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# SIAL CANADA UNVEILS THE SIAL INNOVATION 2022 GRAND PRIZES!

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## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2022 WINNERS!

Discover the Gold, Silver and Bronze winners, as well as the Special Sustainable Development Award!

The 3 Gold, Silver and Bronze winners will receive free visibility at all SIAL shows in the network and will also share 3 prizes offered by Nielsen (total value of \$20,000) and a space at SIAL Canada Toronto 2023. The special Sustainable Development prize will be awarded \$3,750 by Mitacs.



**GOLD MEDAL**  
Congratulations to GROUNDUP ECO-VENTURES for their line of flours and cooking mixes made from recycled ingredients, which won the SIAL Innovation 2022 Gold Grand Prize!  
Why this product? Selected as a new example of circular economy made very accessible by the valorization of rejected ingredients into practical, nutritious and gourmet products.

groundupev.com



**SILVER MEDAL**  
Congratulations to MERJEX FOODS INC. for their product TEMPEHINE, a line of organic, marinated and pre-cooked minced tempeh that won the SIAL Innovation 2022 Silver Grand Prize!  
Why this product? Selected for the quality of its composition and the use of a new process that makes tempeh a very versatile ready-to-use ingredient and allows adding vegetable proteins to a wide variety of meals.

tempehine.ca



**BRONZE AWARD**  
Congratulations to LA PRESSERIE for their line of raw and unpasteurized vinaigrettes made from cold-pressed fruits and vegetables, which won the SIAL Innovation 2022 Bronze Grand Prize!  
Why this product? Selected for their simple and natural composition, the use of fresh ingredients and the cold pressing process that adds sophistication to the products.

lapresserie.ca



**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AWARD**  
Congratulations to PARAMO SNACKS for their product GOOD CHIPS, organic beet and yacon chips with no added oil or sugar, which won the SIAL Innovation 2022 Special Sustainable Development Award!  
Why this product? Selected for the naturalness and authenticity of the product resulting from the origin of the ingredients, the transformation process and the manufacturer's relevant commitments to sustainable development.

paramosnacks.com

SIAL Innovation is the only international competition present in the four corners of the world. Made up of food professionals including Dana McCauley, SIAL Canada 2022's innovation ambassador, and chaired by Isabelle Marquis, Senior Food Strategist, the jury awards 10 finalists with 4 GRAND PRIZES including 1 SPECIAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRIZE.

Montréal, April 20, 2022 - It was during the first day of the show at 10:30 a.m. directly on the SIAL Innovation space that the four grand prize winners of the prestigious SIAL Innovation competition were unveiled in front of the visitors and journalists!

### A word from the jury president

"Despite the circumstances, the SIAL Innovation 2022 competition was a real success! And a first this year: the four winning companies are start-ups. Their innovations also have in common that they highlight a very strong trend this year and in the years to come: sustainable development. I wish them the best of success!"

Isabelle Marquis  
Senior Food Strategist



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**THE HEINZ KETCHUP OF RELISH**



## In this Issue

18 SIAL Canada Post Show

23 Comfort in the Classics  
*From pasta to pizza, consumers will always love Italian Foods.*

25 **HEALTH & WELLNESS UPDATE**  
Fermented Foods are Good for Gut Health

29 Wellness Trends from CHFA Now

31 Grand Prix Finalists  
*Finalists announced in 29th annual edition of Retail Council of Canada Grand Prix Awards*

39 Grocery & Specialty Food West Post Show

41 Healthy Snacks Hit the Spot  
*With more snacking occasions, consumers are looking for healthier options.*

44 Keeping it Cold  
*Ways to reduce costs and maximize profits in refrigeration.*

49 B.C. Food Report  
*Supply chain vulnerabilities revealed.*

## Departments

- 6 MARKET UPDATE
- 8 CALENDAR OF EVENTS
- 20 CATEGORY MANAGEMENT
- 52 IN THE BAG
- 54 RETAIL COLLABORATION



31

23

25



41



10

## On Our Cover

10 Giving Back  
*Supporting the communities that support you through giving-back programs is good for the community, good for your team, and good for business.*

Photo courtesy of shutterstock.com

## publisher's perspective

### Online Shopping Stabilizing



The surge in online grocery shopping has largely stabilized from its pandemic highs, albeit at higher levels than pre-pandemic times, although still accounting for less than three per cent of the e-commerce market in 2021. This stabilization resulted in a drop in all e-commerce retail channels in February of -4.6 per cent, as consumers resumed shopping at brick-and-mortar stores. Grocery stores were no exception.

A recent study by US based Coresight Research, found that 54.3 per cent of all respondents had bought groceries online in the past 12 months — a decline of 4.7 percentage points (PPTs) from the 2021 survey (which was the first to fully capture the pandemic's impact). Furthermore, the proportion of respondents who expect to buy groceries online in the next 12 months dropped by 2.6 PPTs compared to findings from the year before.

An interesting result from the study was that although the proportion of shoppers who shopped online in the last 12 months declined compared to 2021, there was a slight increase in the size of the subset doing "most" or "all or almost all" of their grocery shopping online — up 3.6 PPTs to 28.3 per cent. This indicates that the online channel now captures a meaningful share of full-basket grocery shoppers.

Coresight's trend data suggests that the proportion of Amazon Prime members who buy groceries on Amazon is trending downward, with a 1.6 -PPT drop in the latest survey period, indicating that Prime members are increasingly drifting away from purchasing groceries through Amazon.

Also interesting is that among online grocery shoppers, 48.2 per cent reported that they collect their orders — up 5.2 PPTs from last year and reversing a prior multiyear drift toward delivery. There has been a widescale adoption of grocery pickup services by retailers and consumers trying to circumvent transportation delays and higher delivery fees and surcharges.

What this tells us is that the past surge in online sales was more of a temporary trend that now has lost a lot of its steam. But the process of grocers continuing their digital transformation, spurred on by the pandemic, will remain a strong focus regardless.

*Frank Yeo, Publisher & Editor*



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## Kraft Heinz Appoints Groff

Kraft Heinz has announced that Tiffin Groff will join the organization as the new Head of North America Coffee. With more than two decades of experience leading organizations for consumer-packaged goods companies, Groff brings a new level of expertise to our business. Enabled by the skills and experiences she has developed as a strategic leader, Groff has worked with many customers across the North America market and is uniquely positioned to connect our Kraft Heinz North America Coffee growth ambition to customer strategies and needs.



Tiffin Groff

## Sobeys Inc. Partners with Kids Help Phone to Support Black and Indigenous-focused Child and Youth Mental Health Programs



Sobeys Inc. with Kids Help Phone in its Family of Support: Child and Youth Mental Health Initiative ("Family of Support"). This new partnership will support two community-based mental health programs from Kids Help Phone, RiseUp and Finding Hope, to connect Black and Indigenous youth to real-time virtual counselling and crisis help. Each program

provides 24/7 support for vulnerable youth, with the support of volunteer champions, counsellors and community advisors from Black and Indigenous communities. With Sobeys Inc.'s support, the RiseUp and Finding Hope programs have significant growth plans to help even more youth in Canada.

## Nunzio Tumino Founder of Aurora Importing Passes

It is with tremendous sadness that founding father of Aurora Importing Mr. Nunzio Tumino has passed away. He was a true entrepreneur and pioneer within ethnic food imports from Italy and abroad into Canada. As we mourn this loss, we must also take this opportunity to celebrate "Mr. T's" life, to show our sincere appreciation and admiration for having the privilege and honour of spending time with such a charismatic, passionate, and inspirational individual. Mr. T, although small in stature, was a giant of a man who will always be remembered for being a loyal friend and trusted business partner, one of honour and respect that solidified many relationships with a firm handshake.



## 'Prime' Time for Western Canadian Beef Supply

Plenty of locally grown and harvested Western Canadian beef is available for barbecue season. Cattle on feed in Alberta and Saskatchewan feedlots have numbered over one million head each month since November 2021. It is rare that the number of cattle on feed surpasses the million head mark starting in November; the last time this happened was November 2006. Larger numbers of cattle on feed are supportive to beef supply this spring and summer.



In the first quarter of 2022, Western Canadian fed slaughter (youthful cattle) was up six per cent from the same period in 2021, with slaughter utilization keeping record pace at 94 per cent. Western Canadian steer carcass weights averaged 921 lbs, 11 lbs heavier than the first quarter of 2021 and 25 lbs heavier than the five-year average. The large numbers of heavier cattle are supporting Western Canadian Prime+AAA production. Eighty per cent of all 'A' grades were Prime+AAA in the first quarter of 2022, up from 75 per cent in the first quarter of 2021 and 70 per cent for the five-year average. There is more supply in the pipeline: on April 1st, 2022, cattle on feed numbers were up 10 per cent from April 2021.



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By Informa Markets

## I LEVEL MANAGEMENT NOW APPROVED MEMBER OF THE CAMSC



iLevel Management Incorporated has announced that it has been approved by the Canadian Aboriginal and Minority Supplier Council (CAMSC) as a CAMSC Certified Supplier. CAMSC is a not-for-profit organization that certifies and prepares diverse suppliers to successfully engage and connect with corporate and government buyers/advocates for more inclusive supply chains. This certification is important for iLevel Management Inc. as the CAMSC champions minority groups and pushes for equality across the Canadian business landscape.

More importantly, this means a lot to Jimmy Vaid, founder and president of iLevel, as he is a first-generation IndoCanadian and an avid advocate for diversity. "Building a business is a challenge for anyone but especially for those that are underrepresented. The barriers we face usually get swept under the rug but recently our voices have grown stronger due to the support from large-scale associations bringing to light the inequalities that exist across various industries," said Vaid. "When we came across CAMSC we knew we had to be part of what they are doing, not only to benefit iLevel but also to see how we can help others like us not just succeed but thrive." iLevel Management Inc. is a CPG sales brokerage focused in the natural and organic products segment. Bringing some of the best industry brands to retailers coast to coast to coast.



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## Great Little Box Company Named One of Canada's Top Small and Medium Employers of 2022

Great Little Box Company Ltd./ Ideon Packaging (GLBC) has again been recognized as one of Canada's Top Small and Medium Employers. This annual competition organized by the editors of Canada's Top 100 employers, has selected GLBC to be recognized for this coveted award. The award recognizes the small and medium enterprises that offer Canada's best workplaces and forward-thinking human resources policies.

"We are proud to accept this award and truly believe our people are the foundation of our company."



As our company celebrates our 40th anniversary we're grateful for the fact that people tell us today that their favourite part of the job is their co-workers, and it's the same answer that people gave 20 years ago, when the company was so much smaller," says Brad Tindall, president of GLBC. "The fact that the essence of the company is still intact even after all of our growth is collectively our greatest achievement so far," he adds.

## Freson Bros. Hinton Valley Awarded Regional Grocer of the Year

Freson Bros. Hinton Valley has been awarded the 2022 Alberta/Saskatchewan/Manitoba/NWT/Nunavut Regional Award - Medium Surface Category. Each year, the Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers (CFIG) Awards Program recognizes the success of outstanding independent retailers and the Canadian Independent Grocer of the Year is the most prestigious award CFIG can bestow. Each year, independent grocery stores from coast to coast in Canada compete for the coveted title. Each of the competing stores is visited personally by a highly respected retail management expert, who evaluates competing stores based on retailing excellence and innovation, store team performance, customer service, space utilization, freshness and cleanliness. Sally Congdon, Freson Bros. Hinton Valley manager said after the announcement, "We are humbled and our team is uplifted by this Canada-wide recognition for doing what we love to do every day: serve our customers and community." Doug Lovsin, president attributes Freson Bros.' continued success to the team's unwavering commitment to family, community and heritage. "This award is a testament to Freson Bros.' ability to offer Alberta with a unique fresh food shopping experience. This is the foundation of our brand and who we are."



