-leading Fundraising Standards Board.



Morten Toft Bech

Founder, Meatless Farm
Toft Bech started Meatless Farm in 2016 to help cut overall meat consumption, aiming to improve health through better eating, support the environment and reduce dependency on intensive farming. The top four UK supermarket chains now stock Meatless Farm products. In September 2020, it announced it had raised \$31m for further international expansion. The company claims 180% like-for-like UK annual sales growth.



Sarah Arrowsmith

Chief executive, UK grocery, ABF
Arrowsmith guides the bosses of nine independently managed businesses, from Allied Bakeries to Jordans Dorset Ryvita. Joining ABF in 2002 as managing director of The Silver Spoon Company, she ran other UK and Australian ABF businesses. Named chief executive of ABF's UK grocery division in 2010, she chairs 'Women in ABF', aiming to help over 700 women from its global businesses develop careers in the group.



Bakery



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Dina Foods

Established in 1992, Dina Foods is a north London-based artisan producer of specialist Mediterranean foods, which include a range of authentic flatbreads, confectionery and savouries.

Having grown from a small, family run business, the company now supplies national and international customers. Its story began when the Haddad brothers – Amin, Souheil, Samir and Fadi – began manufacturing from a factory in Hackney.

The company now operates from a number of sites in Park Royal, north London and holds food safety accreditation including BRC, IFS Higher Level and Sedex Registered.

In addition to its commitment to traditional recipes, Dina Foods invests in innovation to keep up with consumer demand.

In August 2020, the company launched a new range of flatbreads to tap into the healthy eating trend. The Tasty Goodness range comprises three mini flatbread variants, which are made using 50/50 wholemeal and white flour: seeded, sourdough and demi pain.



Finsbury Food Group

A UK-incorporated company, Finsbury Food Group is a bakery manufacturer producing a diverse range of cakes, bread and bakery snack products. The group comprises specialist bakeries across the UK and Europe, serving the major retailers and the foodservice market. The UK bakery division has manufacturing sites in Cardiff, East Kilbride, Hamilton, Salisbury, Sheffield, Manchester and Pontypool. The overseas division comprises the company's 50%-owned firm Lightbody Stretz, which supplies and distributes the group's UK-manufactured goods and third-party products, primarily to Europe, and the company's manufacturing facilities in southern Poland. In May 2020, the group announced it had invested in improving its asset management system as part of a wider efficiency initiative dubbed 'Operating Brilliance'. August saw the announcement of its foodservice arm, Kara, investing more than £1m to boost capacity at its Manchester factory by more than 30%, with a focus on the output of doughballs.



Simply Doughnuts

An independent British manufacturer of extended shelf-life doughnuts based in Lancashire, Simply Doughnuts makes its products according to a secret recipe. In 2020, the company was recognised with a Queen's Award for Enterprise in the 'innovation' category. Established in 2012, Simply Doughnuts manufactures its products in a range of flavours for customers throughout the UK and beyond, including major wholesalers and well-known retailers. The company, which is AA+ rated by the British Retail Consortium, is equipped with its own manufacturing plant and can deliver large or bespoke orders at relatively short notice. The doughnuts can be delivered at ambient temperatures but can also be transported in refrigerated vehicles for up to six hours without deterioration in texture or flavour. Recent initiatives include work with environmental sustainability specialist Enworks, which uncovered efficiencies in the company's manufacturing processes, helping to reduce waste ingredients, water use and energy consumption.

Chilled, Fresh & Dairy

Free-From



Lymn Bank Farm

Lymn Bank Farm produces cheese brands including Lymn Bank Barrels, Nibble Nose and Artisan, plus handmade chutneys to complement them. The firm involves potential customers in taste tests and says this has led it to recognise that today's palates lean more towards smoother textures. It has recently expanded its online gift store, which now offers a larger range of gifts and hampers, as well as its online deli area selling local and quality foods.



Mash Direct

Mash Direct has grown hugely since it won Most Innovative Small Food or Drink Manufacturer of the Year at the 2013 Food Manufacture Excellence Awards. It followed that up in 2016 by winning Food Manufacture Company of the Year and Chilled, Fresh and Dairy Manufacturing Company of the Year. Since then it has secured deals with retailers such as Waitrose, Amazon Fresh and Asda. It now employs over 200 people and has a portfolio of more than 50 products.



Müller UK

Müller UK sources milk from 1,600 farmers in Britain to make branded and own-label dairy products. Müller UK & Ireland has three business units. Müller Yogurt & Desserts's brands include Müllerlight and Müller Corner, plus chilled desserts under licence from Mondelez International and own-label yoghurts. Müller Milk & Ingredients makes fresh milk, cream, butter and ingredients. Milk & More delivers to 500,000 homes in England, via 53 local fulfilment centres.



