

Indies of East Anglia adapt to feed communities



As part of its wide-ranging support for small retailers and producers during the COVID-19 crisis, the Guild of Fine Food has been gathering and sharing innovative ideas from across the UK's independent food and drink retail community. With many in East Anglia nimbly adapting their offerings, the Guild of Fine Food hopes these stories will inspire the sector and shine a spotlight on the small businesses that are stepping up to become part of the solution.



Among those providing a vital lifeline to people across the region, is Slate in Aldeburgh, which is now serving shoppers from its doorway and providing a delivery service, so locals can purchase cheese and provisions to stock their fridges and freezers. Others include Kale & Damson of Cambridge, which has made the switch from wholesale to home delivery following 20 years of supplying restaurants, pubs, hotels and conference centres with fresh produce, and Barron Farms in Chappel near Colchester, a turkey farm which has set up a mobile farm shop on the back of a tractor to deliver locally sourced vegetables, eggs and meat to surrounding villages.

While waving the flag for the agile independents going the extra mile to ensure that shoppers can get the provisions they need, the Guild of Fine Food has also created a dedicated COVID-19 online resource, offering tailored information, advice and tips for the fine food trade. Open to all, the webpage features a live map of food and drink businesses that have stock available or need supplies, connecting producers, distributors and retailers, as well as suppliers of equipment and services.

The food industry can also sign up to receive the Guild of Fine Food's new support bulletin via email, which will feature content specifically relevant to independent food retailers, the producers who supply them and the consumers who support them.

John Farrand, managing director of the Guild of Fine Food, commented: *"We could all do with some positive news at the moment and the independent food scene is coming up with the goods in more ways than one. It fills me with pride to see how our members and the wider retail market have adapted their businesses overnight, in order to serve their customers more effectively and safely during this period, and I think this says a lot about the people behind the patchwork of diverse independents across the country. These businesses have stepped up when we need them the most and they deserve our support in return. I'd encourage everyone to check out what their local delis, cheesemongers, butchers and bakers are doing and use the hashtag #supportlocal on social media to share their stories."*

The Guild of Fine Food's COVID-19 support resource is open to all and can be accessed at gff.co.uk/support

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