## Calendar of Upcoming Events

June 5-7, 2022  
**IDDBA**

Georgia World Congress Center  
Atlanta, Georgia, USA  
<https://www.iddba.org>

September 15-18, 2022  
**CHFA Now Toronto**

Energicare Centre, Toronto, ON  
<https://chfa.ca>

October 15-18, 2022  
**National Frozen & Refrigerated Foods Convention**

Orlando World Center Marriott  
Orlando, Florida, USA  
[www.NRFAConvention.org](http://www.NRFAConvention.org)

October 25-26, 2022  
**Grocery Innovations Canada**

Toronto Congress Centre, Toronto, ON  
<https://virtualgroceryinnovations.com>

March 27-29, 2023  
**The Sweet and Snacks Expo**

Las Vegas Convention Center  
Las Vegas, Nevada, USA  
[www.worldteaexpo.com](http://www.worldteaexpo.com)

March 30-April 2, 2023  
**CHFA Now**  
<https://chfa.ca>

## POST SHOW REVIEW

# 2022 EDITION OF SIAL CANADA IN MONTREAL

*For its 19th edition, SIAL Canada is celebrating its return with a successful edition!*



The 19th edition of the International Food Show (SIAL Canada), which took place from April 20th to 22nd at the Palais des Congrès de Montreal, has closed its doors on a very successful edition, after an absence of three years.

With 809 exhibitors and brands from 49 countries spread over 220,000 square feet and nearly 15,000 professional visitors from 57 countries, this edition of SIAL Canada was once again a success, both in terms of the variety of the commercial offer as well as the quality of the visitors. According to Xavier Poncin, CEO of SIAL Canada, this 2022 edition confirms the importance of this event as a source of inspiration for the entire North American industry, the best platform for doing business.



"This was by far the most complicated, but also the most successful edition in our history under the circumstances. Three years without events, restrictions lifted two months before the show, a 100 per cent new team, only five months of marketing and promotion is, as far as I am concerned, a successful tour de force! Our show has demonstrated its

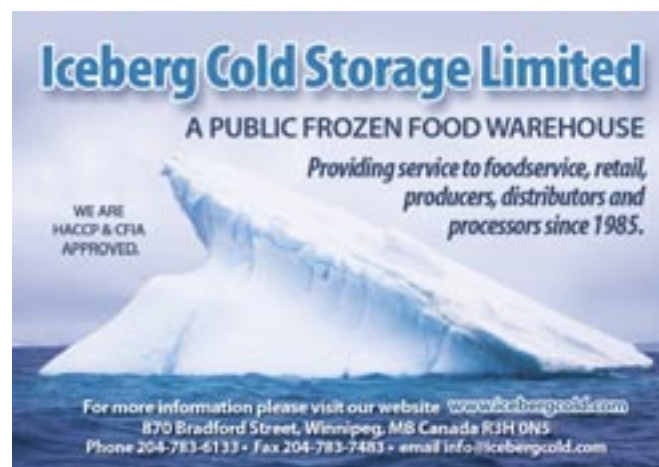
strong anchorage in the agri-food industry landscape, and this despite our absence! Indeed, we succeeded in keeping our place as a leader both in the great exhaustiveness of our offer, as well as in our high level content through our conferences, workshops and animations. We can say that our objective of "back to business face to face" has been reached, even exceeded, which would have been impossible to do without the support of our partners and exhibitors. SIAL Canada 2023, which will take place from May 9th to 11th at the Energicare Centre in Toronto, is already shaping up to be a great event.

## SIAL Innovation, a key international competition in North America

On the first day of the show, in the SIAL Innovation area, the three winners were announced, and the special Sustainable Development prize was awarded in front of the press and visitors. In total, more than 40 applications were submitted this year for this 14th edition of the SIAL Innovation competition. We would like to thank all the participants and congratulate the 10 finalists for their remarkable innovations: Bruleries Faro Roasting Houses, Chocmod Canada Inc, Club Kombucha, GroundUp eco-ventures, La Presserie, Les Aliments Merjex Inc, LOC Industries Inc, Oliméga, Paramo Snacks, and The Foodie Family. ●

See you May 9th to 11th, 2023, at the Energicare Center in Toronto for the 20th edition of SIAL Canada!

Visit [sialcanada.com](http://sialcanada.com) for more information about our successful 19th edition.





## GIVING BACK

By Carolyn Camilleri

Supporting the communities that support you through giving-back programs is good for the community, good for your team, and good for your business

# GIVING

photo courtesy shutterstock.com

# BACK

Meridian Farm Market in BC supports a wide range of giving-back initiatives. They donate to food banks and other charitable causes in the communities they operate in on an ongoing basis. But one fundraiser in particular holds special meaning.

“One of the main ways we give back is through a month-long fundraiser for the Canucks Autism Network (CAN),” says Brody McDearmid, CFO at Meridian Farm Market. “Since 2015, Meridian has donated over \$110K to CAN in support of their programs, training, and community support.”

The CAN fundraiser is Meridian’s most popular for a few reasons. “We have several employees with Autism, so this is a cause many employees feel good getting behind,” says McDearmid, adding that the fundraiser also has strong executive and ownership support. “Many employees know someone that is impacted by Autism, so it hits close to the heart.”

As a business, a key benefit of supporting CAN or any



Meridian Farm Market in BC supports a wide range of giving-back initiatives.

meaningful cause is that it makes people feel good about what they are doing.

“Most people like to give and help others, so this provides an outlet in this area for our employees,” says McDearmid. “While we obviously advertise and market our fundraising efforts, the economic benefits derived are secondary to the main purpose of the fundraising, which is to help CAN thrive.”



In-store and online advertising has a huge role in communicating a giving-back program to store patrons.

“Not only does it influence customer purchasing decisions, but it helps them feel part of the ‘giving back’ as well,” says McDearmid.

McDearmid has a tip for other stores that want to make giving back part of their brand. “I think it’s important to partner with organizations or support causes that you feel are a good match to your own brand. For us, CAN is an excellent match and we are proud of our contributions to this great organization.”

“Each year, when we present CAN with the large ceremonial cheque, it feels like we have accomplished something good,” he says.

### Bettering our communities

Brent Rostad, manager of the Freson Bros. store in Peace River, is very proud of a video made last December for Meals for Months, a collaborative food-hamper program with the Peace River Rotaract Club. And he should be proud.

“Last year, we managed to raise very close to \$40,000 for the community, between the local food bank and the hot lunch programs,” says Rostad.

For a community with a population of just about 7,000 people, that’s impressive.

“We’re feeding those that need the help,” says Rostad, explaining that the Salvation Army doesn’t have the capacity to hold all the food there. Instead, the store holds a fund for the hampers and the food bank calls when they need them.

“Last week, we had to put a significant order together because they were completely wiped out at the centre, which is a lot faster than the norm,” says Rostad, adding that there is a lot more stress on the food bank, especially in the past six months.

Meals for Months is just one of several giving-back programs his store is involved with. That involvement reflects how the whole Freson Bros. company participates in community initiatives.

“From a Freson Bros’ point of view, this is something that all of our stores would follow,” says Rostad. “We’ve been heavily involved with Kids With Cancer Society. Every year, we have an annual fundraising promotion where we raise funds in conjunction with our

customers and the store matches a certain amount that we contribute back to the Kids With Cancer Society here in Alberta.”

They are also involved with Toonies for Tummies, a program the Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers runs across the country to keep kids fed while they’re in school.

“For us with Freson Bros, we feel we have a responsibility to look after the communities we have our stores in,” says Rostad. “We were built on the foundational pillars of family,



Freson Bros – is involved in several giving-back programs.

community, and heritage, and we take it to heart. Each one of our stores is operated by managers and other leaders within the store structure that are very involved in the community in different forms. We’re not all Rotarians or Chamber of Commerce members, but we fit in where we have more of a passion and that passion fits with what we are as a company.”

Rostad says they promote events they are involved with on social media so their customers can see the delivery of the programs.

“For example, if you came in and you bought that food hamper, then you see us actually delivering and handing off and the food bank acknowledging the receipt of the hamper,” he says.

Rostad adds that being in a smaller community means there is also often a connection. “A lot of people know what’s going on because their kids are involved or someone in their family or friends.”

It comes back to family, community, and heritage.

“Our founder, Frank Lovsin and his late wife, Agnes, always believed — and it was instilled in all of us as operators and as partners and shareholders and team members — that we have a duty to give back and to do our part to better the communities where we live,” says Rostad, adding that the Frank and Agnes Lovsin Legacy Fund offers ongoing support to charities in most of their Northern stores.

Because, as he points out, if it weren’t for their communities Freson Bros. wouldn’t be there. ●









# Committed to Caring

## KELLOGG CREATES BETTER DAYS FOR CANADIANS

The Kellogg legacy of giving back to the community dates back to founder W.K. Kellogg, who was a conservationist, a philanthropist, and the original well-being visionary.

“As a global food company, we are passionate about doing our part to make sure there is enough food for everyone in a world with a growing population and increasingly limited natural resources,” says Lores Tomé, director of communications and corporate affairs, Kellogg Canada Inc. “And so, we are driving growth through purpose and focusing on addressing the interconnected issues of well-being, hunger relief, and climate resiliency to drive positive change for people, communities, and the planet.”

Through the Kellogg’s Better Days global ESG purpose platform, they are committed to creating “Better Days” for three billion people in Canada and around the world by the end of 2030 and are well on their way to achieving that goal.

“At Kellogg, we are also in a unique position to bring attention and awareness to the very real and crushing problem of food insecurity both globally and right here at home in Canada,” says Tomé. “Before the pandemic, a staggering one in five Canadian children were at risk of going to school on an empty stomach. Today, that heartbreaking statistic is one in three. And, for Indigenous communities, it jumps to a devastating one in two.”\*

Kellogg is dedicated to supporting the efforts of their longstanding hunger partners — Food Banks Canada (15 years), Breakfast Club of Canada (10+ years), among others.



and special volunteer activities.”

During the pandemic, Kellogg dialed-up their charitable giving efforts and were one of the first corporations to commit food and funds to both Breakfast Club of Canada and Food Banks Canada.

“2021 also saw us give a record amount of funds to our partners and launch our first-ever social-led donation matching campaign in recognition of National Cereal Day whereby for every \$1 donated to Food Banks Canada Kellogg matched it up to a total donation of \$100,000,” says Tomé. “Funds raised supported Food Banks Canada’s \$150 million-dollar COVID-19 Response Fund and affiliate food banks, improving access to food for those in need, including a specific focus on northern and Indigenous communities.”

Additional highlights from the past year include Kellogg’s Free Box and Give Back and Keep or Donate on-pack promotions which trigger financial donations back to the company’s Better Days hunger partners and invite consumers to participate too. Toonies for Tummies is another, which in partnership with The Grocery Foundation, provides access for children to healthy breakfasts and mid-morning meals in judgement-free environments. Food Banks Canada’s After the Bell initiative, of which Kellogg is a founding partner, supports children experiencing hunger during the summer months (when school breakfast programs have closed) and distributed 150,000 meal packs to communities across Canada in 2021. Plus, so many more: Kellogg Canada Day of Caring, Giving Tuesday, World Food Day, Walmart Canada’s Fight Hunger Spark Change, disaster relief in response to the floods in Abbotsford, and the list goes on.

Programs such as the Kellogg Canada Adopt-A-School Employee Volunteer Initiative also help foster the spirit of giving back within the Kellogg team. And the Kellogg Canada Volunteer Benefit Policy gives team members the opportunity to take up to two days of paid volunteer leave to give back to the community. There is no doubt about it: Kellogg cares. ●



“In fact, since 2015, Kellogg Canada has donated more than \$4 million dollars and 60 million servings of food to food banks and breakfast clubs across Canada,” says

Tomé. “Our community efforts to fight food insecurity come to life in a variety of unique and impactful ways across Canada, including through our consumer- and customer-facing activations, employee giving efforts, Corporate In-Kind and Financial Donations,

# Kellogg's Better Days

## Creating Better Days for 3 billion people by the end of 2030



At Kellogg, we have a legacy of giving that dates back to our founder, W.K. Kellogg, who was an early conservationist, a leading philanthropist and the original wellbeing visionary.

More than 100 years later, we continue to do our part to help create Better Days for the communities in which we live, work and play.

