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LOCAL AND THEN SOME

**PEPPER'S FOODS EXEMPLIFIES
THE TERM BUY CANADIAN**

*(Clockwise)
Cory Davits,
general manager,
Shannon Davits,
price controller,
Don Way,
store manager and
Scott Zaichkowsky,
grocery manager*

+ WHAT CANADIANS ARE EATING FOR BREAKFAST



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Pepper's Foods exemplifies the term buy Canadian.

Cover Photo credit: Phillip Chin



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Canada

publisher's perspective

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Food Banks Play Crucial Role in Canada



As food inflation continues unabated-now at an average of 3.4 % across Canada-and the economy remains flat, food banks are needed more than ever before. More than 50% of Canadians are one paycheck away from needing to use a food bank. An accident, illness or job loss might be all it takes to push them over the edge. In 2025, they recorded nearly 2.2 million visits in a single month, according to Food Banks Canada, which is double the monthly usage since 2020.

Canada is experiencing a cost-of-living crisis, and for many, food banks have become the solution. Compounding this crisis are global and political shifts that are further straining an already brittle system. Food banks are facing not only record demand but also skyrocketing costs and donations that aren't keeping pace with the need. In 2021, just over half of food banks had to purchase food to meet their clients' needs. Today, that number is nearly 80%. And the price tag has ballooned — from \$209,000 to over \$535,700 annually on average in just three years. For food banks in larger cities, the price tag is in the millions.

Canada's largest food bank is in Montreal. Moisson Montréal has been named one of Canada's Top 10 Most Impactful Food Banks by Charity Intelligence (Ci), an independent organization that evaluates the impact of Canadian charities. At Moisson Montréal, every dollar donated allows for the redistribution of the equivalent of \$15 worth of food, a return that reflects the strength of its food recovery model and the efficiency of its supply chain. Last year, Moisson Montréal recovered and redistributed more than 24 million kilograms of food, enabling its 292 accredited organizations to respond to over one million food assistance requests each month.

In the West, Alberta has the highest use of food banks in Canada, with a significant increase in visits attributed to rising food insecurity and economic pressures. In 2025, Alberta saw a 92.4% increase in food bank visits compared to the previous year, indicating a severe impact of food insecurity on the province's residents.

Grocers are well known for working with local food banks. Loblaw Companies Limited made financial contributions totaling \$1,100,000 to Food Banks Canada, Second Harvest, and Food Banks of Quebec in 2022. Major grocery chains like Loblaw, Sobeys, and Walmart donate surplus food, with Loblaw donating 6.7 million kilograms of food in 2022. Food Banks Canada collaborates with grocery stores to match them with local food banks, recovering around 19.1 million pounds of food from store locations.

These contributions help alleviate food insecurity and support communities in need.

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Bel Group Canada’s Babybel Plant in Sorel-Tracy Achieves Zero Waste to Landfill

Bel Group Canada has announced that its Babybel manufacturing plant in Sorel-Tracy has now achieved zero waste to landfill. This achievement — an important milestone in the agri-food sector — illustrates Bel’s commitment to the circular economy and responsible residual materials management, while strengthening the plant’s positive impact within the local community.

“At Bel, our mission is to enable everyone to access healthier and more sustainable food through a responsible and profitable food growth model. We are proud of the tangible measures we have implemented to reach our zero waste to landfill objective across our Canadian operations,” said Cristine Laforest, CEO, Bel Group Canada.



This result is the culmination of a five-year approach based on three pillars: reduce, valorize and recycle residual materials. Once these steps have been maximized, the remaining fraction is now directed to incineration, generating renewable energy rather than going to landfill. This represents about 15 tonnes per month that are no longer sent to landfill.

FDP Group Acquires UNFI Produce

The FDP Group, a leader in the distribution of ethnic, organic, and conventional produce, has acquired the UNFI Canada Produce division. This represents an exciting new chapter for FDP Group and specifically Fresh Direct Produce as it will provide an even broader selection of fresh, high-quality produce while strengthening its position within the organic market.

Fresh Direct Produce has two Distribution Centres in Western Canada — one in Vancouver, British Columbia and one in Calgary, Alberta.

“This strategic acquisition will further increase our ability to service and meet the needs of our organic customers across Western Canada,” said Adri de Wet, group president. “UNFI Produce has an extensive history, and we will continue to uphold their dedication to the organic category”.

Cove Soda Names Bryan Crowley CEO

Cove Soda has appointed Bryan Crowley as chief executive officer and board member. He is joined by Craig Olikiwicz as chief commercial officer and Joe Lee as chief operating officer, forming a seasoned leadership team to guide Cove’s expansion across North America.

“Functional soda has moved from an emerging trend to a high-growth category that demands creative brand building and disciplined execution,” said Crowley. “Founders John and Ryan MacLellan have built a great-tasting product and an authentic brand with real consumer love. The opportunity now is to scale that foundation thoughtfully and build a business designed for longevity.”

Founded in 2017 by two brothers at a local farmers’ market, Cove Soda has built a devoted following through its fresh approach to functional beverages. Today, Cove is the leading functional soda brand in Canada and is entering the U.S. market at a time when retailers are actively reallocating shelf space toward functional, low-sugar beverage offerings.



L to R: Joe Lee, Bryan Crowley and Craig Olikiwicz.



Fresh St. Market Opens Kitsilano Location

This past January 16th, Fresh St. Market invited the Kitsilano community to celebrate the grand opening of its newest location at 2823 4th Avenue.

Palle Knudsen, vice-president of retail operations at Fresh St. Market says “Since opening our doors in December, we’ve been thrilled by the warm reception from local residents.”

Fresh St. Market Kitsilano serves as a one-stop destination for everything from locally sourced fresh produce and Certified Angus Beef to in-house freshly made sushi daily, its signature hot off the plate cookies, Peak donuts, a burrito bar, carvery and more. The store features the chain’s largest hot bar to date, offering customers an expansive selection of ready-to-eat hot meal options with two seating areas.

The new location has created over 80 new jobs and established partnerships with more than 200 BC producers, strengthening Fresh St. Market’s commitment to supporting local suppliers and the provincial economy.

Two important programs active at the Kitsilano location include FoodMesh and Borrow a Bag.

Fresh St. Market has partnered with FoodMesh since 2020 diverting surplus edible food into the equivalent of nearly three million meals, benefiting charities and individuals across the province.

Customers can also utilize Fresh St. Market’s unique Borrow a Bag program where they are able to get a reusable bag for a refundable deposit of \$2.99, and when they are finished with the bag they can return it to get their deposit back. The bag is laundered and brought back to the store for more customer use in this circular reusable bag system.

