

The Grocer

JOB OF THE WEEK

Supermarket CEO Indonesia p62

MOVERS & SHAKERS

Brakes in search for new UK CEO p58



OMBUDSMAN

Should you fear the new 'Adjudicator'?

FOOD INFORMATION

'Fresh' milk labelling under threat from EU

ASDA

How Asda is funding big price cuts with big price hikes

THE CO-OP GROUP 6

Satisfaction levels slump to just 30% in latest tracker survey

COCO POPS

Kellogg's launches sub-brand that's nutrient profile-friendly

SPAR

Sales up 11% as UK athletes shine in Barcelona



BOIL IN THE BAG 40

The popular 1970s invention is getting a posh-nosh makeover

OLYMPICS 24

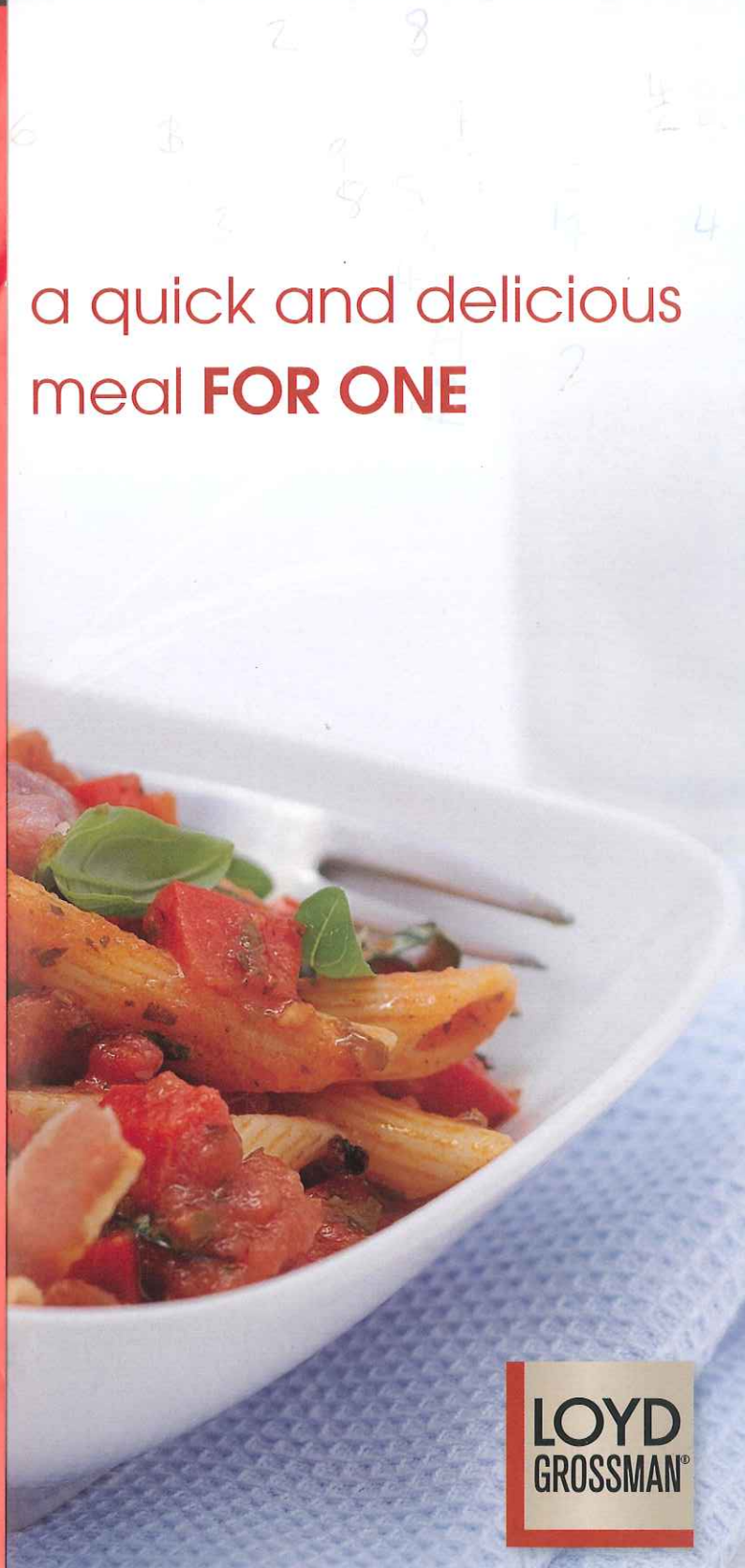
Cadbury's retail plans for the 2012 Olympics revealed

POPTARTTASTIC 32

Savoury pop tart launch is just the start in UK for €4bn German giant Tönnies

HAPPENINGS 34

Making old brands cool again



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PICTURE THIS...

