

Reformulation for Health

Reformulation Support Case Studies

fdf
Scotland



Funding opportunities for the industry

Food and drink businesses have a real desire to offer a wider range of healthier products – but the associated costs can be challenging. With 95% of Scotland’s food and drink manufacturers being SME size it is essential that they receive the support needed to reformulate, adapt to the evolving asks of industry, and remain competitive. This is why we have developed a range of funding opportunities, and continue to highlight the need for long-term funding commitments to make Scotland products and people healthier.

With thanks to Reformul8 Partners Scotland Food & Drink, Interface, and Food Standards Scotland, we have facilitated six funding opportunities, putting a total of £239,000 into industry to invest in health reformulation.

Further funding will be provided in 2024 with a fourth cycle of the reformul8 Challenge Fund, and a second collaborative fund with Food Standards Scotland.

Funds	Number of Manufacturers Supported	Total Awarded
RCF1	18	£19,000
RCF2	12	£40,000
RCF3	12	£50,000
HPIF	8	£80,000
HBF	13	£50,000
Total	63	£239,000



Joanne Burns, Reformulation for Health Manager.

“ I am proud to illustrate some of the fantastic case studies selected from over 60 food manufacturers who have engaged with the Reformulation for Health programme over the last 5 years. Through our externally funded work, we’ve seen all sectors of the food industry get involved including butchers, bakers and ready-meal makers. Projects have covered all aspects of reformulation from fat, salt, sugar and calorie reduction, to positive nutrition with fibre enrichment.

These case studies will give you a flavour of the array of businesses that we support, and some of the amazing work taking place by food manufacturers across Scotland to improve the health of our products and people. ”

Our first fund was developed in 2021 and funded directly from the Scottish Government's Reformulation for Health grant. A total of £19,000 was shared between 18 businesses which also received support from our team.

Growers Garden

Reformulating our broccoli crisps will help us reach new stockists and reduce VAT

Growers Garden is a farmers' collective in Fife producing tasty broccoli crisps. The snacks have always been healthy, containing fresh broccoli as the number one ingredient. With continuous improvement being a priority for the company, the team looked for market opportunities and set to improving their health claims.

FDF Scotland's Reformulation for Health programme has given encouragement and advice.

The first opportunity was to **reduce potato content**. Potato crisps are subject to VAT at 20% but by reducing potato to the third ingredient, the snacks could be sold VAT-free. A substitution was found in the form of a pre-gelatinised cornflour that had a potato flavour. This reduced the potato content, and is still a natural ingredient.

Secondly, the team wanted to maximise the opportunities within the growing trend of **healthy snacking**. The reformulation project achieved:

- **reducing salt content from 2.1% to 0.95-1.2% (depending on the flavour) with successful taste tests**
- **increasing the percentage of fresh broccoli in each pack.**

What next?

The reformulation process has given the team experience and knowledge that can be applied to other products within the portfolio. "There's a great market opportunity out there which we are now well placed to capture" Rachel Athey, General manager, Growers Garden.

Tower Bakery

Tower Bakery in Abernethy has been owned by Angela and Sandy McKinnon for over 40 years, and they now run the business alongside their three children. The bakery has 5 own brand retail shops, and third party outlets including a large retailer and local authority contracts.

With the New Nutritional Requirements for Schools Regulations now in force in Scotland, many Local Authorities are seeking options from suppliers containing enhanced nutrition. Stirling Council contacted Tower Bakery, an existing supplier, seeking an enriched white morning roll containing higher fibre.

“ The reformulation process is not new to the business, who have been reformulating for years in order to meet retailers' specification requirements. ”

Angela McKinnon

There was a great deal of research involved, to identify and source higher fibre flours and powdered fibres which would present enough fibre while keeping the product light in colour. The NPD team sampled many flour alternatives, and found their functionality to be very similar to wheat flour. Multiple recipe formulations were trialled, but to their delight the team found that no processing adjustments were required. With the white morning roll so ubiquitous in Scotland, it was vital that this reformulation project was completed with finesse. A product development consultant helped direct the team to the powdered fibre that was used in the final recipe:

“ The fibre is something that is used by large bakeries, and available, but doesn't seem to be promoted by ingredients companies. We wouldn't have been able to use it if we hadn't been told exactly where to source it from by our consultant. ”

Angela McKinnon

The finished product

The original recipe morning roll made with wheat flour contains 2.1g fibre per 100g product. Tower Bakery's new reformulated higher fibre white morning roll contains 4.3g per 100g, which is more than double the original fibre content.