“Fresh St. Market has always been about more than just groceries — it’s about building connections and supporting the communities we serve,” added Knudsen. “We’re proud to bring our commitment to quality, local partnerships, and sustainability to the heart of Kitsilano, and we look forward to being a valued part of this vibrant neighbourhood for years to come.”

London Drugs Doubles Retail Footprint in Manitoba with CF Polo Park Store Opening

London Drugs has opened its second store in Winnipeg, representing the doubling of its retail footprint in Manitoba and unveiling its second refreshed concept store in Western Canada.

Situated in the CF Polo Park shopping centre with an address at 1485 Portage Avenue, the new store represents London Drugs’ continued commitment to growth in the province and as retailer prioritizing future-forward shopping experiences.

Covering 29,895 square feet, the store takes residence in a prominent location on the second floor in a unit previously occupied by Zellers. It is the second London Drugs location in Western Canada to launch with a reimagined vision for retail rooted in human-centred design thinking, following London Drugs at The Amazing Brentwood in Burnaby, BC, which opened in May 2025. Custom design in-store stems to a pharmacy division with private consultation rooms and a modernized shopping experience showcasing Canadian-made products.

Under the design project, London Drugs’ CF Polo Park location boasts a seamless flow guided by four principles: assistance, personalization, community, and discovery. The store is equipped with a Connected Health service point for technology education and solutions, pharmacy services, and beauty products with a focus on dermatology. Customers can also bring items including soft plastic packaging and small appliances to the recycling counter in-store to support sustainable practices.



New Data Shows Surging Demand for Plant-Based Foods in Canada

Humane World for Animals is spotlighting new polling data which reveals strong and growing consumer demand for plant-based foods nationwide. According to a recent survey, 54% of Canadians now say they are interested in increasing or actively working to increase their consumption of plant-based foods.

The survey found that 24% of Canadians are “actively trying to eat more plant-based foods” and a further 30% are “interested in increasing” their “consumption of plant-based foods in the future.” This finding, that the majority Canadians want to adopt plant-forward diets, is in line with the plant-based sector’s momentum elsewhere — especially this month, as millions of people around the world are building new plant-based eating habits throughout January. It also represents an increase from other, similar polls in recent years (Neilsen, 2017; Charlebois, Somogyi and Music 2018).



The top driver, cited by 33% of respondents, is reducing food costs—a reflection of current economic realities and the savings associated with switching to plant-based proteins. Compassion for animals (30%) and reducing environmental impact (29%) closely follow, while health considerations such as lowering the risk of chronic disease (23%) and antibiotic resistance (21%) also play a significant role.

The survey also reveals current barriers to plant-based eating, highlighting opportunity areas for policymakers and the food industry. Cost again tops the list, with 45% citing it as a challenge, followed by desires for improvement in taste or texture (36%) and concerns about nutrition (33%). Combined with practical issues of family preferences (30%), limited variety (25%) and lack of cooking skills (19%), the survey indicates a clear need for solutions that are accessible, cost-effective and appealing.

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Canada Packers Appointments

Canada Packers has announced several key leadership appointments as the company continues executing its strategy to become the global standard in sustainable pork.

Anthony Wu joined the company on January 5th as senior vice-president, sales, marketing and optimization. Wu brings 17 years of global operations and commercial leadership from Cargill, most recently serving as Canada business unit lead for McDonald's. He oversees Canada Packers' commercial strategy across all markets, driving revenue growth and maximizing value from every hog processed.

Suzanne Hathaway has also joined as interim chief legal officer and corporate secretary. Hathaway led the legal and governance work for Canada Packers' October 2025 spin-off from Maple Leaf Foods and brings extensive experience in law, governance, and corporate affairs.

Andrew Scuccato will join Canada Packers as senior vice-president, Supply Chain. Scuccato brings more than 20 years of global operations and supply chain leadership from Ferrero, L'Oréal, Mars, and Michelin. He will lead the company's end-to-end supply chain strategy, including manufacturing, planning, logistics, and quality.

"We're building a leadership team that delivers results," said Dennis Organ, president and CEO of Canada Packers.

Make Happy Tummies Expands National Impact Through New Partnerships with Field Agent Canada and Flipp

Make Happy Tummies, the national fundraising platform powered by The Grocery Foundation, has announced two significant national collaborations that will expand its reach and impact in the fight to ensure no child arrives at school hungry.

Field Agent Canada will activate its national shopper network to help drive awareness and donations. Flipp Operations Inc. ("Flipp"), will deliver enhanced digital amplification as the Make Happy Tummies store fundraiser returns to over 1,700 grocery stores beginning January 2026. Throughout the campaign, Field Agent Canada will engage over 320,000 Canadian shoppers to raise awareness and support for Make Happy Tummies both in-store and online.

"Since 2010, Field Agent has been on a mission to change the way the world collects business information and insights around the world. We also want to unleash the power of our vast network to do good. We are pleased to support Make Happy Tummies™ and efforts to nourish children where our agents work and live," says Jeff Doucette, founder of Field Agent Canada.

Since its 2025 rebrand (formerly Toonies for Tummies™), Make Happy Tummies™ has expanded coast-to-coast.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

CHFA NOW

February 20-22, 2026

Vancouver, BC

Vancouver Convention Centre

<https://www.chfanow.ca/>

Grocery & Specialty Food West

April 21-April 22, 2026

Vancouver Convention Centre

Vancouver, BC.

<https://gsfshow.com/>

CPMA

April 28-30, 2026

Toronto Congress Centre

Toronto, ON

https://cpma.ca/home_page

SIAL

April 29-May 1, 2026

Palais des Congrès, Montreal, QC

<https://sialcanada.com/en/>

The Sweets & Snacks Expo

May 19-21, 2026

Las Vegas Convention Center

Las Vegas, NV USA

<https://sweetsandsnacks.com/>

IDDBA

June 7-9, 2026

Orange County Convention Centre

Orlando, FL

<https://www.iddba.org/>

CPG EXPO 2026

April 17-18, 2026

Calgary Stampede Park

BMO Centre, Hall D, Calgary, AB

<https://www.cpgexpo.ca/>

Keurig Dr Pepper Canada Appoints Nault-Cloutier

Keurig Dr Pepper Canada has announced the appointment of Audrey Nault-Cloutier, CHRA, as senior director, human resources.

Nault-Cloutier joined the company in 2015 and has since progressed through a series of senior leadership roles, supporting enterprise-wide people initiatives and contributing to the evolution of the talent and leadership agenda.

Before joining KDP Canada, Nault-Cloutier held senior human resources roles at Bombardier, Cirque du Soleil and Publicist, building a cross-industry career spanning manufacturing, entertainment and marketing services. A Chartered Human Resources Advisor (CRHA), she holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration, specializing in Human Resources, from the Université de Sherbrooke.



