

western

MARCH/APRIL 2026

grocer

Serving the Grocery Industry Since 1916

PROTEIN CRAZE

PROTEIN IS SHOWING UP IN EVERY AISLE AS CONSUMERS WANT IT FOR EVERY DAY



MORE IN YOUR POUR

GOING BEYOND
QUENCHING THIRST

SUSTAINABILITY REMAINS A TOP PRIORITY

FIRE UP THE GRILL

MAKING THE MOST OF
BARBECUE SEASON



NEW

A creamy, chocolatey peanut experience



TRY NEW FERRERO ROCHER® CHOCOLATE SQUARES



SHAKE it your way, Eh!

Try something different



Orangina ZERO sugar added



The best thing that can happen to an orange

In this Issue

14 Sustainability Remains a Top Priority

But sustainability is really part of a much larger goal: ESG

22 More in Your Pour

All beverages, whether flat or fizzy, are going beyond quenching thirst.

37 Stock Up the Freezer

It's a made-in-Canada summer in the ice cream and frozen novelties section.

46 Fire Up the Season

How Canadian grocers can make the most of barbecue season.

55 From Field to Shelf

Saskatchewan's growing grocery market.

HEALTH & WELLNESS UPDATE

33 Fromage Protein Pops Captivates at CHFA Now Vancouver 2026

Crowned CHFA Launch Pad champion.

Departments

6 MARKET UPDATE

12 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

60 IN THE BAG

14



22

46



37



28

On Our Cover

28 For the Gains

Protein is showing up in every aisle as consumers want it for every day.

Cover Photo credit: shutterstock.com

publisher's perspective

Single-Use Plastics Ban to Remain in Effect



On January 30, 2026, the Federal Court of Appeal upheld the federal government's decision to list "plastic manufactured items" as toxic under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA). As a result of the unanimous decision, Canada's Single-use Plastics Prohibition Regulations remains in effect, maintaining the ban on the manufacture and sale of single-use plastic items.

Single-use plastics, such as bags, straws, bottles, and food packaging, are designed for brief use but can take decades or even centuries to decompose. For example, a plastic bag may take 10-20 years, a bottle roughly 450 years, and Styrofoam may never fully biodegrade. During this time, plastics fragment into microplastics, which infiltrate soil, waterways, and oceans, accumulating in ecosystems and forming massive garbage patches. These microplastics are ingested by marine life, from plankton to fish, and eventually enter the human food chain.

The decision provides long-awaited clarity by confirming that the legal foundation for the federal plastics ban is reasonable and will remain in force.

The legal challenge originally brought forward by the Responsible Plastic Use Coalition (RPUC), and the subsequent appeal, contributed to a period of uncertainty for businesses across the packaging value chain making material and investment decisions over the past several years.

According to the Paper and Paperboard Packaging Environmental Council, there is now clarity for both businesses and policymakers moving forward.

During this period, several federal initiatives under the government's Zero Plastic Waste Agenda, including proposals for a pollution prevention planning notice for primary food plastic packaging and potential recycled content rules, were on hold pending the outcome of the appeal.

With the Court's decision, the uncertainty that had placed these initiatives on hold has now been resolved. And while no new regulatory measures have been announced, the ruling paves the way for potential new policies or initiatives under the federal government's broader plastics and waste reduction agenda.

Industry responses to the Court's decision have varied across the packaging and plastics value chain.

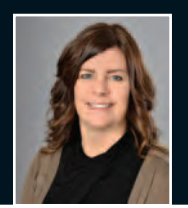
The Responsible Plastic Use Coalition (RPUC), who launched the legal challenge against the federal government, indicated that it is reviewing the ruling and considering further legal options.

While stakeholders across the packaging and plastics value chain seek to protect their sector's interests as policy frameworks evolve, the Court's ruling is clear, which raises a broader question for the sector: rather than pursuing further litigation, would it be more constructive to direct resources toward improving recycling systems, designing for circularity, and innovating how materials are made and managed?

Frank Yeo, Publisher & Editor



Robin Bradley
Associate Publisher & National Account Manager
rbradley@mercurypublications.ca



Melanie Houssin
Western Account Manager
mhoussin@mercurypublications.ca



Publisher & Editor, Frank Yeo; Associate Publisher & National Account Manager, Robin Bradley; Western Account Manager, Melanie Houssin; Editorial Production Coordinator: Brennah Doyle; Advertising Production Manager, Marsha Coombe; Creative Manager, Sarra Burton; Circulation Department e-mail: jmartin@mercurypublications.ca; Advertising Consultants: David Bastable, Loren Fox, Edna Saito. Publisher: Western Grocer Magazine is published bi-monthly by Mercury Publications Limited Head Office: 675 Berry Street, Unit L, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3H 1A7 Tel: (204) 954-2085 Fax: (204) 954-2057 www.mercury.mb.ca • e-mail: fyeo@mercurypublications.ca Associated Publications: C-Store Canada Magazine, Western Hotelier, Western Restaurant News, Western Food Processor and Bar & Beverage Business. Circulation: Western Grocer Magazine serves the grocery and allied non-food industries. Readership includes distributors, brokers, manufacturers, wholesalers, independent grocers, food processors, bakeries, supermarkets, convenience stores, principal food service outlets, food researchers and consultants, government, voluntary groups and co-ops in the four Western Canadian provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Northern Canada and the Northwest Ontario area. Subscription Rates: \$45.00 for one year, \$63.00 for two years, \$93.00 for three years; \$5.00 for single copy, plus 7% GST. Canadian rates only. Advertising: Deadline is 25th of the first month. Editorial: The contents of this publication may not be reproduced in whole or in part without written consent of publisher. Photo credits not given unless requested in writing along with photo submission.

Publication Mail Agreement No: 40062509. ISSN# 0705-906X. Return Undeliverable Canadian addresses to Circulation Dept. at 675 Berry Street, Unit L, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3H 1A7 e-mail: jmartin@mercurypublications.ca Printed in Canada

Funded by the Government of Canada / Financé par le gouvernement du Canada **Canada**



Equifruit Helps Pattison Food Group Elevate Banana Offering with Organic Fairtrade

Pattison Food Group has transitioned its organic banana program supplier to Equifruit, a proudly Canadian and female-owned company.

Equifruit is North America's leading Fairtrade-certified banana importer, working exclusively with farmers approved by Fairtrade International, an organization recognized as one of the most trusted sustainability labels committed to making trade fairer for the people who grow our food. Through this partnership, Pattison Food Group and Equifruit will help support sustainable incomes and improved working conditions for banana growers in Latin America.

"Switching to Equifruit organic bananas is a natural fit for Pattison Food Group," said Justin McGregor, general manager, produce & bulk at Pattison Food Group. "They share our values of fairness, transparency and collaboration that benefits everyone, from growers to shoppers."

In addition to promoting fairer wages and safer working conditions, the Fairtrade Standards prohibit child labour and provide farmers with support to reduce their environmental impact. A Fairtrade Premium is also paid directly to growers, which provides community funding for projects such as education programs, clean water facilities, and housing improvements.

Group Bel Canada Partners with Logiag to Support the Decarbonization of Canadian Dairy Production

Group Bel Canada, a major food player offering healthy dairy, fruit and vegetable products and a leader in the healthy snack market, today announced the implementation of a strategic partnership with Logiag, an agricultural technology and agri-environmental consulting firm, aimed at supporting the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions associated with dairy production in Canada. This long-term partnership is supported by a \$3.7 million investment over five years from Group Bel Canada to provide concrete support to dairy farms in adopting sustainable and measurable practices, contributing to the responsible evolution of the Canadian dairy sector.

True to its mission of providing healthier and more responsible food for all, Bel places the reduction of its environmental footprint at the heart of its strategy. Bel Group has set ambitious decarbonization targets across its entire value chain, including a 25% reduction in indirect greenhouse gas emissions and sourcing 100% of its milk and fruit from farms transitioning to regenerative agriculture by 2030. Upstream dairy production represents approximately 35% of the company's total emissions, making it a priority lever for action. To contribute concretely to these objectives, Group Bel Canada has partnered with Logiag and its Dairy Farms program.

This initiative is based on a holistic and distinctive approach, working directly with a cohort of 34 dairy farms in Quebec and across the dairy value chain. It combines on-farm greenhouse gas measurement, the development of personalized roadmaps and the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices to generate measurable, long-term impacts for producers.

The resulting emission reductions are quantified and verified using an internationally recognized methodology validated by SustainCERT, ensuring the credibility and robustness of the results.

As part of this initiative, Group Bel Canada aims to reduce carbon emissions from its upstream dairy supply dedicated to Mini Babybel production at its Sorel-Tracy plant by approximately 30%. This represents a reduction of 12,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions by 2031 — equivalent to the average annual emissions of approximately 10,000 cars.



LEVEL GROUND COFFEE APPOINTS BEN MILLER

Level Ground is pleased to announce the appointment of Ben Miller as director of business development & market expansion.

Miller steps into the role with more than 10 years of experience across business development, marketing, and sales. In this expanded position, he will lead sales, marketing, and all business development initiatives, supporting Level Ground's continued growth across Canada and strengthening partnerships within the grocery and specialty coffee channels.

Since joining Level Ground, Miller has played a key role in driving strategic growth initiatives, combining data-informed planning with hands-on execution to scale, expand distribution, and deepen customer relationships. His leadership will build on the strong foundation established over the company's 29-year history.