To learn more, please visit [www.kelloggs.ca](http://www.kelloggs.ca)

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Source: 1 in 3 stat: <https://www.breakfastclubcanada.org/our-purpose/>





# Feeding Kids' Minds, Bodies and Futures

## GOLDEN VALLEY, SPARK EGGS AND EGGSOLUTIONS-VANDERPOL'S — UNDERSTANDING FUNDRAISING FOR BREAKFAST PROGRAMS

L. H. Gray & Son Limited, a primary player in the Canadian egg market, and Breakfast Club of Canada have joined forces in a new partnership for 2022 that will help school-age kids eat more nutritious breakfasts.

In addition to the annual partnership donation to the Club, L. H. Gray business units, including Sparks Eggs (based in Calgary), Golden Valley Eggs and EggSolutions-Vanderpol's Eggs (both based in Abbotsford), will be running local fundraising activities to raise additional funds for breakfast programs. Activities include helping to prepare and deliver breakfasts to local classrooms and creating egg nutrition materials to be used as classroom resources.

Sean Mateer, vice-president, sales and marketing at L. H. Gray & Son, says the goal is two-fold:

"First, to support the local communities where our teams, our partners and our consumers live," says Mateer. "Given that we're in the egg business, the food business, working with Breakfast Club of Canada made complete sense. Every child should have a good, nutritious meal to start their day. The Club is working every day with local schools to make this happen."

Breakfast Club of Canada has been feeding nutritious meals to school-aged kids in Western Canada for more than 25 years.

"Having access to a proper, balanced breakfast each school day helps children focus, learn and grow," says Paul Lethbridge, director philanthropy, corporate and community giving for Breakfast Club of Canada.

**"GIVEN THAT WE'RE IN THE EGG BUSINESS, THE FOOD BUSINESS, WORKING WITH BREAKFAST CLUB OF CANADA MADE COMPLETE SENSE. EVERY CHILD SHOULD HAVE A GOOD, NUTRITIOUS MEAL TO START THEIR DAY."**

The reach and impact on such programs are significant. Every day, almost 38,000 children are reached in 658 programs in Canada's Western provinces and territories, and every meal has a measurable and positive impact on kids.

"We're fortunate to live in a rich, supportive country like Canada, but unfortunately, hunger exists in our borders and kids are the most vulnerable," says Lethbridge. "Breakfast Club of Canada exists to help offset the effects so that more children than ever have the chance to learn and flourish. Together, with partners like LH Gray, we're feeding kids' minds, bodies, and futures."

Over 600 schools across the country are on waiting



lists to received funding for a breakfast program.

"Support from the community and various levels of government is essential to help ensure every child has access to a breakfast when they need it," says Lethbridge. "Our partnership with L.H. Gray ensures we can continue to meet our mission to provide access to nutritious food for kids."

The second part of the L. H. Gray goal, and equally important, says Mateer, is to reinforce their sense of team: "Amazing bonds are formed when we all work together toward a goal that means something to us personally."

Kate Rennie, HR manager at Sparks Eggs, says their teams are culturally diverse and for many team members, this is their first job in Canada.

"For so many newcomers, having a close community is incredibly important," says Rennie. "Our people know first-hand what it means to start a new life in a new country, sometimes with very little family support since many family members are back home."

When provided the opportunity to participate in programs that support and give back to the local community, Rennie says their participation is overwhelming.

"As a business, by supporting and offering these programs, we are able to provide resources and comradery for our team members, ensuring their families are taken care of and that their new life in Canada is a positive and rewarding journey," says Rennie. ●



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# Organic and Sustainable

## LEVEL GROUND HAS PARTNERED WITH FAIRTRADE CANADA TO ESTABLISH OPEN SOURCING PRACTICES

At Level Ground, giving back means being sustainable and caring for the planet, people and partnerships that support their coffee business. Since 2020, Level Ground has been sourcing all organic products.

“The ‘big’ story for us is that, since 2020, we’ve been exclusively sourcing organic products,” says Stacey Toews, co-founder of Level Ground. “We know that choosing organic is the single biggest factor that we can have on the sustainability of our coffee. More than the shipping, logistics, or packaging. The single biggest question we can ask when it comes to sustainability of coffee is: ‘is it organic?’”

And consider what giving back looks like in the relationships they have with their farmers.

“The notion of ‘giving back’ isn’t one we rely on. It’s a partnership,” says Toews. “In order to cultivate sustainable coffee, farmers must be paid well. They are the ones tending the land, they are the ones harvesting the coffee, they are the ones who will ensure the coffee is grown organically. When we think about sustainability in organic coffee, we have to put our partnership with farmers first.”

To care for their farmers, Level Ground is partnered with Fairtrade Canada, establishing open sourcing practices.

“We can tell you the exact location of where all of our coffees are grown,” says Toews. “We travel to these farms; we sit down and have meals together. It’s not a transaction on paper; it’s a relationship in real life.”



Level Ground has been located in Victoria BC since 1997.

“Coffee is an easy win in our — and any! — community,” says Toews. “We love partnering with local youth sports teams, community kitchens, and food events.”

Level Ground also partners with local farmers and gardeners to reduce their byproducts. For example, thousands of coffee sacks made of organic fibres



are distributed annually and make great ground cover for local farms and gardens. Coffee chaff, which is a byproduct of roasting, is rich in carbon and joins composting efforts at local farms for organic food production.

Other sustainable and giving-back practices from Level Ground include that the company has been landfill-free for 18 years.

“We steward 13 streams of recycling in our facility to divert everything from landfill,” says Toews. “All staff have full access to this recycling program for their households as well.”

Level Ground staff are also paid to “green commute” to work. This includes carpooling, biking, walking, and more.

And then there is their patented roasting technology. “We innovated a roasting and VOC collection technology that has reduced our natural gas consumption by 43 per cent,” says Toews. “Annually, we save enough energy to power 100 homes.”

For people buying coffee, knowing they are supporting a company which values sustainability is important, so when certifications change, Level Ground tells them.

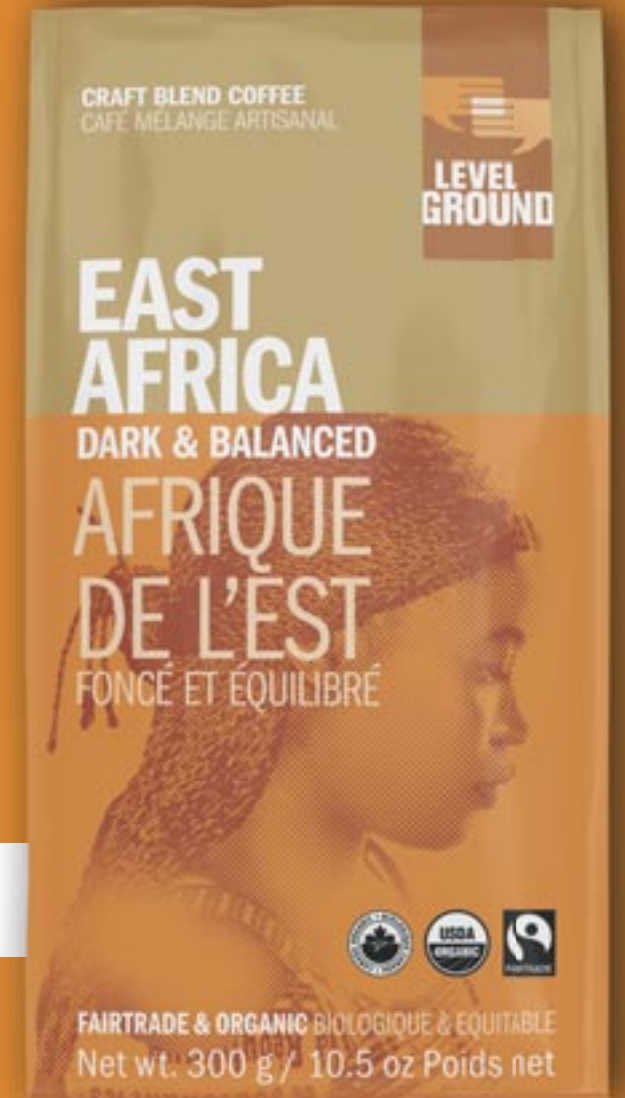
“We’ve found that customers want to choose sustainable options, but we need to communicate these options clearly and efficiently: that’s why we’ve expanded the certifications on our packaging,” says Toews. “We’ve added 1% For The Planet and recently swapped our entire lineup to be 100 per cent organic. Additionally, we’ve partnered with Fairtrade Canada and display their recognizable fairtrade logo on our packages.”

That’s giving back, sustainably, and organically for the long term. ●

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# 5 Ways to Improve Your Shopper Understanding



Sue Nicholls is the founder of "Category Management Knowledge Group"

There's no better time than now for transformation. Especially when it comes to our relationship and understanding of the shopper. We need to take a holistic perspective, understanding who they are, how shopper behaviours have changed, and how we need to track them moving forward. The connection to this rapidly changing consumer and shopper are paramount for organizations.

I'll share with you five ways to create better shopper insights that you can implement to improve your shopper approach.

## 1 UNDERSTANDING KEY DRIVERS & MEGATRENDS

Without understanding the key drivers and megatrends that drive shopper change, your shopper strategy and approach will be missing key insight. It's important to realize category trends are not driven by your last promotion or those new SKUs

that were brought into the category. So many times I see presentations where sales teams or marketing teams make it seem like a trend was driven by the category shoppers, by innovation, and even by tactics like promotions and new SKUs and display activity, instead of the trend being the result of something much bigger that you and I don't influence.

Rather shopper behaviour is directed by global drivers and megatrends. For example, a big trend these days is plant-based protein. Plant-based protein isn't being driven from specific categories like meatless proteins, but is the result of a much bigger global trend addressing environmental and sustainability awareness and for health and wellness reasons.

### Big Picture Perspective

We want to always keep the bigger picture in mind and respond, as brands, and within new categories to meet these megatrends. This allows you to understand the biggest influences on consumer

behavior and better predict the future for the industry and categories.

Euromonitor has an amazing analysis framework that helps you better understand key drivers and megatrends. For instance, key drivers setting the stage of a changing environment include shifting economic powers, technology advancement, environmental shifts, world population, and changing values.

Megatrends such as a circular economy, connected consumers, generation gaps, and healthy living can affect different categories differently and influence the way shoppers are shopping even at a generational level or different customer segments. You want to understand which megatrends are most driving important shoppers for you and make sure you're addressing those needs.

## 2 KNOW SHOPPER TRAFFIC AND SPEND CATEGORIES

The second way to create better shopper insights is to understand how shopper traffic and spend have changed, both online and offline, compared to other categories. Looking at things from a bigger picture perspective is incredibly helpful as well as understanding what's happening in the total market, or within the total stores.

For example, spend categories such as coffee and dog food and treats have changed dramatically from pre-pandemic to post-pandemic. Being stuck at home, we all stopped going to Starbucks or Tim Hortons, or wherever you buy your coffee while on your drive to work. Dog food and treats also saw a spike during the pandemic due to an increased adoption rate and people spending more time with their pets at home.

The question is, will some of these spend categories shift back to pre-pandemic numbers as we move through the pandemic? As shoppers find a new normal, we really want to make sure that we understand and track these trends going forward from a bigger picture perspective beyond our categories. This will help us to better understand spend categories relative to the total store.

## 3 DIG DEEP INTO SHOPPER BEHAVIOUR

Understanding shifts in your shopper behavior is essential to gathering powerful insights. Panel data is one of my biggest and favourite data sources, and it always has been. Everyone on your team needs to understand panel data, not just category management and shopper insights.

You don't want to only be looking at information from a consumer and brand perspective. By also turning to panel data and understanding numbers from retailer and category perspectives, you can get a lot better insights that will strategically help you better understand the shopper opportunities.

**WE NEED TO TAKE A HOLISTIC PERSPECTIVE, UNDERSTANDING WHO THEY ARE, HOW SHOPPER BEHAVIORS HAVE CHANGED, AND HOW WE NEED TO TRACK THEM MOVING FORWARD.**

## 3 LOOK AT TRENDED SHOPPER INFORMATION

Not only should we be looking at our data from the past 12 and 24 and 52 weeks, but we should be looking at overall trends. If you look at a category like pasta, the trend initially appears as if it's going up. However, this increase is only a result of pantry loading and panic right at the heart of the beginning of the pandemic.

So if we take that anomaly out, pasta in fact is not really trending up. You want to think about these numbers and trends, being realistic moving into the future. Drilling into this data once again by product group and geography will help you to truly understand what's driving those numbers.