Audrey Nault-Cloutier



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Grocery Store Prices Climb Across Canada, Beef and Coffee Leading the Way

Grocery prices are up across Canada, and a new study shows which provinces are feeling it the most at the checkout.

The analysis from money experts Dollarwise analyzed data from Statistics Canada's Consumer Price Index (CPI) reports for May 2025. The analysis compared year-over-year price changes (May 2024 to May 2025) for food products across all Canadian provinces.

Food prices across Canada went up 3.4% between May 2024 and May 2025, data from the Consumer Price Index reveals, meaning Canadian families must dig deeper for their weekly grocery shop.

Top five provinces with greatest increase in food prices were New Brunswick at 3.7%; Newfoundland and Labrador at 3.6%; Ontario at 3.6%; Saskatchewan at 3.5%; and Prince Edward Island at 3.4%.

The figures show which items hurt shoppers most. Fresh or frozen beef led nationwide increases at 12.7% (+\$2.12kg ground beef) in 12 months. Oranges cost 15.8% (+\$0.88) more across Canada.

Looking at April to May 2025 shows more price shocks. Potato prices rose 9.6% (+\$0.2kg) in just four weeks. The one bright spot was for fruit and veg, tomato prices dropped 9.7% (-\$0.17kg) and cucumber prices fell 10.1% (-\$0.05).



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Raven Indigenous Capital Partners Invests in Mitsoh to Accelerate Growth of Canada's #1 Indigenous-Owned Meat Snack Brand

Mitsoh, an Indigenous-owned food company and one of Canada's fastest-growing meat snack brands, has announced a multi-million-dollar investment from Raven Indigenous Capital Partners. The growth financing will expand Mitsoh's manufacturing capacity at its Edmonton production facility, enhance national distribution, and fuel new product innovation across its line of premium meat snacks.

As part of the company's next phase of growth, Mike Fata, a seasoned Canadian food entrepreneur and investor known for scaling Manitoba Harvest into a \$100-million enterprise, has been appointed Mitsoh chairman of the board.

"This investment is about more than capital, it's a commitment to amplifying Indigenous leadership in food," said Sean McCormick, partner at Raven Indigenous Capital Partners. "Mitsoh is redefining what it means to build a modern Indigenous owned food brand, one that celebrates culture, quality, and community while delivering category-leading growth."

Fata added, "Mitsoh is a rare combination of purpose and performance. We're building the future of meat snacks in Canada; authentic, clean-label, and proudly Indigenous-owned. With Raven's support and our talented team, we're ready to take Mitsoh from a regional success to a national household name."



WHAT CANADIANS ARE EATING FOR BREAKFAST

BREAKFAST FOODS

By Mike Yeo



Cracking the Breakfast Code

There's a good reason for the saying; "Breakfast is the most important meal of the day." Breakfast breaks the overnight fast replenishing glucose to boost energy, alertness, and concentration, while also jumpstarting your metabolism for the day ahead. With the on-the-go world of today Canadians have adapted their breakfast routines to match the pace.

Coffee remains the beverage of choice for breakfast, with 52.6% preferring coffee with breakfast. Water is second at 13.2%, followed by tea at 11.4%, juice at 9.2%, and milk

at 8.7%. Even though coffee is the preferred beverage for all generations, Baby Boomers (1946-1966) and the Greatest Generation (1900-1945) are at least twice as likely to prefer having coffee with breakfast than Gen Zs (1997-2005).

Despite milk being the least preferred choice of beverage by Canadians for breakfast, milk is still significant with cereal and grains, as about 54% of daily fluid milk intake is consumed in conjunction with these during breakfast hours.

While milk as a beverage has declined, the consumption of plant-based milk alternatives (like almond or soy) as

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PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

Here are some products from manufacturers that are continually innovating in order to thrive in the breakfast market.

Medallion Milk

Milk Frothers

Our milk frothers are designed to support the powdered format and improve the overall breakfast beverage experience. They help powders mix smoothly and evenly, whether someone is preparing coffee with creamer or a flavoured breakfast drink. From a consumer perspective, frothers add a small moment of quality to a busy morning. People want convenience, but they also want their coffee or breakfast drink to feel enjoyable. Frothers help bridge that gap by improving texture and consistency without adding extra effort.



French Vanilla and Pumpkin Spice Coffee Creamers

Our creamers give consumers flavour options without sacrificing practicality. These additions are designed to fit easily into daily coffee routines while offering the benefits of a shelf stable format, including longer storage, portion control, and consistent taste from cup to cup.

Banana and Chocolate Milk Powders

People can adjust flavour strength, portion size, and frequency of use more easily than with ready to drink products. Familiar flavours like banana and chocolate feel comforting, and the powdered format allows consumers to enjoy them in a way that fits naturally into their routine. We see them used in smoothies and quick breakfast drinks, especially in households looking for variety without extra preparation.



Neal Brothers

Gran Fondo – Light Roast – Whole Bean Coffee

A light roast blend that delivers a vibrant citrusy acidity, with balanced notes of buttery cashew, brown sugar, honey, and a clean smooth finish.

Morning Glory – Medium Dark Roast – Whole Bean Coffee

By blending two separate roasts, this complex product has notes of roasted nut, spice, and black pepper with a hint of acidity for a balanced and smooth finish.

Cranky Pants – Dark Roast – Whole Bean Coffee

A smooth creamy coffee with notes of roasted almond, semi-sweet chocolate and plum.



photo shutterstock.com

well as powdered coffee creamers and powdered milks has increased.

The market for these alternatives is booming with sales for non-dairy, plant-based beverages in Canada expected to grow at a high annual rate (8.4% to 10%) between 2023 and 2028.

Breakfast continues to be an important focus for Medallion Milk because it is where routine, convenience, and reliability matter most. Recently, they have expanded their coffee creamer selection with flavours like French Vanilla and Pumpkin Spice, which are designed to fit easily into everyday morning coffee habits while offering longer shelf life and portion control.

“Our whole and skim milk powders remain among our most popular products, especially for breakfast use. Many households rely on them for coffee, cereal, and smoothies because they can mix only what they need and avoid waste,” says Monica Moskalyk of Medallion Milk.

“Our buttermilk powder is also a widely used ingredient for breakfast pancakes, offering a convenient option without the waste that often comes with liquid buttermilk. We are also seeing growing interest in products like banana milk powder, which adds flavour and variety to breakfast

drinks without changing how people already start their day,” says Moskalyk.

Overall, more households are moving toward pantry-based breakfast options that last longer and help reduce waste. Powdered dairy fits naturally into this shift by offering flexibility and dependability across a range of breakfast moments, from coffee to pancakes.

While approximately 30% consume these products occasionally to regularly, about 40% of Canadians are actively looking to increase their consumption of plant-based foods through their breakfast routines.

