

MACSWEEN OF EDINBURGH

“We’d like to shift the way consumers traditionally consume and think about black pudding and haggis. It’s important for us to help our customers understand their dietary choices and reframe how they might traditionally consume these products, for example, using lower-fat black pudding as an ingredient in a variety of meals, not just as part of a Scottish breakfast. Our classic haggis, vegetarian haggis and black pudding products are incredibly versatile, nutritious and great tasting, and we want to maximise each of these credentials as much as possible.”

Joyce Fox, NPD Manager, Macsween of Edinburgh



Capturing the product opportunities in health and wellbeing trends

[Macsween of Edinburgh](#) is a third-generation family business, launched in 1953 as a butcher’s shop in Morningside. The business now produces award-winning haggis, vegetarian haggis and black pudding products that are sold and enjoyed around the world.

New takes on traditional favourites

Health studies show that obesity has nearly trebled worldwide since 1975. That’s an astounding statistic, especially when you consider that a raised BMI (body mass index) is considered a major risk factor for a number of serious illnesses.

However, it’s clear that the Covid-19 pandemic has elevated consumers’ interest in diet, health and wellbeing. It’s not just about wanting to be stronger or slimmer: consumers want to support their immune system by eating well and keeping fit and healthy in general.

Macsween of Edinburgh saw this as an opportunity to adapt traditional products such as haggis and black pudding into healthier, lower-fat versions for the retail setting. The objective of this has been to encourage consumers to make positive food and health choices, without having to compromise on traditional and exceptional taste and texture.



Macsween of Edinburgh’s project and support received

With the help of Food and Drink Federation Scotland’s Reformulation for Health programme, Macsween has launched a project seeking to:

- Reduce total fat content within its haggis and pudding products for retail.
- Move the saturated fat content of these products from red to amber on the traffic light labelling system, which will be adopted.
- Explore options for reducing traditional sodium chloride salt content.



The traffic light system was chosen as it was considered a suitable target due to being well understood by both retailers and consumers. Foods labelled amber are recommended for consumption 'most of the time'; this will help us show consumers that Macsween's haggis and black pudding can make great meals or ingredients for enjoying at any time of day and throughout the year.

Thanks to the support from the Reformul8 team, Macsween of Edinburgh has received:

- Funding towards research and development.
- A final-year student from Glasgow Caledonian University to support with market research and hands-on development of projects.
- Benchmarking of products against traffic light criteria

In addition, Reformul8 can also provide additional support on aspects such as competitor analysis and alternative ingredients in partnership with the Macsween of Edinburgh technical team.

Alternatives for animal fats and salt

Reducing total fat content is the mainstay of Macsween of Edinburgh's project which has led them to explore the use of **fat mimetics**, which mimic the physical and sensory properties (such as taste, smell, mouth-feel) of conventional fats. They are typically protein or carbohydrate-based molecules that can be combined with citrus fibres to improve water absorption and add fibre. The business is also researching natural options to keep its products 'clean-label'.

The two main challenges being investigated are how to reduce animal fat content without compromising on manufacturing processes and traditional product characteristics. However, Macsween is confident that it can overcome these challenges and also deliver enhanced

benefits to its products such as higher fibre content.

The company is also exploring the use of seaweed to reduce traditional sodium chloride salt. Seaweed is a natural source of iodine, and it's been shown to help lower blood sugar and stimulate thyroid function.

Health and sales benefits

It's too soon to quantify the benefits and successes just yet, but for Macsween the attraction of reformulation is contributing to consumers' health and wellbeing, whilst continuing to offer them high-quality, tasty haggis and black pudding that they can enjoy as much as ever. As well as helping tackle obesity, it is hoped that reformulation will open up new opportunities to engage more health and diet-conscious consumers.

Did you know?

Taste is the single greatest factor determining whether consumers continue to buy a product after reformulation.