Strathmore Foods

Strathmore Foods manufactures ready meals, bakery products and savoury puddings, supplied both chilled and frozen to retail and foodservice customers across the UK.

With some retail customers looking to reduce salt and calorie content to meet UK health guidelines, the team at Strathmore had been asked to reflect this in their tenders. This prompted them to explore their reformulation options, with funding support and advice from FDF Scotland's Reformulation for Health programme.

Reducing the salt and calories

The project goal was to **reduce salt and calories by roughly 10%** across the range, with the focus mainly on the kcal per 100g and g salt per 100g figures. The plan included:

- working with ingredient suppliers to reduce the salt content of batch mixes
- utilise a lower-fat cheese, leaner meat, higher vegetable content, or alternative ingredients to reduce calorie content

The process of reformulation doesn't stop at the test kitchen. The timing of any recipe changes needs to be carefully managed to fit with customers' tender phases and the business's own production logistics for different customers. In addition, retail and consumer customers can be very sensitive to price changes, and also don't want the flavour to change.

Sales, brand and health gains

Why take on the work? There were three major benefits in mind:

- 1. Commercial benefits:** making products healthier while keeping the existing appeal and price will help retain and win tenders.
- 2. Building reputation:** increase the appeal of the brand to health-conscious customers.
- 3. Societal benefits from supporting healthier eating:** in Scotland and the rest of the UK.

“ A 10% reduction in salt or calories across our products could add up to some huge figures in reduced calorie and salt consumption nationwide. ”

James Smiles, Technical Manager,
Strathmore Foods

The popularity of the first fund highlighted the readiness of manufacturers to reformulate, and the extent to which cost was acting as a barrier to doing so. In 2022 funding was secured from the Scotland Food & Drink Recovery Plan to provide a second round of the Reformul8 Challenge Fund. A total of 12 manufacturers were awarded a share of £40,000 and received the support of the Reformulation for Health team.

Peacock salt

Peacock Salt is the largest and oldest distributor of salt products in the UK, headquartered in Ayr. They supply salt for a vast range of purposes, from food production and fish processing to water treatment and road de-icing.

Why lower-sodium salt?

With a long history of supplying salt into the food industry, Peacock was aware of the shift in attitude towards sodium in food. Many of their customers were working to meet demand from their own customers, and others were starting to prepare for new government guidelines on sodium, to be met by 2024. In response, they decided to develop a lower-sodium salt blend.

The aim: to help the food industry reduce their sodium content while keeping the great taste, feel and look of their products.

What they did

The project was started in late 2019, with the addition of a new staff member with a technical background and support from University College Dublin. Several different blends were developed, with the sodium levels tailored to the various categories in the 2024 Public Health England guidelines.

It was vital that the blends met certain criteria to be industry friendly: cost, stability, taste, and texture. To do this, numerous sodium alternatives were trialled, including potassium, magnesium, seaweed, malt extract and others. The final blend contained sodium, potassium, and magnesium, with consistent grain sizes to ensure the quality of the product.

