

Potato Statistics

Observations

Overall, total frozen value shows a year on year increase of 1.5% and an increase of 0.4% by volume

In value terms, all categories show an increase except recon. and convenience – down 15.8% and canned potatoes – down 10.1%. The largest increase is seen with chilled potatoes up 13.4% followed by crisps up 6.5%

In volume terms, chilled potatoes show the largest increase, up 16.6%, while recon. and convenience potatoes are down 14.9% and canned potatoes are down 14.1%

Observations

Total fresh potatoes show a decrease in value of 3.7% but growth in volume of 0.1%. Within this, total pre-packed shows a value decrease of 0.7% and a volume increase of 2.0%, while total loose shows a value decrease of 18.8% and a volume decrease of 19.2%

In terms of value growth, the only increase is shown by pre-packed baking at 3.7% with organic showing the largest decrease of 24.3%

Pre-packed baking is the category showing the highest volume growth of 17.3%. Loose new and organic show the highest rate of decrease – 29.6% and 30% respectively

POTATO PRODUCTS 52 wks to 21 Feb 2010	VALUE (£000s)	VALUE CHANGE % Yr on Yr	VOLUME (Tonnes)	VOLUME CHANGE % Yr on Yr	AVERAGE RETAIL PRICE (£ per kilo)
Frozen Chips	336,658	1.5	328,394	0.7	1.03
Frozen Potato Products	201,413	1.6	139,980	-0.2	1.44
TOTAL FROZEN	538,071	1.5	468,374	0.4	1.15
Recon. & Conven. Potato	27,477	-15.8	13,771	-14.9	2.00
Chilled Potatoes	149,986	13.4	44,658	16.6	3.36
Canned Potatoes	11,439	-10.1	16,755	-14.1	0.68
Crisps	760,094	6.5	128,004	1.3	5.94

POTATOES by PACK TYPE 52 wks to 21 Feb 2010	VALUE (£000s)	VALUE CHANGE % Yr on Yr	VOLUME (Tonnes)	VOLUME CHANGE % Yr on Yr	AVERAGE RETAIL PRICE (£ per kilo)
Pre-packed New	269,568	-1.7	358,437	-4.6	0.75
Pre-packed Maincrop	527,810	-1.4	1,065,245	2.1	0.50
Pre-packed Baking	83,627	3.7	131,941	17.3	0.63
TOTAL PREPACKED	883,603	-0.7	1,561,703	2.0	0.57
Loose New	56,735	-18.4	39,650	-29.6	1.43
Loose Maincrop	18,610	-11.9	22,912	-3.6	0.81
Loose Baking	66,524	-20.8	52,739	-15.8	1.26
TOTAL LOOSE	141,869	-18.8	115,301	-19.2	1.23
Organic	21,204	-24.3	24,170	-30.0	0.88
Conventional	1,004,268	-3.1	1,652,834	0.8	0.61
TOTAL FRESH (Retail)	1,025,473	-3.7	1,677,004	0.1	0.61

Retail Detail



RETAILER SHARE OF FRESH POTATO MARKET 52wks to 21 Feb 2010 % change year on year	VALUE %			VOLUME %		
	Total Potatoes	Prepack Potatoes	Loose Potatoes	Total Potatoes	Prepack Potatoes	Loose Potatoes
Tesco	28.1 -1.3	29.5	19.5	28.8 -4.7	29.6	17.4
Sainsbury	15.8 1.4	16.1	13.8	13.9 -1.9	14.0	12.4
Morrisons	12.5 2.4	12.2	14.2	12.9 10.1	12.8	13.3
Asda	14.8 2.1	15.7	8.9	17.1 2.2	17.8	8.4
Somerfield	2.7 -36.3	2.6	3.8	2.3 -37.1	2.2	2.8
Co-Op Grocers	5.8 6.7	5.9	5.6	5.4 9.3	5.4	4.8
Marks & Spencer	2.9 -7.2	3.0	2.5	1.6 9.0	1.6	1.8
Waitrose	4.0 5.7	3.4	7.9	2.6 7.0	2.3	6.1
Aldi	3.1 0.9	3.6	0.1	5.2 6.9	5.6	0.1
Lidl	1.9 5.5	2.0	1.1	2.7 12.1	2.7	1.5
All others	8.4	6.0	22.6	7.5	6.0	31.4
TOTAL MARKET	100.00 -0.7	100.00	100.00	100.00 0.1	100.00	100.00

DATA SOURCE—TNS

Retail News

February sales up

The Office for National Statistics has released the retail sales data for February. These confirm that sales values are up 2.1%. The British Retail Consortium figures reported a similar rise a few weeks ago.

