

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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### UK Supermarket Chain Profiles 2016

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**Report Highlights:**

This is a Market Brief providing information about the leading UK supermarket chains: Tesco, Asda/Wal-Mart, Sainsbury's, Morrisons, The Cooperative, Waitrose, Marks and Spencer's, Whole Foods Market, Aldi and Lidl. It gives an overview of the trading styles, and target customers of each retailer, as well as contact details for their head office.

## General Information:

### Foreword

This report is intended to supplement the report entitled “UK Retail Market Brief”. If you would like a copy of this report please email [aglondon@fas.usda.gov](mailto:aglondon@fas.usda.gov)

## UK Supermarket Chain Profiles

### Tesco

Tesco Stores Ltd  
Tesco House, Shire Park, Kestrel Way  
Welwyn Garden City, AL7 1GA  
Tel: +44 800 505 555  
Consumer website: [www.tesco.com](http://www.tesco.com)  
Corporate website: [www.tescopl.com](http://www.tescopl.com)

Tesco is the number one supermarket in the UK and number three globally after WalMart and Carrefour with stores in other European countries, including the Czech and Slovak Republics, Hungary, Poland, and the Republic of Ireland. Tesco also trades in Turkey, Malaysia, South Korea, China, India and Thailand.

Tesco has been a market leader in the UK grocery sector for over 25 years. It introduced the first loyalty card in the UK, which has become a highly efficient and targeted marketing system and now has over 38 million active members. Tesco was also the first UK supermarket to develop an on-line shopping service and has grown to be the world’s largest and most profitable online grocery retailer.

Click and Collect has become very popular in the last couple of years with Tesco having 1,750 click and collect collection points for general merchandise and over 260 grocery drive-thru locations in the UK.

Tesco’s progress in the UK in the last five years has been noteworthy. Tesco’s sales were £54.4 billion (\$70.7 billion) in 2015/16. They employ 310,000 people in the UK.

Tesco has six different store formats, each tailored to the customer’s needs in a particular locality.

Type of Store	Number of Stores
Extra	250
Superstore	479
Metro	178
Express	1,713
One-Stop	873
Total Tesco Stores	3,493

As of June 2016.

Express Stores are up to 3,000 square feet and offer customers great value, quality and fresh food close to where they live or work. The first express store was opened in 1994, and there are now 1,713 outlets selling a range of up to 7,000 lines, including fresh produce, wines and spirits, and in-store bakery items.

Metro Stores are between 7,000 and 15,000 square feet. The first Metro store was opened in 1992 bringing the convenience of Tesco to town and city center locations. Tesco Metros cater to busy customers, offering a tailored range of food lines, including ready-to-eat meals and sandwiches.

Superstores are between 20,000 and 50,000 square feet. Tesco began opening Superstores in the 1970's. During the 1980's and 1990's, Tesco built a national network to which it is adding more stores every year. These stores respond rapidly to changing consumer needs. In recent years, Tesco has introduced a number of non-food ranges, such as electronics and books, into Superstores.

Extra stores are usually above 60,000 square feet in size. Since the opening of the first Extra store in 1997, the "one stop" destination store format has proved extremely popular. Extra stores offer the widest range of food and non-food lines, from electrical items to homewares, clothing, health and beauty and seasonal items.

Tesco's main consumers are middle income. Tesco's range of food features a strong private label element. In addition to their general Tesco branded range, there are two other main ranges – Tesco Value that features basic goods at highly competitive prices and Tesco Finest, pitched at the quality end of the spectrum, with a strong emphasis on ingredients.

Tesco currently has 1,600 product lines across both the Tesco Value and Tesco Finest ranges. A typical Tesco Superstore will stock around 40,000 product lines, of which 25,000 are food and beverages.

Tesco has positioned itself to lower prices and a competitive agenda. Tesco, Asda, and more recently Sainsbury's are constantly competing on price. Tesco has received considerable criticism in the press for reportedly placing pressure on suppliers to achieve its price agenda.

Tesco's multi-format stores bolster success. They allow customers to access the Tesco 'brand' at many different levels.

Tesco has faced strong competition in the last couple of years from Aldi and Lidl.

**Sainsbury's**

Sainsbury Plc.  
33 Holborn  
London, EC1N 2HT  
Tel: +44 207 695 6000  
Consumer website: [www.sainsburys.co.uk](http://www.sainsburys.co.uk)  
Corporate website: [www.j-sainsbury.co.uk](http://www.j-sainsbury.co.uk)

Sainsbury's is currently the number two supermarket chain in the UK with 16.0 percent market share behind Tesco.

