STERLING SUPERGROUP

It's clear there is one definite aim for Sterling Supergroup over the following months and that is to maintain margins

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

In the face of an onslaught of inflationary pressures, combined with unprecedented supply chain shortages faced by the whole trade, we are making it a priority to maintain margins over the coming months.

Q How do you plan to do this?

Prices are changing by the day which, unfortunately, has to be passed down the line. Wholesalers who had stocked up for Brexit got caught out by Covid-19 and are now having to build stocks to try to ameliorate these issues facing the trade.

Labour costs are rising and post-Covid wholesalers are running on fewer staff in many areas of their businesses, plus they are also having to look at increasing minimum order values to help offset the rising fuel costs.

Q After a tumultuous two years for foodservice, how has the market changed?

Regionally, especially in the areas of the country that have a tourist season, wholesalers have seen an even larger boost

> " *Alfresco dining is a trend that looks set to stick around"*

than usual due to the enforced staycation that many people enjoyed. This changed the mix of items sold to fulfil the needs of their customers who, in turn, found it very difficult to access the range that they would usually have from many sources. Wholesalers have tried to be as much of a one-stop shop as possible, according to their customers' needs.

Q Are there any stand-out trends that have emerged from the pandemic?

Obviously, weather allowing, the huge increase in alfresco dining is a trend that looks set to stick around. Many outlets have made the investment in allowing this to extend further into each end of the season.

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

Yes, sustainability is very important, guiding many decisions made throughout the year. We expect this year to be another good one, with further progress made.