BRC Director General Stephen Robertson, said: "The official data confirm our findings that the total value of sales in February was well up on a year earlier.

"But these figures may not be all they seem. The growth is compared with very weak figures a year ago when February saw the worst of last winter's weather. This February's performance was helped by sales postponed from January – particularly sales of non-food items such as furniture and fashion. But food sales growth slowed as customers had stocked up in January's wintry weather and food inflation is falling.

"Consumers are certainly more positive than a year ago but job worries, tax increases and uncertainty over what is still to come after the General Election are causing customers to remain cautious."

Waitrose partner with Shell

Waitrose have also been in the news recently with the announcement of a trial partnership with Shell that will see the supermarket's food on sale at UK forecourts. Waitrose sandwiches, snacks, and a small range of groceries will be offered alongside Shell's current range at three outlets in the Birmingham area. The tie-up is part of a concerted effort by the supermarket to crack the convenience sector, following deals with Welcome Break and Boots earlier this year.

Managing director Mark Price says: "There are still millions of customers without access to a local Waitrose and we want to explore all the possibilities for making our food available to more customers."

The partnership follows an unsuccessful joint venture with Sainsburys, which saw the supermarket open convenience stores on Shell forecourts in 2003.

Waitrose is also looking to add to its three convenience stores and explore new formats and commercial director Richard Hodgson believes there is room for the company in the competitive convenience market.

'Consumers are more positive than a year ago'

'Waitrose try to crack the convenience market'

Are calorie counts on food too high?

SUPERMARKETS could be overstating the number of calories on food labels by as much as 20% because they are using flawed measurements, according to research.



Critics say existing calorie counts fail to factor in the extra energy needed to chew and digest foods that are high in protein. The counts also ignore the effects of cooking and the texture of the food on the amount of energy used in digestion.

As a result, some foods can appear more fattening than they

really are, creating confusion for those who carefully monitor their daily calorie intake.

Scientists are now calling for calorie counts to be altered so that they are in line with nutritional advances.

Dr Geoffrey Livesey, an independent nutritionist who previously worked at the Medical Research Council, said: "In blunt terms, food labels are wrong. Some of the stated calories that appear on the labels are wasted during digestion."

The current method of calculation is based on tables first put together more than 100 years ago by Wilbur Atwater, an American agricultural chemist.

Atwater burnt samples of food and then measured the amount of energy from the heat this produced. He then estimated the amount of energy the body used up by calculating the amount of energy in undigested food in waste products.

He deduced that every gram of carbohydrate produced four calories, every gram of fat, nine, and every gram of protein, four — figures that have been used ever since.

Livesey claims Atwater's calculations are wrong because humans chew and mechanically break down food rather than incinerate it.

Taking account of energy used in digestion, Livesey has calculated that the number of calories attributed to proteins should be cut by 20%, while those in fat should be reduced by 3%.

He says the changes could have a significant impact on everyday diets. A bowl of All-Bran cereal would contain 157 calories rather than 171, while a dish of vegetarian lasagne would have 367 calories rather than 400. An extra 20 calories a day can lead to an annual weight gain of 2lb.

The FSA said the research was of "legitimate scientific interest" but would not have sufficient impact on overall diets to warrant changing calorie counts on packaging.

Making potatoes a more relevant option

Recent research commissioned by Potato Council sought to understand the attitudes of potato users by looking at less frequent consumers, principally the pre-family and younger family lifestages, with some interesting results. The key findings are summarised below.

- The biggest barriers to more frequent potato usage amongst these lighter users is longer, messier preparation and cooking times and the perception that a meal with potatoes is generally less healthy than one with rice or particularly pasta. This is partly driven by the feeling that potatoes are only interesting when you add things to them like butter, cream or cheese, or they are cooked in oil or fat
- There is a general acceptance that unused potatoes will be thrown away at the end of the week and while this is not viewed as good neither is it seen as a major problem although there is an environmental concern among some. Purchasing excess is driven by the fact that most cannot buy the smaller bag size they would ideally like thus being forced to buy more than they need. Criticism of this is not more vociferous because potatoes are not viewed as expensive. Loose potatoes do not enter the frame here
- On the positive side, potatoes are seen as incredibly versatile, relatively cheap and filling — the latter being particularly relevant to families with children
- Pasta is particularly interesting as it is seen as being quick, healthier in the sense that a pasta meal is generally healthier and more contemporary. In fact almost the opposite to potatoes. It is a similar story with rice in pouches or frozen although, if cooked from scratch, rice is not seen as particularly quick or convenient. Pasta is a particular favourite as a fast, simple, healthy and filling meal for children



