The Grocer

Focus On: Sports Nutrition by Rob Brown (rob.brown@thegrocer.co.uk)

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The Story

- **Sales of sports nutrition products in the supermarkets are bulking up. In the past year the combined value of whey protein powders, sports bars, protein drinks and sports supplements have surged with volumes also up. What's driving the growth? Which brands and retailers are cashing in the most? Is anyone being left behind? And why have average prices dived by almost 10%?**

Key themes:

Bulk items: A central theme of this feature will be the performance of the larger items in the market, such as bulk packs of whey protein and supplements that can sometimes sell for as much as £50 a pack. Our analysis shows that value sales have dipped slightly in the past year while volumes have risen by almost a fifth. Why is this? Are prices being slashed? Are pack sizes being cut?

Retail channels: We will also explore how different retailers' share of the market has changed. Are the multiple grocers stocking as many bulk sports nutrition SKUs as they were prior to the imposition of VAT or have they delisted as shoppers have gone online to get a better deal? We will explore the different approaches of conventional grocers and online specialists in a separate box out.

Convenience items: Of course we cannot ignore the huge amount of new product development we've seen over the past year as sports nutrition brands have sought to enter the mainstream with RTD protein drinks and sports snacks. Who's winning in this market? Where have brands won listings for their products? And what's next?

Merchandising: With the development of more mainstream products, sports nutrition products are leaving the niche sports nutrition fixture in store and entering chillers and convenience stores. Some are even being stocked alongside mainstream soft drinks in the food to go section. Which brands are benefitting from this and in which retailers? Is this an ongoing trend? What's next?

Price/promotions: This feature will investigate how big a part price and promotions have played in the market over the past year, particularly in light of the imposition of VAT. It will explore how spend on this area has impacted brands' spend on other areas such as advertising and NPD and how promotional mechanics employed have evolved and are likely to continue to evolve.

The next big thing? As well as looking at the NPD that has made the biggest splash on the market over the past year, this feature will investigate in detail the new trends that are likely to shape new products over the coming 12 months. We will profile four of the most interesting new products in a separate box out. What will be the next big functional ingredient?

The paleo movement: This feature will include a separate box out on the growing number of brands that are producing products with claims that they fit a paleo diet. Are such products destined to remain in a niche or do they really have mainstream potential? Who's most active in this area and what is their strategy?

8 x innovations: Eight new products or product ranges that have not appeared in The Grocer before (four impulse; four bulk items or supplements) including launch date and RSP, and a hi-res picture of each.

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?
- We profile four new products or product ranges that have ideally not appeared in The Grocer before, including launch date and RSP.