Prior to Level Ground, Miller held leadership roles across both B2B and B2C environments, developing expertise in revenue growth, channel strategy, and brand expansion.



Ben Miller



FCL Reports Strong Year and Returns Patronage, Despite Impacts of Economic Uncertainty

On Mar. 1, 2026, delegates representing more than 150 local Co-ops across Western Canada gathered at Federated Co-operatives Limited's (FCL) 97th Annual Meeting.

While addressing the delegation, CEO Heather Ryan commended the Co-operative Retailing System (CRS) for its resilience and commitment to its co-operatives values, during times of uncertainty in the world. Ryan further praised the CRS and how together, it remained steadfast in making a difference in the lives of members and the communities it proudly serves across Western Canada.

"2025 brought challenges and instability beyond our control. But I prefer to talk about what we've been able to accomplish and how at Co-op, we're built for this — built by our members, to support our members, their families and the communities we call home," said Heather Ryan, FCL CEO. "Despite the economic uncertainty, we stood together as Canadians, but more importantly, as a co-operative grounded in our values-based approach to business. With that, we are proud to return \$261 million in patronage to local Co-ops and Co-op members across Western Canada."

At the end of fiscal year, FCL achieved total sales of \$11.7 billion and \$462 million in net earnings, returning \$261 million in patronage to local Co-ops. Over the past five years, FCL has given back nearly \$1.6 billion to local Co-ops, resulting in consistent support of more than 650 communities across Western Canada.

The 97th Annual Meeting marked Paul Hames' first year, as president/chair of FCL's Board of Directors. Together, the membership reviewed the 2025 financial results and discussed the current and future state of the CRS.

"In my first year as president/board chair, I've been honoured to witness first-hand the strength of FCL and the Co-operative Retailing System," said Paul Hames, president/board chair of FCL. "Building off our core values and deep commitment to community, we must listen, learn and lead together, as the CRS continues to evolve. I'm optimistic about where we're going — not because the path is easy, but because I believe in the people who are taking us there."

The company's values-based approach to business has always centred on what matters most to local Co-ops, their members and communities. As it looks toward the future, FCL plans to further that commitment in providing value to the CRS and to build on its legacy as a truly local and proudly Canadian co-operative.



Discovery Organics is an independent and BC owned importer/wholesaler of certified organic produce, serving Western Canada since 1998.

With over 400 certified organic fresh produce items, Discovery Organics can help retailers increase sales in the industry's strongest growth areas - organic and fair trade.



Canada Packers Appoints Amy Hastings as SVP, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary

Canada Packers is pleased to announce the appointment of Amy Hastings as senior vice-president, general counsel and corporate secretary, effective March 23rd, as the company continues executing its strategy to become the global standard in sustainable pork.



Amy Hastings

Hastings brings more than 15 years of experience leading legal and governance functions for publicly listed companies. She most recently served as General Counsel and founder of Ionik Corporation, where she led the company's go-public transaction and oversaw enterprise-wide legal operations across a portfolio of

North American subsidiaries. Earlier in her career, she held senior legal roles at Perk Inc. and RhythmOne plc and began her legal career at Wildeboer Dellece LLP and Gowling WLG.

"Amy's blend of practical legal experience and business savvy is an incredible combination," said Dennis Organ, president and CEO of Canada Packers. "She is a great addition to our leadership team and I'm looking forward to the contributions she will make."

Italpasta Wins 1st Place for Best Pasta at the 2026 Chatelaine Pantry Awards

Italpasta's Artisan Radiatori has been awarded 1st Place in the Best Pasta category at the 2026 Chatelaine Pantry Awards, an esteemed recognition program celebrating the most exceptional food products available to Canadian consumers.

In addition to Italpasta's win, two of its partner brands also achieved top honours: Mutti was awarded 1st Place for Best Canned Tomatoes, and Sibilla earned 1st Place for Best Sparkling Water, further highlighting the strength and quality of Italpasta's extended family of premium food brands.

Selected through an extensive tasting and evaluation process conducted by Chatelaine's editorial judging panel, the win underscores Italpasta's commitment to crafting high-quality pasta rooted in authentic Italian tradition.

"For nearly four decades, Italpasta has been dedicated to bringing Canadians the very best pasta made with premium 100% Canadian durum wheat and traditional methods. Being recognized by the Chatelaine Pantry Awards is a tremendous honour and a testament to the passion behind our products," said Angelo Boras, executive vice-president, Italpasta Ltd.



Coffee Consumption Remained Strong in Canada Despite Rising Prices

Coffee remained Canada's most-consumed beverage in 2025, with 71% of Canadians reporting they drank a coffee beverage yesterday, according to the Coffee Association of Canada's Canadian Coffee Drinking Trends study.

Despite economic pressures and rising food and beverage costs, coffee continued to be a daily staple. Consumers are adjusting how and where they purchase their coffee — cutting back on out-of-home spending, stocking up when it's on sale, and trying new brands at home — rather than giving it up altogether.



"Even in challenging economic times, coffee continues to play an important role in Canadians' daily routines," said Robert Carter, president of the Coffee Association of Canada. "What we're seeing isn't a decline in consumption, but a shift in behaviour as consumers adapt to higher prices and seek value."

Traditional coffee remains the most popular choice, with 45% of Canadians consuming a traditional coffee beverage yesterday, followed by 29% enjoying espresso-based drinks. Eight in 10 Canadians noticed coffee prices rising, and more than half report cutting back on non-essential spending, including socializing less.

"These trends highlight the resilience of coffee demand in Canada," added Carter. "Consumers are still choosing coffee, but in new ways — buying on sale, experimenting at home, and making thoughtful choices about where they spend their money."

All data is from Winter 2025 and reflects adult Canadians aged 18+, from the Coffee Association of Canada's proprietary Canadian Coffee Drinking Trends study.

Previous years' infographics, back to 2016, can be found on the CAC website: <https://coffeeassoc.com/coffee-facts/>.

Okanagan Frozen Dough Appoints Sandra McDonough National Director of Sales



McDonough brings extensive food industry experience and a proven record of driving growth, building strong customer partnerships, and leading high-performing teams. In her new role, she will oversee national sales strategy and support the continued expansion of Okanagan Frozen Dough across retail and foodservice channels.

Her leadership, market expertise, and collaborative approach align with our commitment to providing only the absolute best quality traditional and innovative frozen dough products along with unbeatable customer service.



Sandra McDonough

The Little Potato Company Marks 30 Years of Innovation with Anniversary Logo Unveiling

The Little Potato Company, the number one little potato brand in North America, is kicking off a year-long 30th anniversary celebration with the unveiling of a new anniversary logo. The visual mark reflects the company's growth over three decades and its ongoing mission to Feed the World, Better.

Since 1996, The Little Potato Company has purposefully grown little potatoes with big flavour and made them easier to prepare and enjoy, so families can spend less time in the kitchen and more time around the table creating little moments of happiness together.



What started as a father-and-daughter operation on a one-acre plot of land in Edmonton, has grown into a trusted North American brand, known for innovation, quality, long-standing relationships with family farmers, and a commitment to sustainability.

Throughout 2026, the new 30th anniversary logo (found here) will appear across company materials, marketing, and select touchpoints as a visual marker of the milestone year. Additional activations are planned for later in the year, including social and email campaigns, employee events, and celebrations with partners.

MEET YOUR SAUCE'S NEW BEST FRIEND



1st PLACE
Best Pasta,
Chatelaine Pantry
Awards 2026

Crafted in Canada with only 100% Canadian durum wheat and bronze-cut for that perfect bite, **Italpasta Artisan** is where tradition meets taste – with no shortcuts, no compromises – just pasta with big personality.

IT'S NOT JUST PASTA. IT'S 

www.italpasta.com 

Whitney Douglas Takes on Role of Vice-President at Living Alchemy



Whitney Douglas

Living Alchemy has announced that Whitney Douglas has taken on a new role of vice-president of the company.

“This brand has long represented what I believe the future of wellness looks like: reverent to nature, rooted in fermentation and wisdom traditions, and uncompromising in integrity. In this role, I’ll be supporting vision, growth, and strategy across sales and brand — helping steward Living Alchemy

into its next chapter while staying true to its soul. Grateful for the trust, the team, and the work ahead. This feels deeply aligned — and just the beginning,” says Douglas.

Nortera Appoints Gabrielle Fallu as Senior Director of Corporate Communications and Government Relations

Nortera has appointed Gabrielle Fallu to the position of senior director of corporate communications and government relations.



Gabrielle Fallu

In this new strategic role, Fallu will be responsible for external communications and strengthening relationships with government bodies and industry partners. The creation of this key position reflects Nortera’s commitment to consolidating its leadership within the agrifood landscape to support local production and food sovereignty in Canada.

Drawing on her background in political science and journalism, Fallu combines strategic vision, communication rigor, and a deep understanding of public and media issues. Before joining Nortera, she spent nearly seven years at Exceldor Cooperative where she managed public and government relations in addition to serving on several strategic industry committees.



The Proverbial...
LUMP O' COAL™
The Ultimate Novelty Stocking Stuffer!
780-910-5032 • www.lumpcoal.ca



Canadian Retailers Must Strengthen Trust and Personalization with Tech to Win Cost-Conscious Consumers, SOTI Research Finds

SOTI, a proven innovator and industry leader for simplifying business mobility solutions, has released new Canadian insights from its annual global research report, “Retail Tech Assessment: Opportunities for Enhanced Consumer Experiences.”

