

The Grocer

Focus On: meat free by Beth Brooks (beth.brooks@thegrocer.co.uk)

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The Story

- **The strong growth in meat-free of a few years ago is a distant memory. Sales & volumes have inched up in the past year and own label enjoyed much of that growth. What will it take to kickstart more meaningful category growth? Which brands are the best and worst performers? And which retailers are driving the growth in own label? What lies ahead for 2015 and beyond?**

Key themes:

Innovation: This will be key to this feature. We will be investigating how new product development has shaped the category over the past year and what is in store for shoppers in 2014. We will be profiling four of the most interesting launches in a separate innovation panel.

Price and promotions: This feature will explore how the promotional strategies of retailers and brands have changed over the past year. Attention will be paid to the promotional strategies of retailers and how this has affected average prices over the past year.

Grills: Vegetarian grills have defied the overall market's rather lacklustre performance to deliver value and volume growth. This feature will explore which players have been driving this growth, and how. What can sausage, burger and meal centre players learn from the growth?

Ready meals: It seems the controversy surrounding certain beef ready meals of the past year has rubbed off on meat free ready meals, which have suffered a significant decline. Why? Has anyone bucked the trend? How is the market looking to return to growth?

Pastry products and snacks: These are two of the fastest growing areas in meat free. Which players are driving this growth and how? How are they looking to sustain growth in coming years? Is snacking, which still accounts for just a fraction of the market, the next big growth opportunity?

Advertising and marketing: This feature will also investigate how the marketing and advertising strategies of the category's biggest brands have evolved over the past year and how they will develop in the coming year to sustain growth or return brands to growth.

Key questions the feature is likely to address:

- What consumer trends have impacted the category over the past year?
- How have promotional strategies (both in terms of price and marketing) evolved?
- How have individual retailers' strategies impacted the market?
- How has merchandising changed in the market?
- What impact has own-label had on branded players?
- What's next for the category?