In a recent study published by Dalhousie University’s Agri-Food Analytics Lab, a total of 57.2% of Canadians still eat breakfast daily. While 12.8% eat breakfast 5 or 6 times a week and 12.9% eat breakfast 1 to 3 times a week. Only 5.8% never eat breakfast. Among generational groups, Gen Z has the highest rate of breakfast skippers at 9.0% and the lowest rate of daily breakfast consumption at 48.8%. The Greatest Generation has the highest

Here’s What Canadians are Choosing

- 40.6% Toast and bagels
- 37.5% Eggs and a side protein like bacon, ham, or sausages
- 29.7% Cereal and granola
- 23.4% Fruits and oatmeal
- 18.3% Yogurt and smoothies
- 11.8% Pancakes and waffles
- 11.3% Pastries and muffins
- 6.2% Protein shakes or bars
- 6.0% Leftovers from dinner

rate of daily breakfast consumption at 74.8%, while Boomers have the lowest rate of breakfast skippers at 4.1%.

The top choice in Canada for breakfast is toast and bagels at 40.6%. Second down are eggs and a side protein like bacon, ham, or sausages at 37.5%. Cereal and granola sit on the list third at 29.7%. Fruits and oatmeal come fourth at 23.4%, followed by yogurt and smoothies at 18.3%, followed by pancakes and waffles at 11.8%, pastries and muffins at 11.3%, protein shakes or bars at 6.2%, and leftovers from dinner at 6.0%.

Even in an established space like the breakfast market uncertainty always remains. In the face of ongoing supply chain disruptions caused by tariffs and economic uncertainty, brands looking to capitalize on recent breakfast trends will

need to find ways of staying competitive in the crowded space. That said, many consumers source their breakfast at home more often than any other meal, this trend is creating many opportunities for retailers and manufacturers alike. ●



Santa Cause

Honours Welke and Hughes



(Left to right) Jeff Shevchuk, Gary Hughes (Honouree), Ron Welke (Honouree) and Dave Puller

The Calgary Food and Drug Executives annual charity fundraiser, Santa Cause, has once again been a huge success.

This year the honourees were Ron Welke and Gary Hughes.

Welke is the president and CEO of Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers (CFIG). He joined CFIG from Federated Co-op where he worked for 32 years and was previously a board member of Ecobain Naturals and Mother Labs and served on CFIG's board of directors from 2013 to 2022. He was chair of the board from 2019 – 2021. Currently Welke serves on the boards of GS1 Canada Grocery Board, The Grocery Foundation, and Grocery Business Magazine Advisory Council.

All funds raised go to the honouree's chosen charities. Welke's chosen charity is the "Hope's Home"

Hope's Home provides medically inclusive child-care and supportive living services for children with complex medical needs, creating a safe, nurturing environment for all.

Hughes has worked in the grocery industry for over 28 years. In his current role as local development specialist at Sobeys and he has been an invaluable resource and advocate for numerous producers navigating the highly competitive retail landscape.

Hughes's chosen charity is the "Cross Cancer Institute" The Cross Cancer Institute is Alberta's leading comprehensive cancer centre, specializing in advanced treatment, research, and education for patients across Western and Northern Canada.



(L-R) Jim Hamilton, Deb Hamilton, Laura Collaton, Caludia Solorzano



Past Santa Cause honourees- (L-R) Al Hollman, Larry Martin, Jim Garrand, Lyle Waldren, Tim Lalach, Bryan Walton, Ron Welke, Gary Hughes, Jamie Moody, Peter Mattson, Teresa Spinelli



(L-R) Dave Puller, Jeff Shevchuk, Mitch Jacobsen, Michelle Pitt (ACF), Gary Hughes, Leanne Sears, Frank Gallucci

LOCAL AND THEN SOME

Pepper's Foods exemplifies the term Buy Canadian

It's the dream of every small grocer: to offer a store full of locally sourced goods and carve out a niche as a genuine neighbourhood business. But it's quite another thing to overcome the logistics of making this happen.

The owner and management of Pepper's Foods in the suburban community of Cadboro Bay on Vancouver Island have not only overcome the logistics: over the past 50 years they have become a magnet for regional mom and pop food processors — and the envy of similar-sized grocers wanting to take full advantage of the deathless buy local movement.

As any Pepper's shopper will attest, inventory comes and goes quickly, and shelves are constantly being replenished with hundreds of local vendors, which augment national brands. It's all contained in a cozy 4,000 square foot wood building that resembles a ski

chalet. The entrance features three outdoor gazebos, under which produce is displayed. Inside, the aisles are tight, super-clean and richly stocked. Black and gold awnings impart a touch of elegance, and every square inch of space is used discreetly (including the space above the freezers, where back stock is concealed behind curtains).

Complementing the notion that Pepper's Foods is devoted to the local community is its staff: without exception, they are friendly and attentive and frequently help carry groceries to the shoppers' automobiles.

There's even a white board within the store that shoppers are encouraged to write down food wish lists. "And if we can obtain their products, they will be on our shelves," says General Manager Cory Davits. "Moreover, if the products sell, we'll make them permanently available."

Pepper's Foods is a classic old-fashioned independent grocery, but its customers are hardly old-timers; instead, they're a pleasing mix of old and young and in between, with a growing ethnic diversity. Moreover, Pepper's continues to thrive even though big brand grocers are only a short drive away. "Cadboro Bay residents both new and long-term treat Pepper's as if it belongs to

them, and they're not wrong," Davits says. "It helps that we've always been located in the community's village hub alongside other popular venues."

Unlike other retailers that hopped on the buy local movement during the past decade or so, Pepper's Foods was proudly local from when it was launched as Shop Easy by Cadboro Bay resident John Pepper in 1969. Davits, 53, remembers him vividly: "He was a pillar of the community, down to earth, very friendly; and sourcing local produce and meat was second nature to him, at a time when the community was very rural."

Davits's father, John, was a meat cutter who moved his family from Edmonton in the 1980s and got a job at a butchers across the street from Shop Easy. Perhaps inevitably, the two Johns formed a working relationship, and in 1989 John Davits and Pepper's produce manager bought the business, renaming it Pepper's Foods in honour of its founder (an idea that was, typically, suggested by shoppers).

Seven years later, John became the sole owner — by which time Cory Davits had already cut his teeth in grocery, first as a bottle sorter for his father, then moving

up the ranks. "I worked in all of the departments except meat because dad didn't want me to become a meat cutter," he laughs. "After he handed over the daily operations to me, it was the one department I had no experience in — a definite shortcoming, because this department carries lots of beef, lamb, bison and other products, and there's great communication between the customers and meat cutters. So whenever there was a staff shortage, I recruited dad to come in and help!"

Today, the obsession with and ability to source

Pepper's Foods is the heart of adboro Bay Village, Victoria, BC.



