

**FOOD WAREHOUSE 'A SUCCESS'**

We opened at nine o'clock and by 11 o'clock decided it's a good idea

– Malcolm Walker, founder and CEO, Iceland

in the grocer**One year ago**

Breakfast biscuits are hot, doubling sales inside 12 months for the second year in a row and establishing a new £76m category after just four years.

25 years ago

Cadbury snaps up Trebor for £110m following three months of talks, taking Cadbury's share of the sugar confectionery market to 22%.

50 years ago

Tesco opens its 80th store, in Cambridge. The 13,500 sq ft shop carries "a full range of fashion, household and non-food lines."

75 years ago

The Grocer slams the Evening Standard for accusing grocers of profiteering in the wake of the outbreak of World War II.

Walker unveils plans for Food Warehouse

Andrew Don

Iceland boss Malcolm Walker has declared his new The Food Warehouse format a success and said he planned to open three more outlets by next year.

Having opened the first 10,000 sq ft outlet in Stoke-on-Trent last week, Walker told The Grocer the second branch would open in Wrexham in three weeks, with a third in Pontypridd opening mid-November and a fourth on London's Old Kent Road next year.

"We opened at nine o'clock and by 11 o'clock decided it's a good idea," he said, describing the format as a "bigger and better freezer centre."

"We've got 850 shops and, more or less, they



The first The Food Warehouse opened in Stoke last week

are all identical. To move to the next step you've got to do something a bit more radical. We started out in loose frozen foods, then we became a freezer centre catering to people with big chest freezers in the garage à la Bejam and then we evolved into a ready meals shop. It's constant evolution."

The next step was for Iceland to sell products such as whole lobsters and whole salmon, but its existing stores were not large enough to do this. Instead, such products would be offered through The Food Warehouse, Walker said. "We've got a lot of price points for £20, which for us is good."

The new format means Iceland will now actively target retail park locations. "Historically we've kept away from retail parks because the footprints have been too big for us," Walker said. "This enables us to open on retail parks and to have a slightly wider range."

But he added he had "no idea" how many more stores overall he would open. "Last year we opened 40 stores, this year probably 40 stores, and some might be larger units on retail parks."

Walker also said the current trading environment was the toughest he had known in 40 years "and quite where it ends up I don't think any of us know, really."

Co-op reassures staff it is not looking for 24/7 availability

The Co-operative Group has moved to reassure staff over S3 Store Standards as the roll-out of the new system of working continues to concern staff.

S3 was launched earlier this year to make food stores more efficient, but has prompted staff to share their concerns on social media and thegrocer.co.uk. The new system has involved cutting the number of hours in some stores as well as asking staff to fill in availability forms to ensure The Co-op has a



Co-op says it will respect personal circumstances

flexible workforce.

This week, the society took to its staff Facebook page to "clarify some of the processes." Staff had expressed concern that the Co-op expected them to be on call 24/7, but the Co-op said: "We are not

looking for 24/7 availability, simply sufficient colleagues in store at the times our customers need us. Any adjustments required to colleagues' working hours are completed through a consultation process with the store manager, which should take into consideration every colleague's personal circumstances."

On the wider S3 system, it added: "The dedication of our colleagues to bringing S3 to life is enabling consistent, efficient service in our stores."

Camelot site hit by 'teething problems'

National lottery operator Camelot has admitted to "a few teething problems" following the launch of its new web and mobile platform last week.

The multi-platform site was developed to work with smartphones, tablets and desktops. But some users have complained on thegrocer.co.uk that it "does not seem to be user friendly," with one adding: "Have been trying to play online for the last two days with no success."

Neil Kellar, director of

IT and business services, said the overwhelming response from players had been "very positive."

However, he acknowledged: "With a technology update of this size, it's inevitable there may be a few teething problems, and users with much older devices may be limited in terms of their experience."

Kellar added Camelot had implemented several "minor fixes" to the site so far and it had troubleshooters on hand, both online and via its customer contact centre.