The Abergavenny Fine Food Company

The Abergavenny Fine Food Company makes over four million kilos of premium goats cheese, free-from, plant-based and vegan products annually. It has export partners in North America and Australasia. Clients include Aldi, Coles and Costco and it sources ingredients locally where possible. KPI management is fully automated and in 2020 it invested in an automated bagging machine, filling retail bags directly.



Hawkshead Relish Company

A family-run business based in Cumbria, Hawkshead Relish Company supplies products to stockists around the world. The Hawkshead range of chutneys, relishes and preserves began with just two or three products, originally made to accompany meals served to customers at a café in the Lake District run by Maria and Mark Whitehead. When diners began asking to buy jars to take home, the owners started producing more jars of preserves to sell. The range has now grown to over 100 lines. All products are still made by hand using traditional open pans. They are free from nuts, gluten, additives and preservatives, as well as all being suitable for vegetarians. Most of the range is also vegan friendly. Production now takes place in a 16th century barn located a mile outside the town of Hawkshead. The café also now serves as the company's shop.



Kirsty's

Founded around a decade ago, Yorkshire-based Kirsty's is a producer of gluten- and dairy-free frozen meals, pizzas and desserts, available in supermarkets across the UK. Founder Kirsty Henshaw started the business having discovered her son Jacob was allergic to nuts and intolerant to gluten and dairy, leading her to explore free-from food options. She appeared on BBC programme Dragon's Den in the same year that she started the enterprise and secured an investment of £65,000 for a 30% stake in the business from dragons Duncan Bannatyne and Peter Jones. Henshaw bought out the dragons in January 2020, with the business now worth £11m. In July 2020, Kirsty's invested £2m in the first production facility to be owned by the company. Kirsty's meals are all under 400 calories, while the pizzas are free from all major allergens. Desserts are gluten-free and made with dairy-free recipes.



Wholebake

Wholebake is a dedicated gluten-free snack contract manufacturer. Its portfolio includes projects for customers across market sectors including weight management, sports nutrition, toddler snacking, healthy indulgence, vegan friendly, digestive health and mainstream better-for-you brands. The company's bar options include muesli, flapjack, seed, fruit, nut and protein recipes. Wholebake can also coat its snack bites and energy balls with seeds, coconut, cocoa powder or flours for added visual impact and taste. The company insists that every supplier completes an extensive self-audit certification before entering into a trading partnership. For smaller suppliers, Wholebake provides support and guidance where necessary through its design and development procedure. The company also physically audits the suppliers of its key ingredients.

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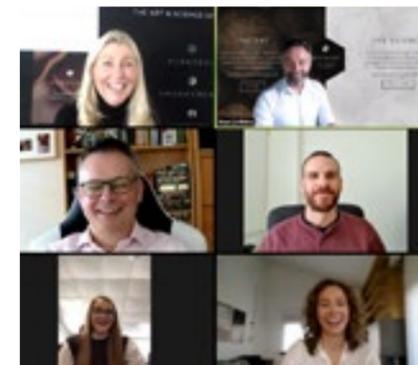
Informing, inspiring and connecting the industry

We look forward to the summer when the industry reunites at the UK Food & Drink Shows, encompassing The Ingredients Show, National Convenience Show, Food & Drink Expo, Foodex, Farm Shop & Deli Show and The Forecourt Show.

Find out more at
theingredientsshow.co.uk

This is a trade event. No under-18s will be admitted.

William Reed
INFORMING BUSINESS GROWTH



Besmoke

Besmoke produces flavours for smoke, grill and taste enhancement developed using the company's own PureTech technology and SmokeCreate natural smoking process. The company was born when founder Huw Griffiths developed smoked garlic, salt and pepper products and quickly grew into a large-scale supplier of smoked ingredients. Products now include smoked sugar, smoked paprika, smoked yeast, chipotle, smoked garlic granules and powder, and smoked oil.



Carr's Flour Mills

With mills at Kirkcaldy in Fife, Silloth in Cumbria and Maldon in Essex, Carr's Flour Mills supplies food manufacturers across the UK, using both British and imported wheat. The Hutchisons Mill in Kirkcaldy is one of only two remaining flour mills in Scotland. The Maldon mill is the smallest of three sites, with 70% of the wheat locally sourced within 30 miles. The Silloth mill began operating in 1836 and is where all retail bags of Carr's flour are made and packaged.



Nim's Fruit Crisps

Nimisha Raja began making Nim's Fruit Crisps in her shed, using just fruit and vegetables, with skin, core and pips intact, by slicing and air-drying. She upgraded to a garage before outsourcing to a manufacturer in Eastern Europe. However, she set up a BRC certified factory in Kent in 2015. In 2019, the company secured a supply deal with NHS Supply Chain, making products available for order by catering managers in every hospital in England.