(L to R) Scott Zaichkowsky, grocery manager, Don Way, store manager, Shannon Davits, price controller, Cory Davits, general manager.



Pepper's Foods is 100% locally owned in Victoria, BC. The Buy BC logo tells consumers that the products are local.





(L to R) Melissa Murphy, accounts, Carolyn Young, front end manager, Shannon Davits, price controller, Cory Davits, general manager, Don Way, store manager, Tony Brown, meat manager, Scott Zaichkowsky, grocery manager, Dora Spencer deli manager.

regionally produced food remains undiminished. In fact, despite Vancouver Island being a hotbed of suburban development, Davits describes small rural producers as “thriving and incredibly diverse in our neck of the woods. Our procurement strategy has always been to search for local first for everything, from produce and meat to condiments and snacks, and although we constantly run

out of products because items literally fly off the shelves, we’re able to restock almost immediately.”

Procurement is made possible thanks to long-term relationships with local companies. But it’s also common for Davits and staff to stop at roadside stands during commutes and examine the merchandise. “If I see a pop-up stand I’ll always pull over,” he says. “We’ve been able to stock many great foods thanks to that habit.”

The benefits go both ways, with Davits’ enthusiasm in some cases helping regional businesses scale up. Such was the case with The Little Stand, founded by Katherine and James Little, whose humble roadside jam stand near Saanich was ordered



(L to R) Tony Brown, meat manager, Ben Cator, meat cutter.

closed by local authorities 15 years ago. “We heard about this on the news and snapped them up,” Davits says. Today, the couple’s small-batch jams, jellies, chutneys and salsas are highly coveted by Pepper’s shoppers.

In a similar vein, the owners of Victoria-based Pizzeria Prima Strada approached Davits to discuss their goal of getting into the frozen pizza market. “We replied that if they could develop suitable boxes for their pizzas, we would be glad to stock them,” he recalls. “They created appropriate packaging, and today their pizzas, which each cost about \$20, constantly sell out.”

Although he is friendly and approachable, Davits runs a tight ship. “I have to: we’re still a small retailer with the competition breathing down our back. Cleanliness throughout our store is a

huge priority. So too is customer service. My staff of 80 full-time and part-time employees wear uniforms, and without exception they are courteous and helpful. The reality is we can’t beat the big stores with prices, so we have to excel with our human resources. After all, this is what a neighbourhood store should be about.”

Helping to maintain the high standards is Davits’ wife, Shannon (price controller); Store Manager Don Way; Grocery Manager and local items Buyer Scott Zaichkowsky; Produce Manager Cam Dean; Deli Manager Doris Spencer; and

Our procurement strategy has always been to search for local first for everything, from produce and meat to condiments and snacks.



Sam McGrath, grocery supervisor, Pepper’s Foods.

Meat Manager Tony Brown. “If it wasn’t for these key personnel, Pepper’s would not be what it is today,” Davits says.

Not surprisingly, Pepper’s has earned a long string of accolades over the years, including back-to-back National Gold Awards from the CFG in 2004-2005, and a bronze medal from the Canadian Independent Grocer of the Year Awards in 2020 for being one of the top stores under 15,000 square feet in the entire country.

But just like any small operator who has achieved long-term success, Davits is careful with his reply when asked what the foreseeable future holds. “We’re in the midst of rebuilding our customer base after losing some of them to two

years of roundabout construction leading directly to our entrance,” he says. “On the plus side, he continues to benefit from Canadian patriotism thanks to the tariff wars, and we’ve just finished renovating our dairy section to make

our cases more energy efficient.

“Whatever the circumstances, we will continue to serve the great people of Cadboro Bay. We are simply going to continue doing what we’ve always done — only better.” ●



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health and wellness update

Whole Health

VITAMINS & SUPPLEMENTS

by Carly Peters



Well-informed consumers are looking to vitamins and supplements for longevity

When customers come in for vitamins and supplements, they often already know what they want. Consumers are becoming more informed and intentional in their purchases, looking for products that are personalized to support how they want to feel and function every day.

According to Mintel, 86 per cent of Canadian adults have used vitamins, minerals, or supplements in the past year, highlighting their consistent integration into daily routines. This widespread adoption is further driven by Canadians' commitment to preventative healthcare.

What People Want in Wellness

Cloverdale Pharmacy’s Natural Health Manager, Lyle Sunada breaks down some of the most requested products or functions he’s seeing right now:



Lyle Sunada, natural health manager, Cloverdale Pharmacy.

- Berberine has seen significant growth in popularity, particularly for weight management, largely driven by social media influencers capitalizing on the success of GLP-1 drugs like Ozempic. It is often marketed as “Nature’s Ozempic,” which has fuelled consumer interest.
- Other supplements experiencing strong growth due to social media include creatine, collagen, and protein powders — products tied to lifestyle, fitness, and active aging trends.
- Functional mushrooms such as Lion’s Mane, Turkey Tail, and Red Reishi have also gained popularity, driven by demand for natural cognitive support, immune health, and stress and sleep benefits. This trend has been especially strong among aging Baby Boomers and has accelerated since the pandemic.



Aaron Skelton, president & CEO of the Canadian Health Food Association.

“An important shift worth highlighting is the growing role vitamins and supplements play in supporting self-directed health care decisions. As access to primary care remains strained, many Canadians are taking a more proactive approach to managing their day-to-day health,” explains Aaron Skelton, president and CEO of the Canadian Health Food Association (CHFA).
Supplements are increasingly used to help maintain energy, support mobility,

What’s New in Wellness

Gut Health in a Gummy

The probiotic category has experienced strong double-digit growth over recent years, with more consumers understanding how gut health is connected to overall wellness, mood, health, and immunity.
Kombucha is a convenient and tasty option for individuals seeking to improve their gut health. The fermented, functional beverages market in Canada was valued at \$157.8 million USD in 2024 and is expected to grow to \$535.3 million USD by 2033, according to Grand View Research.
Your Preference, a Medicine Hat nano brewery that specializes in fermented beverages, like Kombucha and Water Kefir, a naturally fizzy, dairy-free, probiotic drink, is capitalizing on their functional benefits but in a new format: a gummy.
The brand’s Kombucha Probiotic + Prebiotic Gummies, and Water Kefir Probiotic + Prebiotic Gummies, contain real fermented cultures, are vegan, gluten-free and low in sugar, while offering a higher consistency of active microorganisms per serving in a format that makes it easy to take daily.
“Your Preference Kombucha sits exactly at the intersection of real fermentation heritage and a modern gummy delivery format,” says CEO Bruce Allworth. “They don’t replace kombucha — they extend the category to people who won’t drink it regularly.”



