

# Go with the grain

As we see a return to healthy cooking, how can you up your grain sales?

**B**eing healthy has never been so fashionable, and healthy cooking has never been so popular. This is in part the reason we have seen a rise in the sales of traditional ingredients, which are without doubt coming back into favour.

Simple, wholesome food is certainly a driver for an increasingly health conscious public, and so different kinds of grains present great opportunity for retailers.

"There is growth across the whole grains market for several key reasons and in a number of key areas. The main drivers for this growth are nutrition, health, clean eating, veganism/vegetarianism, consumer awareness, and, importantly for certain grains, consumers with coeliac disease, gluten/wheat allergy and intolerances or seeking wheat free alternatives," commented Lee Switzer, from Organico.

Suma's Emma Robinson added: "We're seeing a steady growth across our range of grains. Rice remains a good seller, although interestingly sales of short grain brown rice have overtaken long grain and continue to grow. We've found that organic rice has become more expensive in recent years due to short seasons and crop issues, but it continues to be a reliable seller nonetheless. The strongest areas of growth have mainly been seen with newer grain varieties, such as black rice and gluten free corn couscous."

## Purchasing drivers

In terms of how to target this audience, it is important to understand what drives their purchasing decisions, and then tailor your product choice.

"As a whole, it is the overriding trend for whole grains that is responsible for the growth, and within this, it's the explosion in ancient grains that's a major driver – and for numerous reasons," Switzer commented.

"The widely [consumer] understood health benefits from whole grain versions of the more common grains, and grain products, such as wheat, corn and oats is helping to increase growth in these grain areas, primarily from a health and

nutrition perspective. However, it is the ancient grains, with their enhanced nutritional characteristics and functional properties that are driving trends, new product development and an expansion of the grain category – especially within the clean eating, nutritionally aware, millennial, and gluten avoiding consumer groups."

Robinson continued: "There's been a fair bit of publicity recently around plant-based foods as healthy sources of protein – amaranth and quinoa (though technically seeds) are getting lots of attention for this reason. It seems that consumers are looking for variety in their grains too; freekeh, pearl couscous and black rice are growing in popularity. We're regularly taking on new products as it seems that the popularity of wholefoods and vegan diets is set to continue, and grains have a big part to play in this."

People are also looking for function, and this is another key selling point.

Switzer agreed, commenting: "In addition to nutritional and functional characteristics, one of the key characteristics of most ancient grains, including amaranth, buckwheat, millet, quinoa, chia, sorghum, teff and wild rice is that they are gluten free – making them even more desirable. For gluten intolerant (but not coeliac or allergic) consumers, ancient members of the wheat family, such as einkorn, emmer/faro, spelt and kamut have been shown to have lower gluten protein levels and different protein profiles to that of modern wheat. Tolerance, though, is on an individual basis."

Organic too remains a key driver.

"Clean eating advocates are pushing more and more for organic and non-GMO certified products, while the most current on trend area for grains is sprouting and sprouted grain products, watch this space," Switzer added.

And in terms of how you as a retailer can support your offering?

"Showcase your products with a knowledge and enthusiasm that informs your customers, enhances their knowledge and brings that ever so important bond of trust. Being able to get

over to your customers the relevant and important information about the products and their ingredients is essential," Switzer said.

"If you're not sure whether the grain ingredients in a product are ancient or modern (or even a modern ancient – yes, they 'exist'), true grains, pseudo-grains or in fact the seeds of an aquatic grass (wild rice a case in point), gluten free, high or low in nutrient x, y or z, or any other aspect that is important to your customers, then how are they supposed to know what, indeed even if, to buy?"

## Stock selection

There's much to choose from in terms of products in this area, so what should earn shelf space?

"Short grain organic brown rice is our most popular grain, with other rice varieties at the top of the list too. Quinoa is another biggie. Organic grains of all kinds are continuing to perform well for us," Robinson commented.

Switzer added: "Our current top seller in this area is Luke's Organic, a range of tortilla chip type products that we import from the USA. All the products are organic, gluten free and vegan and are all based on a unique combination of supergrains (corn, brown rice, millet, quinoa and amaranth) and a special blend of cold pressed vegetable oils. Each variety includes combinations of nutritious ingredients, including kale, chia seeds, Himalyan pink salt, flax seeds and a protein-rich blue corn. We have a range of organic, wheat-based, fine food breadsticks, pastas and whole grain pastas under our Organico brand, which are made in Italy and are consistently good sellers."

So, what else could you be considering?

Switzer suggested: "Corn-based products are key drivers in the grain snack category. Tortilla chip type products continue to enter the market and popcorn snack products, as healthier alternatives to other snacking categories, are in wide abundance and still growing. New varieties of corn (and rice) cakes, often with added ancient grains, other ingredients or toppings continue to be

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popular as healthier option snacks or as part of reduced calorie 'meals'.

"Snack products made wholly from ancient grains and/or super grains and other positive nutritional ingredients are new to category and growing well. Breakfast cereals and cereal bars are pushing strongly, both with staples such as oats and also now with the introduction of ancient grains – either combined with, or replacing, the more traditional grains."

Keeping an eye on new developments in free from is also important.