Based on responses from 13,000 consumers across 11 countries, including 1,000 Canadian respondents, the report outlines how technology, economic pressures and rising concerns about data security are reshaping Canadians’ shopping choices.

With inflation and household spending pressures still elevated, Canadian consumers are more selective and pragmatic in how they shop. They’re actively comparing prices across channels, prioritizing value-driven loyalty programs, and paying closer attention to where and how products are made.

Research found that economic factors have influenced consumers ability to purchase their usual items in the past 12 months. Canada (64%) is among the countries that feel this impact most strongly, alongside the U.S. (69%), Mexico (65%), Australia (63%) and the UK (62%), compared to 50% in Germany, Italy and Sweden and 49% in the Netherlands.

Canadians are reducing impulse or non-essential purchases (43%), and buying local remains a strong consideration, with 31% checking product origin, and 38% actively choosing to buy Canadian-made goods to support the Canadian economy.

“Canadians are navigating a cost-of-living crunch by being smarter with how and where they shop,” said Shash Anand, SVP of product strategy at SOTI. “They’re prioritizing price and increasingly supporting local brands that align with their values. Retailers who leverage technology to improve operational efficiency, whether through smarter inventory management, dynamic pricing or personalized loyalty offers, will be better positioned to maintain trust and customer retention even in a tighter economy.”

While Canadian consumers increasingly use digital tools to shop, they see room for retailers to make these experiences more personal and connected. Fifty per cent (50%) of Canadians choose retailers that use technology to make the in-store experience more personalized, while 55% choose online retailers for the same experience. Forty-eight per cent (48%) of Canadians use retailer apps for loyalty points, faster checkout or exclusive offers.

Anuga FoodTec 2027 Reports Early Booking Record – Two Thirds of the Area Already Allotted

Anuga FoodTec is sending a strong signal to the international food and beverage industries: two thirds of the exhibition area for 2027 have already been allotted. Never before have we received so many area reservations so long before the start of the event. The booking status marks a peak and underlines the great industry confidence in the leading international trade fair.

Around 75 per cent of applications up to now involve companies that already exhibited in 2024. According to the status today, a total of more than two thirds of the exhibition area for 2027 has been allotted. This extraordinarily early and broad commitment sends a clear signal of quality to the market and improves planning security for all participants.



The circle of exhibitors to date includes, among others, Handtmann, Vemag, JBT, Marel, Fortifi, Seydelmann, GEA, Krones, Alpma, ProXES, Florin, Ulma, Aetna, Duravac, Multivac, Weber, Siemens, G. Mondini, IMA, ifm Beckhoff, Stäubli, Schneider Electric, CSB-System, Regal Rexnord, Forbo Siegling, Westfalia, Movexx and Aicon XRay. New are, among others, manufacturers like Epson, Sticomax, Schindler & Wagner, BEMA, Borncut and Gulftech. Returning are, among others, Ecolan, Bizerba, Ecolab, PDT Group, Air Liquide and Grote.

“We are very pleased at the strong interest and the broad and extraordinarily early commitment of the exhibitors. In connection with the high returnee rate, especially on the part of the global key players, this impressively underlines the innovation power of the industry and the importance of Anuga FoodTec as a leading international trade fair”, notes Roland Thiemann, director of Anuga FoodTec.

Bee Maid Honey Appoints Paul Remillard as Chief Executive Officer

Bee Maid Honey Limited has appointed Paul Remillard as its new chief executive officer. Remillard succeeds Guy Chartier, who previously announced his retirement. The appointment follows a thorough CEO selection process led by Bee Maid Honey’s Board of Directors to ensure the cooperative’s continued strength and long-term success.



Paul Remillard

“Paul is a proven executive leader with deep operational expertise and a strong track record of aligning strategy with execution,” said Danielle Eastman, chair of Bee Maid Honey’s Board of Directors. “His values and leadership philosophy align strongly with Bee Maid’s cooperative foundation, and we are confident he will guide the organization forward with integrity and a focus on sustainable growth for our members.”

Remillard brings more than 25 years of manufacturing, engineering, and operational experience, along with over 20 years of senior-level strategic leadership across both family owned businesses and publicly traded organizations. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering from the University of Manitoba and is a registered Professional Engineer.



RELIABLE FOOD PROCESSING EQUIPMENT

Model 6642 Meat Grinder Model 1433 Food Saw

Model Pro-9 Tenderizer

Model VTS-42 Food Tumbler

Model Mini-32 Food Grinder

BIRO
www.birosaw.com 044 Biro_12-25



SERVING THE GROCERY INDUSTRY FOR OVER 105 YEARS!

western grocer magazine

Read our most recent issues and sign up for our newsletter at www.westerngrocer.com

More Than A Quarter of US Loyalty Program Points Go Unspent with an Estimated \$10 Billion in Savings Lost Annually

US consumers are missing out on an estimated \$10 billion in savings annually, as more than a quarter of shoppers' loyalty points go unspent, and over one in ten are left to expire, new research reveals. Despite this, 41.7% of consumers take advantage of promotions every time they shop, and 81.8% use them at least a few times a month.

So, despite Americans overwhelmingly embracing discounts, deals, and loyalty programs, why are they leaving money on the table?

In an effort to deliver compelling deals to customers, build relationships, and unlock repeat business, brands have made loyalty programs a fact of life for consumers. According to the Antavo Global Customer Loyalty Report 2026, a survey of more than 1,000 US consumers (of a global sample of 10,000) that unpacks the trends shaping the evolving consumer loyalty landscape, participation in loyalty programs is rising sharply: 43.2% of consumers are more likely to join one than last year.

A good loyalty program is becoming a big part of customer retention, with 31.3% of consumers saying they would be more likely to continue doing business with a brand that offers one. Clearly, there's a shift in the role of loyalty programs from a "nice-to-have" perk to a core part of the customer relationship, driven by the economic climate.

While loyalty program membership is higher than ever, and traditional discount-driven promotions are still effective, customers want greater maturity and personalisation in their loyalty programs. They want more options and incentives to use the points they earn.

Chances to save remain the biggest reason people use their loyalty programs, but other motivators, like freebies and personalized rewards, are quickly becoming must-haves for shoppers.





Olaf Packaging

Protecting Food
Extending Shelf Life
Reducing Food Waste

Focused on supporting
Food Processors, Bakers,
Produce Packers and
Grocers across Western
Canada since 1985

We've got you covered



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

CPG EXPO 2026

April 17-18, 2026
BMO Centre, Hall D
Calgary Stampede Park, Calgary, AB
<https://www.cpgexpo.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/>

RCCSTORE26 Conference

June 2-3, 2026
Toronto Congress Centre, North Building
www.storeconference.ca

IDDBA

June 7-9, 2026
Orange County Convention Centre
Orlando, FL
<https://www.iddba.org/>



Western Canada's Premier Grocery Exhibition & Conference Event

Bringing together retailers and manufacturers from across the nation to discover new innovations and build relationships within the grocery industry.

April 21-22, 2026

Vancouver Convention Centre, East Building



Grow Your Network



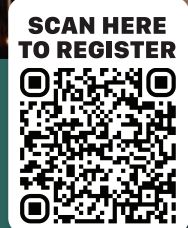
Gain Ideas & Insights



Spot the Latest Trends



Meet with Buyers



SCAN HERE TO REGISTER

CFIG RETAILERS FREE TRADE SHOW ENTRY

TOTAL 90,000+ SQ FT TRADE SHOW FLOOR

Who attends?

Connect with Canada's top grocers & operators, wholesalers, distributors, and suppliers this spring at the largest industry event in the West. Seize the opportunity to showcase your product or service in Canada's grocery stores.

By Frank Yeo

SUSTAINABILITY REMAINS A TOP PRIORITY

For many, the term “sustainability” may seem a bit hackneyed today, used in vague ways that often highjack its true meaning to simply serve corporate profitability. While many pay “lip service” in this way, it is those companies that see sustainability as part of a larger societal drive now termed “Environmental, Social Governance” or ESG that are really embracing the movement and see the problem in its true form.

“We have the greatest impact when we’re able to help Canadian communities thrive,” said Per Bank, president and CEO, Loblaw Companies Limited. “That can involve delivering value, supporting Canadians with their healthcare needs, doing our part in fighting climate change and advancing social equity, and more. When we see ways to make Canada stronger, we’ll explore them, because we know we can have a big impact on the people and places we serve.”

Loblaw’s ESG strategy is rooted in two purpose-led pillars: fighting climate change and advancing social equity. Under these two pillars, the company has developed five focus areas: carbon net-zero; eliminating food waste; tackling plastic waste; being Canada’s most diverse and inclusive employer; and supporting the health and well-being of women and children.

Loblaw has long recognized the importance of environmental stewardship and has been an industry leader in environmental actions for decades. The company is making significant strides in its goal to achieve carbon net-zero, demonstrating a commitment to influencing its entire value chain:

- By investing over \$40 million in more than 500 carbon reduction projects.
- Achieved a 16% reduction in Scope 1 and Scope 2 greenhouse gas emissions compared to the 2020 baseline.
- Approximately 32% of Scope 3 volume (by spend) came from suppliers with science-based targets.

Loblaw continues to tackle plastic waste head-on, not only do these efforts reduce environmental impact but they also resonate with increasingly eco-conscious consumers:

- Achieved over 90% compliance relative to the in-scope Golden Design Rules for control brand and in-store plastic packaging, putting the company within reach of its 2025 goal to make all such packaging 100% recyclable or reusable.