Start Them Young

Kids are not simply little adults. They have specific needs for growth and development, and wellness products should be formulated to match those needs. KidStar Nutrients provides multivitamin and mineral supplements professionally formulated to support active and growing children’s health without sugar or harmful preservatives and ingredients.
“The way we treat our bodies when we are young influences our health as we age. KidStar’s product line is designed to grow with our consumers, making sure families have great quality products that also taste great at every age,” says Caitlyn Vanderhaeghe, president, CEO, and co-founder of the brand.
KidStar’s latest offering can meet the needs of the whole family - an All-in-One Vegan Protein in Vanilla flavour and a reformulated All-in-One Vegan Protein in Chocolate. More than just protein, the powders are jam-packed with plant-based protein, fibre, vegetables, and fruits that can be used not just as a shake but can be mixed in or baked into other foods.



Parents were also asking for a way to provide iron to their littles (and themselves), which prompted the brand to add BioFe Liquid Iron 30mg Sachets to the line-up. The sachets offer up a double-the-dose iron in a convenient, travel-friendly format that tastes great and has no unpleasant side effects like other common iron supplements.



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Heather Hood, owner of Mountain Goodness.

improve sleep, and manage stress, often as part of a prevention-first mindset. And, while this does not replace the health care system, says Skelton, it does complement it by helping Canadians stay well and engaged in their own health.

The customers at Mountain Goodness in Revelstoke, B.C., are certainly taking the lead on their wellness. Owner Heather Hood estimates about one-fifth, or 300 square feet, of the store is dedicated to vitamins and supplements to meet the demand.

“It is a huge part of our business and a big reason why people shop at the store,” she explains, noting they offer a wide variety of products but are seeing a preference for Canadian-owned companies. “People definitely come in looking for products after doing their own research or being

sent with a list from a health care provider.”

She notes while consumers are coming in well-informed, there is still a lot of responsibility being placed on retailers to help people pick the right products just for them.

“So much of our business is based on trust; we have deep conversations with some of our customers who disclose their situations. Our customers know the research we do, which puts their trust in us for the products we make available to them,” says Hood.

This in-store guidance has raised product expectations across the category. CFHA’s Skelton states there is greater scrutiny of vague or exaggerated claims, which has reduced impulse purchasing and increased comparison shopping. “Products that clearly explain what they do, why they work, and who they are for are far more likely to earn trust. Transparency, credibility, and consistency across channels are now central to earning a place in the basket.”

Using simple education to explain benefits can significantly improve confidence at shelf, while other merchandising strategies, such as organizing products by need-state and offering clear good-better-best options, offer a consumer-first approach, says Skelton. “Strong assortments paired with clear guidance can build trust, deepen loyalty, and reinforce the category’s role as a practical, everyday part of healthy living.” ●



Why CHFA NOW Vancouver Is a Must-Attend for Retailers Planning Ahead

Retail success in 2026 will belong to those who plan earlier, think differently, and stay deeply connected to how shoppers are evolving. As wellness continues to expand beyond product claims and into lived experience, retailers are being asked to rethink not just what they stock — but how they inspire, support, and reward their shoppers. CHFA NOW Vancouver, taking place February 20–22 at the Vancouver Convention Centre, is designed to help retailers do exactly that.

This year’s event delivers more than product discovery. It offers retailers early access to trends, practical tools for buying and merchandising, and exclusive experiences that

support smarter decision-making across the year ahead. New for 2026, CHFA NOW Vancouver introduces Deck the Aisles, a show-floor activation created specifically to help retailers plan ahead for one of their most important retail moments: the holiday season.



Aaron Skelton,
president and CEO, CHFA.

Developed in partnership with Hive Retail Solutions, Deck the Aisles gives retailers a first look at Holiday 2026 — well ahead of traditional buying cycles. The activation offers inspiration and insight into seasonal product opportunities and merchandising

strategies that can drive engagement, increase basket size, and differentiate on shelf during a highly competitive period. By previewing what’s coming next, retailers can approach prebooks with greater confidence and clarity, rather than reacting after decisions are already made.

To add even more value, retailers who participate in Deck the Aisles will have the chance to win a \$500 prize pack, including product and merchandising services from Hive Retail Solutions — making this activation as practical as it is inspiring.

Beyond the show floor, CHFA NOW Vancouver also delivers retailer-exclusive education designed to connect trends directly to buying behaviour. On Saturday morning, retailers are invited to attend a dedicated session available

only to retail attendees — an opportunity to step away from the bustle of the floor and focus on what’s shaping the wellness basket today and tomorrow.

Wellness shopping in 2026 is driven less by products and more by how shoppers want to feel. As expectations shift, purchasing decisions are increasingly guided by emotional outcomes such as calm, capability, and reward, rather than by traditional categories or claims. This exclusive session explores the key wellness trends shaping retail through a shopper-led lens, helping retailers better understand what motivates purchasing decisions and how buying behaviour is evolving across categories.

The session includes coffee and breakfast, and the first 100 retailers will receive a gift bag. Seating is first-come, first-served, and breakfast service ends 30 minutes after the session start time — so arriving early is strongly encouraged. Sponsored by Indigo and Bob’s Red Mill, the session offers retailers a valuable blend of insight, hospitality, and exclusivity.

Together, these experiences reflect the broader value of CHFA NOW Vancouver. Over three days, retailers can connect directly with hundreds of brands, distributors, and service providers across natural, organic, specialty, and wellness categories. It’s an efficient, high-impact environment to discover new products, assess innovation, strengthen relationships, and gather insights that inform both near-term buying decisions and long-term strategy.

Just as important is the energy of the event itself. CHFA NOW Vancouver brings together a community focused on growth, collaboration, and the future of wellness retail in Canada. The conversations that happen on the show floor — often unexpected, always relevant — are where new ideas and partnerships take shape.

For retailers looking to stay ahead of shifting shopper expectations, seasonal planning cycles, and category evolution, CHFA NOW Vancouver offers a concentrated opportunity to plan smarter and think bigger. ●

Retailers can register onsite from February 20–22 at the Vancouver Convention Centre. Proof of industry involvement is required.

Learn more at chfanow.ca



Human-Centred Refresh

A ‘DaVinci’ approach energizes London Drug’s New Winnipeg Store

A balancing act: that’s one way to describe the care it takes to refresh a major brick and mortar retail brand. Deviate too far from the norm, and you risk losing customers in droves.

Clint Mahlman, president and COO of London Drugs, understands this intimately, and that’s why he’s so pleased with the reaction to the second Winnipeg London Drugs store that opened in November, which is also the second venue to launch with a human-centred design concept.



Clint Mahlman, president and COO of London Drugs.

The concept, which Mahlman’s colleagues also refer to as a “DaVinci design,” follows four principles: assistance, personalization, community, and discovery. What this translates into at the CF Polo Park shopping centre London Drugs is heightened and improved familiarity.