Meeting customer demand: sensory testing

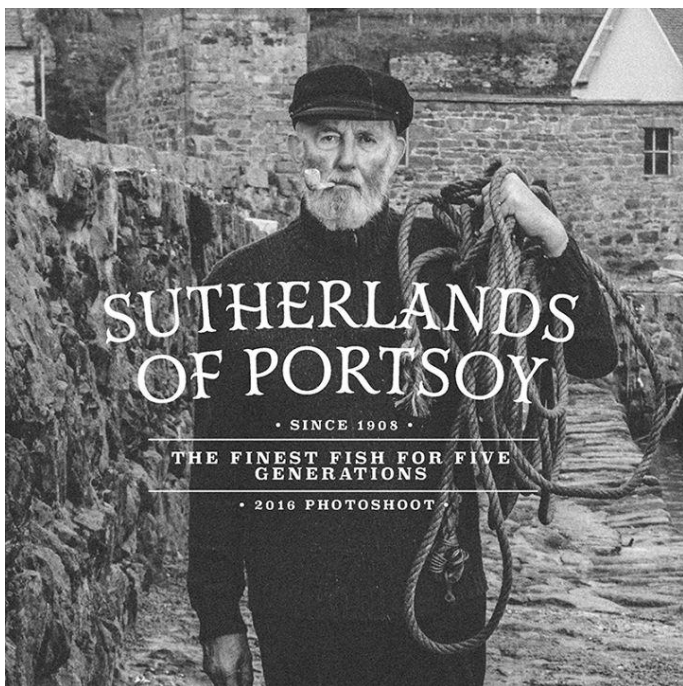
The next stage of the journey was **sensory testing**, made possible by the Reformul8 Challenge Fund.

Detailed sensory testing was carried out with Queen Margaret University (QMU) in Edinburgh. They panel-tested two new reduced-sodium formulations, using them in some of Scotland's best-loved foods – **oatcakes, soup and pastry** – and looking at elements like texture, mouth-feel, appearance and taste. With industry readiness a priority, Peacock now offers three 'off the shelf' blends providing a 20%, 30%, and 40% reduction in sodium under the brand **Saltsmith**. They can also provide custom-made blends to meet unique customer needs.

“ The FDF Reformulation team were really helpful from the very beginning. As well as a grant, they've helped us with advice and putting us in contact with key people. Every time we asked them something, they really engaged with us. ”

“ We feel so positive about our new blends. We're not just selling more salt, we're selling something different, and meeting a key need for a lot of customers. And the market for it will grow as people become more and more health-conscious. ”

Greg Waters, Sales and Marketing Director, Peacock Salt



Sutherlands of Portsoy

Sutherlands of Portsoy is a traditional smokehouse dating back to 1908, based in the idyllic village of Portsoy on the Northeast coast of Scotland. They boast a core range of the finest smoked Scottish fish which is sold locally, online, to the hospitality sector, and internationally.

The forward-thinking brand is always looking for ways to improve its processes. Their team identified that a cold smoked salmon product with reduced sodium content, which maintained both the microbiology and taste, could offer a healthier option and grant the brand a competitive edge.

The reformulation project

A grant of £5,000 from the Reformul8 Challenge Fund enabled the team to review the whole salting process, exploring different salt types available from salt suppliers Peacock and Blackthorn. As a preservative, it was vital to establish whether the use of sea salt, which is naturally lower in sodium than other salt, would transfer less sodium into our product while still meeting the legal safety requirements for salt content and still scoring positively on taste and texture tests.

To trial this, extensive microbiology, sensory and nutritional tests on salmon cold-smoked were conducted using 3 different types of salt:

- existing coarse salt
- Blackthorn seasalt flakes
- A new low-sodium salt blend developed by Peacock (also with funding support from Reformulation for Health). The 70/20/10 blend of sodium chloride, potassium and magnesium

Microbiology tests surveyed the aqueous salt content and moisture content. To ensure food safety, the smoked salmon must meet the legal requirement of having aqueous salt content above 3.5%. All samples contained levels far exceeding this, allowing the project to continue.

Sensory tests, focussing on the appearance, colour, aroma, texture and salty taste of the different salmon types, scored well, with all samples receiving high ratings.

The worthwhile discoveries:

- All the new salt types tested would meet food safety requirements for salt content.
- The sensory tests have shown opportunities for a new product range with a slightly different flavour profile for customers who like a lighter, less salty smoked salmon.
- The project has shown the feasibility of reformulating the 'standard' range to reduce the sodium content while maintaining safety and flavour standards.

“ We are seeing potentially significant benefits from this reformulation process. If this challenge changes the taste, it could provide us with an additional line of products. ”

“ Engaging the workforce in a reformulation challenge equally has a positive impact, in that the business is seen to be thinking of the next generation. ”

John Farley, Director, Sutherlands of Portsoy

In 2022 funding was provided by Scotland Food & Drink to provide a third round of the Reformul8 Challenge Fund. This awarded a share of £50,000 to 12 businesses, along with the support of the Reformulation for Health team.