BUT **SUSTAINABILITY**
IS REALLY PART OF A MUCH
LARGER GOAL: **ESG**

photo shutterstock.com

The company continues to make great strides towards its goal of sending zero food to landfill by 2030, and to helping achieve their Feed More Families commitment to provide 1 billion pounds of food to community-based food charities:

- Diverted over 80,000 metric tonnes of potential food waste from landfill through food consistent donations and other food rescue initiatives.
- Including donations of more than 50 million pounds of food to community-based food charities across Canada, in support of the Loblaw Feed More Families™ program.

Canada's other major retailers have also adopted ESG policies that inform all parts of their businesses.

Joshua Goodman, head of corporate sustainability for Empire Company Limited, says "We have always believed that sustainability is good for business and drives our growth strategy. Over the past year, we've made strategic investments to deliver more value to customers across all our banners. For example, we've expanded Own Brands with a focus on large-format, multicultural and value-oriented products to meet evolving customer needs. In addition, we have made our transportation network more efficient by enhancing our transportation

health and contributing to other meaningful causes that are important to us, to our customers and to our teammates. Playing a leading role to advance Canada's Grocery Code of Conduct, meanwhile, reflects Empire's commitment to fairer industry practices and better outcomes for consumers."

Empire continues to focus on eliminating food waste, supporting local food banks and strengthening Canada's food ecosystem. A big part of this is their Climate Action Plan, which includes the target to achieve net-zero by 2040 for Scope 1 and 2 emissions by decarbonizing their business and using energy and other resources sustainably.

"In fiscal 2026, we plan to refresh our understanding of the sustainability issues that are most important to stakeholders and to business success" says Goodman. "This matrix informs our sustainability strategy. We continue to share our progress on evolving ESG topics under the sustainability strategy pillars of People, Planet and Products."

Over at Save-On Foods, there has been a concerted effort to link community needs to their sustainability and zero waste objectives with tangible community-based partnerships and initiatives. Starting in 2018 the company had a goal to eliminate their food waste by 50% by 2025 but were so successful that the goal was achieved by the summer of 2019. Today their company-wide program is keeping over 93% of unsold food out of landfills — providing charities, food banks, and local



it is those companies that see sustainability as part of a larger societal drive now termed "Environmental, Social Governance" or ESG that are really embracing the movement and see the problem in its true form.

management systems, optimizing delivery frequency and expanding our supply chain network."

The company underlines, however, the importance of a larger societal view in approaching the problem. "We believe a strong, sustainable food system in Canada is critical to our country's economic resilience and food security. As a proudly Canadian grocery retailer, we are committed to strengthening domestic supply chains, investing in homegrown businesses and ensuring people across the country have access to the best locally sourced products. We are helping nurture healthy bodies and minds across Canada through investments in the more than 900 communities we serve, supporting youth mental

farms with much-needed edible food.

Other initiatives include transitioning their flyer program to a digital platform, keeping over 8 million pounds of paper waste per year out of communities. In the spring of 2022, Save-On-Foods was invited by the City of Vancouver to participate in the Circular Food Innovation Lab (CFIL), a multi-stakeholder program addressing food waste in Vancouver. This led to the Reframe Project. The objective of the Reframe Project is to explore the impacts of "reframing" less-than-perfect produce, over-ripe items, and providing educative materials on how to better store food items at home to reduce at-home food waste. ●

Your Brand. Every Aisle. Every Neighborhood.

With custom reusable bags, your brand travels farther than your flyer ever could.



Durable, stylish, and sustainable — designed for visibility and built for longevity.

info@colnuck.com

1.866.594.2247

colnuck.com



HEALTH *starts* HERE

Because good health isn't a trend— it's your new standard.



Digestion | Absorption | Immunity

LEARN HOW ALOE LOVES YOU BACK →





By John Marron,
Director of Commercial Relations,
Fairtrade Canada

Fairtrade Organic Bananas Roll Out Across Western Canada

Pattison Food Group Is Raising the Bar with Equifruit's Fairtrade Organic Bananas

In a category long defined by the status quo, Pattison Food Group is proving bananas can still be a platform for innovation, differentiation, and values-driven growth. By transitioning its organic banana program to Equifruit, Pattison is not simply switching suppliers to North America's leading Fairtrade banana importer. It is aligning with one of the fastest-growing movements in produce: Fairtrade-certified, ethically sourced fruit that resonates with the expectations of today's shoppers and strengthens supply chain resilience.

Over the past five years, organic Fairtrade banana volumes in Canada have surged by more than 294%, with roughly one in three organic bananas now estimated to be Fairtrade.

That growth signals a structural shift. The message is clear: the banana market is evolving, and retailers must keep up.

A Strategic Move in a Volatile Market

Bananas remain a traffic-driving staple, but the global market is increasingly unstable due to climate pressures, labour challenges, and price volatility. Fairtrade offers producers the Fairtrade Minimum Price, providing growers with stable incomes for long-term planning and aiming to cover the cost of sustainable production, as well as the additional Fairtrade Premium for community and business investments, stabilizing supply chains while improving livelihoods.

For Pattison, the switch reflects a long-term view of category health:

"Switching to Equifruit organic bananas is a natural fit for Pattison Food Group," said Justin McGregor, general manager, produce & bulk at Pattison Food Group. "They share our values of fairness, transparency, and collaboration that benefit everyone, from growers to shoppers."

In addition to promoting fairer wages and safer working conditions, the Fairtrade Standards prohibit child labour and provide farmers with support to reduce their environmental impact. A Fairtrade Premium is also paid directly to growers, which provides community funding for projects such as education programs, clean water facilities, and housing improvements. In an era of ESG

scrutiny and consumer transparency demands, those outcomes translate into real brand equity at shelf.

"In a highly volatile global banana market, Fairtrade provides a level of stability for banana farmers," said Jennie Coleman, president and co-owner of Equifruit. "That stability allows them to invest in a better future for themselves and their communities, and a more sustainable future for the banana industry."

Pattison and Equifruit, an Impactful Partnership

Montreal-based Equifruit is North America's leading Fairtrade banana importer and a certified B Corp. A Canadian, women-owned business, Equifruit is especially appealing for retailers seeking local partnerships and supplier diversity. The company's bold marketing stands out in produce aisles, and its exclusive sourcing from Fairtrade-certified farms reinforces credibility in a category often criticized for opaque supply chains.

Under this partnership with Pattison Food Group, Equifruit's Fairtrade organic bananas are now available across Pattison banners including Save-On-Foods, PriceSmart Foods, Urban Fare, Buy-Low Foods, Quality Foods, and Nesters Market.

For national chains, the competitive implications are hard to ignore. The cost barrier is also minimal, with industry data suggesting that upgrading to Fairtrade bananas adds only a marginal annual cost of CA\$5 - \$10 for shoppers while funding meaningful improvements for farmers.

A Clear Signal to the Rest of the Market

Pattison Food Group has positioned itself as a Western Canadian leader by embracing a banana program that aligns profitability with purpose. Equifruit brings the credibility, growth trajectory, and consumer resonance to make that leadership visible at shelf.

For retailers evaluating their produce strategies, the takeaway is simple: Fairtrade is becoming a category expectation, with shoppers looking for transparency and impact.

As Julie Francoeur, CEO of Fairtrade Canada, says: "Today's shoppers are paying closer attention to how their food is sourced, and they reward retailers who reflect their values. Fairtrade products offer a clear, credible way to build trust, support farming communities, and differentiate, especially in highly competitive categories."

Retailers who act early position themselves as leaders, capture growing consumer demand, and reinforce a culture of purpose-driven retail. It's time to lead with values, partner with trusted suppliers, and let your produce speak volumes. ●



John Marron, Director of Commercial Relations, Fairtrade Canada.



The banana category is changing.



Pattison Food Group is raising the bar with Equifruit's Fairtrade organic bananas.



A Clean You Can Trust

Q&A with Brad Liski, CEO, Tru Earth

Please describe your corporate mission in terms of sustainability

At Tru Earth, we don't have a mission but a Critical Cause to make true lasting change that cares for your future. We embody this by reducing plastic waste at the source while improving access to essential household products. We exist to challenge the disposable, plastic-heavy status quo of the home care industry by designing products that help protect the planet and support people at the same time. Sustainability is not a program or initiative for us, but it is embedded in our ethos. Our commitment is guided by the triple bottom line: people, planet, and profit. This means every decision we make is evaluated not just for financial performance, but also for its impact on environmental protection and social well-being. By integrating these three pillars, we ensure that our business drives positive change for communities and the planet, while remaining economically viable. For us to be successful, all three must be working in harmony.

How are your products sustainable? How does this differ from other companies?

Our products are designed to eliminate plastic household containers before they are ever produced. By replacing traditional liquid detergents with ultra-concentrated, lightweight formats such as laundry detergent sheets, we remove the need for rigid plastic jugs, excess water, and inefficient transportation. This design-first approach reduces plastic waste at the source rather than relying on downstream recycling solutions.

Additionally, Tru Earth is a portfolio brand, expanding our water-activated format across all areas of household cleaning, including the laundry room, kitchen, and bathroom. This broadens our impact and empowers customers to make sustainable choices throughout their homes.

What differentiates Tru Earth from other companies is that sustainability is not layered onto conventional products, it is engineered into the product itself and reinforced through our business model. 100% of our products are in paper packaging; we are not just taking advantage of a consumer trend, we created and lead that movement. We are firm believers that single use plastic MUST STOP and we won't compromise on this. We are B Corp certified AND a registered Benefit Corporation, meaning we are legally committed to prioritizing environmental and social outcomes alongside financial performance.