Synergy Flavours

Synergy Flavours makes and supplies flavourings, extracts and essences. Applications for its flavours range include bakery, confectionery, nutrition and beverages. The Synergy Pure range of extracts and essences embraces coffee, tea, fruit and vegetable essences, herb and botanical essences and vanilla. Its authentic cuisine pastes include Indian, pan-Asian, Chinese, American, Mediterranean and Middle Eastern flavours.

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5-7 JULY 2021
NEC BIRMINGHAM

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foodex.co.uk

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William Reed
INFORMING BUSINESS GROWTH



ABP UK

ABP works with over 35,000 farmers. The company's meat is sustainably reared and completely traceable. In October 2020, it announced the creation of 200 entry level roles across its UK manufacturing base in a bid to combat youth unemployment. In collaboration with Youth Employment UK, it offered the vacancies through its ABP Talent Academy, with opportunities promoted across 14 sites including butchery, abattoir process improvement, IT and technical.



Cranswick Country Foods

Established in 1975, Cranswick was listed on the London Stock Exchange in 1985 and has continued to build ever since. It produces fresh pork, gourmet sausages, cooked meat, air-dried bacon, premium cooked poultry, charcuterie, sandwiches and gourmet pastry products. Brands include Bodega, Weight Watchers, Woodall's, Simply Sausages, Red Lion Foods and the Black Farmer. Cranswick recently reported sales had topped £1bn in the year to March 2020.



Dunbia

Starting life in 1976 as Dungannon Meats, a premium butcher in Moygashel, County Tyrone, Dunbia rebranded 30 years later and embarked on a significant programme of expansion and acquisition. Steady growth continued and in 2017, a strategic partnership between Dunbia and Dawn Meats was forged. In July 2020 it was announced that Dawn Meats would take full control of the venture. Dunbia continues to trade under its brand across 12 processing sites.



Moy Park

Moy Park supplies branded and own-label chicken products to retailers and foodservice providers in the UK, Ireland and Europe. It processes organic, free-range and higher welfare chicken, beef products, vegetarian items such as spring rolls and onion rings, and desserts. Moy Park works with 800 farmers and 590 broiler farms. The company operates four business units: agri-business and live production services, fresh poultry, retail foods, and prepared foods.



Westaway Sausages

Sausage maker Westaways distributes to customers ranging from small corner-shops to customers in Asia, the Mediterranean, the Caribbean and the Falkland Islands. It supplies caterers, butchers, delicatessens, foodservice companies and over 500 retailers in the West Country. With products already packaged in recyclable cardboard certified by the Forestry Stewardship, the company switched in July 2020 to 100% compostable packaging.

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Plant-Based



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Freaks of Nature

Founded by entrepreneur Peter Ahye, Freaks of Nature launched its desserts, which are free of dairy, gluten and egg, in 2016. Created in the company's BRC-accredited factory in Ossett, West Yorkshire, the desserts are available to buy via many of the top grocery retailers. In February 2020, chocolatier, patisserie and bakery expert Claire Gallagher was appointed as director of product innovation, bringing with her 25 years of industry experience. The appointment was followed up in June with a £1m investment in the company's manufacturing facilities to keep pace with demand. Then, in October, the business announced its launch into the foodservice market. In partnership with foodservice and convenience food marketing specialist Cognosco, a range consisting of Chocolate Fudge Hot Pudding, Sticky Toffee Pudding and Bramley Apple Crumble was made available to hotels, pubs, cafés, garden centres, contract caterers, independent grocers and convenience stores.



Glebe Farm Foods

Based in Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, Glebe Farm Foods is an independent business led by sister and brother team Rebecca and Philip Rayner from their family farm. The company grows and processes gluten-free oats, producing porridge flakes, oat flour and its gluten-free oat drink PureOaty. Rebecca started the business at farmers' markets in 2000 and she recognised the need for a range of gluten-free flours after receiving repeated requests for bread free from wheat or gluten. The first crop of pure oats was planted in 2008, from which a range of gluten-free porridge oats, muesli and granolas was created. This was shortly followed by PureOaty as well as gluten-free beer, cider and bread. Philip joined the business in 2010 and used his previous experience in electronics and engineering to refine processes. In 2020 Glebe Farm opened a new multi-million-pound plant-based milk production facility at its site, with a daily capacity of 50,000 litres.