- By and large potato meals do not fit into this segment's busy, contemporary lifestyle in the way that rice and particularly pasta are perceived to
- With regard to meal choice households tend to fall into two camps, dictatorships and democracies. The shopper usually being the cook as well, will either take a unilateral decision on what the meal is going to be or they will consult with their partner and/or children
- For these lifestages, meals have to fit into their hectic lifestyle, particularly during the week. With many couples both working, (often with different hours or shifts) and some with children, meals and meal preparation times are often shoe-horned into the available time between activities — work, sport, clubs etc. The cook is therefore seeking a fast nutritious meal solution which for many is not seen as one that includes potatoes. The exceptions, although in the minority, are those cooks who plan ahead, who decide what they are eating in advance and can prepare accordingly, such as using slow cookers which are started before going to work. A lot also depends on their attitude to food — food is important and interesting or food is simply fuel
- Weekend behaviour tends to be different — more relaxed, more time, more indulgent — and potato meals are perhaps a happier bed-fellow, largely due to more available time. The potential concern here among lighter users is that potatoes will become increasingly viewed as a weekend or special occasion treat

This new research is being used to inform and develop Potato Council's campaigns to reach the pre-family and younger family lifestages.

Local food – demand at the right price

37% said they would pay extra for local food

The drive toward locally produced products has been on the food agenda for several years now, but how do shoppers really feel about it?

According to recent IGD research 30% of shoppers had bought locally produced food over the previous month, twice the figure recorded three years ago. Shoppers said they bought local food either to support local producers and farmers (54%), to support local retailers (34%) or to keep jobs in the local area (29%).

It appears, however, consumers are not willing to pay more for locally produced food despite wanting it to be more readily available, a new survey for The Grocer has indicated.

The survey of 1,000 shoppers revealed 65% who said there was insufficient access to local food where they usually shopped. Perhaps surprisingly only 37% said they expected to pay extra for local food, suggesting while

there might be a demand for locally produced food, it has to be priced the same as comparable products.

Twenty per cent of the respondents said the only thing they didn't like about local food was that it can sometimes be more pricey.

As well as getting consumers to understand the value of local food, suppliers also needed to find reliable routes to market to build sales, said Kirsty Grieve, MD of regional specialist Mad For Food.

"There's definitely huge potential for local, but it's a question of getting food producers working together to solve the distribution issue," she said. "Producers must think about other routes to market, such as getting together to package and distribute in bulk."

Most respondents (85%) bought local produce at least once a month, with 40% buying weekly. Shoppers in Scotland and the north, south west and east of England were more likely to buy it, reflecting the wider availability of clearly defined local food in rural areas.

More than 70% of those surveyed defined 'local' as produced within 50 miles of where they lived.

It must be true, it's in the media

Spotted in the Grocer:-

US company Dream-fields is gearing up for a UK launch to try to replicate the success of its low-carb pasta in America.

The company claims its spaghetti, penne rigate and rotini range has a glycaemic index 65% lower than regular pasta, so it releases energy at a slower rate and makes consumers feel fuller for longer.

The brand is reportedly worth \$16m in the US, with sales up 9% year-on-year.

"The initial response from health-conscious consumers in the UK has already been overwhelming," said UK marketing director Lee Chapman.

Spotted in the Guardian:-

The moral virtue felt by buying organic food can lead to selfish behaviour according to the latest research findings. The Canadian study found that when people feel they have been morally virtuous it can lead to the "licencing of selfish and morally questionable behaviour", otherwise known as "moral balancing" or "compensatory ethics". The research authors said that buying green products does not necessarily mean you are a better person.

Dieter Frey, a social psychologist at the University of Munich, said the findings fitted the patterns of human behaviour. "At the moment in which you have proven your credentials in a particular area, you tend to allow yourself to stray elsewhere," he said.

Spotted in the Daily Mail:-

Drinking potato juice every day can ease indigestion, a new study has found. Almost eight out of ten participants who had suffered from chronic indigestion benefited after a week of treatment.

One in five was free of symptoms. Freshly pressed potato juice is a traditional treatment for stomach ailments in some parts of Europe.

In research carried out by four universities in Germany and Australia, 40 adults - whose symptoms had lasted more than 12 weeks - drank 100ml of the juice in the morning (half an hour before breakfast) and the same again before going to bed.

Two-thirds of the patients experienced at least some improvement, about half benefited considerably and complete relief was seen in 20 per cent.

It is thought that compounds found in potatoes - called alkaloids - have an antacid effect.



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