

Playing safe for consumers - novelty without the risk

G

ood news for British farmers this month with reports of a bumper UK Apricot harvest (yes we do grow them here now) and a commitment from Morrisons to shun New Zealand Lamb in favour of British (to match a similar initiative by the Co-op). Good news too for Teesside's Quorn factory with the promise of 'hundreds of new jobs' following an upturn in sales for the meat substitute producer. Part of the increase in turnover is due to Quorn's 'healthy protein' content, which is bang on the high protein trend. Again, this month there have been further new Protein enriched products being tested through Fast Foodfax, across a range of categories: from yogurt to dried pasta.

Consumers repeatedly tell us they are on the look-out for new food and drink products, even though the reality is that most of us buy the same, or similar, products week in week out. This inherent conservatism tends to be exaggerated during times of economic uncertainty as they avoid risking money on foods they and the family may not like. A tried and tested way round this, as seen to great affect at this year's Grocer New Product Awards, is to build on at least one familiar element - whether that be a familiar ingredient, or recipe in a new context, a traditional cooking method or an extension of a well-known brand. The latter can be a dangerous strategy. Whilst guaranteed to attract initial interest, a brand extension has to be in keeping with the core values of the brand and deliver the expected quality. One product that struggled to match its category norm this month was Nestle's Milky Bar Milk Slices, which lacked the creamy milkiness of the original. Coming at the end of summer, there was still an outdoor feel to this month's product test list, with an innovative Showcase Product: Asda's BBQ Coleslaw Kit, plus a popular Rustlers Gourmet BBQ Burger, as well as some tasty fresh produce. Tesco's Petite Peppers set a new category maximum and were suited to a range of eating occasions, although M&S's Orange flavoured Fennel proved far more challenging.

Check out some of the more exciting new products this month including interesting innovations from familiar brands:

SHOWCASE PRODUCT OF THE MONTH



Embodying the taste of summer, this **Asda Coleslaw** mix looked fresh and colourful, and was accompanied by a tasty BBQ flavoured Mayonnaise. (Review 170716).



Kellogg's Coco Pops Crispy Granola. An interesting brand extension, but still viewed as unhealthy despite is lower sugar claim. (Review 170725)



Go Ahead Crunchy Dippers. An intriguing extension of this healthy brand but tasted "too sweet" & too expensive for a children's snack (Review 170713)



This pack of **Mousse Fusions** from **Noble Desserts** was a welcome extension of the upmarket Gu range. (Review 170723)



Monty Bojangles Scofflets. "Rich" and "moreish": the perfect antidote to all that summer salad. (Review 170733)



The distinctive **Nestle's** branding proved a key attraction of the **Milky Bar Milk Slice**. But the taste lacked the expected milky indulgence. (Review 170722)