### WHO IS YOUR SHOPPER?

Finally, you need to know who your shopper is. When I work with teams, I ask a lot, 'who is your target shopper, or who is your shopper?' And a lot of times they don't really know. Rather, they give very vague or general shopper descriptions instead of really having an innate sense of who it is that they're really trying to target.

Both retailers and suppliers want to please the whole world as one large shopper group, but instead we should split them into our proper customer segments, get to know them much more intimately, and then figure out how to market to them, what the right SKUs are, where they play in the world, where they are on the internet, where they buy from, and it goes on.

And so, it typically ends up where we must use panel data to focus primarily on the most important and heavy shoppers. Take advantage of monthly panel data to gain a more thorough picture of shopper behavior looking at household penetration, purchase frequency, buying rate, spend per trip and units per trip.

### Your New Shopper Approach

So, that's it! Implementing these five practices can help you to really think about ways to change your view on shopper insights and make the shopper a priority. More often than not, I continue to see sales presentations with little or no shopper data — it's still about historical share and volume results vs total market. ●



Sue Nicholls is the founder of "Category Management Knowledge Group", an online, accredited category management training company.



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One in four dishes consumed worldwide is Italian food! Here in Canada, the love for pasta and pizza is just as strong; with 35.5 per cent of Canadian influencers cooking Italian dishes daily. Whether it's the comfort of a gooey slice of pizza, or a nutritious bowl of veggie pasta, Italian foods hit the feel-good mark, along with budget and dietary needs that customers are craving while cooking more meals at home.

Often the base of any great Italian dish, in house or dine out, is the tomato. In Canada, the tomato-based category saw a tremendous increase of 11.3 per cent throughout 2021 with products such as tomato paste growing in excess of 20 per cent, tomato sauces increasing by 16.3 per cent, and whole tomatoes by 14.3 per cent.

"This is without counting the pizza sauce category that increased in value by a swift +31.5 per cent," states Laura Dal Bo, director of marketing at Italtasta, which is the exclusive distributor of Mutti, premium Italian tomatoes, in Canada. "We explain this growth by the growing desire for consumers to cook throughout the pandemic. We have also seen a growing preference for authentic Italian products rather than just Italian sounding brands."

This June, Mutti's signature product, Polpa, which is finely chopped, 100 per cent Italian tomatoes with a pinch of Mediterranean

# Comfort in the Classics

From pasta to pizza, consumers will always love Italian foods

Sea salt, is celebrating 50 years. At the same time the company is launching a line of organic canned tomato products, while promoting the new Pizza Classica, sauce — racking up 23 made-in-Italy products available in Canada.

And when you have a good sauce, customers want something that it can cling to. Pasta is also trending towards that Italian authenticity, which includes traditional formations and cuts that hold a sauce.

Bosa Foods, which offers up the authentic La Famiglia Pasta line, has recently added the company's bronze die, extruded pasta made with either 100 per cent Italian Marco Arellio or 100 per cent Italian Varieta Capelli Wheats. Bronze-cut, or bronze die, pastas are a little courser, a little more porous, and, thus, a better surface for sauces to cling to.



**ITALIAN FOODS**

By Carly Peters





## Make it Like Nonna

When Marco De Luca is considering a product for his family's speciality food store, he asks himself two things: Would I eat this at home? Does it taste like how Nonna would make it?

De Luca Specialty Foods started in Winnipeg in 1968, originally serving the city's Italian community. Gradually the business grew to include two locations each with a grocery store and restaurant, as well as a cooking school, production & distribution warehouse and coffee roasting facility.



Marco De Luca

They create homemade Italian products in-house and stock a wide choice of olive oils, vinegars, pasta and European speciality items.

To find those items, the family goes right to the source — Italy. De Luca states pre-pandemic Italian and European food shows allowed them to meet new suppliers and sample products. Now, with restrictions being lifted and food shows back in full swing, they are looking forward to finally going back to bring the authentic taste of Italy to the city.

"Traditional Italian cooking and products have not changed for hundreds of years," says De Luca, there will always be a new hot item

but you cannot recreate the Italian Classics, like Prosciutto di Parma, Bresaola, San Marzano Tomatoes, Burrata, or Mozza di Buffala. "There are always new trends but most of them are traditional recipes with a twist on preparation or presentation. The flavour combinations of Italian cooking are classic."

He adds those, delicious, simple, and healthy classic Italian dishes are also extremely budget friendly — something a lot of families are looking for. "Pasta still remains a very affordable option. For under \$15 you can buy a great Italian pasta, a can of quality Italian tomatoes, some fresh basil and garlic, and feed four to six people."

Along with providing customers the ingredients, De Luca's offers up the inspiration as well. From



cooking classes to a recipe blog, the store helps consumers create their own authentic Italian dishes at home (their pizza dough is legendary). De Luca says the pandemic really pushed people to try different products, such as oils, vinegars, pasta, charcuterie, thereby creating a whole new wave of Italian home chefs. Nonna would be proud.

Shape also plays a key roll in how saucy a consumer's bowl will be. Italtasta's newest offering, the Artisan Pasta line, is inspired by an age-old Italian way of making high-quality pasta. The six, unique pasta cuts, which includes Gemelli, a twisty, traditional shape that's soon to be a Canadian favourite, are an "ode to the simple things done right," resulting in a rough texture for sauce to cling to.



Even through Keto and low-carb diets, pasta has continued to surge in sales due to its association with comfort.

In fact, in the onset of COVID, Italtasta began manufacturing 24/7 and reduced their offerings to the top six-seven pasta shapes, to meet the demand.

"Canadians turned to home cooking not only as an activity to enjoy safely during the pandemic, but

also one that brought comfort in uncertain times. The yearning for familiar and nostalgic foods will influence meal choices coming out of the pandemic," says Angelo Boras, vice-president of sales at Italtasta, adding with the increase in food costs, pasta will also fit the bill. "With increased pressure on household budgets, consumers will look for value. A pantry staple in many Canadian households, pasta is also the most cost-effective way to feed a family a nutritious and balanced meal on a budget."

John Porco, chief operating officer for Unico Inc./Primo Foods also points to not only pasta's versatility but Italian foods in general, which can help consumers keep with classics or try a revamped staple. "People love the different Italian dishes that can be made using fresh vegetables, meat and seafood, all with tomatoes, sauces, and beans, like cannellini beans or chickpeas. Cross merchandising with multiple products and different departments are very effective in preparing a full meal solution," he says, adding not to forget the olive oil, like Gallo, a key ingredient in the preparation of many Italian meals.

Creating Italian-inspired displays can also help consumers solve their charcuterie queries (and possibly save some deli labour creating these still super popular share items). From Bosa Foods' Preferisco brand's selection of re-sliced Italian specialties, like Prosciutto di Parma or San Daniele, Genoa Salami, or Coppa Capicollo, paired with Latteria's hand-wrapped Parmigiano Reggiano Bio-Diversity line of cheeses, make a charcuterie experience that's both authentic and easy.

And, really, that's all customers are looking for in their Italian foods. ●

## health and wellness update

by Kathy Kerr

### FERMENTED FOODS



# FUNCTION AND TASTE

Health benefits drive new interest in fermented products

Fermentation is gaining popularity in the food world as consumers seek the ancient practice's health benefits and versatility.

Fermented products span across grocery aisles, taking in beverages such as kombucha and kefir, food such as tempeh and kimchi and seasonings including miso and soy sauce.

Research company Technavio estimates the global market for fermented food and drinks will grow by \$533 million between 2021 and 2026. Various estimates put annual growth in the worldwide market at between 6.3 and 6.4 per cent.

A 2020 fermented food report from consumer analysis firm Mintel said that Covid prompted people to pay greater attention to their health, which could create new opportunities for fermented food which offer benefits including gut health and strengthened immune system. Mintel reported 57 per cent of U.S. consumers try to eat a diet that encourages a healthy gut-microbiome.

Lyndsay Scott, CEO and founder of Kindred Cultures Inc.

was seeking a probiotic solution for her infant son who was having digestive problems.

"I needed something that was dairy free. I personally was interested in it having a good nutritional profile, without buckets of sugar," she says.

Scott created a non-carbonated kefir water, a scoby-based fermented beverage similar to kombucha.

"Our product offers a soft probiotic that feels soothing to the body. So we've combined good flavour, like strawberry and lemon with functional ingredients like turmeric, organic ginger and activated charcoal that help alleviate more digestive discomfort symptoms."

The firm went from direct sales to wholesale in early 2020. That year units sold increased by 85 per cent and jumped another 49 per cent in wholesale sales from 2020 to 2021. The product, which comes in a 250 single serve and a one-litre family serving is sold in the cooler section of independent and health-oriented speciality stores and grocers.



# health and wellness update

Remedy Drinks Canada is selling its fermented beverages in most major grocery chains and 7-11s. The firm offers several flavours of kombucha, an apple cider vinegar-based beverage called switchel, and ginger beer.

What sets Remedy kombucha apart, says National Sales Manager Leanne Sears, is that it is sugar free.

“We brew our kombucha for 30 days. We start with sugar but over the brewing process the sugar is brewed out. You look at other brands, they will have quite a bit of sugar. Because we have no sugar we can be shelf stable.”

That allows stores to stock the firm’s four-can multipack on the shelf, and the single serve in the grab-and-go cooler or with other kombucha drinks. Being sugar free is an advantage in attracting consumers, says Sears. Her firm’s research shows 57 per cent of consumers who purchase Remedy Drinks have never purchased kombucha before.

Henry’s Tempeh also markets the health benefits of its product which is a fermented soy protein product which can be used as a plant-based entree ingredient.

Tempeh originated in Indonesia and uses a starter culture which is a form of fungi. A cakelike product is the final result of the process.

Nadia Andruchow, Henry’s Tempeh director of operations, says tempeh is becoming more mainstream as consumers eat more plant protein.

## PRODUCT SHOWCASE

### HEAT-AND-SERVE CRUMBLE OFFERS A HANDY MEAT ALTERNATIVE

Henry’s Tempeh Crumble is new to the market, offering a pre-seasoned tempeh product that adds protein and umami flavour. The crumble works as a pizza topping, in shepherd’s pie, cabbage rolls, chili or anywhere that meat would normally be used. The crumble patty can be left uncrumbled to serve as a sandwich filling.



### SUGAR-FREE GINGER BEER PLAYS TO HEALTH AND TASTE

Remedy Ginger Beer doubles up on digestive health with natural fermentation and ginger, a traditional tummy soother. Like all Remedy products, the beer begins with sugar but the sugar is brewed out. Stevia provides a bit of sweetness. The beverage can be enjoyed on its own or as a mixer.



### CONVENIENT SEASONING PACKS AN UNAMI PUNCH



Haiku brand Miso Granules makes the traditional Japanese flavour accessible to home chefs with these easy to use granules. Hot water and granules create a miso soup, or granules can be sprinkled on meat, fish, salads, vegetable or pasta to enhance flavour or mixed into salad dressings, marinades or dips.

### INNOVATION FUSES FLAVOUR AND FUNCTION



Kindred Cultures’s Power Green Water Kefir contains spirulina, a blue-green algae known for its nutritious qualities. The non-carbonated, non-dairy drink has probiotic qualities equivalent to dairy kefir or yogurt. Spirulina can be a difficult flavour, but Kindred Culture has created a fresh tropical limeade type beverage.

“Because it’s fermented, some nutrients in the soy beans become more bio-available and the fermentation starts to break down some of the protein into more digestible forms,” says Andruchow.

She says it has a deeper umami flavour than tofu products.

Henry’s is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, says Phil Diceanu, managing partner; operations, sales and marketing. The firm’s products are available in grocery coolers from Winnipeg to St. John’s and the company is preparing to expand in Western Canada.

Diceanu says consumers are looking for plant-based proteins that are less processed and tempeh fits the bill.

The Asian origins of many fermented products offer another marketing angle for retailers, says Andrea Felli, marketing manager for I-D Foods Corporation.

I-D Foods Haiku brand offers instant miso soups and granulated miso. Miso is a traditional Japanese fermented soybean, rice and salt seasoning.