This is definitely a London Drugs, with its famous logo and aisles of unique goods among popular items intact. But in the same breath, it’s a new and sublime shopping experience. Mahlman

explains, “For example, the electronics department and beauty products are far closer to the pharmacy services than in other stores, since there is a growing crossover of products in all three categories: wristwatches that measure heart rates; dermatological products suitable for post-surgery circumstances, and so forth.

“Locating these departments closer together makes it easier to shop and cross-consult with the professional of each department.”

The cosmetic changes of the DaVinci design are similarly sublime. “Everything is brighter and whiter and less cluttered, but we’ve offset the risk of imparting a clinical appearance by deploying wood treatments throughout,” Mahlman says.

One of London Drugs’ most popular shopping areas — the centre of the store that showcases seasonal items — has been officially named The Square and exhibits what Mahlman describes as “a more boutique-like approach to how the seasonal items are displayed, to reinforce this being reminiscent of an old village square market.”

The Polo Park store features several unique features thanks to its location in the mall: it occupies space that was previously a Zellers and is 29,895 square feet, compared to London Drugs’ usual top-end size of about 25,000 square feet. “Also, a skylight that runs almost the length of the store adds to the fresh appearance of the aisles,” Mahlman says.



Although it’s too early to disclose figures that would verify the success of the DaVinci Design concept, Mahlman says, “Sales in our Polo Park store have far exceeded our expectations. That was the case when we launched our first human-centred design concept store in the Brentwood Mall in Burnaby, B.C. last May, and it enhances our confidence as we plan to apply the concept to a third store in downtown Vancouver, on Hastings Street.”

The balance of old and new London Drug elements as showcased in the Polo Park store is masterful, but the venerable retail chain is equally adept in how it determines if its refresh ideas are on the mark or off-base, before undertaking a full-blown renovation.

“What we do is install test fixtures in some stores and see what the reaction is,” Mahlman explains. “Some elements of our DaVinci Design were tested as far back as 2021. Sometimes we succeed and sometimes we fail, but the failures help in us being able to zero in on customer preferences.”

With CF Polo Park being London Drugs’ 80th store in Western Canada, Mahlman is excited about future opportunities for the brand and its innovative design concept. He concludes, “There’s a social, learning, and sensorial aspect to the retail shopping experience that AI and online cannot approach, and our goal is to make the most of these elements. We look forward to our next phase of growth.” ●

London Drug’s new Winnipeg store at the CF Polo Park shopping centre.



By Brennah Doyle

Colnuck Evolving Thoughtfully

Sustainable Packaging Solutions in Canada

Back in 2003, reusable bags were largely limited to markets like Australia and Japan and were virtually unheard of in North America. Even before sustainability became part of the mainstream conversation, Patricia Salazar, founder and CEO of Colnuck, saw an opportunity to introduce something innovative and forward-thinking to the North American market.

Today, Colnuck is a leading supplier of custom-made reusable bags and sustainable packaging solutions in Canada with over two decades of industry experience. The company specializes in helping businesses implement reusable and eco-friendly alternatives to single-use packaging that align with environmental goals and operational needs.

“What immediately stood out to us was how simple yet powerful the concept was. After digging deeper and doing our research, we realized this wasn’t just a product — it was a smarter way of thinking about everyday consumption,” Salazar shared.



Patricia Salazar,
founder and CEO of Colnuck

Colnuck’s evolution is driven by a commitment to staying responsible and closely connected to customers. Working with partner factories has been a key part of their process, allowing the company to stay informed, and accurate as material innovation evolves.

“Over the years, we’ve continuously researched and adopted new materials that genuinely address environmental concerns while still meeting real-world performance needs,” Salazar says adding, “Our product offering has

also adapted alongside changing market conditions and customer expectations.”

Rather than chasing trends, Colnuck is focused on understanding how their customers actually use their products and where they see value. That insight has guided everything from expanding product range to refining services.

“One of the most important decisions shaping our growth has been investing in long-term partnerships — both with our manufacturing partners and our customers



— which has allowed us to evolve thoughtfully and sustainably over time,” says Salazar.

Above all, outstanding customer service has been central to Colnuck’s success.

“We see it not just as support, but as a partnership — listening closely, responding quickly, and helping our customers find the right solutions for their needs. That level of service builds trust, long-term relationships, and ultimately allows us to grow alongside our customers.”

Colnuck partners with companies to design, source, and deliver high-quality reusable bags and products tailored to their unique applications. Grocery and retail bags, insulated carriers, backpacks, courier bags, and more are created using a broad range of materials. Certified organic cotton, jute, non-woven polypropylene, recycled polyester, rPET and woven PP materials enable businesses to choose solutions that balance sustainability with durability.

By combining innovative, environmentally-conscious materials with exceptional quality and thoughtful customization, Colnuck makes it easy for businesses to adopt more sustainable packaging without sacrificing the look, feel, or effectiveness of their branded solutions. Whether used in retail environments, promotions, events, or everyday customer interactions, our products help companies build stronger brand recognition while reducing reliance on disposable packaging.

“Above all, our growth has been made possible by the strength of our team. From our sales force on the front lines to the administrative team behind the scenes, their dedication and collaboration have allowed us to navigate change successfully.” As a women-owned business, Colnuck is proud of the inclusive, resilient culture they’ve built that continues to drive the company forward. ●

in the bag

WHAT’S NEW & IMPROVED IN THE GROCERY AISLE

Caledon Farms Launches Gently Cooked Dog Food Line in Canada!

The Crump Group Inc. is introducing gently cooked dog food under its Caledon Farms brand, making wholesome fresh frozen meals in-house with real, recognizable ingredients. This launch marks the company’s move beyond treats into food with the same all-natural, fewer ingredient promise. With just three steps from freezer to bowl, Farm & Field and Catch & Coast products make mealtime easier than ever as a complete food or mixer.



“Bringing our new Fresh Frozen meals to market in under ten months is an incredible milestone for The Crump Group and a testament to our team’s agility and collaboration,” said Paul Sproule, president of The Crump Group Inc.

Developed by pet nutritionists, every Caledon Farms gently cooked recipe begins with real, high-quality meat or fish, farm-fresh ingredients, and ancient grains. Each meal is lightly steamed at lower temperatures than traditional kibble to retain natural nutrients, flavour, and moisture. The result is a complete and balanced meal close to its whole food form to support digestion, hydration, and taste while giving pet parents confidence in exactly what they’re feeding every day.

For more information: www.thecrumpgroup.ca

iÖGO nanö Introduces Completely New Yogurt Experience with Bubbles Innovation

Lactalis Canada has launched iÖGO nanö Bubbles — a first of its kind offering in the kids yogurt category featuring playful, mouth-bursting bubble texture in a creamy & smooth yogurt in a 100g cup.

