



COUNTRY RANGE

The group celebrates its 30th anniversary and is focused on supporting foodservice recovery with a raft of plans and events

Q What are your plans/priorities for foodservice in the coming 12 months?

First and foremost, the focus is on supporting our members and giving them the tools and product portfolio to ensure their customers can come out of these two pandemic years stronger and ready to take advantage of the opportunities ahead. With it being our 30th anniversary, we'll be raising £100,000 for Hospitality Action and local causes aligned with our members. It's been a torrid two years for everyone in catering, so we felt it was only fitting that we used our anniversary year to raise some much-needed funds to support and help those who need it most.

Q How will you bring this to life?

We have an array of exciting new product launches planned throughout the year, which was kicked off recently with the roll-out of our range of three new premium fries. Our customer magazine, Stir It Up, has been rejuvenated with new features, interviews, recipes and trend reports and additional content is being published online.

We also have a packed schedule of Country Range events, both face to face and digitally, the website is updated monthly with the latest advice and seasonal recipes, plus we will continue to invest in the grassroots of professional cookery through our

sponsorship of the Country Range Student Chef Challenge.

Q How has Natasha's Law affected the way the sector operates?

From a safety point of view, it has definitely helped to raise awareness of allergens, but we believe consumer choice has been negatively affected as it is difficult for caterers to comply. Some caterers have stopped food-to-go offerings altogether, while other menus are shrinking. There needs to be more pressure on suppliers to ensure they provide up-to-date allergen information. Suppliers should also be legally obliged to change their barcodes if they change the allergens in a product.

Q Is sustainability a key focus for your business in the next 12 months?

Definitely – the group and our members have made huge strides in the last few years but this is only the beginning. We're passionate about continuing to assess, test and develop new solutions to further reduce our footprint, while also encouraging manufacturers, suppliers and customers to follow our lead.

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