

Aussie Innovation Helping UK Food & Drink Sales in 2009

Submitted by: food&drink towers

Wednesday, 28 January 2009

A view of opportunities 'up top' from 'down under'

Austrade (Australian Trade Commission) announces today that it will publish its exclusive top five trends report for 2009 at an informal media breakfast briefing on February 12, 2009.

'The Austrends 2009 Report' will provide an insight into how Aussie food and beverage producers are delivering innovation within key food trends, revealing some tantalising opportunities for food and drink companies in the UK.

Kylie Hargreaves, Senior Trade Commissioner at Austrade, comments: "I'm particularly pleased to unveil this report examining five food trends where we believe Australia has an exciting offering and which will have particular resonance with UK buyers and consumers over the next year".

The five key trends noted are: Flavourful Free-From - Super Premium - Real CSR: Less Talk More Action - Enhanced Convenience for Convenience - Digestive Health.

"Part of Australia's culinary heritage arrived from Europe with the First Fleet in 1788. Ever since then Australia has been learning and blending these influences with its own and those of surrounding regions. Now we find some of our products have become 'boomerangs', including 17 innovative arrivals which we're featuring at our informal press breakfast briefing at Australia House", says Hargreaves.

An informal press breakfast briefing will be held by Austrade at Australia House, London on February 12, 2009 (9am – 11am) to officially launch the report. The event will introduce the UK media to some of the innovative food and drink products now available from Australian producers in this country, each of which tap into at least one of the five trends identified in 'The Austrends 2009 Report'. The breakfast briefing will give journalists the chance to talk to the Austrade team and some of the producers featured in the report, find out more about the producer's plans in the UK and, of course, sample some Australian specialities.

Helen Lewis, author of the report and managing director of food&drink towers (www.foodanddrinktowers.com), comments: "Brits are developing a love affair with Australia, not only for its fantastic scenery and hot weather, but its vibrant food and drink culture and traditions. The journey is a hurdle for many of us, preventing regular trips for most people, but there is increasing availability of high-quality Australian products in the UK that can meet our demand for Aussie specialities.

"The Australian food and drink industry is highly innovative and forward-thinking, with many trends mirroring activity in the UK sector. Best-practice lessons can be learned 'up top' from 'down under' and vice versa. The aim of this report is to show the fluidity between the two markets, and the opportunities for new product development and growth in the UK through the eyes of Australian producers. We believe the report to be an industry first and hope it proves to be a useful resource for producers, retailers and suppliers in both countries".

-Ends-

Notes to editors:

Journalists are cordially invited to attend the Austrends 2009 media breakfast briefing at Australia House. To RSVP please email helen@foodanddrinktowers.co.uk before February 9, 2009.

Time: 9am – 11am (you are welcome to drop by whenever you like during these two hours).

Date: Thursday February 12, 2009.

Location: The Australian Trade Commission (Austrade), 5th Floor, Australia Centre, Australia House, corner Melbourne Place/Strand, London WC2B 4LA. Please report to reception.

For a pre-publication copy of 'The Austrends 2009 Report' ahead of its official publication on February 12, 2009 please email Helen Lewis at helen@foodanddrinktowers.co.uk.

Post-briefing, an electronic version of the report will also be available from Julianne Davis, Senior Business Development Manager at Austrade (Direct: +44 (0) 20 7632 0075 / Julianne.Davis@austrade.gov.au) and online at http://www.foodanddrinktowers.com/press_article.php?id=1670.

More about the report:

Five key food and drink trends have been identified that Austrade believes will continue to become increasingly important to the UK over the next 12 months, and which are already thriving in Australia.

Austrade commissioned food&drink towers (www.foodanddrinktowers.com) to conduct a mini online survey in January 2009 to capture qualitative and quantitative information and insight from a selection of Australian producers with a presence in the UK market and those looking to launch here shortly.

Each trend is analysed in this report incorporating quotes and results taken from the online survey of Australian producers. Examples of how Australian producers are meeting consumer demand (both in Australia and the UK) are provided for each trend, alongside analysis of the potential of each of the trends in the UK market.

An extract from The Austrends 2009 Report:

Flavourful Free-From

The Australian free-from food and drink market is thriving, with new product launches and interest not only from people with food sensitivities but also the mainstream market. There continues to be negative flavour and quality perceptions pervading the UK free-from market, which manufacturers are keen to shrug off. However, with a lack of support from retailers who seem reluctant to position free-from products alongside their traditional counterparts, it continues to be more of a niche trend here in the UK than it

is in Australia.

Despite this niche status, the UK is showing signs of becoming a highly profitable market for free-from producers, going from a very low starting point to record double-digit value and volume sales growth in recent years. This growth is assisted by campaigns such as Allergy UK's Food Allergy and Intolerance Week, an annual campaign run to raise awareness about people who suffer from food intolerance to ingredients such as wheat, dairy, eggs, and gluten (held 19-23 January 2009).

Australian producers recognise the importance of maintaining the same (or superior) quality rationale for free-from products as is expected of mainstream goods. High quality ingredients is the most important factor influencing Australian consumers wishing to purchase free-from products, according to 71% of respondents to the Austrade online survey. This is followed by products that are free from artificial ingredients and the need for the product to be equally as flavourful as mainstream variants. Taste, ultimately is the most important purchase influencer for food and drink, regardless of whether it is produced for the mass-market or those with food sensitivities.

Ingredients with negative health perceptions are naturally frowned upon including trans fats, sugar, salt and fat. More than half of the respondents stated that it is 'very important' for Australian consumers that there are no trans fats in free-from products. Dawoud, sales manager at Passion Pasta, which produces a range of gluten-free pasta and sauces, is unsurprised by this finding saying: "Australians are more health-conscious in general".

"As a very broad brush statement, Australians are overall more conscious of their health, including diet," agrees Sarah Goodwin, marketing manager at Maggie Beer (www.maggibeer.com.au). "In conjunction with this, Government agencies proactively preach the health message, more so than in the UK. Being English, and returning as regularly as I do, I definitely see the differences between the two countries."