Can you quantify the positive impact your products are having on the environment?

We believe accountability requires measurement. That is why we track and publicly report our impact using clear, outcome-based metrics. We are one of the few mid-sized CPG firms that report to CDP, SBTi, 1% for the Planet and B Corp. We feel the consumer should demand

transparency. Further as of March 1st, 2026, Tru Earth has saved over 200 million plastic household containers (and other single-use plastics) from entering landfills and oceans by eliminating plastic jug-based products from everyday routines.

We are also proud to share that we have recently completed a comprehensive Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) of our detergent sheets, which is currently undergoing third-party verification. Preliminary results indicate that Tru Earth's products deliver a markedly lower environmental impact compared to traditional liquid or pod laundry detergents, demonstrating significant reductions in resource use and emissions throughout their life cycle. This evidence further validates our commitment to leading the industry in sustainable innovation. Once the verification is complete, Tru Earth will share the results with customers and stakeholders.

And to finalize our quantification, we calculate triple bottom line using Environmental and Social Economics and since inception, have now contributed \$91M to the Environmental Economy and \$87M to the Social Economy.

How do you combine environmental responsibility with social responsibility?

Environmental responsibility and social responsibility are inseparable at Tru Earth. Reducing plastic waste is only part of the equation as we also address hygiene poverty, a global issue affecting health, dignity, and well-being. Through our Tru Giving program, we donate laundry detergent sheets to communities in need, ensuring access to essential cleaning products while leveraging the same low-waste, low-impact product design.

As of March 1st, 2026, Tru Earth has donated over 60 million laundry detergent sheets globally and supported more than 5,000 nonprofit partners working across hygiene access, disaster relief, shelter support, and community resilience.

To further ensure transparency and accountability, our Tru Giving program is verified by 1% for the Planet, demonstrating our commitment to rigorous standards in environmental philanthropy.

This integrated approach reflects our belief in the triple bottom line of people, planet, and profit. By aligning product innovation, charitable giving, and long-term partnerships, we ensure that every purchase contributes to measurable environmental protection and meaningful social outcomes. Our ESG strategy is built to scale impact responsibly, proving that business can be a force for good without compromise.●



Brad Liski, CEO, Tru Earth.

TRU EARTH
CLEANING THAT CARES

Bring Better Cleaning to Your Shelves

From laundry to kitchen to bathroom, Tru Earth water-activated products tackle life's everyday spills and stains—without plastic jugs



Consumers are moving away from bulky plastic jugs—and toward compact, sustainable solutions.

Tru Earth delivers:

- Powerful, water-activated cleaning
- Made in Canada quality
- Plastic-free innovation customers are looking for
- Efficient packaging that maximizes shelf space



Learn more about becoming a retail partner today!
Email us at wholesale@tru.earth



By Carly Peters

COLD BEVERAGES REPORT

CONSUMERS ARE ASKING MORE FROM THEIR BEVERAGES THESE DAYS. THEY ARE HELPING YOU HIT YOUR DAILY VITAMIN COUNT, INCREASING GUT HEALTH, OR PROVIDING A PERSONALIZED ALTERNATIVE FOR A SOBER-CURIOUS LIFESTYLE.

This quest for more functionality has meant more sales. According to the Canadian Beverage Association, consumer spending on sports and energy drink sales rose by 52 per cent, while carbonated and flavoured water saw a 147 per cent increase. Ready-to-drink iced tea and coffee drinks, as well as still drinks (non-carbonated non-alcoholic beverages), also saw a 220 per cent rise in sales.

Overall, the Canadian beverage industry is projected to reach \$13 billion by 2029.

So, what's driving all this growth? Trends such as wellness, personalization, and sustainability are shaping products in the category, whether they're flat or fizzy.

SOFT DRINKS

Soda, pop, soft drinks, whatever you want to call it, Canadians love them. According to Keurig Dr Pepper State of Beverages 2025 Trend Report, it's the number one beverage people use to treat themselves. But they're also asking a lot more of their favourite fizzy beverage.

One notable trend is the increasing demand for healthier, more natural beverage choices, fuelled by consumers' heightened awareness of health and wellness. This has led to more low-sugar or sugar-free options, as well as beverages made with natural ingredients that offer functional benefits, such as added vitamins, antioxidants, or prebiotics.

Many point to GenZ's movement towards sober or sober curious living, where alcohol is being replaced with options that still provide the fun, fizz, and flavour, while not compromising their wellness goals.

For examples of this, one only needs to look at the meteoric rise of the low-sugar, probiotic-based soda brand Poppi, which was acquired in 2025 by PepsiCo for \$1.95 billion US; its top competitor in the functional soft drink category, Olipop, which is valued at \$1.85 billion U.S.; and Coca Cola's launch of a probiotic soda product under its Simply line last year (not fully available in Canada yet).

MORE IN YOUR POUR

ALL BEVERAGES, WHETHER FLAT
OR FIZZY, ARE GOING BEYOND
QUENCHING THIRST



photo shutterstock.com

According to Keurig Dr Pepper State of Beverages 2025 Trend Report, 50 per cent of respondents want to try carbonated sodas with probiotics (56 per cent), prebiotics (55 per cent), or fibre (52 per cent).

WATER

Many health-conscious consumers have put down pop completely in favour of water, particularly flavoured and functional varieties that offer good-for-you, great taste.

Flavour has become a critical factor in a consumer's choice of water, with 30 per cent of U.S. and Canadian consumers citing it as the top driver in bottled water purchases. According to Innova's Overview in Flavored & Unflavored Waters in the US & Canada report, 33 per cent of consumers demonstrate a preference for berries and summer fruit flavours, while 28 per cent favour tropical fruits.

Brands are responding with flavour profiles beyond lemon and lime. Bibly recently dropped cosmic swirl (berry and vanilla), melon eclipse, and dragonfruit stardust — all in the brand's new mini-can format — while Clearly Canadian also added a "tariff-defying" SleekCans format containing Mountain Blackberry Original, Wild Cherry Original, and Sparkling Mineral Water, the perfect base for creating mocktails or personalized beverage options.

Trends like #WaterTok offer up creative tips and flavour hacks to personalize hydration routines, making water

Canadian-based brands are also bubbling up. Halifax-based Cove Soda, which launched in 2023, recently announced an exclusive partnership with KDP Canada to expand distribution, while Toronto's Henderson Brewing Company's Solly's Craft Soda, a prebiotic soft drink made entirely with Canadian ingredients, was listed in 250 Walmart stores across the country late last year.

At close to \$3 a can, Solly's addition to big box reflects mainstream consumers' willingness to purchase craft and premium soft drinks. KDP's report notes 46 per cent of consumers are willing to pay more for beverages that they consider premium; 56 per cent associate premium with better ingredients and better quality.

PRODUCT SHOWCASE

POUR ONE ON: NEW BEVERAGE OFFERINGS

Net Zero

It's the irresistible taste of Orangina without sugars, calories, or aspartame. Orangina Zero Added Sugar's unique formula is a subtle blend of citrus (orange, lemon, mandarin, and grapefruit) and pulp for a truly pleasurable moment. The new option comes in a six-pack, but retailers can place the sparkling juice in multiple locations in-store, from on-shelf to the fridge, as single-unit cans.



Cherry on Top

Coca-Cola has announced the expansion of its cherry portfolio with its latest innovation, Coca-Cola Cherry Float. The limited-time offering delivers a nostalgic twist on cherry with smooth, creamy vanilla flavour and is available in both regular and zero sugar. And, back by popular demand, Diet Coke Cherry features a bold cherry twist layered onto the crisp, refreshing taste fans love, all with zero sugar.



Sweet on Sour

Medallion Milk, typically known for its high-quality, Canadian-made powdered milk, is adding a new lemonade product, offering a refreshing, pantry-stable beverage option that complements their existing milk powders and creamers. Made with real lemon juice and pulp, it delivers an authentic, close-to-homemade, fresh lemon flavour, combined with the convenience and long shelf life of a powder format.



Out of the Ocean

Functional Alchemy Beverages recently launched Origen Sea Water Electrolytes, a clean, ready-to-drink hydration solution sourced from the ocean and packed with over 92 essential minerals. Designed for high-sweat athletes and everyday wellness seekers alike, Origen delivers superior hydration with zero sugar, no artificial flavours, and consistent purity.



Fresh Favourites

Canadians are reaching for familiar favourites alongside refreshment. Heritage brands like Canada Dry and Dr Pepper continue to thrive, especially when paired with new flavour twists. Canada Dry Peach Mango delivers a vibrant take on a trusted classic, crafted for consumers seeking a fruit-forward experience, while Dr Pepper Strawberries & Cream Zero Sugar taps into the growing "treat without compromise" trend, delivering indulgent flavour in a zero-sugar format.



A DARK ROAST MADE FOR ADVENTURE



Claim your special
launch deal

grocery@levelground.com

The sweet life
with 25% less sugar

OASIS

#1 MOST TRUSTED by Canadians 2025
BrandSpark Most Trusted Awards

OASIS 4 YEAR WINNER

Registered Trademark of Lassonde Industries Inc.

more exciting to drink. Here, flavour merges, once again, with function. Nutrient-rich add-ins, like electrolytes, collagen, and vitamins, along with fresh fruits (Yuzu, a zesty superfruit, is rising in popularity), allow consumers to support wellness goals and personal expression.

