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By Michael Barker

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## ***Bakkavor on road to recovery***

Fresh prepared specialist says sales are bouncing back after Covid shock, though UK salads are still suffering



**B**akkavor has reported increasing demand for fresh and healthy food as sales volumes recover during the pandemic.

In early April the prepared food specialist said the Covid-19 outbreak had created significant operational challenges across its global business, and that its UK and US businesses had experienced a sharp reduction in sales volumes in March and April.

However in a new trading update Bakkavor said sales in the two key regions, as well as China, have stabilised and are showing early signs of recovery. Group like-for-like revenue for the five months to the end of May are down around five per cent against the same period last year.

UK like-for-like revenues fell 19 per cent in April and 13 per cent in May compared to 2019, and while performance across the meals, pizza, bread and desserts categories have improved, salad and food-to-go sales volumes are still significantly lower than last year.

"Although there remains significant uncertainty around trading levels for the second half of the year, we are seeing overall demand for fresh, healthy and convenient food steadily increase, albeit from a lower base," the company explained. "Relationships with our UK customers remain very strong; we have increased our market share and are working closely together to drive growth back into our categories and to expand ranges that were simplified at the start of the outbreak."

Chief executive Agust Gudmundsson said: "In the UK, consumer behaviours continue to adjust, and while it will take time for sales to return, I have been encouraged by the recent increase in volumes. Current events have also reinforced my confidence in the vital role we play in partnering with our customers to deliver the fresh, healthy and convenient food that consumers look for every day.

"In the US and China, both businesses have managed incredibly well through the turmoil, and we continue to support our customers as they reopen their stores and restaurants.

"We are a robust, balanced and well-capitalised group and the steps we are taking to protect our business, combined with the current improvement in trading, gives us every confidence for the future."

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

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