Winterbotham Darby

Working from four locations spread across England, Winterbotham Darby supplies chilled Mediterranean and plant-based foods to the retail and foodservice sectors. It established its position in the plant-based category three years ago. Sourcing from across Europe, the company produces its ranges from a dedicated site in Bicester, Oxfordshire, for which a multi-million-pound refit was completed in August 2020. Its plant-based Squeaky Bean brand covers sweet and savoury snacks. Products include chicken-style pieces such as Kick of Tikka Chicken, Sweet Smokey BBQ and Tasty Thai, as well as sandwich slices, pancakes, nuggets and Fishless Fingers. Winterbotham Darby's Vivera brand covers plant-based meat alternatives including bacon, steak, fish fillets, chicken goujons, garlic kiev and shawarma. The products from both brands are supplied to major retailers such as Waitrose, Ocado, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Asda and The VeganKind Supermarket.

Small & Large Company of the Year

Judges Special Award



Nairns Oatcakes Large Manufacturing Company of the year 2020



Raynor Foods Small Manufacturing Company of the year 2020

In addition to the other award categories, Food Manufacture offers a Small Manufacturing Company of the Year Award and a Large Manufacturing Company of the Year Award, acknowledging the unique strengths and challenges of businesses in both camps.

The bigger contenders, which are defined as companies with turnovers of £10m and above, can claim to be champions of the whole industry. Smaller players often find it easier to be the innovators and trendsetters on account of the speed at which they can enact decisions and their flexibility. Winners in both areas are chosen from those who came top in each of the main product categories.

The 2020 Large Manufacturing Company of the Year was Edinburgh-based Nairn's Oatcakes. The UK's largest oatcake producer opened a £6.5m gluten-free bakery in 2017. It went on to chalk up double digit sales growth in its 2018-2019 financial year, with gluten-free sales up 23.6% in an increasingly competitive market. It also grew export sales by 63% over a three-year period.

In 2020, Raynor Foods won the Small Manufacturing Company of the Year award. Its pioneering work on its vertical hydroponic farm Rosemary Gardens, which supplies leafy salads for the sandwiches it makes wowed the judges as a textbook case study on sustainable sourcing.

Raynor's innovation and technical director Tom Hollands also largely authored the Listeria guidelines now adopted by the British Sandwich Association.



Not an annual feature, the Judges Special Award is only occasionally given in cases where the judges believe special mention should be made of an entrant that may not be a category winner.

Traditionally, it has been bestowed upon UK food and drink manufacturers that excel in one particular field or that, for one reason or another, deserve special recognition.

Over the many years that the Food Manufacture Excellence Awards have been running, a range of companies have claimed the accolade.

In 2004, for example, Pinguin Foods – now known as Greenyard Frozen – claimed the trophy for the remarkable turnaround of a former Albert Fisher frozen vegetable site at Kings Lynn, Norfolk, rescuing the facility from closure.

Other recipients have included 2 Sisters Food Group; ice cream accompaniments supplier Askeys; juice, smoothies and sweet sauces maker Fruitapeel and dairy firm Yeo Valley.

The last time the award was given was in 2016, when it was known as the Judges' Star Performer trophy and SK Chilled Foods claimed it. The judges were especially impressed by the business's focus on quality control, together with the lengths it had gone to in ensuring the traceability of the ingredients used in its products for a major supermarket customer.

SK Chilled Foods subsequently went on to win the overall title of Company of The Year Award at the 2017 Food Manufacture Excellence Awards.

Company of The Year



Of course, the Food Manufacture Company of the Year Award represents the pinnacle of achievement for entrants to the Food Manufacture Excellence Awards. It is given to a main category winner that the judges believe stands out from the rest of its top-performing peers.

Last year's champion was Raynor Foods, which also won the Chilled, Fresh & Dairy Manufacturing Company of the Year, the Technology Partnership Award and the Small Manufacturing Company of the Year Award.

Its technical apprentice Karina Gluszczyk also won a Highly Commended award in the Apprentice of the Year category.

Commenting on the cluster of trophies, chairman Matt Raynor told Food Manufacture: "We have come up with some mad and crazy ideas – in fact, we're known for the mad and crazy ideas – and to be recognised for this is fabulous validation that, actually, we might be a bit mad and crazy, but we also really know what we are doing."

Raynor also described the business's

successful partnership with NHS Supply Chain: Food to supply sandwiches to NHS Trusts and its progress in launching food produced according to high food safety standards for these customers.

"We pride ourselves in producing a very safe product, but I wouldn't like to be complacent in that," he said. "We put a lot of money and a lot of energy into our technical department to keep those standards very high and it's lovely that Karina's hard work was acknowledged this evening."

Be part of the 2022 Food Manufacture Excellence Awards

To find out more about the awards, visit [foodmanawards.co.uk](https://www.foodmanawards.co.uk)

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