Aldomak

Based in Glasgow, Aldomak is a family business with 80 years of experience in the confectionery industry. They produce handmade confectionery with care and consideration, inspired by recipes passed on by generations of crafty confectioners who made treats taste utterly delicious.

Why sugar reduction?

This project was driven by the consumer market as there is significant demand from customers for reduced sugar products. The business is hoping to open the door to additional retail opportunities and maintain competitiveness as consumers seek healthier options.

The rolled Scottish oat bars were chosen to investigate, with a primary aim of reformulating a reduced saturated fat and sugar raspberry and honey oat bar. As natural ingredients play such a huge part in the brand, an important secondary purpose was testing consumer acceptance of the honeyberry as a new flavour. The Reformul8 Challenge Fund awarded £5,000 which contributed to funding the cost of ingredients, our team's time.

The five-month project called on the skills of the Quality and Technical Manager Joan Craig, as well as providing an Aldomak placement for fourth year food science student, Annabelle Darling from Glasgow Caledonian University.

Benchmark

The team used the UK government's guide to products high in fat, salt, and sugar (HFSS) as a benchmark, aiming for a score of less than four ("healthy") on the Nutrient Profile Score (NPS) calculator. This would future-proof the product from promotional restrictions should these be introduced in Scotland, as they are in England.

Recipes

Multiple clean label ingredients were trialled, including different grades of fibres and starches. It was found that inulin as a fat and sugar replacer provided the best functionality for the product.

The final product was high in fibre, with low enough saturated fat and sugar for the product to be classified as healthy under the NPS calculation. The nutrient content and water activity was comparable to an equivalent supermarket standard fat and sugar oat bar, showing that food safety standards were possible with the alternative ingredient. Also extremely helpful was the access to facilities: the collaboration with the university lab filled the void of available laboratory testing facilities, which the team reported as an increasing challenge for small and medium-sized businesses. A sensory panel analysis was also carried out, returning a high level of consumer acceptance for both bars, the raspberry & honey and the honeyberry.



“ This wasn't just about replacing sugar, we wanted to create a product that hit the healthier eating brief without wavering on Aldomak's commitment to great taste. ”

“ The project was a great opportunity to investigate new tastes and ingredients and explore different processes. ”

Marion McCormick, Aldomak Director



Simon Howie

Perthshire butcher and manufacturer of premium meat products Simon Howie is passionate about quality meat. From award-winning bacon to Scotland's best-selling black pudding and the UK's best-selling haggis, Simon Howie's quality ingredients are trusted and relied upon by their customers to create mouthwatering everyday meals.

Why reduce the fat in black pudding?



Simon Howie is the number one black pudding brand in Scotland, selling approximately 2million packs a year. Despite using a historical recipe, they wanted to explore if the fat content could be reduced, which would also reduce the calories and make it a healthier choice for customers. An added driver was the price of beef fat: previously a relatively inexpensive by-product, it had sharply increased in price. The business was awarded £3,000 in support from the third round of the Reformul8 Challenge Fund.

Initially, the fat reduction target was between 20 and 30%. Several fat alternatives had been identified for trial, but a flash of inspiration transformed two challenges into one solution.

By-product

The brand had seen a surge in the production of packs of bacon. The team considered the potential to use the ends generated from bacon production as a fat substitute in the black pudding. With so many kilogrammes of bacon ends being generated every day, and no competing use for them, they set out to investigate this solution.

The project took around 10 weeks, commencing in February 2023. It brought together the production, technical, and commercial teams who formed the task force for discussion and decision-making. Different percentages of bacon ends were trialled to find an optimal balance between functionality, taste, and flavour. It was found that the combination of 40% bacon and 60% beef fat gave the best results.

The findings

The results of the reformulation project found:

- The finished product contained almost half the original amount of fat, and more protein.
- As an added bonus, the final salt content was reduced.

The reformulation project made the team feel involved and informed, so for example the production supervisor was genuinely interested and engaged in how the reformulated black pudding had performed. We were surprised at how straightforward it was. We carried out two trials, and it all seemed to fall into place so we were obviously very lucky, focused – or both. We had discussed the percentages beforehand and there is an element as a butcher of knowing your product.

