



## David Hughes

Food and agribusiness companies tend to operate within one part of the value chain – retail, manufacturing, production, or inputs – and make strategic decisions based on a partial view. Consumer preferences, retail power dynamics and sustainability pressures are all shifting simultaneously, and their effects travel in both directions along the chain. A business that reads only its own segment will consistently misread both the timing and the scale of what is coming.

When global consumer behaviour, retail power and sustainability demands converge to reshape the food industry, organisations across the supply chain need someone who can read all three simultaneously – David Hughes, Emeritus Professor of Food Marketing at Imperial College London, has been translating those signals into commercial strategy for food and agribusiness leaders across every continent for five decades.

### David Hughes's 2026 Biography

#### Why organisations work with David Hughes

- Hughes reads the whole value chain – from farm inputs and life science companies through manufacturers, retailers and food service – and identifies the commercial implications of change at each stage, giving organisations a perspective they cannot assemble internally.
- His 1994 book “Breaking with Tradition: Building Partnerships and Alliances in the European Food Industry” established the intellectual case for vertical supply chain collaboration – a thesis that remains central to competitive advantage in the sector today.
- He does not only analyse food businesses; he built one. As co-founder of a branded fresh produce company that he grew and sold into US supermarkets, and as a 20-year Non-Executive Director of Berry Gardens Ltd – the UK’s largest farmer-owned berry business – his commercial judgement is grounded in direct business experience.
- Organisations working in any geography get genuine cross-continental intelligence. Hughes works across Africa, Asia, Australasia, North and South America and Europe, making his read on consumer trends and retail dynamics global in scope rather than extrapolated from one market.
- As Honorary Nuffield Scholar and the inaugural Sainsbury Professor of Food Marketing at what is now Imperial College London, his academic standing gives food and agribusiness organisations a credible, research-grounded voice for external-facing events, policy engagements and board-level discussions.

#### AVAILABLE FOR

- After Dinner Engagement
- Organisational Development Programme
- Panel Participation
- Speaking

#### DAVID'S SPEAKING THEMES

- Business Strategy & Growth
- Climate Action and Sustainability
- Economic Trends & Global Markets
- Health & Wellbeing
- Innovation & Disruption
- Supply Chain Resilience

**LANGUAGES:** English

## Biography highlights

- Emeritus Professor of Food Marketing, Imperial College London; inaugural Sainsbury Professor of Food Marketing at Wye College (now Imperial College London) from 1991
- Visiting Professor, Royal Agricultural University, UK
- Ph.D. Food Marketing, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne; M.Sc. Agricultural Marketing; B.Sc. (Hons.) Agricultural Economics
- Non-Executive Director, Berry Gardens Ltd – UK’s largest farmer-owned berry business – for 20 years; co-founder of a branded fresh produce business sold into US supermarket chains
- Author/editor: “Breaking with Tradition: Building Partnerships and Alliances in the European Food Industry” (Wye College Press, 1994); published in British Food Journal, Supply Chain Management, and Business Ethics: A European Review
- Honorary Nuffield Scholar; keynote speaker at major food industry conferences across Africa, Asia, Australasia, the Americas and Europe, with named clients including Nestlé HQ (Switzerland) and William Reed Ltd (The Grocer)

## Biography

Consumer preferences for health, sustainability and convenience are not moving in straight lines – and the food businesses that are best placed to respond are those that see how each shift propagates across the whole value chain, from the genetics company at one end to the food service operator at the other. David Hughes has spent more than fifty years building exactly that whole-chain, whole-world view, working with senior management in food and agribusiness on every continent.

Hughes became the inaugural Sainsbury Professor of Food Marketing at Wye College in 1991, later Emeritus Professor at Imperial College London, where he established and directed the Food Industry Management Group. His 1994 edited volume “Breaking with Tradition: Building Partnerships and Alliances in the European Food Industry” set out the commercial logic of vertical supply chain collaboration – an argument that has only become more relevant as retail power has concentrated and sustainability scrutiny has intensified. He is also Visiting Professor at the Royal Agricultural University and an Honorary Nuffield Scholar.

What distinguishes Hughes from the academic analyst category is that he has operated commercially inside the industries he studies. He co-founded and sold a branded fresh produce business serving US supermarkets, and served as Non-Executive Director of Berry Gardens Ltd – Britain’s largest farmer-owned berry business – for two decades. That combination of institutional credibility and business experience is what makes his reads on market shifts actionable rather than observational.