“Grocers who cater to health-conscious consumers, will most certainly want to include an offering of fermented products in their stores,” Felli says.

“In terms of merchandising, grocers can piggy-back off of the increasing popularity of Asian cuisine and keep the products highly visible in their Asian foods section while also placing them prominently in their Natural/Good For You area of the store,” she says.

Proponents of fermentation say the health science behind the process is solid and modern consumers are embracing a food preparation method used for many centuries in cultures all over the world. ●

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## Top Natural, Organic, and Wellness Trends from **CHFA NOW Vancouver 2022**

After a two-year hiatus, we finally got to host CHFA NOW Vancouver in April, live and in person! Over 6,000 industry professionals joined us for Western Canada's largest natural health trade show. Our community of industry leaders, investors, retailers, and over 750 brands in the natural, organic, and wellness space came together to network, learn from each other, and celebrate being back on the tradeshow floor. One of the highlights for us, the CHFA Team, is getting the opportunity to hunt for new innovations and the products we can't wait to see lining the aisles and virtual shopping baskets in the months ahead. Here are our top trends from CHFA NOW Vancouver.

### 1 UPCYCLED FOODS & REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE: BETTER FOR YOU AND BETTER FOR THE PLANET

The natural health industry leads the way we think about the circularity of food. We spotted brands looking at traditional food waste in a new light and creating shelf-worthy products from ingredients that would ultimately go into the landfill.

**Brand Spotlight:** Loop is giving fruit and veggies a second life to create cold-pressed juices, smoothies, probiotic sodas and more. Susgrainable saves fibre and protein-rich spent brewery grains from the landfill and upcycles the grains to make barley flour and delicious baking mixes.



### 2 NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CATEGORY

Beverages like kombucha and cold-pressed juices have made a statement on our show floor for years, but this year a new and emerging category took the spotlight: alcohol-free alternatives. You could hardly walk one aisle of the CHFA NOW tradeshow floor without coming across non-alcoholic beers, spritzers, or wine. With the non-alcoholic sector (including soft drinks) expected to reach \$280 million this year, brands are ready to show sober-curious consumers that there are plenty of options to imbibe without alcohol!

**Brand Spotlight:** Launch Pad finalist OPUS brings non-drinkers the tastes of cocktail favourites with their non-alcoholic Peach Bellini and Gin and Tonic. Edna's small-batch cocktails are a strong competitor with the classic mojito and Paloma adaptations.



### 3 SMART & SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING

When it comes to environmental concerns and s hopping for food and drink, packaging waste ranks first for Canadians — and brands are responding. This year we saw more eco-friendly, sustainable, and innovative packaging options make their mark on the tradeshow floor.

**Brand Spotlight:** Humble Potato chips with Canada's first compostable chip bag and Attitude Living's Plastic-free line of beauty products with cardboard packaging impressed us the most!





#### 4 PLANT POWER:

The plant-based revolution shows no sign of slowing down as consumer demand continues to grow for climate-friendly products. New and creative categories that harness the power of plants continue to emerge — from plant-based seafood to bee-free honey plants are now powering all your kitchen staples

**Brand Spotlight:** Mindful FÜD's Bee-Mindful Hunnie is made from apples, not bees, but you wouldn't know it! Komo Plant-Based Comfort Food's lasagna was easily one of the biggest crowd-pleasers at the show, and Save Da Sea continues to impress with their vegan tuna salad and smoked salmon offerings.



#### 5 THE FUTURE IS FEMALE

Female founders used their platforms on the tradeshow floor and at events like CHFA NOW Launch Pad to open the conversation about female health issues that are often only talked about in a hushed voice. Loud and proud these brands are offering natural solutions to female health issues that need more airtime.

**Brand Spotlight:** Launch Pad Winner, Aeryon Wellness, won for her Up & Away product made with 100% Boric Acid for female vaginal health.



#### 6 FROM THE SEA

From food to beauty products, brands have harnessed life under the sea to create sustainable products we can feel good about consuming. The ingredient of choice on the tradeshow floor? The nutrient-packed superfood: seaweed.

**Brand Spotlight:** Launch Pad finalist Algi's IMPACT Bar uses nutrient-packed algae to create an eco-friendly, healthy, ready-to-eat food option that tastes great, and 7 Fathoms Seaweed company's simplified skincare is powered by sustainably harvested seaweed in Newfoundland.



#### 7 CULTURAL ROOTS

International flavours delighted the senses and were another dominating presence on the show floor. Attendees enjoyed a range of tastes, from ready-to-eat treats to sauces and spices that reflect the changing demographic of Canada; we can't wait to dig in.

**Brand Spotlight:** TMRW Foods' sweet, zesty Thai plant-based ocean cakes, perfect for dunking into a spicy peanut dipping sauce, Three Farmers Turmeric & Spice Roasted Chickpeas offering an anti-inflammatory power snack and Good Food for Good's lick-the-bowl-clean masala and butter chicken sauces were a hit!

Twice a year, CHFA looks forward to walking the tradeshow floors at our iconic events to gain inspiration from our incredible community. Every year, we find something new and innovative that we know will wow consumers from coast to coast. We can't wait to see what new and exciting trends come out of CHFA NOW Toronto taking place September 15-18.



**CTA: Interested in joining us?**  
 Exhibit sales for CHFA NOW Toronto are currently open.  
 Attendee registration opens June 2022. Learn more at [chfanow.ca](http://chfanow.ca).

1 Non-Alcoholic Spirits Are Popping Up Everywhere. But The Category Still Has A Few Lessons To Learn, Forbes, 2021  
 2 Sustainability in Food, Canada, 2022, Mintel



2021 new product trends reflect Canadians' growing interest in plant-based foods and desire to add more restaurant-level finesse to their home cooking

Retail Council of Canada (RCC) is excited to reveal the finalists for the 29th Annual Canadian Grand Prix New Product Awards.

The 29th Annual Canadian Grand Prix New Product Award finalists represent 121 of the most impressive food and non-food products launched into the Canadian market in 2021. Submissions were received from all types of product

development teams across the country, including entries from both large and small established companies, start-ups, and family-owned independent retailers.

"It's exciting to see brands introducing new packaged goods products in Canada are listening to Canadian consumers," said Diane J. Brisebois, president and CEO, Retail Council of Canada. "We hear from retailers,



restaurateurs, and food influencers that Canadians are looking for ways to recreate restaurant-like meals at home while also looking for healthier plant-based options, and more environmentally friendly packaging. And that is what we are seeing in many of this year's finalists."

The prestigious Canadian Grand Prix New Product Awards, and the feedback provided to product developers, are widely viewed as an endorsement of achieving the level of excellence that will satisfy consumers' evolving desires and become a commercial success.

Chef and Jury Chair Marcus A. Von Albrecht, who has overseen the Canadian Grand Prix New Product Awards judging for 23 years, has directly witnessed the influence of these awards. "I see the past feedback from our expert jury reflected in the most innovative products and exceptionally smart packaging we have seen in this year's entries. There have been, for example, huge quality improvements in plant-based eggs, vegan cheeses, and foods that are now strong alternatives to the more traditional food choices. Packaging, as another example, is quickly moving to using more

sustainable materials and showing more of the product."

This year's jury of 34 food and grocery industry experts evaluated products based on innovation, taste, texture, consumer value, and packaging. The rigorous evaluation process requires that to become a finalist, a product needs to receive an overall score of at least 70 per cent. Jurors review food and non-food products in the four categories of innovation and originality, product characteristics, presentation and packaging, and overall consumer value. Finalists can use the Canadian Grand Prix New Product Award finalist seal on their products. Finalists also receive extensive exposure in a variety of digital and printed publications, distributed to Canadians across the country.

On June 1, 2022, the winners will be announced live at the 29th Canadian Grand Prix New Product Award Gala along with five specialty awards. These specialty awards recognize the best performance in the evaluation of Innovation and Originality; Innovative Packaging; and Overall Consumer Value. Also recognized are the products that

performed highest across all evaluation categories, an All-Canadian made product, and an Excellence in Ethnic Products award.

This year's Gala dinner and awards show will be hosted by international food and travel celebrity Mijune Pak, known to many as the founder of FollowMeFoodie.com and judge on both Top Chef Canada and Iron Chef Canada.

The complete list of finalists is now posted on the Canadian Grand Prix New Product Awards website. ●

## About Retail Council of Canada

**Retail is Canada's largest private-sector employer with over two million Canadians working in our industry.**

The sector annually generates over \$78 billion in total compensation. Core retail sales (excluding vehicles and gasoline) were over \$433B in 2021. Retail Council of Canada (RCC) members represent more than two-thirds of core retail sales in the country. RCC is a not-for-profit industry-funded association that represents small, medium, and large retail businesses in every community across the country. As the Voice of Retail™ in Canada, we proudly represent more than 45,000 storefronts in all retail formats, including department, grocery, specialty, discount, independent retailers, and online merchants. [www.retailcouncil.org](http://www.retailcouncil.org).

RCC grocery members represent more than 95 per cent of the market in Canada. They provide essential services and are an important source of employment in large and small communities across the country. They have strong private label programs and sell products in every food category.

Contact: Branka Stavric,  
Senior Director Marketing  
and Communications  
[bstavric@retailcouncil.org](mailto:bstavric@retailcouncil.org)

Visit [rccgrandprix.ca/register-now/](http://rccgrandprix.ca/register-now/) to order tickets to the Gala, which will be hosted at the Toronto Congress Centre on June 1, 2022 and close the two-day RCC STORE 22 Conference.

## FOOD FINALISTS

KIJU ORGANIC  
LASSONDE INC.



OASIS HEALTH BREAK  
LASSONDE INC.



ROUGEMONT ORCHARD  
COLLECTION  
LASSONDE INC.



AL'FEZ MARINADES  
AB WORLD FOODS



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NUTYBITE  
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BOURSIN MINIS  
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NO SUGAR ADDED  
PROTEIN LOAF  
BIMBO CANADA



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BREAD 22 GRAIN THIN  
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STONEMILL ROASTED  
GARLIC & SEA SALT BREAD  
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BRIDOR



CARBONAUT LOW-CARB  
GLUTEN-FREE BREAD  
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CAVENDISH FARMS



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TRIPLE CHOCOLATE BITES  
CHOCOLAT  
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COFFEE POUR OVER  
COASTAL COFFEE



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Consumers crave convenience and BeeMaid is the #1 Honey brand in Canada\*  
\*Nielsen National All Channels 52 Weeks ending Jan. 15, 2022

**It's a BIG Opportunity in a Li'l Packet!**

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POWER BOWLS  
CONAGRA BRANDS



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REALFRUIT GUMMIES  
DARE FOODS LIMITED



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BASED EGG  
EAT JUST, INC.



JUST EGG,  
PLANT-BASED EGG  
EAT JUST, INC.



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## CONSUMER PACKAGED GOODS



# AB WORLD FOODS

## LEADERS IN WORLD FOODS INNOVATION



### DID YOU KNOW...

Authenticity, Premium Quality, Clean ingredients are all important factors in International food.

78% of International food shoppers want Al Fez available at their store

Middle Eastern was one of the hottest trends according to the Restaurants Canada Chef Survey in 2020.

Source: 2021 SMART Market Research - AB World Foods Canada P2P & SCR; Restaurants Canada Chef Survey, 2020.  
Source: 2021 SMART Market Research - AB World Foods Canada P2P & SCR; Middle Eastern Food in Canada, Vivid Research, February 2020

CONTACT YOUR ID FOODS REPRESENTATIVE FOR MORE INFORMATION





## FOOD FINALISTS

ORGANIC MEADOW  
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ZOGLO'S INCREDIBLE  
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PREPARED MEALS  
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## CONSUMER PACKAGED GOODS

## NON-FOOD FINALISTS

MAGIC MOMENTS  
CARLTON CARDS

PAPYRUS  
- 3D UNICORN SCENE  
CARLTON CARDS

PAPYRUS  
- QUILLING HUMMINGBIRD  
CARLTON CARDS

CASCADES  
FLUFF & TUFF  
CASCADES TISSUE GROUP

HONIBE TRAVEL GUMMY  
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• Comes with dipping sauce

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On June 1, 2022, the winners will be announced live at the 29th Canadian Grand Prix New Product Award Gala along with five specialty awards.