JUICE

Earlier this year, Minute Maid announced that it was discontinuing its line of frozen juices “in response to shifting consumer preferences.” Lassonde, a Canadian company behind juice labels like Oasis, Kiju, and Rougemont, told CBC News that it left the category last year after demand for frozen-from-concentrate juice waned.

Much like its beverage counterparts, there has been an emphasis on low- and zero-sugar juice skus from some of the biggest brands. From Welch’s Zero line, to Ocean Spray’s Pure (100% real juice, zero added sugar; newest flavour tart cherry), to Minute Maid’s Zero Sugar options (Plus a new IG littered with celebs like Cardi B, Jon Hamm, and a 2025 collab with WWE), the better-for-you options attempt to bring in new generations of



consumers. This makes sense when you see SunRype promoting their Slim juice line as a low-cal mix for custom mocktails, giving Get Z wellness that feels enjoyable, not restrictive.

This important demo is also seeking juice products that are genuinely good for both them and the planet. Whether it’s the reduction of food waste — say, Loop’s raw, cold-pressed fruit and vegetable juices and smoothies

TOP SHELF MERCHANDISING

Winning the beverage aisle depends on several factors: assortment, navigation, visibility, and occasion-building to create that crave appeal and drive purchases.



Shillpa Khandelwaal, director of insights and innovation at Keurig Dr Pepper Canada, breaks it down.

CREATE CLEAR DESTINATION ZONES

Shoppers don’t want to hunt. Dedicated, clearly marked sections for high-growth segments like iced tea and non-alcoholic beverages simplify the shop and reduce leakage to competitors. Defined “zones” signal relevance and make emerging categories feel mainstream and not niche.

SECONDARY IS STRATEGIC

Growth categories deserve more than one touchpoint. Seasonal displays, end caps, and trend-forward features spotlight innovation and drive impulse. Secondary placements are especially powerful for RTDs and non-alcoholic beverages, where visibility fuels trial.

MERCHANDISE BY OCCASION, NOT JUST CATEGORY

The biggest unlock? Cross-category thinking. Pair cold beverages with salty snacks for game day or movie night. Merchandise non-alcoholic options alongside better-for-you snacks to support moderation occasions.

from rejected food into lines — water consumption, or eco-friendly packaging, sustainable claims are likely to gain younger consumers’ trust, loyalty, and dollars. According to Forbes, 51 per cent of Gen Z consumers are willing to spend more for sustainable beverage options, with an average willingness to pay six per cent more for such products.●

Groceries for Good

MAKE HAPPY TUMMIES: NOURISHING CHILDREN ACROSS CANADA

Make Happy Tummies (formerly Toonies for Tummies), launched in January 2025, is a grocery industry initiative focused on feeding children and making a huge difference for students on a national scale. The non-profit organization funds local nutritional school programs to ensure students are prepared for the day.

These programs receive funding through The Grocery Foundation’s annual gala, formerly known as the Night to Nurture, which is scheduled to return January 30, 2027, under its new name, The Make Happy Tummies Gala. The gala has been running for nearly 50 years and allows the foundation to raise funds for student nutrition programs, as well as through an annual grocery store fundraiser. Supported by a community of retailers, brands and industry partners, Make Happy Tummies brings purpose to a great industry.

“Humans connect through food, and this organization builds stronger relationships and a united classroom,” says Joe Fusco, senior vice-president, Metro Ontario Inc., and chair of The Grocery Foundation board.

Make Happy Tummies play a huge role in responding to the urgent needs in communities because the programs they fund are constant and available at the start of each school day. They consistently help children at school every day, so students can attend classes knowing they will be supported and nourished. In doing so, the organization aids in raising attendance levels in schools and provides vital funding and support to schools in over 3,000 communities nationwide. The program is growing increasingly universal and is open to all children.

“At Make Happy Tummies, we have the opportunity to nurture something truly special. Consistent trust and care have real-life impacts for families inside and outside the classroom,” says Simon Small, executive director of The Grocery Foundation board.

100% of funds raised by The Foundation through its gala and its Make Happy Tummies store fundraiser, which



(L to R) Joe Fusco, chair of The Grocery Foundation board, and Simon Small executive director of The Grocery Foundation board.

connection and make a difference for programs at scale,” noted Small.

Today, The Grocery Foundation helps fund more than 3,000 breakfast programs across the country, using the money that is raised to directly impact local communities.

And throughout it’s nearly 50-year history, The Grocery Foundation has raised more than \$125 million dollars.

“As an industry, we have the unique opportunity to reach children every school day when learning and development are happening. Together we can create a larger, more effective and immediate impact and a lasting difference in their future,” says Fusco.

The Make Happy Tummies 2026 campaign runs to the end of April. A kick-off for 2027, including ways to engage, will be held in May. Increasingly, companies are also bringing Make Happy Tummies into their employee-giving platforms so that everyone in the industry can support student nutrition and help address one of the country’s most pressing issues year-round.●

Visit makehappytummies.ca

100% of funds raised by The Foundation through its gala and its Make Happy Tummies store fundraiser, which runs in over 1,700 grocery stores January-April each year, benefit local school breakfast programs.

runs in over 1,700 grocery stores January-April each year, benefit local school breakfast programs.

“Engaging in The Foundation’s fundraising campaigns gives Canadian grocers, the brands that retail in their stores and companies supporting the industry an opportunity to unite to be actively part of the solution by providing in-school nutrition programs. Make Happy Tummies enables us to stand together, build a deeper



FOR THE GAINS

by Carly Peters



photo shutterstock.com

PROTEIN IS SHOWING UP IN EVERY AISLE AS CONSUMERS WANT IT FOR EVERY DAY

Whether you're browsing the cereal aisle, opening the ice cream freezer, or walking past candy end caps, one thing is impossible to miss: everything is packed with protein.

Once associated with athletes chasing muscle (and drinking chalky shakes), mainstream consumers are looking to add this essential macronutrient into their everyday. In fact, approximately 71 per cent of Canadian consumers reported wanting to eat more protein, according to a 2025 Nourish Food Marketing report.

But it's not those aforementioned pasty powders. Today's customer is looking for protein that provides function, quality, convenience, and integration into everyday routines.

This shift has changed the game for food and beverage brands, turning the question "should we add protein" into how we deliver it in a format that meets evolving consumer tastes and needs.

Canadian Health Food Association members are approaching protein innovation from several angles, particularly by integrating protein into everyday foods in more creative and accessible ways.

THIS SHIFT HAS CHANGED THE GAME FOR FOOD AND BEVERAGE BRANDS, TURNING THE QUESTION "SHOULD WE ADD PROTEIN" INTO HOW WE DELIVER IT IN A FORMAT THAT MEETS EVOLVING CONSUMER TASTES AND NEEDS.



Fromage Protein Pops, winner of the 2026 CHFA Launch Pad competition for most innovative product.

Lynsey Walker, vice-president of marketing and communications for the CHFA, points to Fromage Protein Pops, which won the 2026 CHFA Launch Pad competition for most innovative product at the association's recent CHFA NOW Vancouver show. The brand reimagines the frozen dessert category by using cottage cheese as the primary ingredient, delivering around 11–12 grams of natural protein per pop with less sugar and no artificial sweeteners.



Lynsey Walker, vice-president of marketing and communications, CHFA.

"This kind of innovation reflects a broader trend we're seeing across our membership and the industry: protein appearing in categories where consumers might not traditionally expect it, from indulgent treats to everyday snacks," says Walker, noting beyond frozen desserts, brands are also developing protein coffees, high-protein bakery items, and clean-label formulations that focus on taste, digestibility, and minimal processing. The result is a wave of products that deliver functional nutrition while still meeting consumer expectations for flavour and convenience.

Walker adds, one important nuance is that while protein demand is strong, consumers are increasingly discerning about quality, looking beyond simple "high protein" claims to understand ingredient sourcing, digestibility, and how a product fits into a balanced diet.

"That's where the natural, organic, and wellness industry continues to lead by developing products that deliver meaningful nutrition with thoughtful ingredients," she says. "For retailers, the opportunity isn't just to offer more protein, but to offer better protein options that align with evolving consumer expectations around health, transparency and sustainability."

PUTTING PROTEIN ON THE FLOOR

For grocery retailers, the protein push has meant rethinking shelf strategies and expanding footprints for protein-boosted staples and products consumers already use and love.

"Retailers have an opportunity to think about protein as a cross-category merchandising strategy rather than a single aisle," explains Lynsey Walker, vice-president of marketing and communications for the CHFA. "Consumers are looking for protein throughout the store, from breakfast and snacks to ready-to-drink beverages, so highlighting these options through signage, secondary displays, and curated sections can help shoppers easily discover them."



photo shutterstock.com

Opening up merchandising opportunities allows customers to see protein as a weekly addition to their grocery cart that sits alongside snacks, desserts, breakfast foods, and other essentials.

Clear shelf communication for shoppers around functionality and ingredients is also key, notes Leslie Ewing, executive director of Plant-Based Foods of Canada. "Knowing that consumers are looking to diversify their protein options, plant-based proteins should be easy to find and presented as accessible options within the broader protein category."



the range of protein-packed, plant-based options for consumers to place within their everyday grocery basket.

Ewing says dairy alternatives remain one of the most established segments and an important area of innovation, alongside emerging plant-based protein snack products. And while across all categories, food companies are focusing on enhancing taste and texture, there is also growing attention to overall dietary balance as shoppers take a more holistic view of health.