Known internationally as “Dr. Food,” Hughes speaks to boards, trade associations, producer groups and government bodies across Africa, Asia, Australasia, North and South America and Europe. His work is sector-wide – meat, dairy, fresh produce, packaged foods, food service and the input industries that serve them – and consistently oriented toward the commercial question: given what is shifting, what should an organisation do on Monday morning?

## Key speaking topics

- Global consumer food trends and retail dynamics
- Food and agribusiness commercial strategy
- Supply chain partnerships and vertical alliance models
- Sustainability, environment and the food industry
- Health, nutrition and food market development
- Fresh produce and grocery retail innovation
- Food entrepreneurship and business model change

## Ideal for

- C-suite and board-level audiences in food manufacturing, grocery retail, food service and agribusiness
- Trade associations and producer organisations seeking to brief members on market direction
- Government and policy bodies working on food security, trade and sustainability
- Financial services and investor audiences with food sector exposure

## Audience outcomes

- A clearer distinction between structural shifts in food consumer behaviour and short-term trends – and the commercial implications of each
- Understanding of how change in one part of the food value chain creates threats and opportunities in adjacent segments
- A cross-continental frame of reference for food market developments that is difficult to assemble from within a single geography or sector
- Practical direction on how food businesses can build the supply chain partnerships and consumer connections that underpin competitive advantage
- Greater confidence in communicating strategic rationale to boards, investors or government stakeholders on food industry direction

## David Hughes's 2026 talks & topics

### The Future of Food

A forward-looking analysis of the forces reshaping global food markets – consumer health priorities, sustainability demands, retail consolidation and food service evolution – and what they mean commercially for businesses at every stage of the supply chain.

### Key takeaways:

- Which consumer-driven trends are structural and which are likely to plateau – and how to position a business accordingly
- How shifts in retail and food service power are rewriting the commercial rules for manufacturers and producers
- Practical principles for building the supply chain partnerships that will define competitive advantage in the decade ahead

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## Insights and Trends in the Healthy Food Sector

An evidence-based tour of the health and nutrition trends driving consumer choice globally, and the commercial opportunities they create for food producers, manufacturers and retailers.

### Key takeaways:

- The demographic and lifestyle forces driving demand for health-oriented food and drink products across different markets
- Where the most commercially significant opportunities lie – and which claims are overstated or market-specific
- How food businesses can credibly position and communicate health attributes across different retail and food service channels

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## Riding the Health Wave: Connecting with 21st Century Consumers

A commercially focused examination of how evolving consumer attitudes to health, provenance and sustainability are reshaping purchase decisions – and what the food industry must do to stay relevant.

### Key takeaways:

- How health and sustainability motivations interact in consumer decision-making, and what that means for product development and marketing
- The growing importance of provenance, traceability and ethical positioning as commercial differentiators
- What “connecting with the consumer” actually requires of producers and manufacturers in a market where retailer power remains dominant

## David Hughes's Videos



## What David Hughes's clients say

Your presentation was enlightening, inspiring and challenging.

*Nestle HQ, Switzerland*

David is a leading authority on food marketing. He is at the forefront of the industry, in demand around the world as a speaker and lecturer, many thanks for the brilliant presentation yesterday. The audience loved it, the only criticism being that they'd have liked you to speak for longer.

*William Reed Ltd, The Grocer. Grocery & Food Service Conference*

...a very entertaining, engaging, animated, informed speaker. Easy to understand and great value.

*Australian Summerfruit Conference, Melbourne*

## David Hughes's 2026 speaking fees

Specific fees fall within the ranges shown. These are presented as a guide only and are subject to change without notice.

	<b>EUR</b>	<b>GBP</b>	<b>USD</b>
<b>Home Country</b>	Under €12000	Under £10,000	Under \$15000
<b>Asia Pacific</b>	Please enquire	Please enquire	Please enquire
<b>Europe</b>	Please enquire	Please enquire	Please enquire
<b>Middle East &amp; Africa</b>	Please enquire	Please enquire	Please enquire
<b>South America</b>	Please enquire	Please enquire	Please enquire
<b>United Kingdom</b>	Under €12000	Under £10,000	Under \$15000
<b>US East Coast</b>	Please enquire	Please enquire	Please enquire
<b>US West Coast</b>	Please enquire	Please enquire	Please enquire
<b>Virtual</b>	Please enquire	Please enquire	Please enquire