

# The Grocer

Focus On: National Convenience Show and Farm Shop & Deli by Alex Wright ([apnwright@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:apnwright@yahoo.co.uk))

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## The Story

**How can c-stores increase basket value while maintaining frequency of shop? We speak to exhibitors at the National Convenience Show, taking place at the Birmingham NEC in April, to find out how to strike the balance between footfall and basket spend through product mix, services and so on. So, what are consumers actually looking for from their local store? Which categories should retailers be focusing on to drive growth? And, how can food to go play a part?**

### Key themes:

**The shows:** NCS and Farm Shop & Deli will be packed with the biggest and most innovative FMCG suppliers and service providers for c-store operators and farm shops. So, what's on offer? What are the latest innovations in this sector? What are the key themes and trends set to make an impact over the coming year?

**Categories:** What are the key food & drink categories in growth in c-stores? How is this different from the multiples and other retailers? What are retailers doing to capitalise on this? Key areas of discussion here are ranges, merchandising, promotions, marketing, NPD and so on.

**Increasing value:** As above, this is the crux of the piece. How are smaller retailers increasing their basket spend? What part does ranging have to play in this? Are we seeing the emergence of more niche goods in their aisles? If so, what? With consumers shopping across a much wider array of stores than before, how has the need for c-stores changed and how are they evolving to meet this need?

**Inflation:** As a follow on to the above point, how is inflation impacting the sector and the availability and prices of various goods? How are conversations going with the big suppliers with regards to price changes and Brexit?

**Local goods:** Farm shops & delis are often in a unique position to offer an array of truly local, and often premium, goods from craft beer, to home-baked loaves, to charcuterie. What are the key trends and how is this translating into the wider grocery market?

**Competition:** How will the recent announcement of the Tesco/Booker merger affect c-stores? Some say this blurs the lines and as such c-stores are going to have to re-valuate who their competitors are. Why?

**Food to go:** How are smaller retailers changing their food to go ranges to tap into this burgeoning market? What do their meal deals, if they have them, look like? How can they compete with more traditional food to go outlets, such as coffee shops and Boots on this?

**Hot new trends:** Of course, any discussion of NCS wouldn't be complete without a rundown of the hottest new trends that will be shaping convenience retail over the coming months and years. This feature will explore which hot new consumer trends will be defining this year's show. If it's new and innovative, we want to hear about it!

**Innovation:** This will be key to this feature. We'll be exploring how NPD and new services will be shaping the sector in 2017. We will be profiling eight of the most interesting launches in a separate panel.

**New services:** It's never been more important for independent convenience retailers to create a genuine USP. This feature will explore in detail how NCS exhibitors will be looking to help c-store retailers establish that point of difference. We will be looking at everything from electronic bill payment and money transfer services through to food to go and ATMs.

**Key questions the feature is likely to address:**

- What consumer trends have impacted the category over the past year?
- How have promotional strategies (both in terms of price and marketing) evolved?
- How have individual retailers' strategies impacted the market?
- How has merchandising changed in the market?
- What impact has own-label had on branded players?
- What's next for the category?