Made with 100% Canadian milk, real fruit and no artificial colours, flavours, or sweeteners, iÖGO nanö Bubbles introduces an innovative snacking option for kids aged 6-12 inspired by the rising popularity of bubble tea style textures among a younger generation of Canadians — both youth and parents. Providing a source of Vitamin D and Calcium, the offering includes three delicious flavours: Orange Cream with Mango Bubbles, Mixed Berries with Strawberry Bubbles, and Banana with Mango Bubbles.

According to Adrienne Pagot-Gérault, general manager, yogurt & cultured division, Lactalis Canada, “This breakthrough innovation expands our iÖGO nanö brand beyond drinkable yogurt into a creamy yogurt cup that reflects shifting consumer expectations for distinctive texture and playful food experiences while maintaining the brand’s high quality and nutritional value.”

For more information, visit www.lactalis.ca

Ritz Expands Canadian Portfolio

Inspired by the growing love for sweet-and-salty flavour combinations, RITZ Drizzled Minis are available in two crave-worthy flavours. RITZ Drizzled Minis Fudge feature a smooth, chocolatey fudge drizzle, while RITZ Drizzled Minis Caramel are finished with a rich caramel flavoured drizzle. Each bite delivers a satisfying balance of flavours — half salty, half sweet, entirely delicious.

“With RITZ Drizzled Minis, we wanted to create the ultimate sweet-and-salty snack, something that feels fun, familiar, and easy to reach for,” said Heidi Chiu, marketing director, savoury at Mondelez Canada. “They’re made for moments when you don’t want to choose between sweet and salty. Ritz Drizzled Minis are the perfect snack to enjoy at home, at work, or even on the go!”



For more information: www.mondelezinternational.com

Cavendish Farms Launches Two Exciting Twists on Familiar Classics

Cavendish Farms has introduced two new products, both offering exciting new twists on old favourites: Quick Crisp Crinkle Chips and FlavourCrisp Crinkle Fries.

Snack time will never be the same with Cavendish Farms’ Quick Crisp Crinkle Chips, a hot new take on potato chips. Made to cook in just five minutes in the air fryer, and perfect for dipping, hosting, and solo snacking, the Crinkle Chips join the game-changing Quick Crisp lineup of products.

“Canadians are snacking more than ever and they’re looking for higher quality ways to satisfy those cravings,” says Julie Levesque, vice-president of marketing, Cavendish Farms. “Our new, hot crinkle chips are a perfect addition to our Quick Crisp lineup. Quick Crisp products have brought an influx of new shoppers to the freezer aisle, and we’re confident these new Crinkle Chips will excite Canadians and bring even more new shoppers to the category.”

Hot chips aren’t the only twist from Cavendish Farms. The company is launching a new take on Canada’s favourite fry with its new FlavourCrisp Crinkle Fries. Wrapped in Cavendish Farms’ mouth-watering FlavourCrisp batter, these new, crispy crinkled fries were made to help Canadians enjoy the buzzy restaurant cut at home.



For more information: www.cavendishfarms.com

Carbone's Classic Vodka Sauce Arrives in Canada

The wait is over for Canadian fans of New York's legendary Carbone restaurant. The iconic eatery's Classic Vodka Sauce, the recipe behind their most sought-after pasta dish, will be available at select retailers across Canada from March 2026.



Created by award-winning chefs Mario Carbone and Rich Torrisi, this isn't your average jarred sauce. Each batch is slow cooked with imported Italian tomatoes grown in volcanic soil and hand-picked at peak ripeness, then blended with 100% pure non-GMO olive oil, garlic, and vodka. The tomatoes are packed in basil-lined stainless-steel cans, never plastic drums a detail that speaks to the brand's commitment to quality.

The sauce comes intentionally cream-free, allowing home cooks to add their own heavy cream and butter for the freshest possible finish. It's a simple invitation to participate in the final touch of a restaurant-calibre dish, achievable in minutes on any weeknight.

With hand-stripped basil to preserve its aromatic oils and a carefully balanced blend of premium ingredients, Carbone's Classic Vodka Sauce delivers the depth of flavour that made the Greenwich Village restaurant a culinary destination.

For more information: ppitzey@terrafoods.ca

Small Footprint, Big Impact: Ishida Canada Launches New WM-MICRO Automated Tabletop Wrapper

Ishida Canada Inc., a leader in innovative food equipment, wrapping systems, and weighing scales, announced the upcoming launch of its state-of-the-art WM-MICRO Tabletop Wrapper.



Ideal for grocery stores and food processing facilities, the WM-MICRO transforms small spaces into high-productivity hubs. This all-in-one system seamlessly integrates weighing, wrapping, and labelling functions, eliminating the inefficiencies of manual processes and bulky machinery. At just 80 cm wide — smaller than a traditional hand wrap station — the WM-MICRO easily fits into backrooms or on worktables, offering a complete food packaging solution at half the cost of fully automatic wrappers.

For more information: sales@ishidacanada.ca

Traditional Medicinals Expands Wellness Offerings

Traditional Medicinals has launched two new organic herbal teas: Rosy Mood and Stress Ease Calm. As the brand celebrates 50 years of botanical innovation, these new blends represent both a continued commitment to holistic well-being and Traditional Medicinals' most recent entry into the mood support category. Both teas are Traditional Medicinals' first Fair for Life certified offerings, supporting ethical sourcing and sustainability at every step.



Formulated to support the emotional and lifestyle needs of today's consumers, Rosy Mood and Stress Ease Calm deliver plant-powered rituals that provide accessible, botanical solutions for everyday well-being. Rosy Mood inspires joy and uplifts mood, while Stress Ease Calm supports intentional unwinding and builds resilience to stress, two essentials for modern living.

For more information: www.traditionalmedicinals.com

Nature's Path Love Crunch Granola Goes Gluten-Free with a Strawberry Cheesecake Twist

Nature's Path is expanding its premium organic Love Crunch Granola line to include a crave-worthy gluten free offering with the launch of Love Crunch Gluten Free Strawberry Cheesecake.

As more consumers embrace gluten-free lifestyles — whether due to dietary needs or personal wellness goals, Nature's Path is making it easier for everyone to indulge in its fan-favourite Love Crunch granola. Inspired by the classic dessert, Love Crunch Gluten Free Strawberry Cheesecake combines the taste of sweet strawberries and tangy cheesecake with an addicting crunch for gluten-free eaters and granola fans to enjoy, either as a decadent breakfast or crave-worthy snack. Each serving also offers 51g of whole grains.

Crafted with organic whole grain rolled oats and creamy cashew butter, the irresistible crunchy clusters are topped with Fair Trade white chocolate chunks and sweet strawberries for an indulgent finish. It's gluten-free granola that truly takes the cake.



For more information: www.naturespath.com



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