



**BRITISH  
FROZEN  
FOOD  
FEDERATION**

# ANNUAL REPORT 2025

## Board of Directors

Rupert Ashby, BFFF

David Cole, Sysco GB

Ashley Hopwell, Hopwells Ltd

Martin McIlroy, Daregal Gourmet Ltd

Karen McQuade, The UK Foodhall Ltd

Richard Pike, COOK

Timothy Rose, Three Oceans Fish Co Ltd

Shaun Smith, Birds Eye Ltd

Rebecca Stanton, Morrisons

Gareth Thomas, Iceland

Paul Weatherby, Crop's Foods Ltd



# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



## **Karen McQuade**

BFFF President and Chair of the Board of Directors

My first year as your President has raced by and it has been a pleasure working with the BFFF Board and team.

For many of us it has been a challenging year.

The hike in national insurance arrived in April with many of us having to make changes to our businesses to cover the cost which came straight off the bottom line. In my own business I regrettably had to reduce the workforce to cover the impact, and I know many of you will have had difficult decisions to make as a result.

Food inflation has remained high with its effect on all ingredients and final product costs at a time where the consumer is watching what they spend. This has put pressure on relationships between businesses across the foodservice and retail industry, and the resulting performance of the category.

However, despite all the pressures, frozen food is increasingly relevant in modern society.

The Government is currently working on several strategies where our work and products are important. The National Security Strategy is being reviewed and the BFFF are highlighting the shelf-life benefits, access to unseasonal food 'in season' all year round alongside the nutritional benefits and why frozen is such a vital component of these plans.

The BFFF are engaging with the Defra team writing the Food Strategy which focusses on good nutritious foods available for all, reducing obesity, giving children access to high quality food, reducing farming affects on nature, and reducing food waste. We all know that our products tick many of these boxes as we have a great story to tell.

The focus on feeding our children good quality food is close to my heart. During times of economic difficulty food poverty spirals. I am keen to keep the issue of school food high on the radar, especially the constant uncertainty around the future of universal infant free school meals in England with a focus on one day

levelling up England with the key stage one & two universal free school meals provided in Wales & Scotland. Sadly, restricted budgets and increasing food costs have a detrimental effect on the quality of school food in an economic climate where children need guaranteed quality food in school.

Over the year, both Kantar and Circana figures looking at the retail sector show an increase in spend on frozen, which is simply an indication of food inflation, but a reduction of around 0.5% in volume against last year. Kantar (now called World Panel by Numerator) however shows performance starting to pick up again with a small growth over the 12 weeks to September, so we hope to see this continue into the Christmas period and beyond.

BFFF consumer research during 2025, covered in more detail in the CEO report, is encouraging as it shows that increasingly consumers are beginning to better understand the benefits of our products, and the fact that if there was not the limiting factor of freezer space holding many back, they would be buying more. The latter point is food for thought and discussion, whilst we as an industry need to take advantage of the shift in consumer perception. With that in mind, at our recent Board strategy session plans were put in place to expand the work of the BFFF's Frozen Food Revolution Campaign to include work and output from influencers about our products. We will see that appear through the next 12 months.

The BFFF teams continue to work hard on our behalf, whether influencing Government, advice and guidance for the membership, through their Young Leaders work or through the brilliant networking events that the team put on. The BFFF team impress me consistently with their knowledge, their dedication to our frozen industry and our members. I give my heartfelt thanks to Rupert and the team.

Their work was recognised this year following nominations and votes from the industry, with the federation winning the Food Management Today's Best Trade Association Award for the second time in 3 years against some stiff competition. Congratulations to the team.

In addition, the membership continues to grow with member company numbers at 340, just shy of our all-time peak of 352 back in 2015 which is a clear recognition of all the great work going on.

At the halfway point of my Presidency, I look forward to working through 2026 with our impressive Board on the BFFF strategy to ensure our amazing industry achieves and has the recognition across all areas it deserves.



**Karen McQuade**

BFFF President and Chair of  
the Board of Directors





# CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT



Rupert Ashby  
BFFF Chief Executive

Data and research are always a key part of the work that the BFFF does on behalf of the membership. Over the last 12 months we have worked with our partners, Vypr, on several areas focussing on consumer attitudes and beliefs around frozen and, as trailed by the President in her report, there are some useful insights.

The research saw 9 in 10 consumers say that they believed the nutritional quality of frozen foods has improved in the last couple of years, with over a quarter describing the improvement as significant. This is a marked positive shift from our research a few years ago.

Over two-thirds of the respondents are more likely to purchase frozen foods that are sustainably sourced or produced, and over half are willing to pay a premium for these products.

Labelling is also becoming increasingly important with 6 in 10 shoppers now actively look for frozen options that are free from additives. This trend is particularly pronounced among younger demographics.

Over half of consumers pay attention to the environmental impact of frozen food packaging, highlighting an opportunity

for brands to align packaging innovation with sustainability goals while maintaining product quality.

As always, cost remains a major driver, but convenience and longer shelf life are climbing in importance with the respondents showing a shift in their priorities when choosing what they buy.

And finally, the younger respondents aged 25-34 expressed frustrations at a lack of variety in the frozen aisle and felt there should be much better placement and signage to drive their interest and purchasing behaviour.

The industry has a clear number of issues to look at, but in all cases the consumers are being gradually won over by frozen products. We need to take advantage of this moment and react.

The BFFF reacted to this with the Frozen Food Revolution Campaign which focused on nutrition in 2025 to challenge any outdated perceptions and inspire consumers to see frozen food in a new light. To date the campaign has attracted over 50,000 website visits with its strong emphasis on nutrition and health, addressing long-held myths around quality, ingredients, and additives.

I highlighted the areas above in my talk at the International Frozen Food Conference at Anuga in Germany in October. Neesha Ramsingh-Cleary, the BFFF's Member Relationship Manager and I also took the opportunity to catch up with the 54 member companies exhibiting at the show.

Our events have been well supported through the year, and the team are putting the final plans in place for the 2026 calendar and are looking to include, where possible, topics or ideas put forward to us by members in our recent member satisfaction survey, which many of you responded to.

The survey responses were heartening in the levels of support and satisfaction within the membership, but there was also some useful constructive criticism which we have taken on board and will look to address as we constantly look at how to improve our services for the membership.

The BFFF team continues to work hard delivering these services, helping members with advice and guidance, running events, and looking for opportunities to promote the industry.

As we look to achieve more on your behalf, we will continue to make requests for your feedback on industry issues, input on consultations and comment for the press. I am in danger of sounding like a stuck record here, but my plea to you all is that, if possible, please do respond when you can. We are always grateful for as many responses as possible. Government will often react to real life case studies rather than anecdote, so your examples and information can often be the difference between being ignored or achieving something for the industry, however big

or small. The same goes with information we provide to the press as we look to make as much noise as possible about your businesses, whichever area you are involved in.



**Rupert Ashby**  
BFFF Chief Executive