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By Michael Barker

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Double-digit grocery gain for Sainsbury's



Lockdown shopping patterns boost grocery sales in the first quarter, though cost of managing crisis takes its toll

Sainsbury's has recorded double-digit grocery sales growth for the first quarter as shoppers rushed to supermarkets during coronavirus lockdown.

Grocery sales at the chain were up 10.5 per cent in the 16 weeks to 27 June, although overall retail sales were only up 8.5 per cent thanks to a substantial decline in clothing.

Sainsbury's reiterated its position that dealing with the challenges of Covid-19 had hit its bottom line to the tune of £500m, but that was broadly offset by business rate relief and stronger grocery sales.

The company said its sales performance was ahead of expectations thanks to good spring weather, while strong online growth had also boosted its business. Sales through its online channels more than doubled, with nearly 50 per cent of new online groceries customers proving to be new Sainsbury's customers too.

"We have worked really hard to listen and to respond to customers throughout the crisis," said chief executive Simon Roberts. "We have lowered prices on many key products as we continue to focus on lower regular prices. Our price position versus

our competitors has improved in the quarter; Sainsbury's key customer feedback scores are at record levels and we have gained market share."

Perhaps surprisingly, convenience sales were down by five per cent. This was a result of very weak sales in city centre locations, where trade is normally driven by office workers.

<http://www.fruitnet.com/americafruit/article/1474/parts-of-san-diego-quarantined-as-psyllid-count-mounts>

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