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By Michael Barker

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Aldi unveils £1.3bn investment plan

Supermarket, which has announced record sales, said it will invest in stores, DCs and innovation in the next two years



Aldi has pledged to invest £1.3 billion by the end of next year with new and upgraded stores, distribution centres and further innovations across its business.

The plans are expected to create a further 4,000 new jobs next year, adding to the 3,000 permanent roles already created in 2020. The supermarket, which celebrates its 30th anniversary in the UK this year, said its continued investment in Britain was "recognition for three decades of trust and loyalty" shown by its growing base of customers.

In its annual trading update, Aldi said an influx of new shoppers had helped it increase sales in the UK and Ireland by 8.3 per cent to a record £12.3 billion in the year to 31 December 2019. The group, which reported a drop in profits in 2018, saw margins improve last year, with efficiencies of scale offsetting continued investment in prices.

Under its investment plan, Aldi expects

to open around 100 new stores across the UK over 2020 and 2021 in line with its long-term target of 1,200 stores by 2025, alongside over 100 store upgrades under its Project Fresh initiative. Other investments include new and expanded distribution centres and the rollout of recent innovations and developments, including its new 'click and collect' service which was successfully piloted and launched to customers last week.

Looking ahead, Aldi said its most important commitment to customers was to continue to keep its prices the lowest in the market as household budgets come under greater pressure.

Chief executive Giles Hurley said: "For over 30 years, our success has been driven by the ever-increasing number of shoppers who put their trust in Aldi every time they shop with us. This is what enables us to keep investing in Britain - in our products, our prices, our people and in the communities we serve.

"The founding principle of our UK business back in 1990 was to offer a carefully-selected range of great-quality products at the lowest prices. While we're continuing to innovate to give customers an even better experience and greater convenience, our core philosophy remains unchanged.

"With the UK's economic outlook increasingly uncertain, families are more concerned about their grocery bills than ever. We've seen before that our customers need us most in times of financial hardship, which is why our commitment to remain Britain's lowest-priced supermarket is more important than ever."

Aldi said it had spent an extra £1 billion with UK companies last year, taking its total to £8 billion, and had also reformulated around half of its range to improve product quality this year while introducing hundreds of new products in line with changing consumer tastes.

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

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