The complete list of finalists is now posted on the Canadian Grand Prix New Product Awards website

<https://rccgrandprix.ca/product-finalists/>

E-NEWS

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CO-OP GOLD FLAT TAIL PALE ALE ALCOHOL-FREE  
CO-OP GOLD PURE PLANT BASED FROZEN DESSERT  
CO-OP GOLD PURE PLANT BASED PROTEIN TWISTS  
CO-OP GOLD SALAMI

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LONGO'S CURATO HAZELNUT CROSTATA  
LONGO'S FROZEN CHICKEN SOUVLAKI  
LONGO'S ORIGINAL ALMOND THINS

#### METRO INC.

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DISCOVERED BY IRRESISTIBLES SAUCES  
INVITATION ALCOHOL FREE WINE  
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IRRESISTIBLES FROZEN FRUIT  
IRRESISTIBLES GINGERBREADMAN ICE CREAM SANDWICH  
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LIFE SMART CRISPY RICE BARS  
LIFE SMART FLOURS  
LIFE SMART INSTANT OATMEALS  
LIFE SMART NATURALIA FROZEN FISH FILLET  
LIFE SMART ORGANIC RICE  
LIFE SMART ORGANIC SEEDS  
LIFE SMART PLANT-BASED ICED BARS  
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NOSH & CO. LAVENDER LEMON COOKIES

#### SAVE-ON-FOODS LIMITED PARTNERSHIP

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ICE CREAM WAFFLE SANDWICHES  
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#### SOBEYS INC.

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#### WALMART CANADA

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SPECIAL KITTY FLAVOUR CAT TREATS

# GSF 2022

## - Welcomes Back Delegates to Live Event

*Western Canada's largest grocery event took place in Vancouver April 25 & 26*

Welcome Back! The industry's largest grocery event took place live in person for the first time in two years April 25 & 26 at the Vancouver Convention Centre East Building with 18 per cent increase in retail attendees compared to 2019.

The event featured over 90,000-sq.-ft. of trade show space with suppliers from across Canada, along with pavilions from Brazil, WUSATA, Choose Ontario, Quebec, First Timer's and Canada Connect. There were nearly 300 booths and more than 200 exhibitors with a 16 per cent increase in exhibitors from 2019!

Among delegates surveyed post event, 87 per cent of those surveyed said they found innovations at the trade show exhibition. SMEs represented more than 60 per cent of the trade show floor.

Along with business opportunities and retailer-supplier 1-to-1 meetings, there was networking occasions at GSF starting with the Mix and Mingle on the Monday at the close of the trade show. Some 300 attended the reception jointly hosted by Save-On-Foods and Instacart. Monday evening, The 59th Annual Canadian Independent Grocer of the Year Awards were handed out. The NATIONAL GOLD AWARD Winners were:

Save-On-Foods - Scottsdale Centre, Delta, BC (Large surface)

Longo's - Liberty Village, Toronto, ON (Medium surface)

Urban Fare - Mount Royal, Calgary, AB (Small surface)



DAVID C. PARSONS AWARD OF EXCELLENCE IN SPECIALTY FOOD RETAILING (GOLD): Sunripe Sarnia, Sarnia, ON.

Wayne, Harmina, Peter and Kathy Richmond, 49th Parallel Grocery Ladysmith, Ladysmith, BC, were awarded THE ARNOLD RANDS HERITAGE AWARD. The award is given to the year's best multi-generational store that is privately owned, and that has been in the same family for at least two generations, in the same community for 35 years.

James Inglis, Doug Nakano & Team, Blind Bay Village Grocer Ltd, Blind Bay, BC, were inducted into the HALL OF FAME. ●

To book your spot for next year's GSF event in Vancouver, April 24 & 25, 2023 contact Rolster Taylor, RTaylor@cfig.ca; Go to www.GSFShow.com

To book for the Toronto event, October 25 & 26, 2022, contact Rolster Taylor, RTaylor@cfig.ca; Go to www.GroceryInnovations.com



(in no particular order):

#### EARTH STONE GRILL CLEANING BLOCK

Distributor: Advantage Solutions  
Category: BEST CLEANING PRODUCT

#### EGG BITES

Manufacturer: Burnbrae Farms  
Category: BEST INSTANT FOOD

#### AHA SPARKLING BEVERAGE WATER

Manufacturer: Coca Cola  
Category: BEST NEW BEVERAGE

#### DF ENERGY 100% GINSENG SACHETS

Manufacturer: PAN-X Corp.  
Category: BEST NEUTRACEUTICAL

#### DRAGÉES MÉDICIS

Distributor: LPB Distribution  
Category: BEST NEW CANDY

#### ORGANIC ENHANCED COLLAGEN

Manufacturer: Organika Health  
Category: BEST NATURAL BEAUTY SUPPLEMENT

#### FAN TASTY KETO CAKE MIX

Distributor: Tree of Life Canada  
Category: BEST BAKING PRODUCT

#### BUBUWARES

Manufacturer: Bubuwares  
Category: BEST GREEN PRODUCT

#### FUME-EH SMOKED OLIVES

Manufacturer: FUME-eh Gourmet Foods  
Category: BEST CONDIMENT

#### DELISSIO CROISSANT

Manufacturer: NESTLÉ Canada  
Category: BEST FROZEN FOOD

The Best Booth Awards adjudicated by trade publishers were granted to:

Best Single Booth - Baking Barn #1522

Best Double Booth - Refresh Packaging #1501

Best Multi Booth - Kev's Juice #1015

Best Marketed Booth - Ponderosa Mushrooms & Specialty Foods #1020





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EXCITING FLAVOURS**



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ALL ON A SUPERFOOD\***



\*A healthy diet low in saturated and trans fats may reduce the risk of heart disease. Almonds are low in saturated and trans fats.

\*Une alimentation saine, faible en gras saturés et en gras trans, peut réduire le risque de maladie cardiaque. Les amandes contiennent peu de gras saturés et de gras trans.

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photo courtesy shutterstock.com

**SNACKS**

By Mike Yeo

# Healthy Snacks Hit the Spot

HEALTHIER SNACKING TRENDS ON THE RISE IN CANADA



The definition of snacking has moved beyond just potato chips and chocolate bars and is inclusive of many different segments these days. As a result, consumers' go-to snack habits are changing, with the change trending towards healthier snacks that don't just taste good but also provide them with added health benefits. These changes in snacking habits are encouraging growth rates to consistently climb.

In the US, the value of the healthy snacks market is expected to rise from USD 78.13 billion earned in 2019 to USD 108.11 billion by the end of 2027. The market is likely to exhibit a CAGR of 4.2 per cent during the forecast period set between 2020 and 2027. In Canada, the snack food category in its entirety is worth more than \$4 billion dollars, with an average growth rate of six per cent over the last five years.

The traditional three meals a day are undergoing an overhaul in Canada, as new research from Mintel reveals that nearly half (46 per cent) of BFY (better for you) snackers feel that it is healthier to snack throughout the day than to eat three large meals. In need of constant fuel, many Canadians have snacks at the ready with two-thirds (65 per cent) of BFY snackers believing it's important to always keep healthy snacks on hand.

Keeping up with their interest in snacking throughout the day, according to the same research by Mintel, more than half (51 per cent) of Canadians agree that they'd like to see more healthy snacks packaged for eating on the go. As consumers look to make better choices for themselves, it

seems fresh and less processed snacks are coming out on top as fresh fruit and vegetables (84 per cent) are the nation's top BFY snack of choice, followed by cheese (79 per cent), nuts (69 per cent) and popcorn (60 per cent).

"Popcorn in general is a really great snack because of its relatively low caloric content but high fibre content," said Matthew von Teichman, founder at C4 Funds.

"Purplesful Snacking is a mission-driven snacking company that focuses on putting Purpose before Profits. We are creating snacking products using purple ingredients, famous for their high antioxidants, to deliver great tasting products with elevated antioxidant content, and in the case of the popcorn, a much lighter and fluffier mouthfeel. Purplesful Popcorn features non-GMO, Gluten Free purple corn from South America that has been grown by farmers in the Andes for generations. We currently have two flavours, Sea Salt and Vegan Cheddar."

The biggest reason purple popcorn is considered healthier than normal popcorn is the antioxidants found in purple corn. Even after it's been popped, there is a significantly higher amount of antioxidants than you would find in normal popcorn.

"Purplesful Popcorn also has less salt than most brands and more fibre, add all that to the support we offer kids in underprivileged communities, and there's a few different great reasons to try Purplesful out. We believe that corporate profits should not only enrich shareholders but should also be supporting those who need the help the most, in this case





Purpleful Popcorn is currently available in two flavours Sea Salt and Vegan Cheddar.

kids,” added von Teichman. Purpleful Popcorn gives back 25 per cent of their profits to support kids in underprivileged communities, helping to tackle food security, educational inequalities and to make some sports more accessible, amongst other notable causes that affect kids in underprivileged communities.

Shelled nuts account for a large annual sales volume of over \$500 million in Canada; representing a significant market share, and probably the fastest growing segment of the overall snack category.

According to Chuck Corrigan of C.B. Powell, “The annual projected growth rate of the shelled snack nut segment is a healthy 15-20 per cent, as Canadian consumers continue to recognize the advantages of healthy and tasty snacking.”

Blue Diamond brand whole almonds are only available in the best two grades, which are highly prized for their premium size, flavour and texture. “Flavour variety is exceptionally broad and exciting; from the ever-popular Smokehouse & Roasted Salted to our brand new innovative and very flavourful Spicy Dill Pickle, Salt & Vinegar, and Sriracha. Blue Diamond is also always available as simply Whole Natural for those who love just the taste of the quality almonds,” added Corrigan.

Along with unique great taste and texture Blue Diamond almonds are a powerful source of nutrition...with more riboflavin,

fibre, and vitamin E (an excellent source) than any other tree nut. Just like other snack nuts Blue Diamond almonds are low in saturated & trans-fats, high in protein and calcium.

From The Ground Up is another healthy snack brand that offers a wide range of plant-based snacks. Made with cauliflower and butternut squash, From The Ground Up’s snacking options are not only healthier but also delicious. The brand offers a wide range of healthier for you snacks including chips, tortillas, stalks, pretzels, crackers, snacking crackers and more. There are a variety of flavours to choose from, including Sea Salt, Cheddar, Lime, Nacho and more.

Healthy snacks are becoming increasingly important for consumers and therefore for stores. We see every day that healthy snacking options are no longer exclusive to natural food or health



Blue Diamond has a variety of flavours from Smokehouse and Roasted Salted to the new innovative flavours of Spicy Dill Pickle, Salt & Vinegar and Sriracha.

stores, but more grocery and mass retailers are looking for healthy snacks’ offerings in the market.

In the end the bottom line is that increased home time, family time, as well as leisure time, combined with increased stress and 24/7 access to our pantries have all translated into a rise in snacking, as Canadian consumers reach for healthier options. ●

# Confetti Sweets

## - Totally Awesome Cookies & Cookie Mix

The market for cookies in Canada is vast. In the past five years alone, the cookie market has grown by just over three per cent. What is even more interesting, is that in 2020 during the height of the pandemic, annual cookie sales increased by 4.4 per cent in Canada. It is anticipated that we will see the compound annual growth rate continue to rise.

When it comes to creating the perfect cookies, Kathy Leskow, founder of Confetti Sweets, has pretty much got it down. She started off baking cookies in her home kitchen in Alberta and selling them at her local farmers’ market. But that wasn’t enough, so she expanded to a few more markets.

Soon her home oven, mixer, and pans couldn’t keep up with the new demand she was receiving, so she sought out commercial equipment. Before she knew it, Confetti Sweets was born.

Awesome Cookie Mix that you can buy on shelves and take home to bake yourself.

“Our Totally Awesome Cookie Mix lets you experience the warmth of our freshly baked cookies made with our favourite ingredients right from home with four different varieties.

Our Chocolate chunk mix is not your basic chocolate chip cookie! Ours is filled with semisweet chocolate chunks and packed with Skor™ toffee bits! Our Sugar cookie mix makes for a tender cookie adorned with rainbow sprinkles and vanilla flavouring! They are simply delicious... and addicting! As for our Coconut cookie mix, it creates chewy, delicious cookies that are jam packed with real coconut. This is our most famous cookie! Lastly, our Gingersnap cookie mix produces chewy, classic gingersnaps that burst with sugar and spice.

