



## GROCER TOP BRANDS REVIEW

The winners and losers for branded sales have been published for the year to 7<sup>th</sup> October 2006. In frozen, Birds Eye had successes with Simply Fish cod fillets up 17.7%, fish fingers up 12.6% and, surprisingly, pies up 23.3% but, suffered disappointment with ready meals down 20.8%. However, the numbers only included a few weeks' sales of the new 'Pub Specials' range. Although branded pizza was down 2.0%, 'Goodfella's Solo's' showed spectacular growth of 3,936% to be the fastest growing brand in the entire survey. WeightWatchers frozen showed growth in desserts of 33.7% but had a tough time with their ready meals down 12.5%, ambient bread down 8.2% and ambient soups down 8.7%.

Frozen Ready Meals continued to decline by 13.0% with Birds Eye and WeightWatchers both in retreat, as previously mentioned, but there were some bright spots with Aunt Bessie's up 23.6%, Youngs up 10.0% and Chicago Town up 5.5%.

More generally, it was interesting to note that overtly diet or low calorie brands fared badly with Muller Lites down 17.4% and Walkers Lites down 15.7% which, in part, may explain some of the problems that Weightwatchers are having in frozen. However, natural and simple products are doing well.

For the categories published, total branded frozen, including ice cream, was down 1.6% in value, underlining growth in own label in an overall stable market.

We all agree with the comments made by Lorna Taylor, the buyer from Musgrave, Budgens Londis, who says, "People forget that frozen foods still account for nearly 9.0% of total retail foods purchased and the category has got real potential".

### IS IT ME?

Further to the thoughts above, can you recognise this other exciting category from comments made by a leading retailer's buyer, who said "Convenience, health and ethical sourcing need to support new concepts and formats. Functional foods and choice are also key, as are availability, pricing and value, ranging, quality, retail entertainment and novelty."

We think it's difficult in the frozen category but you need all of the above, especially retail entertainment, if you are playing in the ... canned food market!

**BFFF**

23<sup>rd</sup> January 2007