Sainsbury's operates by five main values which are: Best for food and health, Sourcing with integrity, Respect for the environment, Making a positive difference to the community, and A great place to work.

In June 2016, Sainsbury's had 1,312 stores including 598 supermarkets and 714 convenience stores. Sainsbury's has annual sales of £25,632 million (\$41,011 million).

Sainsbury's has two types of stores: traditional supermarkets and convenience stores.

Sainsbury's 714 convenience stores are on average 4,000 square feet in size. They have limited product ranges focusing on convenience products such as sandwiches and ready meals. The stores aim for high sales turnover of a limited range of products.

As well as branded products, Sainsbury's has private label ranges: Taste the difference (premium foods); Blue Parrot Café (children's healthy food); Be Good to Yourself (low fat foods); Organics (organic lines) and Basics (price led food).

Sainsbury's has tended to focus on food and beverages with a smaller store footprint than Tesco and Asda.

Sainsbury's stated values are reflected in the 30 percent share they hold in the market for Fair Trade products. Tesco in comparison has 18 percent market share of the market for Fair Trade products. They were also the first supermarket to sell only eggs from hens. Sainsbury's sell a lot of organic and environmentally friendly foods.

## **Asda/Wal-Mart**

Asda Stores Ltd.

Asda House, Southbank  
Great Wilson Street  
Leeds, West Yorkshire LS11 5AD  
Tel: +44 113 243 5435  
Website: [www.asda.co.uk](http://www.asda.co.uk)

Asda is the UK's number three supermarket chain with 15.6 percent market share. Wal-Mart bought Asda in July 1999. However, Asda has retained a very British feel in-store and a distinct identity separate from its parent company.

Asda's strap-line is 'Every day low price'. This motto, together with Wal-Mart's global buying power, has contributed to the success of the UK business. Asda is driven by store expansion, non-food growth and price competitiveness. Asda has focused on large stores. However, suitable space for larger stores is hard to find in the UK and this is hampering its expansion possibilities.

Asda currently owns 626 stores, predominately based in the North and South-East of England. The majority of Asda stores are in town centers or in suburban areas. Food is displayed in separate areas from clothing and non-food ranges. Asda employ 180,000 staff in the UK.

Asda has five store formats.

Supermarkets (up to 22,000 square feet) are found in small town and suburban areas. This format has proven successful in recent years bringing Asda to locations that were once inaccessible to them. There are 205 stores each stocking around 24,000 products.

Superstores (up to 60,000 square feet) is the typical Asda format, representing ninety percent of its UK stores. These offer a wide range of food and non-food products. There are 336 stores stocking on average 35,000 products.

Supercentres are over 100,000 square feet in size. At present, there are 32 stores in the UK and they bring together the best of Wal-Mart and full food ranges. Around half of the space is dedicated to non-food. They stock on average 40,000 products.

Asda Living – 33 stores dedicated to clothing and general merchandise products. They are 28,000 square feet in size and stock on average 23,000 products.

Asda Local Stores – local convenience type stores. 10,000 products stocked in each store. Asda currently have over 200 of these stores.

Asda is pitched at the lower end of the mass market. It competes largely on price. Asda and Tesco are continually head-to-head in a price war, both hoping to be crowned the lowest-priced supermarket. They generally price match very effectively.

A typical Asda supermarket carries about 35,000 product lines, 60 percent of which are food and beverage items.

As well as branded products, Asda has a strong in-store label portfolio, with sub-brands such as: Smartprice (price led products); Asda (everyday food and non-food items); Good For You (fat, salt, sugar and calorie controlled products); Extra Special (premium food) and Great Stuff (healthy food for children).

Unlike Tesco and Sainsbury's, Asda does not have a loyalty card system. This may affect its ability to market to customers in the future. However, it reportedly prefers to invest the money that would be required to set up the scheme into driving prices down for customers.

Despite slower growth in the last year, Asda is a strong business and a powerful player in the food and beverage market.

## **Morrison's**

Morrison's Supermarkets  
Hilmore House, Thornton Road  
Bradford, West Yorkshire BD8 9AX  
Tel: +44 1274 494 166  
Website: [www.morrisons.co.uk](http://www.morrisons.co.uk)

Morrison's is the 4th largest UK supermarket with 569 stores. Every week, 9 million customers shop in the stores. Morrison's employs 132,000 staff.