Challenge presumptions

“ It's important to start with a lack of preconceptions, for example the reduced salt was an unexpected result from our testing, so it's worth testing out everything. ”

Katherine Wernsen-Towler, Technical Director

“ One of the biggest wins from our reformulation project was finding a use for a by-product from within our own production chain. ”

Katherine Wernsen-Towler, Technical Director

R&W Scott

Lanarkshire-based R&W Scott is a bakery and confectionery ingredients supplier that offers branded and own-label products for retail, foodservice and wholesale customers worldwide. Their vision: “to delight and inspire with ingredients used for indulgent treats”.

Why look at caramel?

With incoming restrictions on promoting products high in fat, sugar and salt (HFSS), the brand felt that having HFSS-compliant products would help maintain a competitive position in the market. The project aimed to reduce the sugar, calories, and salt in a caramel sauce, and enrich it with fibre or protein. They received £5,000 from Reformul8 Challenge Fund and the support of a student placement. This helped cover the associated costs of reformulation including external nutritional testing, sensory analysis, production time, and specialist equipment.

The reformulated product needed to match the organoleptic properties of the original while meeting specified costs, and be workable with existing manufacturing equipment and processes. The placement student did point out “It was rather challenging to substitute the fat and sugar content of a product that is primarily composed of those two elements,” and decided to focus first on fat reduction. She reduced saturated fats by 70%, using a fat mimicker to replicate the texture, chew, creaminess and smoothness (mouth-feel), and flavour.

The original Nutrient Profile Score (NPM) was 26, which would need to be reduced to 4 or less to be classified as “healthy”. Six formulations were initially developed with gradually reduced sugar contents, with two formulations scoring 2 on NPM.

In the final formulation:

- saturated fats were reduced by 84%
- total sugars were reduced by 66%
- calories were reduced by 41%
- fibre was added

What would Clare McNeil, Commercial Director advise to other manufacturers?

“ Don’t assume it will be more expensive: a key concern is the commercial viability of the product - we might come up with this fantastic reformulated caramel but if it’s triple the price, people aren’t going to be interested. However although ingredients may be different or more niche, don’t think they will definitely cost more, this really wasn’t our experience. ”

“ Talk to suppliers. By which, we mean both existing and new and explain to them what you’re trying to achieve. They are the specialists and in some cases they identified ingredients we weren’t aware of and so we were able to bring them in as part of the project. If they understand what you’re trying to achieve, they’re in a good place to help. ”

“ Innovation and reformulation can seem to be the things that go to the bottom of the pile but we genuinely believe that most products out there can be reformulated if you give them the time and attention they need. ”



Healthier Product Innovation Fund (HPIF)

The first fund managed in direct collaboration with a partner organisation, Interface, was funded by Scotland Food & Drink. This unique grant targeted technical reformulation projects, pairing manufacturers with a research or academic partner who would receive the funding and carry out work on their behalf. A total of 8 projects were funded with a share of £80,000 with work carried out by Abertay University, Scottish Rural University College, Queen Margaret University, and University of Edinburgh.

That's Done

Imagine a ready meal that's easy to prepare and contains 5 portions of fruit and vegetables: well That's Done has, and with funding from the HPIF they are making it a reality. The team at Queen Margaret University have worked on existing product development to optimise the nutritional content and ingredient balance of the meals. The products contain 5 portions of fruit and vegetables, and a source of protein and carbohydrate within each 550g portion. As a complex product, each ingredient needs to perform nutritionally, functionally, while also contributing to the sensory aspects of an appealing dish. After formulating the recipes for 6 different meals, the next step was to prepare the products for scaling up to commercial factory production. Particularly important was an understanding of the cook-freeze process of production and storage. Ensuring that the product can be produced, sold, prepared, and consumed conveniently and enjoyably is vital in the journey of making nutritional food more accessible across demographics of the Scottish population.

Biago

Biago produces the Niselo range of dairy-free and, gluten-free probiotic yoghurt drinks. The current range offers an alternative probiotic product, as many are dairy-based and therefore inaccessible to consumers with milk allergy or lactose intolerance. With funding from the HPIF the team at Abertay University have worked on enriching the products with fibre, and protein.