"Healthier and gluten free breads and bakery products, such as those based on multigrains, rye, spelt, corn, quinoa, buckwheat, rice and millet are another important product category. Wheat/gluten free flours for home cooking and baking are also on the rise."

Robinson continued: "Keep an eye on online trends, food blogs and health-related TV documentaries. A while back pearl barley was getting a lot of press as a traditional British healthy grain, which was reflected in our sales figures. It's good to be prepared for possible uplifts in sales and capitalise on marketing opportunities and increased consumer awareness around a particular product."

### Innovation ahead

The future will certainly see the market continue to innovate and there are expectations of further growth.

"We expect the sector to keep growing, with ancient grains being a key player as they keep moving from 'traditional' grain products into other format areas where their nutritional, functional and health benefits can give added value – and this is likely to also be a key area of innovation," Switzer said. "As the properties of ancient grains are further investigated and more is understood about them, this will inevitably lead to research into new applications and both product and ingredient innovations."

He continued: "Protein demand, especially plant-based, is continuing to increase from consumer pull, and grains will be playing a key role here also – as well as innovations in this area delivering consumer push with new products and concepts for enhanced nutrition. Sprouted and fermented grains will be two areas to keep a close eye on too."

Robinson added: "We feel the demand for variety is set to continue, so would expect appearances from newly 'discovered' grains or rediscovered heritage varieties. We expect gluten free

products to continue to grow in popularity, which is good news for sales of products like amaranth, which is naturally gluten-free and checks the high protein box too."

New to market for Organico is under the Wild Thing! Brand, a new take on the crisp, popcorn and corn cakes.

"We have combined them all to form The Popcorn Flat. We have combined corn kernels with different combinations of vegetables, ancient grains and natural spices and then popped (in coconut oil) and flattened them to develop a truly unique burst of texture and flavour in a wafer thin flat," Switzer explained.

There is also the new Mini Rubatà under the Organico brand, a type of mini breadstick. Two variants are made with wheat flour – the artisan methods used giving a dense, but crispy, texture to the breadstick, which make it more easily digested than similar wheat-based products.

Switzer commented: "These have more traditional flavours, one being with real Italian hard cheese and the other with tomatoes. We have then developed two more based on ancient grain spelt flour; Carrot with hemp, chia and turmeric, and Seeded, with sesame, flax and amaranth." **hfb**





# The ancient grain for modern life

**KAMUT® khorasan wheat, with its soft and nutty flavour, is appreciated for its high nutritional values and its light digestibility.**

## **Nutritional value and energy.**

KAMUT® khorasan wheat provides more energy than modern wheat and contains more proteins, amino acids, vitamins and minerals such as zinc, potassium, iron, phosphorus, magnesium and above all, selenium, a trace element that is known for its strong antioxidant properties.

## **Digestibility and research.**

KAMUT® khorasan wheat has never been genetically manipulated and contains a less complex gluten which is easier to digest. It is an excellent alternative for modern wheat. A study indicated that many people with non-coeliac modern wheat sensitivity had no or little problem eating KAMUT® khorasan products.



## **Taste the difference.**

Thanks to its unique flavour and ease of digestibility, KAMUT® khorasan wheat is the ideal grain for many different dishes from a quick snack to a complete meal. Also the softer taste of this grain eliminates the need for extra sugar added to many products.

Besides flour, which is the basic ingredient for bread, pancakes, biscuits, cookies and cake, this cereal is also ideal for snacks, breakfast cereals and muesli, pasta, bulgur, couscous, pizza, vegetable drinks, beer, wheatgrass juice, etc.

Recipes are available on [www.kamut.com](http://www.kamut.com)

## **Origin.**

An ancestor of modern wheat, khorasan wheat originated in Mesopotamia, which is situated within the Fertile Crescent, an area in the Middle East stretching from Egypt to the Tigris and Euphrates valleys.

## **The KAMUT® brand guarantees:**

- ancient khorasan grain
- always grown organic
- never genetically modified
- protein range of 12-18%
- between 400 to 1000 ppb (µg/kg) selenium
- 98% free of all signs of disease
- 99% free of contaminating varieties of modern wheat

## **What is the science saying:**

- high nutritional value
- antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties
- beneficial for gut health
- improvement of symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome
- reduction of cardiovascular risk factors
- beneficial for non-celiac gluten sensitivity people
- protection against the development of diabetes complications

Complete research results can be found on [www.kamut.com](http://www.kamut.com)

## **All this is possible thanks to:**

- organic farming
- audits to distributors
- the high quality guarantee of the KAMUT® brand
- the possibility to check the purity of finished products

## **Where to buy.**

**KAMUT® khorasan products are available in most organic shops, health food shops and bakeries. The flour in consumer packages is available in the online shop of Doves Farm Foods on [www.dovesfarm.co.uk](http://www.dovesfarm.co.uk) as well as recipes. All available KAMUT® khorasan products, by country and by category, can be found on [www.kamut.com](http://www.kamut.com)**

Please email any questions to [nele.callebert@kamut.com](mailto:nele.callebert@kamut.com).

**KAMUT®**  
BRAND KHORASAN WHEAT

