

Rowcliffe

QUALITY CHEESE AND FINE FOODS

PRESS RELEASE
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ROWCLIFFE - LEADING IMPORTER AND DISTRIBUTOR OF PREMIUM CHEESE PREDICTS KEY INDUSTRY TRENDS AND CHALLENGES FOR 2023

Sunit Mehta, Managing Director of leading importers and distributors of premium cheese, Rowcliffe, discusses the industry and offers predictions on key trends and challenges for the coming year as the sector reacts to changing consumer tastes, rising prices due to the cost-of-living, soaring energy costs and difficult economic outlook.

Rowcliffe has been serving independent retailers since 1967 and premium supermarkets since the early 1990's, with quality cheese and fine foods. The firm was founded by Anthony Rowcliffe (who changed British attitudes to cheese), with a mission to champion and support small producers which is still at the core of the business today.

According to a recent report* demand from consumers remains strong with every type of cheese increasing in sales in the last 12 months and 98% of homes admitting to buying at least one product. This has remained a constant trend for the last few years with cheese consumption in the UK continuing to increase along with the variety available, as the industry continues to adapt to consumer trends and changing tastes to ensure the British public remains a nation of cheese lovers.

Industry Trends for 2023

Online vs Offline Sales

The cheese industry has seen a slower rise in online sales than other sectors as consumers continue to favour buying the product in person but as with previous years online sales are continuing to rise with the Statista report predicting nearly one in five sales (15.5%) expected to be online in 2023.

Price per Unit

No one expected milk prices to increase from just over 30p/litre at the end of 2021 to nearly 50p/litre 12 months and this price rise has seen the cost of cheese soar. According to ONS government data, the cost of cheese increased by a staggering 32.5% from Dec 21 – Dec 22 but with the current economic outlook and a reduction of 26% in the global milk price, UK cheese prices may well be close to their peak. Although 2023 is set to be a challenging year for the industry.

Plant-Based/Vegan Cheeses

An important and increasing sector of the UK cheese industry is Plant-based and Vegan cheese. The popularity of these cheeses continued to soar with sales predicted to rise globally to \$7bn by 2030, up from \$2.5bn in 2020 according to a report by Transparency Market Research and 2023 is expected to see more players enter the market as the quality of the cheese alternatives continues to improve.

Labour Shortages

Like so many other industries the cheese industry is being impacted by labour shortages as sectors battle to attract workers to the sector. Hopefully, the UK government's confirmation of an increase in visas for full-time and seasonal work will attract make the UK more attractive for workers from abroad and help reduce the vast skill shortages in 2023.

Changing Consumer Trends

There is no doubt that the cost of living crisis is having a huge impact on consumer purchasing habits over the last 12 months with many tightening their belts.

Many consumers are reprioritising their expenditures which will certainly have an impact on certain industries. However, based on the latest trends from last year we haven't seen this having an effect on the cheese industry to date. Cheese popularity remains high even with prices rising and sales are still looking set to increase over the next year. That said it is still set to be a difficult year for the industry with many firms struggling to make a profit as the rising costs and competitive pricing will squeeze margins across the sector.

Sunit Mehta MD of Rowcliffe, added, *"The cheese industry has ridden many difficult economic periods and political issues over the last few decades, and I have no doubt that even with all the challenges facing the industry it will continue to innovate, adapt and deliver products that will maintain and grow the popularity of cheese to consumers in the UK."*

At Rowcliffe, we pride ourselves on leading the way by working with and sourcing the best cheese suppliers and partners to ensure our range of products is always market-leading in taste and diversity."

To find out more about Rowcliffe, our range of cheeses and fine food products please visit the website - [Rowcliffe](#)

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*data from Statista, 2022

Press Contact

James Godfrey – press@agencykode.com

About Rowcliffe

Rowcliffe is Britain's leading importer and distributor of quality cheese and fine foods. We have been serving independent retailers since 1967 and premium supermarkets since the early 1990's.

Founded by Anthony Rowcliffe (who changed British attitudes to cheese), his mission to champion and support small producers was continued by his son Tim, who until his own recent retirement was flying the flag for hand-crafted traditions and quality producers.

Scouring the UK and Continental Europe for award-winning produce is a time-consuming process that many premium supermarkets and independent retailers happily leave to Rowcliffe. We have an unrivalled range of artisanal produce, supporting the commercial needs of our increasing customer base.

Our company was built on a commitment to offer quality products whilst maintaining a high level of service and integrity. We are thankful and proud to represent many of Britain's and Europe's talented farmers & artisans. We consider our producers to be part of the company, as they bring forward cheeses with true provenance, made from traditional recipes, with hand-crafted skills and stories that the business is proud to keep alive. We supply the trade with over 2000 cheeses and hundreds of speciality products including: charcuterie, olives, olive oils, vinegars, butters, pastry and much, much more.