The project aimed to increase the fibre content to 6g/100g and qualify for a 'High Fibre' Front of Pack labelling claim. To do this, a single-serve portion of 250ml would need to contain 15g Fibre. Considering the UK recommended daily intake of fibre is 30g, such a product could contribute great potential for positive nutrition. It was a priority of the brand to maintain an 'allergen-free' status, and the innovative team had already identified Red Sorghum as a base ingredient as a drought-tolerant grain high in nutrients, minerals and antioxidants.

The project has been deemed a great success by BiaGo, having enabled 'proof of concept' for multiple products. The work will lead to the launch of a minimum of two products in 2024; one sorghum-based, and one oat-based. They plan on continued research and development work with the Abertay Food and Drink team in the future.

Prozumi Biolabs Ltd

The team at Prozumi Biolabs are working to make gluten-safe bread and bakery products for consumers with coeliac or gluten sensitivity. They propose that wheat flour traditionally used for baking could be made safe by denaturing the toxic parts of the gluten protein. This would enable the development of products within the gluten-free industry, potentially re-introducing the flavour of wheat-based gluten products into consumers' lives. With funding from the HPIF, Edinburgh University is working with the Prozumi team to identify the sequences of enzymes that surgically degrade the toxic part of gluten without affecting the functionality of the protein.

Healthier Bakery Fund (HBF)

In 2023 Food Standards Scotland (FSS) surveyed multiple products served in out-of-home venues, with a focus on sweet bakery items. The purpose was to identify the calorific contribution of 'treat' products that may be consumed out with main meal times. The survey identified that many servings contained over half of an adult's recommended daily intake of calories, with one containing 1,639kcal in one serving. Proposed legislation of mandatory calorie labelling for certain food outlets could see this information presented to customers at point of sale, which may prompt outlets and manufacturers to review the calorie content of their offerings.

FSS followed this by providing funding to run the Healthier Bakery Fund, which was managed in collaboration with the Reformulation for Health programme. A total of £50,000 was awarded to a baker's dozen of manufacturers, ranging in size high-street bakers to nationwide suppliers.

Stockan's Oatcakes

Stockan's Oatcakes, based in Stromness, is a fourth-generation family-owned business that manufactures a range of traditional Scottish oatcakes for UK retail and export. With support from the Healthier Bakery Fund they have successfully reformulated one of their recipes with a focus on fat, sugar, and protein. General Manager Stewart Crichton reported:

“ The main thing for us as an organisation that is dedicated to making a fairly narrow range of products is not to be fearful of change and equally to be confident in our products and processes. ”

“ Our aim was to reformulate a standard recipe to create a product for a retailer that would benchmark well in terms of taste and texture, but also increase protein while reducing fat and sugar. ”

Stewart says that reformulation requires a lot of trial and error.

“ With this product we only had a limited number of ingredients to work with and therefore this project was really a process of trial and error. We created four different batches, tweaking our recipes and processes throughout. ”

“ The outcome was we were able to successfully produce the target product we were after. ”

The Healthier Bakery Fund's support was spread across different areas of Stockan's reformulation journey.

“ We used the funding to test production batches, conduct nutritional analysis, and some of it went towards the final pack design. ”

“ The Healthier Bakery Fund was a great support to us. While it didn't cover all costs, it helped us meet the aspirations of a client for reformulation. ”

Future Hopes

Stewart says that participating in the Healthier Bakery Fund has increased their confidence.

“ Bakeries are a traditional manufacturing sector and sometimes there is a resistance to change but the ability to look differently at products and processes shouldn't be overlooked. ”

“ While we are currently very busy with a pretty full order book, this funding has given us the confidence to do other reformulation projects with other current and potential customers. ”

three sisters bake

Three Sisters Bake

As the name suggests, Three Sisters Bake was set up by sisters Nichola, Gillian and Lynsey Reith 12 years ago. Before Covid, there were two cafes, a cake shop in Glasgow, a bakery, and catering for weddings and events. Post-Covid, the sisters reassessed their business and decided to solely focus on the bakery operation. The business now has three core income streams: farmers' markets, an online shop where cakes can be purchased and posted out to customers, and baking cakes for the wholesale market including shops, cafes and delis.

