

# CASE STUDY

Helping food businesses

**REFORMUL8**  
for a healthier future



## STRATHMORE FOODS

**“Our sales volumes mean that the overall benefits from our reformulation project could be significant. A 10% reduction in salt or calories across our products could add up to some huge figures – almost Brian Cox scale numbers – in reduced calorie and salt consumption nationwide.”**

*James Smiles, Technical Manager, Strathmore Foods*

### Managing the nutritional, logistic and financial elements of reformulation



Strathmore Foods is one of the UK's leading ready-meal manufacturers, based in Forfar, with a range of brands including McIntosh of Strathmore. We're looking to achieve healthier versions of our products, but need to consider production logistics and cost as well as nutrition.

#### Support to meet public health guidelines

At Strathmore we manufacture ready meals, bakery products and savoury puddings, supplied both chilled and frozen to retail and foodservice customers across the UK. With some of our retail customers looking to reduce salt and calorie content to meet UK-wide health targets and guidelines, they have asked us to reflect this in forthcoming tenders. We are therefore looking at reformulation options, with support from FDF Scotland's Reformul8 project. This support includes advice on alternative ingredients and suppliers as well as funding and

product benchmarking, and we were impressed at how straightforward the application process is.

#### Reducing the salt and calories

Our New Product Development (NPD) and buying teams are working closely with our ingredient suppliers to lower salt and calories across our range:

- ) we aim to **reduce salt and calories by roughly 10%**, though the focus is more on the kcal per 100g and g salt per 100g figures. Some of our meals are already near to the baseline figures, so the final % reduction will vary slightly
- ) on **salt**, the first step will be to reduce the salt in the batch mixes and see if or how it affects flavour. If we need to add flavour back in, we can look at other seasonings and ingredients
- ) on **calorie reduction**, the options vary from meal to meal. For example, with **macaroni cheese**, we can incorporate some lower-fat cheese. We have used it previously, and managed to get the texture of the sauces similar to those with full-fat cheese. For **meat-based meals**, like stovies or pies, the options could include leaner meat, higher vegetable content or alternative ingredients.

**Food and Drink Federation Scotland's Reformulation for Health programme offers support to small to medium-sized companies, both FDF members and non-members. For more details, contact [reformulation@fdfscotland.org.uk](mailto:reformulation@fdfscotland.org.uk) or visit [www.fdfscotland.org.uk](http://www.fdfscotland.org.uk).**

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## Other aspects – from price to production runs

We're targeting a finish date of September 2022, but we have tenders due in September 2021 and will need to provide some idea of our plans. September 2022 sounds like a long time ahead, but it's a tight timeline given the complexity of the project. There are so many levels to consider, and in some ways the food science elements are the easy part!

**The customers:** our retail and consumer customers are very sensitive to price changes. We can't just find an alternative ingredient that costs £1,000 a kilo because we need to stay at the same price point. On top of that, some of our consumer customers have been buying our macaroni cheese, stovies and other products for 30 years, and they don't want the flavour or texture to change.



**The production logistics:** when you manufacture own-label products, you sometimes make different retailers' products in the same production run. This complicates the reformulation journey because your tenders with each retailers are time-bound. This means that if you change the recipe mid-tender at the request of one retailer, you:

- ) either have to go through expensive processes to change your product specifications, do nutritional testing and get approval from other retailers
- ) or multiply your recipes and production runs, which is inefficient and challenging for the team in the factory.

This means the timing of any recipe changes has to be very carefully managed.

With this project, we'll start with the food science aspects but always keep in mind the other elements. Our sales team will tell buyers what we are doing, we'll monitor cost and production implications, and our marketing team will prepare any messaging around new recipes and healthier ingredients.

## Sales, brand and health gains

By doing this project, we expect to see three main benefits:

1. **Commercial benefits.** Making our products healthier while keeping the existing appeal and price will help us retain and win tenders.
2. **Building our brand and reputation.** As well as pleasing existing customers, we could increase our appeal to health-conscious customers.
3. **Societal benefits from supporting healthier eating** in Scotland and the rest of the UK. Our typical consumer customers are working on tight budgets and daily schedules and may struggle to change the way they shop or cook. We can help their health and wellbeing by making the change for them.

[www.strathmore-foods.com](http://www.strathmore-foods.com)

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