With stores located throughout the UK, a typical Morrison's store is aimed at the mid- to lower-end consumer and stocks about 24,000 product lines. The company's strategy focuses on offering unbeatable customer service and a pleasant shopping environment; however, it competes primarily on price, special offers and multi-save promotions. Morrison's tries to stock local fresh products where possible.

Approximately 55 percent of sales come from private label ranges. Morrison's private label portfolio consists of: Morrison's (quality and value); Signature (premium foods); Eat Smart (healthy foods); and Savers (price led products).

Morrison's stands out from other grocery stores due to its "Market Street" feature. This is where a collection of fresh food counter stalls are designed to look like a market including butchers, bakers, fishmongers, delicatessens and salads. The majority of products sold in the Market Street are private label.

Morrison's has small non-food sections within its stores focusing on music and video, health and beauty products.

Morrison's introduced a Match and More Card (loyalty card) in 2014. It originally stated it would price match against all supermarkets including the discounters Lidl and Aldi. However, they were not able to compete and, although the loyalty card system remains, it has been rebranded and is now called the

“More” loyalty card.

Morrison’s launched their online delivery service in January 2014, working with Ocado on their delivery operation. It is currently available in the Midlands, Yorkshire and North and Northwest London.

## **The Co-operative**

The Co-operative Group  
New Century House  
PO Box 53  
Manchester, M60 4ES  
Website: [www.co-operative.coop/food](http://www.co-operative.coop/food)

The Co-operative is the UK’s fifth largest food retailer with a 6.5 percent market share. They have over 4,000 stores in the UK, one in every UK postal area. The Cooperative Food is a network of supermarkets and convenience stores owned and operated by over 15 independent societies.

The Co-operative group is a unique family of businesses run by over 5.5 million members, and together they have a say in how the businesses are run.

The Co-operative offers a range of food under its own label that focuses on high quality ethically sourced products. They were the first supermarket to support Fairtrade products (with over 200 lines) and sell food grown on their own farms.

## **Waitrose**

Waitrose  
Doncastle Road  
Bracknell, Berkshire,  
Tel: +44 1344 424 680  
Website: [www.waitrose.co.uk](http://www.waitrose.co.uk)

Waitrose is the supermarket business of the John Lewis Partnership, a leading department store chain. It offers a broad range of products and high quality ingredients to an upper-middle class customer base. Waitrose stores are located in areas where consumers with a higher-than-average disposable income live.

Waitrose stores are usually medium-sized compared to their UK supermarket rivals. However, Waitrose has introduced six larger stores called Waitrose Food & Home, an example of which is their 5,000 square meter store in Canary Wharf, London, and a new up-market food hall in the John Lewis department store in the well known shopping area of Oxford Street, London.

Waitrose, like the major supermarket chains, has an internet shopping service. However, it has chosen to use a key associate company, Ocado, rather than perform their own deliveries.

Waitrose has 350 stores that are predominately based in the south of the UK. These include 50 Waitrose convenience stores. In November 2008, Waitrose opened its first store outside of the UK. It now has two stores in Dubai. It also runs 32 John Lewis Department Stores.

Since Waitrose customers are less price-sensitive, it may present opportunities for American products that are of superior quality but not always the lowest priced.

## **Marks and Spencer**

Marks & Spencer  
Waterside House  
35 North Wharf Road  
London, W2 1NW  
Tel: +44 20 7935 4422  
Website: [www.marksandspencer.com](http://www.marksandspencer.com)

Marks and Spencer is one of the UK's leading consumer retailers with over 21 million people visiting its stores each week. Marks and Spencer has 914 stores located throughout the UK, ranging from large out-of-town stores of over 100,000 square feet to Simply Food Stores of around 700 square feet. The largest store in the UK is located on London's Oxford Street in the center of London and has trading space of over 170,000 square feet, featuring both food and clothing ranges. Marks and Spencer also has over 468 stores in 59 countries.

Marks and Spencer has premium quality food departments that are aimed at middle-upper class customers who are less price-conscious. They also attract customers shopping for special occasions, such as dinner parties, birthdays, office celebrations, and holidays.

Marks and Spencer is also a lunchtime destination for office workers picking up sandwiches and other snack items. In order to make the most of this market, Marks and Spencer has 222 owned and 359 franchised stand alone Simply Food Stores that are convenience format stores of around 700 square feet in size. They are based in town centers, train stations and motorway service stations. Their food revenue is £5.4bn per year whereas general revenue from clothes etc. is £3.9bn.