“We’ve seen a lot of enthusiasm from people who want protein, but also fibre, vitamins and minerals, probiotics, and other essential nutrients,” says Edward Lalonde, CEO of Good Protein. “As nutritional information becomes more easily accessible online, people discovered that not all nutrients are the same – not all protein is equal, for example, are you getting your essential amino acids?”

The wholesome approach of plant-based proteins has also made the category more accessible to Canadians. Take, for example, the contrast between plant-based

CANADA’S STRENGTH IN CROPS SUCH AS PEAS, LENTILS, OATS, AND CANOLA IS FUELLING INNOVATION ACROSS THE FOOD INDUSTRY, EXPANDING THE RANGE OF PROTEIN-PACKED, PLANT-BASED OPTIONS FOR CONSUMERS.

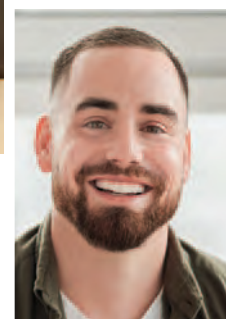
Eat your Peas

Current data from Agri-Food Analytics Lab at Dalhousie University notes that flexitarians - Canadians who prioritize plant-based foods but still consume meat and fish - rose from 4.6 per cent in 2024 to 5.5 per cent last year.

Flexitarians are a key driver of the expanding plant-based protein category, says Leslie Ewing, executive director of Plant-Based Foods of Canada, as they are typically looking to diversify their protein intake rather than eliminate traditional options.

Canada’s strength in crops such as peas, lentils, oats, and canola is fuelling innovation across the food industry, from ingredient processing to finished food products, expanding

protein and whey, explains Lalonde. For decades, whey has dominated the market, but it can cause bloating, which makes it a suboptimal option for a lot of people. “We opted for a plant-based protein that meets nutritional demands, without alienating people.”



Good Protein’s chocolate fudge all-in-one shake is a vegan plant-based protein powder, no added sugar and nothing artificial.

Even with almost every aisle touting this macronutrient, Lalonde says, when looking at the Canadian market compared to other countries, we’re just scratching the surface.

In other words, prepare for protein and protein-plus products to continue muscling their way into everyday eating. ●

Edward Lalonde, CEO of Good Protein.

WHY ARE WE BUYING INTO PROTEIN?

According to InSight’s report Protein in 2026: Why the Protein Boom Isn’t Slowing Down – It’s Evolving, historically, protein products have skewed heavily toward athletes. While that audience remains important, protein’s current consumer base is broader and more diverse than ever.

PROTEIN IS NOW POSITIONED AS:

- A tool for satiety and weight management
- A support for muscle maintenance and healthy aging
- A functional addition to everyday hydration and snacking
- A companion to emerging health behaviours, including GLP-1 usage

This shift has pushed protein beyond powders and shakes and into convenient formats that fit seamlessly into consumers’ everyday.

Stock up on seasonal support.

Vitamin D is a Canadian winter essential, helping support immune function, bone health and mood regulation during months of reduced sunlight.

Orange Naturals delivers D3 and D3 + K2 in multiple strengths and formats, making it easy to build a complete set and confidently meet seasonal demand. Backed by Canadian quality and retail partnership, we help your D3 category perform all winter long.



We support our grocery and pharmacy retail partners in their efforts to foster a community for Canadians who want to feel their best.

Made with ♥ in Canada 🇨🇦

Learn more at [orangenaturals.com](https://www.orangenaturals.com)

FOR EVERY AISLE:

NEW PROTEIN PRODUCTS ACROSS ALL CATEGORIES

POUR YOUR PROTEIN

Fuel your mornings with Silk Protein, a new plant-powered beverage with 18 grams of protein and only six grams of sugar. Proudly made in Canada, it offers twice the protein and half the sugar of regular 2% milk, plus 10 essential nutrients, including Omega-3. Available in regular and chocolate, it's an easy way to power up your day, whether you add it to cereal, smoothies, or enjoy it on its own.



PROTEINLY CANADIAN

With 13 grams of protein per serving, Nordica Cottage Cheese is a protein powerhouse, delicious on its own and just as versatile in sweet and savoury recipes. Made with 100% Canadian dairy, Nordica is packed with essential nutrients like calcium and vitamin D, and is available in a variety of formats, including lactose-free. As a leading brand from Gay Lea Foods — a Canadian, dairy farmer-owned co-operative — every purchase of Nordica supports Canadian dairy farming families.



ONE FOR THE ROAD



OIKOS Pro™ new Caramel Macchiato High Protein Drinkable Yogurt is the brand's first coffee-flavoured drinkable yogurt. Crafted for those seeking a delicious and rewarding experience, the drink is ideal for post-workout recovery or a quick snack during the day, offering a delightful caramel coffee taste.

POP THE PROTEIN

ProPOP is a proudly Canadian-made and female-founded sparkling water delivering 20 grams of complete protein in a refreshing, non-milky format. Each 355 mL can contains just 100 calories and four grams of sugar, crafted with only five simple ingredients, including whey protein isolate and collagen peptides. Designed for busy, health-conscious consumers, ProPOP offers a light and crisp alternative to traditional protein shakes without artificial sweeteners or colours.



LET IT CRUMBLE



Level up your weeknights with Taco Tuesday Crumblz. Offering up 64 grams of protein plus gut-healthy prebiotic fibre, it's also delicious in burritos, bowls, pasta, and more. Or try the umami-rich Mushroom Boost, also featuring 64 grams of protein and prebiotic fibre. Made with a special blend of organic functional mushrooms and adaptogenic herbs for natural energy, focus, stress relief, and immune support.

MMMMAPLE

Good Protein is serving up pure Canadian nostalgia with its brand-new Maple Cookie All-in-One Shake. This Canadian-made shake combines the taste of a buttery cookie, layered with maple fudge and creamy vanilla. One sip feels like a cozy sugar shack moment but provides 21 grams of protein and seven grams of fibre, all while being non-GMO, vegan, gluten-free, dairy-free, and keto.



FROMAGE PROTEIN POPS

CAPTIVATES AT CHFA NOW VANCOUVER 2026 AND IS CROWNED CHFA LAUNCH PAD CHAMPION



After claiming Friday night's top honour, Fromage Protein Pops receives a prize package valued at more than \$50,000, including:

- \$5,000 cash from presenting partner Alive Publishing Group
- \$10,000 in advertising across Alive publications
- A custom consulting and data package from NielsenIQ (NIQ) valued at over \$10,000, providing access to Canadian market data and expert guidance
- \$10,000 in brand and packaging consultation from Brand Natural
- A \$10,000 Product Strategy, Quality & Regulatory Roadmap Package from Salix Sciences
- Promotion across CHFA's newsletters and social media channels
- A booth at a future CHFA NOW trade show
- Complimentary one-year CHFA membership

The future of natural, organic, and wellness has a bold new leader. A distinguished panel of judges at The Canadian Health Food Association's CHFA NOW Vancouver has crowned Fromage Protein Pops the winner of the Most Innovative Product award, receiving a prize package built to fast-track growth and national market readiness.

The announcement was made live this past Friday, on the CHFA Launch Pad stage at CHFA NOW Vancouver, where eight breakthrough brands unveiled their innovations in front of industry leaders, retail buyers, and an expert judging panel as part of CHFA's premier startup showcase.

Chosen from across Canada, eight finalists representing high-growth natural, organic, and wellness (NOW) categories, from functional foods and beverages to supplements, kids' wellness, pantry reinvention, and clean beauty and personal care, stepped into the spotlight to make their case. With just two minutes each, brands delivered concise pitches outlining how their products answer evolving consumer demands and push the NOW industry forward.

"An incredible job once again by all of the finalists in CHFA Launch Pad this year. The closest contest in all my years of being a judge," said Ellen Wheeler, head judge CHFA Launch Pad, Alive Publishing Group, "but a unanimous decision that Fromage Pops has incredible innovation and a fantastic product. Alive and myself personally are excited to work with them."

CHFA Launch Pad continues to be a powerful springboard for brands shaping the future of natural, organic, and wellness, connecting founders with industry leaders, actionable market data, and national exposure that can accelerate their path from emerging startup to category standout.

CHFA Launch Pad continues to introduce some of Canada's most recognized natural, organic, and wellness brands to the industry. Previous winners include EarthSuds, Magic Scoop, Partake Brewing, The Green Beaver Company, Nuts for Cheese, and Aeyron Wellness. ●

For more information about CHFA NOW Vancouver 2026 and the CHFA Launch Pad competition, visit chfanow.ca/vancouver/launch-pad and follow on Instagram at @cahealthfood.



About CHFA: The Canadian Health Food Association (CHFA) is Canada's largest trade association dedicated to natural, organic, and wellness products. As a national not-for-profit organization, CHFA represents manufacturers, retailers, distributors, and service providers committed to helping more Canadians live healthier lives. Learn more at chfa.ca.

NEW

I'VE GOT THE
**PLANT
POWER**

2X more protein* **50%** less sugar*



**TRY
NOW**

*Than 1% M.F. chocolate dairy milk for Silk Protein chocolate. / Than 2% M.F. dairy milk for Silk Protein regular.
†Per 250 mL serving Silk © 2026 WhiteWave Services, Inc. All rights reserved.