A RUN ON SQUIRREL MEAT AT BUDGENS

The media went nuts over squirrels last week after animal rights group Viva! launched a campaign against a Budgens in north London selling squirrel meat. Although the line isn't new to the store – The Grocer first revealed the story in April – owner Andrew Thornton said Viva!'s campaign had helped drive footfall, with lots of interest in the meat. "We were inundated by people wanting to buy squirrel," he said.

Haldanes rolling out local sourcing tactics

Haldanes has rolled out its local sourcing project following a successful pilot at its store in Carterton, Oxfordshire.

The new supermarket chain, which has the strapline 'Refreshingly Local', promised to source up to a third of its products from local suppliers when it launched in November.

Haldanes had introduced more than 300 new lines as part of the project, said chairman Arthur Harris.

"That has taken some time, and there is still work in progress, but we can say that we are bringing this vision to life," he said.

"Once fully implemented, our plans will potential-

ly benefit hundreds of small producers and community groups as well as satisfy the demands of our customers. Key to this policy is quality and we have been very impressed by the quality of products from the suppliers in and around Carterton.

Local producers on board following the pilot in Carterton include fruit supplier Millets Farm, meat supplier Foxbury Farm and ready meals producer Chef on Board.

The move comes despite lower-than-expected sales at the chain. It has already closed two stores and failed to open another due to disappointing sales.

NEWS IN BRIEF

New Horeca lines

Makro has added 54 new products to its premium own-label range Horeca Select. The launch is part of an own-label overhaul by the wholesaler's parent company Metro Group.

Maynews expands

CTN retailer Maynews is planning to acquire a store in Hull and another site by Christmas, taking its total to 20.

Warners vouchers

Budgens retailer Warners Retail has introduced printable money-saving vouchers on its website. They are updated monthly and can be redeemed in the company's five stores.

Specify full-time new store jobs, ACS tells big four

The Association of Convenience Stores has called on the multiples to "come clean" over job creation claims.

A study released by the ACS claims supermarkets habitually use 'head count figures' when telling planners and local media how many jobs will be created when a supermarket opens. However, academics and practitioners use full-time equivalent figures, which only include the number of full-time jobs created.

The ACS has written to the big four, local councils and planning minister Bob Neill calling for a consistent methodology using full-time equivalent figures.

It has also urged them to consider the impact on employment over an 18-month period and associated job losses in the sur-

rounding area. "While supermarkets claim to bring prosperity and employment to a town, we know all too well the damage that can be done to high streets if the wrong supermarket is built in the wrong place," said ACS chief executive James Lowman. "Local businesses often have to cut staff and some are even forced to close as a result of a new development nearby."

Lowman said he hoped the study would alert local councils to the tactics used by supermarkets to push applications through. "Bold employment claims are often essential to a development being approved under new planning policy, so exposing the truth behind these figures could be crucial to the survival of high streets," he said.

Former Somerfields 'are not struggling'

Budgens owner Musgrave Retail Partners GB has denied sales are struggling at the former Somerfields it acquired from The Co-operative Group last year.

Musgrave acquired 13 stores last year, converted them to the Budgens fascia and plans to sell them on to independents. However, a source said Musgrave had "really struggled" since taking them on, with sales "massively down".

Musgrave GB insisted the stores were "on track and achieving forecasts set". A spokeswoman said one store had been sold because it didn't fit the Budgens brand but the first of the retained 12 stores



Budgens: insisting former Somerfields "on track"

would be divested to an independent in the next six weeks, she added.

Musgrave GB is not the only independent struggling with former Somerfields. Harry Tuffins plans to boost margins in the two it bought last year by stocking more fresh food.