The Grocer

Focus On: Ambient & Canned:
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The Story
After years of decline, canned foods have wrestled their way back into tentative growth. However, as one brand redesigned its trademark pie tins because 'young people can't open them', the next generation of shoppers quite literally may not be as open to canned stuff. How can canned food tempt millennials and build on these early shoots of growth?

Key Themes:

Online Listicle Plant-based canned food: The latest launches looking to capitalise on the rise of vegetarianism and veganism

Changing mindsets: The perception of canned and ambient foods as being cheap and sub-par has been responsible for the category's steady decline. So is the slight increase in volume a sign that perceptions are starting to change? Frozen has been hugely successful in tackling misconceptions by emphasising its health credentials, investing in innovation and marketing campaigns. Is it time for canned and ambient foods to do the same?

Young generation: Can openers are a no-no for anyone under 35, according to Fray Bentos. So how can canned products appeal to younger consumers? Which designs work best? Or is it best to offer alternatives e.g. snap pots?

Brands vs Own Label: The rise of Aldi and Lidl have helped boost own label value sales by more than 10%, with growth in all but two subcategories. Volumes are up too but the same can't be said for branded products, with a loss in value sales over the year. How instrumental have the discounters been in reviving canned foods, and how can brands get in on the action?

Veggie power: Ambient vegetarian products are growing fast (albeit from a small base), powered by own label ranges and growing interest in vegetarian, vegan and flexitarian lifestyles. Which products and innovations are driving the sector forward, and can the current level of growth be sustained this year?

Canned fish: Already one of the most expensive subcategories (second only to vegetables in a jar), prices of both branded and own label canned fish jumped again this year, up 16.7% and 7.6% respectively. Whilst brands have yet to justify the new price of £6.63/kg to shoppers, own label has managed to keep volume and value growth going strong. Have brands outpriced themselves?

Sponges go soggy: Tinned sponge puddings are headed for extinction and losing sales fast. If the fate of the sector relies on the next generation of shoppers, it will need to up its game in innovation and NPD. Is anyone fighting tinned sponges corner, or are they about to become a thing of the past?

4 x innovations: Four new products or product ranges that have ideally not appeared in The Grocer before including launch date, image and RSP. h. Please note: these do not all need to be canned, so long as they are ambient and demonstrate how alternatives to cans are being used.

Organic canned food: NPD with organic credentials has attempted to change perceptions of the category. Which have been the most high-profile launches and are they appealing to the typical organic consumer?