As for our retail bakery in Sherwood Park, AB, we not only produce our Totally Awesome Cookies and Cookie Mix but have recently expanded our offerings to include cupcakes and cakes as well,” Leskow remarked.

Confetti Sweets’ uses only the best ingredients, and they don’t skimp on them. Their chocolate, their coconut, their sugar: all real, and are always the best they can find.

“We take pride in the quality of our ingredients and will always spend more on them to ensure we are always using high-quality ingredients to get the best flavour characteristics in all of our cookies! Is using higher quality ingredients more expensive? Sometimes. But to us, it’s always worth it,” says Leskow.



**“We take pride in the quality of our ingredients and will always spend more on them to ensure we are always using high-quality ingredients to get the best flavour characteristics in all of our cookies!”**

“Here at Confetti Sweets, we aim for a clean label. We don’t add any preservatives, and we use only the highest quality, premium ingredients in all our products. This is what sets us apart from everyone else, you can taste the difference in our cookies,” says Leskow.

Along with their Totally Awesome Cookies, Confetti Sweets has also grown to offer their Totally

While each cookie mix package makes 16 large cookies, consumers can easily roll out smaller cookies when making them themselves. This way, they can still indulge in a warm, chewy cookie, just in a more health-conscious way. The butter can be easily swapped out with coconut oil, dairy free butter, or nut butter. ●





## REFRIGERATION

By Karen Barr



# KEEPING IT COLD

## Ways to Reduce Costs and Maximize Profits in Refrigeration

For grocery stores, the energy bills for refrigeration alone can represent up to 60 per cent of overall costs. How can grocers reduce their refrigeration costs, and be more energy efficient in the process to maximize their profit?

Excessive condensation, frost, unresponsive temperature settings, large quantities of food expiration, motor defects and high electrical bills may all be signs it is time for refrigeration replacement.

Ron Grabowski, senior product leader - Systems and Krack Solutions, at Hussmann, says "New compressor technologies allow distributed rack systems to gain not only energy efficiency, but also redundancy versus using single

condensing units. Furthermore, high efficiency low temperature scroll compressors, leveraging vapor injection technology, can provide energy efficiency gains over standard compressors."

Grabowski advises "Investing up front in these solutions will reduce refrigeration costs in the future, and more than one compressor in a rack, versus using a single condensing unit, provides even more savings in the event the latter goes down. Distributed rack systems also provide the



option to leverage remote monitoring systems, that can predict the likelihood of equipment failure or leak detection. These solutions reduce the cost of refrigerant, while providing added benefits to reduce refrigerant released into the environment. These types of systems help optimize system performance, thus increasing the energy efficiency resulting in lower operating costs to cool."

Western Refrigeration & Beverage Equipment Inc., supplies a number of items for grocers including, walk-in coolers and walk-in freezers, open refrigerated deli cases, and solid or glass doors for coolers and freezers.

"All equipment we supply to the marketplace have the new refrigerants and hydrocarbons for the gas they use for cooling. We make sure we are complying to all the current legislations to ensure our equipment in the field passes all inspections," says Chris Midbo, territory manager.

As for coils in walk-in box refrigerators Midbo says, "We offer ECM motors. During heating and cooling demands, a high-efficiency ECM can save approximately 25 per cent on annual motor operating costs compared to a PSC motor." Then, he adds other cost saving ideas, like thicker walk-in box panels. "Walk in boxes we supply are a thicker panel than previously supplied, giving a better R value insulation."

There are some smaller investments that really pay off in the long term. Anti-sweat heater (ASH) controls work to

access humidity in the air around refrigerated display cases, and reduces the amount of power the heater requires. These are installed in the frames of the doors, reducing condensation and fog build-up. The latest designs are easy to install and maintain. In just one year, a grocer can earn back the money spent through energy savings.

Installing auto closers to the main insulated fridge door of walk-ins are more money savers. Think about refrigerator door seals and automatic closers, and motion sensors on case lighting as well.

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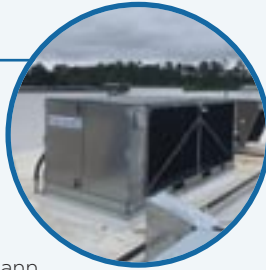


## PRODUCT SHOWCASE

### The latest in refrigeration...

#### Vapor Injection

Proto-Aire EZ, now with vapor injection, is a multi-compressor distributed system, designed for easy installation, serviceability, and maintenance, while reducing total cost of ownership. With vapor injection, customers can increase energy efficiency for low temperature applications, such as walk-in freezers. The EZ is available with up to 177 MBH, with two different platforms available. Available through Hussmann.



#### Countertop Refrigerated Display Cases

Available in curved or round, these display cases are made by Atosa and available from Western Refrigeration & Beverage Equipment Inc. Containing a rear mount compressor, with environmentally friendly refrigerant, a defog feature to ensure glass stays clear, and LED lighting, it also has a magnetic door gasket standard, for an energy efficient door seal.



Refrigerator covers, also called night covers, work to reduce energy. These covers have perforated holes to reduce moisture build-up. "We supply night curtains on open refrigerated cases," says Midbo. "When the location is closed these are pulled down allowing the unit to run less to keep temperature."

"LED lighting is quickly replacing fluorescent lighting in refrigerated display cases. While this transition is primarily due to energy savings and DOE requirements, food retailers are recognizing the value that LEDs can provide in better colour rendering and lighting control, better enabling retailers to create destination departments within the store," says Grabowski. Then he adds, "A simple update to LED lighting can make a noticeable difference in many ways."

Finally, Midbo points out what should be obvious to grocers, but is often left to chance, "Regular maintenance. As equipment becomes dirty and air flow is restricted, the equipment runs inefficiently using more power than required. Preventative maintenance programs save energy costs, and increase the life of the equipment." ●

### "LED LIGHTING IS QUICKLY REPLACING FLUORESCENT LIGHTING IN REFRIGERATED DISPLAY CASES."



## PRODUCT SHOWCASE

### We All Scream for Ice Cream

Granbering KW Low Temperature Reach-in Merchandiser is a ventilated unit that uses electric defrost, LED lighting, and a high efficiency fan. The refrigeration unit minimizes electrical consumption. It's easy to operate, even remotely, eliminating the element of surprise. Perfect for ice cream! Available through ADN Refrigeration LTD.



### Outdoor Service Friendly

CDRH, an outdoor service friendly rack, provides a compact enclosure, with double stacked Emerson or Bitzer compressors, built-in receiver, with a large single electrical enclosure, and a multitude of controllers. Available with or without condensers, solutions range from 2x2 to 2x6 configurations and up to 600 MBH, in refrigeration capacity. CDRH is ideal for large supermarkets. Available through Hussmann.



### Plug and Play

Kysor Warren's (KW) Tango Next is a new refrigerator merchandiser. "It's a medium temperature, reach-in, self contained merchandiser for fresh products," says Cathy Narayan, from ADN Refrigeration LTD. This low consumption model makes it highly efficient, and it comes complete with a maintenance free condenser. "It's a self-contained plug and play unit."



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# Supply Chain Vulnerabilities Revealed

Pivot became the word of the day for at least two years running as businesses changed what they were doing pre-pandemic and adapted to new rules of life. These organizations shifted to e-commerce, social media and direct-to-consumer channels as international markets became inaccessible.

Throw in a flood in BC that closed major supply routes and communities (as well as food-based businesses) to feel the potential of true supply chain breakage.

James Donaldson, CEO of BC Food and Beverage says the impacts of the flood are far from over.

“Having access cut off did a lot more than restrict access of product made in Metro Vancouver and Vancouver Island,” he says. “It also restricted access to inbound ingredients, availability of freight and a massive backlog of shipping containers (products, packaging and equipment) at the ports. All of this led to a surge in freight, packaging and ingredient costs and disruptions in getting access to supplies.”

He notes that because of this, prices go up quickly but take much longer to come back down.

Certainly, the pandemic combined with a flood, have created challenges beyond what was imaginable, but BC’s minister of agriculture and food, Lana Popham, says there have been benefits.

“What we’ve seen happen over the last 2.5 years has heightened consumers’ awareness on the fragility of the food system,” she says. “The amount of fear people had when grocery shelves were bare in the pandemic and when the flood happened that disconnected where food needed to go. The scenario has probably created the

best case for food producers in BC that we’ve ever seen.”

By best case, she’s referring to the consumer awareness and demand for local products, not the hardships producers are facing as mentioned by Donaldson.

“It gives us the opportunity to push programs around domestic consumption,” Popham says. “When I became the minister there was an immediate shift to focusing on the domestic market.”

She adds that this doesn’t mean a move away from international markets, there is simply a need to ensure the security of domestic food systems before expanding other opportunities.

“We need to plan for these disruptions,” she notes. “They help us, in a really tangible way, become more resilient.”

As Donaldson says, the disruptions have highlighted vulnerabilities in BC’s food supply chain.

“And frankly, how much we’ve all taken it for granted,” he says. “What



Lana Popham, BC Minister of Agriculture and Food



James Donaldson, CEO, BC Food and Beverage

**Flooding in BC exposed weaknesses in the province’s supply chain and gave consumers a new reason to root for local.**



## STORE SPOTLIGHT

# FORGING AHEAD IN A PANDEMIC

**T&T Supermarkets opened a new location in 2021.**



In-home cooking took on new relevance during the pandemic and many grocers, like T&T Supermarket, embraced consumers' newfound desire for more culturally-diverse food options and flavours. The stores' ability to provide many Asian food options not found elsewhere, increased the awareness of the brand with new customers while supporting diversity in cooking.

In 1993, Taiwan immigrant Cindy Lee established the first T&T Supermarket stores in Richmond and Burnaby, to make Asian food accessible not just to other immigrants, but to everyone in the Lower Mainland of BC. The brand, then with 17 stores in BC, Alberta and Ontario, was purchased by Loblaw in 2009, with Lee's daughter Tina Lee taking on the CEO role in 2014. Expansion continued, recognizing the brand's growth opportunities as the largest Canadian Asian supermarket chain.

Michael Hei, marketing director with the company says further expansion plans have been hampered in ways common to other retailers during the pandemic.

"Basically, the biggest impact is the delay of equipment shipments," he says. "Of course, new staff hiring became difficult during the pandemic period as well, until now."

Challenges aside, the company opened a new location in Langley, BC in October 2021. The 40,000 square foot space has departments similar to other locations such as produce, seafood, meat, grocery, dairy, frozen, bakery, cashier, e-commerce and kitchen. Kitchen is the in-store, prepared food department where sushi, dim sum, marinated foods and more provide quick and easy lunches and dinners.

"This year, T&T will bring four new stores across Canada," says Hei. "We continue expanding the Asian Fresh across Canada. However, for customers who do not live close to a T&T Supermarket, they still can shop online. We deliver across Canada."

The four new stores include the 38,000 square foot Coquitlam location with high visibility from Highway 1, Sage Hill in Alberta, Toronto and Montreal. All new locations are planned to have the same departments as existing stores.

BCFB is focusing on, is supporting the industry as a community, as there are many opportunities to work more collaboratively. There are 3,000 processors in BC and despite it being very diverse, there are a lot more similarities than differences."

He feels these similarities create resilience and has seen cases of processors working together to support each other around ingredients, shipments, production, co-packing and even donations. There have been winners in the pandemic among BCFB's members. Farming Karma Fruit Co. is one, where fresh, hand-picked, BC grown fruit is turned into sparkling flavoured sodas with no sugar added. The company not only makes delicious drinks, but has also spearheaded their Do Good initiative to recognize individuals who deserve good Karma.

Recently, Big Mountain Foods, a healthy, plant-based foods producer, opened a new 70,000 square foot allergen-free, tofu facility, that is reported to be the first of its kind in the world. The company will be working with Prairie Fava and Protein Industries Canada to create a new line of fava-based products.

Donaldson notes that BC has the advantages of having easy access to the US market, pacific rim markets and port access, but these advantages can quickly be lost when crisis (like the flooding) hits. Popham echoes his sentiments.