Marks and Spencer pioneered the concept of chilled ready prepared food and has led the way in its development. Their food technical specifications are strict, particularly with regard to the traceability of ingredients.

Although Marks and Spencer sell predominately own label products, in the last few years they have introduced some branded products.

## **Whole Foods Market**



Whole Foods Market  
63-97 Kensington High Street  
London W8 5JE  
Tel: +44 20 7368 6100  
Website: [www.wholefoodsmarket.com/uk/index.html](http://www.wholefoodsmarket.com/uk/index.html)

Whole Foods Market opened its flagship store on London's High Street Kensington in June 2007. The 80,000 square foot store is not only the largest food retail space in central London, but is also the first Whole Foods Market in Europe and marks a major step in expanding the company's brand beyond North America.

It also owns eight smaller stores, six of which are based in London with the other two in Cheltenham and Glasgow.

Because of the US home office, Whole Foods stock a wide selection of U.S. food products and is therefore a good first step for US companies entering the UK market.

## **Aldi**

Aldi Stores Ltd  
Holly Lane  
Atherstone  
Warwickshire, CV9 2SQ  
Tel: +44 1827 711800  
Website: [www.aldi.co.uk](http://www.aldi.co.uk)

Aldi is a German owned company that opened its first UK store in 1990. Aldi, along with Lidl are the biggest "discounter" supermarket chains in the UK. Aldi currently has 620 stores in the UK and a record 6.2 percent market share. Aldi opens on average one new store each week in the UK. Aldi have seen sales continue to rise year on year. Aldi also hope to double the number of stores it has to 1,200 by 2022, in a £600 million UK expansion plan.

The discounters remain popular with shoppers from all social backgrounds.

When discounters first entered the UK market, they were seen as stores for working class families on low incomes. However, the high quality of the products, low prices and numerous awards received by the discounters have seen all this change. Now, half of the customers through the door are those from upper and middle class families; people who in the past would have shopped at Sainsbury's or Waitrose.

The majority of Aldi's products are private label. As well as its everyday range, it has an up-market range called Specially Selected. The average size of Aldi stores is 1,000 sq meters. Due to limited stock, consumers buy staple food and drink items from the Discounter, and "top off" with specialty purchases from other retailers.

## **Lidl**

Lidl UK GmbH  
19 Worple Road  
Wimbledon  
SW19 4JS  
Tel: +44 870 444 1234  
Website: [www.lidl.co.uk](http://www.lidl.co.uk)

Lidl, like Aldi, is German owned. It opened its first UK store in 1994. Lidl operates more than 630 stores throughout the UK and currently has a 4.6 percent market share.

Lidl sells well known brands in its stores as well as private label.

Since 2005, both Lidl and Aldi have been going “up market” making their stores more attractive to meet the expectations of Middle Britain. The big difference between the discounters and the big four retailers is the number of lines they stock. A mainstream supermarket chain can stock 32,000 product lines compared to 1,600 in Lidl and 900 lines in Aldi. Instead of having 20 different lines of mustard, they stock one exceptionally good value product that they sell in high volume.

## **Costco Wholesale**

Hartspring Lane  
Watford  
Hertfordshire, WD25 8JS  
Tel: +44 1923 699 805  
Website: [www.costco.co.uk](http://www.costco.co.uk)

Costco Wholesale is an international chain of membership warehouses designed to help small to medium sized businesses reduce costs in purchasing for resale. Costco Wholesale is U.S. owned and therefore their UK warehouses have a very similar layout to those found in the United States. They also stock a lot of U.S. products, both branded and own label under their Kirkland Signature brand.

In Europe Costco have 28 locations in the UK with 2 locations in Spain.

## **Post Contact and Further Information**

If you have any questions or comments regarding this report, require a listing of UK importers, or need any other assistance exporting to the United Kingdom, please contact the USDA office in London.

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Further information on the UK retail grocery sector is available from the British Retail Consortium and the Institute of Grocery Distribution.

**British Retail Consortium (BRC)**

21 Dartmouth Street

London, SW1H 9BP

Tel: +44 20 7854 8900

Website: [www.brc.org.uk](http://www.brc.org.uk)

**Institute of Grocery Distribution (IGD)**

Grange Lane, Letchmore Heath

Watford, Hertfordshire WD2 8DQ

Tel: +44 1923 857141

Website: [www.igd.com](http://www.igd.com)