

Helping food businesses

**REFORMUL**

for a healthier future



## Reborn Lorne hits target with sodium reduction

Malcolm Allan produces a range of sausage products, haggis, black puddings and burgers alongside traditional butcher lines, such as beef olives and steak pies.

Started by Mr Malcolm Allan in 1954 as a family butcher shop in Bonnybridge, the company now produce 50 tonnes of sausages in an average week as well as 54% of all Scotland's Lorne sausage.

### Why change a winning formula?

Although popular, our existing Lorne sausage product didn't meet Food Standards Agency guidelines for the sodium (salt) content in sausage products.

So when a national retail customer approached us with a request to make one that did, we knew the project could help us in reducing salt across the range.

Not only would this help us with new requests, it would also help us tender for new business.

We received around £5,000 in support from the fourth round of the Reformul8 Challenge Fund.

This went towards funding the lab testing for each modified product, which can be an involved and costly process.

**"We always had a lot of ideas, but this process has definitely given team members more confidence in their own abilities as well as proving them within the business."**

**Arlene King,  
Technical manager**

## CASE STUDY

# Malcolm Allan

SCOTLAND'S FAMILY BUTCHER

### What we did

The project took around six months, from starting the reformulation to signing the deal for the successful new product.

We don't have a dedicated new product development (NPD) team so many of the ideas came from one of our founder's sons – butcher James Allan - and the development of the product was done by production manager David Millar, supported by technical manager Arlene King.

**Keeping flavour:** the first challenge in reducing salt was keeping the sausage's flavour. Without any salt, the risk was they would taste bland. It was also important that we didn't add any more allergens into the product.

We worked very closely with one of our ingredient suppliers who we've dealt with for years and they know our products really well.

They developed a complete seasoning mix using yeast extract, as well as taking the salt out of the breadcrumbs we use as a binder.

Although we couldn't remove salt from the seasoning completely, after a bit of to-ing and fro-ing we did reach the FSA targets.

**Lowering fat:** during the reformulation, the customer also asked if we could look at reducing the fat content which sat at around 20% for our Lorne sausage.

The finished product has to have the right mouth-feel so it's not too dry and now we were running the risk of it tasting like cardboard. As we had to use leaner meat, this had a knock-on effect on the price of ingredients – it's cost-prohibitive to use sirloin steak to make a Lorne sausage! - so we turned to pea protein as a solution.

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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## The findings

The project had expanded to reduce fat content as well as reduce sodium, so it was an interesting project to balance that with retaining flavour and mouth-feel, not introducing any new allergens and still keeping within budget.

There had been a fear that in reducing the salt, the shelf life of the product might be affected but that turned out not to be the case.

- we halved the salt content from 1.89g per 100g to 1.09g – a 42% reduction
- we reduced the calories by 55% from the previous product
- the fat content in the original Lorne sausage was around 20%, after the reformulation this was less than 5%, sitting at around 2.2%



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## CASE STUDY

## The benefits and learning points

If we start by looking at the commercial benefits, we just wouldn't have got that piece of business with a national retailer without this reformulation. It shows we can deliver in what was an open bid.

And now we have the opportunity to **expand our business** with that client, and we're quoting for reduced salt versions of other products in our range, such as our steak pies.

We can **apply it to other lines**, such as our hugely popular own brand Malcolm Allan products.

There is also an element of **future-proofing** with this work, as the age profile of our consumer tends to be older. Governmental guidelines state a preferred approach of gradually reducing the overall saltiness of products to allow people's palates to adjust. These reformulations will appeal to a younger audience who tend not to have as much salt in their diet without turning off an important core consumer.

We now have more **confidence**: you don't have to have a dedicated NPD team, you just need to be disciplined to fit it into your work process. We always had a lot of ideas, but this process has definitely given team members more confidence in their own abilities as well as proving them within the business.



Technical manager  
Arlene King ... "lots of ideas"

We'd recommend **working with your ingredient supplier**, especially if they know your products really well.

And finally, **be crystal clear** on what you're trying to achieve, who's doing what and on the target you're aiming for.

It's really important to have a plan and make sure everyone knows what's required from them and you get clear guidance if it's a customer-driven request.

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