"When things are going smoothly, we don't really consider the transportation routes that our food takes, but when disaster hits, we've got these pinch points," she says.

Consumers who buy BC-based products help the provincial food system excel. They vote with their wallets and push retailers to put a greater focus on local food. This type of support will go a long way to ensure the development and sustainability of a rich, resilient local food supply. ●



## HP Juniper, The Authentic Taste of a Gin - Without Alcohol!

Festive & inclusive! HP Juniper is a non-alcoholic spirit derived from gin botanicals, handmade in small batches using locally sourced natural ingredients, including yuzu lemon, organic cucumbers and rosemary. With its low sugar content, it is the perfect spirit for flawless alcohol-free Gin & Tonics and other cocktail recipes – ideal for anyone who's health-conscious but still enjoys the finer things in life.



For more info: [patrick@gmccool.com](mailto:patrick@gmccool.com)

## Duncan Hines Launches Epic Baking Kits



This Spring, Duncan Hines is launching its new EPIC Baking Kits with a Canada-wide "Epic Celebration Day" that is dedicated to celebrating missed milestones.

The new Duncan Hines EPIC Baking Kits include everything you need to create drool-worthy, eye-catching and delicious treats in just a few easy steps. Not only are they so easy to make that Mom won't have to step in, but they will also look like they were baked by a seasoned pro.

The new Duncan Hines EPIC Baking Kits include mix and toppings and will be available in three fun flavours: Cookie Dough Cookie Kit, Cookies & Cream Cookie Kit and S'mores Brownie Kit.

For more information: [selbakri@harbingerideas.com](mailto:selbakri@harbingerideas.com)

## Super Flavours on a Super Food... For Healthy Snack Segment Growth!



Almonds continue to be One of the Top Performing Nut Types. Blue Diamond remains the top quality brand and one of the fastest growing brands in the almond segment. Blue Diamond Growth is being driven by flavours and the 170g Tin Size.

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## Nescafé Introduces Canada's First All-In-One Iced Coffee Sachet

For the 25 per cent of Canadian coffee connoisseurs who prefer their java on the rocks, Nescafé has Introduced new Nescafé Sweet & Creamy Iced Original, the first all-in-one iced coffee sachet available in Canada.

The convenient format of Nescafé Sweet & Creamy Iced Original takes one minute to make, and offers the perfect taste, every time. Each sachet combines rich coffee with the creamer and sugar needed for the perfect cup, so all you need to do is pour one out into your favourite glass, mug or tumbler, fill to the top with cold water and give it a stir! Each box comes with 16 sachets.



"For the Canadians who turn to iced coffee daily as a beverage of choice, accessibility to a convenient, easy solution that also tastes delicious has been an untapped need, until now," says Carm DaSilva, marketing vice-president of Nestlé Coffee Canada. "Our previous success with formulating café-calibre all-in-one coffee solutions has paved the way for the development of new Nescafé Sweet & Creamy Iced Original and we are excited to provide this tasty all-in-one drink to Canadians to support their busy day in a refreshing way."

For more information: <https://www.madewithnestle.ca/nescafe/C3%A9/coffee/sweet-creamy>

## Cascades Enhances Its Line of Eco-Friendly Packaging

Cascades has expanded its eco-friendly packaging line with the addition a 100 per cent recycled PET tray which is also recyclable. Its innovative design makes the tray perfectly compatible with the packaging equipment already used by food processors and retailers.

The 100 per cent recycled PET composition of this tray and its optimized design make it a leading alternative to hard-to-recycle food packaging. By using recycled PET exclusively, Cascades is helping its customers reduce their impact on climate change by 69 per cent. The desire to include this new product in the logic of circular economy was a priority from the outset of its design, and the efforts made in this regard led to meaningful recognition: How2Recycle® has prequalified this tray as widely recyclable in Canada and recyclable in limited communities in the United States. It took three years of research to develop its unique design that allows for minimal use of materials while ensuring optimal rigidity. Its rolled edges reduce the risk of tearing when using shrink-wrap, helping to prevent food waste.

"This latest innovation is the fruit of our continuous efforts to find more sustainable solutions and develop a truly circular economy for food packaging. We would like to thank our early adopter customers for their trust," said Luc Langevin, president and chief operating officer of Cascades Specialty Products Group.



## Starbucks and Nestlé Introduce New Non-Dairy Coffee Enhancers to Bring the Café Experience to Your Home with a Delicious Twist

Starbucks and Nestlé have introduced two new non-dairy additions to its lineup of already popular Starbucks Coffee Enhancers, which provide a delicious, rich and smooth textured taste to your coffee at home, inspired by a range of best-loved Starbucks beverages. The two new flavours – Caramel Macchiato and Hazelnut Latte – are the first dairy-free flavours available in the range.

The development and introduction of the new non-dairy flavours of Starbucks Coffee Enhancers answers the demand for a plant-based alternative among the more than 28 per cent of Canadians who turn to a liquid coffee enhancer to level up their daily cup.



"Last year, Starbucks Coffee at Home introduced Canada to its core range of Coffee Enhancers. The overwhelming success led to numerous inquiries on our social channels requesting a dairy-free alternative, and we are now excited to deliver this product to consumers," says Eryn Pasut, marketing director of beverages at Nestlé Canada. "The two new non-dairy additions to the Starbucks Coffee Enhancers lineup provide the opportunity for more Canadians to become a barista in their own kitchen with the comfort in knowing that they can choose a product to complement their diet and lifestyle."

For more information: <https://www.starbucksathome.com/ca/en-ca/campaign/starbucks-coffee-enhancers>

## Glee Gum Now in Canada

Glee Gum, a pioneer in the natural gum category and leader in the USA is now available in Canada! One hundred per cent natural, non-GMO verified, Vegan certified, Kosher, and Made in Italy. Choose from a variety of delicious all-natural flavours sweetened with sugar-free Xylitol or cane sugar.

For more information: [gleegum.com](http://gleegum.com)



## Freshcap Takes Fan-Favourite Cola-Flavoured Mushroom Gummies to Market

FreshCap has launched their newest fan-favourite product, a cola-flavored mushroom gummy with notes of sweet caramel, vanilla, and spice. Packed with 500mg of fully extracted organic mushroom fruiting body and 145mg of fungal beta-glucan per serving, you can chew these tasty gummies with confidence, knowing that you'll reap the health rewards.

"If you're looking to get some mushrooms into your life, or are tired of popping capsules, we know you'll love our new Mushroom Gummies," says Tegan Shields, co-founder of FreshCap. These cola-flavored gummies put the 'fun' back in fungi, evoking the warm taste of nostalgia with each bite. The gummies won the New Hope Gummy Taste-Off at Natural Products Expo West in March 2022.

In addition to their new gummies, FreshCap offers a wide range of products including powders, capsules, and ready-to-mix stick packs in both individual mushrooms and unique blends for all mushroom lovers. Tony and Tegan, the founders of FreshCap, are passionate not only about their products, but they have become world-renowned educators of functional fungi and have amassed a cult-like following on YouTube with over 14 million views. FreshCap has plans to launch in retail later this year.

For more information: [sfeco@beyondbrands.org](mailto:sfeco@beyondbrands.org)



## advertisers index

AB World Foods Canada	.....35	C.B Powell	.....40	Hussmann Canada Inc	.....47	Nutristar Vitamin Company	.....IBC
ADN Refrigeration Ltd	.....46	CHFA	.....28	Iceberg Cold Storage Ltd.	.....8	Olaf Packaging Group Inc	.....42
Arneg Canada Inc	.....45	Confetti Sweets	.....42	ID Foods Corporation	.....26	Opportunity Traders	.....50
BC Egg Marketing Brand	.....13	Discovery Organics	.....51	Kellogg's Canada	.....15	SIAL Canada	.....IFC
BCFB	.....51	Freybe Gourmet Foods	.....OBC	Kraft Canada	.....3	Siwin Foods	.....37
Bee Maid Honey Ltd.	.....32	Fruit d'Or	.....38	Level Ground Trading Ltd	.....19	Spark's Eggs	.....17
Bodacious Artisan Foods Inc	.....48	Gnu Sante	.....50	Mazee LLC	.....26		
Bosa Foods	.....22	Guru Lucky Snacks	.....7	New Hope Network	.....7		



# The Long Odds of Being a Small Innovative Brand

## Limited Space On-shelf and Unlimited Brands to Choose From

I recently had the opportunity to attend the Canadian Health Food Association (CHFA) and Grocery & Specialty Food West tradeshows in Vancouver and it was really amazing to see the ability of the industry to fill two massive meeting halls with what seemed like an unlimited assortment of products from vitamins to cookies; kombucha to plant-based burgers.

After two days of walking around these events, it really struck me of just how many products are available for Canadian consumers and they are all competing for very limited space on-shelf in-store.

There are really two worlds of brands. In my career in consumer packaged goods I worked for some of the biggest manufacturers in the world. We would launch products twice a year, with the majority of these launches being mere line extensions of existing brands; different flavours, different sizes, products that were designed to meet a specific narrow consumer need.

These launches were normally labelled as "innovation" and there would be a lot of effort and money spent to ensure that as many of these products made it onto the shelf. Over the span of a decade, I witnessed a constant tightening of the retailer's willingness to add these new products as they explained they were finding very little incrementality to the category for the costs incurred by listing these new products in their warehouses and stores.

The result was ever increasing listing fees and stricter enforcement of "one-in-one-out" rules and frustrations grew within the ranks of brand manufacturers seeing these barriers to important elements of their growth plans.

Yes, there were true innovations and those were generally blockbusters that were well supported by the brands, retailers and shoppers alike. Although with the hindsight of now 25 years in this industry, there were really not that many truly innovative products that changed the category and have had the staying power to still be on-shelf today. I can probably count the total number of game changing blockbusters over the past quarter century on just two hands.

On the other end of the spectrum, as was on full display at the CHFA show, is a huge pool of small, up-and-coming and niche brands that are fighting tooth and nail to either get into traditional retail or expand their distribution beyond their local market.

Now don't get me wrong, there are a lot of great products and passionate entrepreneurs in this space but it is just so crowded that it seems to me that the chances of survival, let alone the chances of true financial success seem very, very low. Yes, the next great brand might have been swimming alongside the others at that show but they will have an uphill climb to breakout from the crowded field.

The issue is worse in some categories compared to others.

One particularly crowded space is the plant-based protein products like burgers, sausages and other beef/chicken alternatives. Of course, this category has experienced impressive growth on a percentage basis, but the reality is that it is a relatively small category and there is no real economic model that could support all these brands.

Another category that fits this mold is Kombucha. Again this is one of those categories that is growing quickly and there are so many regional brands with great brand stories; but given the mainly refrigerated nature of the category, gaining national scale and making money will be extremely difficult. Only the strongest will survive and very few will thrive.

One common thread that I have seen amongst these smaller brands that they are driven by passionate entrepreneurs, usually with an intimate connection to the products they have developed. Many of these folks have quit their jobs, mortgaged their home and drained their RRSPs to chase this dream of becoming the next big grocery product. It reminds me a little bit of the hockey system in Canada where players and parents invest so much in chasing the dream when less than 1% of players will ever make it to the big leagues.

This passion is the smaller brands' secret weapon against the big multinationals who are constantly balancing ever changing corporate strategy and the mindset that only chasing the biggest of the big opportunities is worthwhile.

Smaller brands is where true innovation will emerge. Even though plant-based and kombucha are crowded categories today, it was small brands that took the risk and actually developed the market. The industry will support these small brands but only by supporting those with a strong set of fundamentals that will allow them to be on-shelf five or ten years from now.

This means retailers must support the true innovation and have hard discussions with me too launches from both big and small brands. A strange new drink that is the next Kombucha? For sure! Another ghost pepper flavoured BBQ sauce that has a farmers market following? Maybe not.

For all those small brand entrepreneurs. I salute you. The odds are long but your creativity and passion is what will shape the future of our industry. Soldier on. ●



Jeff Doucette is the founder of "Field Agent Canada" an on-demand panel of Canadian shoppers providing a suite of innovative services to Canadian retailers and brands. He can be reached at [jeff.doucette@fieldagentcanada.com](mailto:jeff.doucette@fieldagentcanada.com)

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