The project

Nichola Reith says they heard about the Healthier Bakery Fund through Scottish Bakers and started planning how they could incorporate reformulation into their business.

“ Reformulation doesn't just have to be about changing recipes. We are a bakery that prides itself in handmaking everything. When we first heard about the fund we had various ideas about how it could benefit our business. ”

With their empire biscuit a firm favourite, Nichola knew investment in equipment could make a real difference.

“ Our empire biscuits are one of our best sellers and one thing that struck me is that we have always rolled out the biscuit dough by hand, creating a real size variance. ”

“ When we were hand-rolling, no matter how experienced you are, we can't be as consistent as a machine. So, with the grant from the Healthier Bakery Fund we decided to invest in new equipment that rolls out dough. The rationale was that by introducing this machine we could set a height for the dough and as a result achieve a consistent biscuit. ”

Nichola says that making this one change has had quite a big impact.

“ We have been able to better control portion size and, as a result, reduce the biscuit's diameter by 25% which is a pretty big achievement through one change. ”

“ Ultimately this funding has resulted in something that benefits everyone. As a business, we've been able to make our product more cost-effective. For our customers, they now have a product which is thinner, more crisp and, in our opinion, tastes even better. ”

Future Hopes

This first step into reformulation has given Nichola and the rest of the team at Three Sisters Bakery new ideas about what they can do next.

“ We now have a few different ideas that we would like to look into such as adding fibre into our wholemeal empire biscuit and potentially work with a customer on a specific bakery product which is healthier and appeals to their customer base. ”

“ I think when trialling new ideas like reformulation, businesses can come up against some resistance when trying to bring in any kind of change. We really had to manage the implementation of this machine for our bakers who were, at first, unsure about using the equipment but now love it! ”



Aulds Delicious Desserts

Aulds Delicious Desserts is a frozen dessert manufacturer producing traybakes, cheesecakes, fudge-cakes, pastries and tarts for the food service market across the UK.

The project

Fiona Jackson, Head of Operations at Aulds says that the desserts market is running around 10% lower in 2023 compared to previous years (pre-COVID).

“ We and our customers based in the food service market believe that the addition of calorie information on menus and regulations regarding products which are high fat, sugar and salt (HFSS) have had an impact on the dessert trade. Consumers are looking to make healthier choices and therefore are less likely to have a dessert. ”

With an aim to provide their customers with a healthier dessert option on their menu, they applied to the Healthier Bakery Fund.

“ We wanted to find alternative ingredients to reduce fat, sugar and salt but still maintain the indulgence and high-quality that is associated with our products. ”

The team started by looking at their current range of products and identifying those that were the worst offenders regarding HFSS.

“ Brownies, caramel shortcake, and sticky toffee puddings were the highest in regard to sugar and we’re looking at where we can reformulate to reduce calories. ”

“ One project where we’ve seen positive results is with our baked vanilla cheesecake. We’ve found that by using a different cheese the fat has reduced by 36% and we are waiting on external analysis to confirm results. ”

Fiona says that the journey of reformulation has been one of trial and error.

“ We’ve really relied heavily on our suppliers to come in and do presentations to our team on the alternatives available and where they think we can make reductions and replacements. ”

“ We are using funding from the Healthier Bakery Fund to conduct nutritional testing on all trial products to ensure that any information provided to customers is accurate from the start of the project and the reductions made are sufficient. ”

In addition, Aulds Delicious Desserts will be, where relevant, purchasing new equipment such as depositors to ensure that weights are accurate and reliable to ensure that nutritional information remains accurate and product yields are consistent.

Future Hopes

Fiona is conscious that replacements or reductions will have an impact on flavour.

“ Taste is personal and subjective, and we are keen to do more blind tastings with consumers in the future. ”

“ There will have to be compromises along the way with taste and if we can make these reductions over time the nation’s palate will adjust. ”

“ For us, this project and funding is about the ability to give our customers something different - a quality dessert that can be healthier - and meet a gap in the market. ”

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