Focus On: Rice, Pulses & Noodles by Daniel Selwood (daniel.selwood@wrbm.com)

Publishing: 15 August
Advertising deadline: 6 August
Submissions deadline: 27 July

The Story

Are we facing a basmati rice shortage? Warning bells rang in May, when export restrictions pushed Indian rice prices to a nine-month high. Importers has begun stockpiling earlier in the year amid concerns over supplies. But with basmati one of Britain's most popular rice products, stocks were soon expected to dwindle. It couldn't come at a worse time, with shoppers wanting to keep stocked up on staples in lockdown as they cook more often and with more focus on world recipes. So, what are suppliers doing to meet consumers expectations – and how might a rice shortage benefit that other starchy side noodles?

Key themes

Rice: what's the situation with basmati rice? Is there enough to go around? Are other types of rice at risk of becoming scare? How have brands been responding to demand? And how have their sales been affected by stockpiling in grocery and the closure of foodservice?

Noodles: noodles enjoyed an incredibly strong 2019. Why – and has the success continued into this calendar year? What is driving sales? What flavours and formats are doing well? And which brand are leading?

Pulses: what do pulses have that rice and noodles don't? Are they healthier? Do they serve different occasions? Or different tastes? How do brands innovate with pulses? And who's doing it best?

Promotions: how has the lack of supermarket promotions driven shoppers' choices – especially in flavoured rices?

Own label: It's long been taking the lead in growth. How are sales faring in the 'new normal'?

Plastic: lockdown has revived fears about plastic pollution. With many rice brands offering an array of plastic pouches, what are they doing to allay consumers' environmental concerns?

Shopper Intelligence: how do people shop supermarkets' rice & noodles segment?

Innovations: We identify eight new products that have ideally not appeared in The Grocer before including launch date and RSP, and a picture of each.

Kantar data: using Kantar commentary, the reasons behind the rise and fall of the relevant categories.

Nielsen: using Nielsen commentary, the reasons behind the rise and fall of the leading brands.