**ÔIKOS
PRO**

**FEED YOUR
STRENGTH.†**

**HIGH
PROTEIN**

**NO
ADDED
SUGAR**



†ÔIKOS® PRO™ IS A SOURCE OF PROTEIN. PROTEIN HELPS BUILD STRONG MUSCLES. CONSUMED AS PART OF A HEALTHY ACTIVE LIFESTYLE AND BALANCED DIET. †PER 300 ML SERVING SIZE. ††PER 115 G SERVING SIZE.
**ÔIKOS® PRO™ IS A SOURCE OF CALCIUM AND POTASSIUM. ÔIKOS® PRO™ USED UNDER LIC., © 2026, DANONE US, LLC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

*BEST NEW PRODUCT FOR YOGURT IN A 2026 BRANDSPARK® SURVEY

DIGI's World's First All-In-One MAP Tray Sealer.



The LX-5600 is the world's first MAP tray sealer capable of weighing, gas flushing, top sealing, and labelling fresh food.

Modified Atmosphere Packaging (MAP) enhances food freshness, extends shelf life, and preserves appearance and flavour, while reducing food waste.

KEY FEATURES

- Compact footprint of just 1.3 m
- Apply up to three labels at once (two top, one bottom)
- Easily switch between two gas types per item for optimized MAP
- Three standard tray sizes, customized sizes upon request

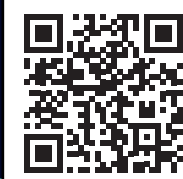


Enhance bulk aisle efficiency with DIGI's BYOC Auto-Tare solution.

Make refill shopping effortless for retailers and shoppers alike. Shoppers can bring their own containers without needing to calculate or tare the container weight each time.

Visit us at: **GSF West**

BOOTH 910



LEARN MORE



Stock Up the Freezer!

It's a made-in-Canada summer in the ice cream and frozen novelties section

For a country with winter lasting as long as it does, Canada has an impressive global ranking of sixth for ice cream consumption. According to TFI Food Equipment Solutions, the market for ice cream and frozen desserts hit \$1.4 billion in 2021, and it continued to grow in 2025, driven by demand for premium, portable, and convenient single-serving treats, including bars, sandwiches, and freezer pops. Last year, approximately 61 per cent of Canadians purchased dairy ice cream over the previous year, with results indicating a bit of a shift towards alternate options such as dairy-free, low-calorie, and protein-enriched frozen desserts.

In October 2025, Spherical Insights reported that within the Canadian frozen foods market, the frozen desserts segment accounted for the largest revenue market share in 2024 and is expected to grow at a significant CAGR during the forecast period (to 2035). The report attributes the segmental growth to both health-conscious consumers seeking high-quality healthier options and consumer attention drawn to luxurious options.

Overall, Canadians are buying a lot of ice cream and frozen treats.

Lesya Chapman, director of marketing and communications for Chapman's Ice Cream, has noticed an increase in sales over the past year, including during the winter.

"Canadians consume more ice cream in the winter than any other country," she says, quipping that "You know you are Canadian, when you eat ice cream in the winter."

The Chapman's product lineup includes their renowned ice cream in so many wonderful flavours, as well as frozen yogurt, sorbet, ice cream bars, no-sugar-added ice cream, and L'il Lolly treats.



(L to R) David Chapman, CEO, Lesya Chapman, director of marketing & communications, Ashley Chapman, COO, Penny Chapman, president, Chapman's.

"Seasonality is always there," says Chapman. "We sell approximately 70 per cent of our products during warmer months."

And summer 2025 was warm from coast to coast to coast.

"Ice cream sales showed strong growth during the current 52-week period (Nielsen) plus-eight per cent, due in part to the hotter summer weather experienced in 2025 compared to 2024," says Pamela Nalewajek, chief marketing and communications officer for Dairy Farmers of Canada. "While the category remains highly seasonal with the largest share in the summer months, retailers also see notable spikes in sales around key holidays such as Easter, Thanksgiving, and the holiday season."



Pamela Nalewajek, chief marketing and communications officer for Dairy Farmers of Canada.

Size matters when it comes to ice cream.

"Over the past 12 months, retail sales have been particularly driven by regular ice cream and options sold in tubs of 1.5 and 2 litres because of the strong value they offer consumers," says Nalewajek.

Chapman has also noted this as well.

"With a pushback on shrinkflation and package downsizing from consumers, there is appreciation for full traditional formats, like a full 2-litre tub," says Chapman.

However, it does depend on your customer base.

"Different consumer segments prefer different formats," she says. "For example, urban consumers with smaller freezers prefer smaller formats. Empty nesters also prefer smaller formats at times."

THE BEST SOLUTION FOR EVERY NEED



PROUD CANADIAN MANUFACTURER

Canada's largest manufacturer of refrigerated retail food display cases for all grocery stores, convenience stores, independent bakeries, butcher shop, delis, liquor stores, produce stores and grab n' go food & beverage locations

For further information contact at us :

1-800-363-3439



arneg



Scooped By Demetres serves ultra creamy, artisanal ice creams, with 20 rotating flavours made with love in Toronto.

continued on page 42



PACKAGING & LABEL SOLUTIONS

- LABELS
- CORRUGATE
- FOLDING CARTON
- DIGITAL PRINT & PACKAGING
- PROTECTIVE PACKAGING
- SHIPPING SUPPLIES

WWW.GLBC.COM

CHAPMAN'S®



Size matters, eh?



Canadian tradition is a full **2L** of Chapman's. Same size since 1973.



Award-Winning Premium

Every spoonful is a delectable treat.
18 delightful flavours.



The Only Chocolate

Best Chocolate Ice Cream Award
International Ice Cream
Consortium (IICC), 2022

Wolf Pass

Best of Butterly Award in the
Ice Cream Category
Based on Canadian Consumer Reviews, 2025

Pecan Butter Tart

NEW Flavour for 2026!
An authentic taste of
traditional Canadian cuisine

PRODUCT SHOWCASE

CLASSIC CANADIAN

Based in Markdale, Ontario, Chapman's Ice Cream is launching Pecan Butter Tart in their full 2-litre Premium line. Inspired by the classic Canadian dessert, this premium ice cream with hints of pecan and maple syrup is brimming with praline pecans and buttery sugar cookie pieces. Every spoonful is a delectable treat.



HEALTHY, SATISFYING, AND DELICIOUS

Founded by two sisters, Fiona and Nuala, in Delta, BC, Fromage Protein Pops pair the joy of ice cream with the goodness of cottage cheese in rich and creamy frozen pops. Naturally high in protein and lower in sugar, they're a treat for the entire family.



PROTEIN FOR THE WIN!

Calgary-based Foothills Creamery has launched the first high-protein ice cream in Canada. Available in Coffee Bean and Chocolate Peanut Butter flavours, their protein ice cream delivers 30 grams of protein per pint and contains 50 per cent less sugar.



HAPPINESS ON A STICK

Canada's Top 2 Dairy-free Pints are now available on a stick! From Calgary, Righteous small-batch gelato bars offer a smooth, refreshing fruit experience with consistent texture and bold flavours in every bite. All natural ingredients, no added colours or flavours.



OLD-FASHIONED GOODNESS

Shaw's Ice Cream is a family favourite made with fresh cream as the first ingredient. Crafted in Tillsonburg, Ontario, by three sisters, Shaw's delivers rich, creamy, and indulgent flavours — and now Shaw's is bringing its classic and creative varieties to Western Canada!



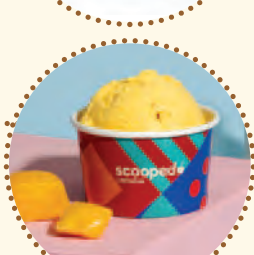
CHECK OUT THESE CAKES

Marvelous Moos dual-layered premium ice cream cakes from Edwinstown, Nova Scotia, have chocolate fudge crunch centres, inclusions, and novelty candy toppings. Cookie Jar Supreme, Strawberry Cheesecake, Toffee Caramel, Chocolate Brownie, Chocolate Candy, Caramel Nut Fudge. Perfect for any celebration.



RENOWNED ARTISANAL CRAFTSMANSHIP

Drawing on more than 35 years of ice cream expertise and based in Woodbridge, Ontario, Demetres produces small-batch, award-winning ice creams with its proprietary 19 per cent butterfat base, chef-driven approach, and the same high-quality ingredients used in their restaurants and boutiques.



As for flavours, Chapman says vanilla and chocolate continue to be Canada's favourites. But there lots of interest in diverse and quite exciting new flavours, like Dubai chocolate (pistachio and toasted, shredded filo dough), ube (purple yam), and that most iconic of Canadian desserts: butter tart.

But the biggest sales driver in 2025-2026 is also the most Canadian.

"The Canadian movement is the main engine of sales growth for Canadian companies, as many Canadians prioritize Canadian products," says Chapman.

Nalewajek concurs.

"Consumer sentiment around buying Canadian continues to influence the choices people make in grocery aisles," she says. "With 90 per cent brand awareness (IMI Research), the Blue Cow Quality Milk logo proudly certifies dairy products — including ice cream — made with 100 per cent Canadian milk and milk ingredients."



Marvelous Moo's strawberry cheesecake crumble includes real premium ice cream for the ultimate dessert experience.

Nalewajek adds that shoppers are increasingly turning to ice cream made with simpler ingredients because it delivers on the taste and authenticity they're looking for, which sets them apart from frozen desserts.

"When retailers choose dairy products with the Blue Cow logo or the words 'Product of Canada,' they leverage the trust consumers place in the high-quality milk produced here at home to some of the world's highest standards," she says.

For retailers across the country, this is your call to stock up your freezers and hang up your flags. No matter what the weather sends us this summer, eating ice cream and frozen novelties has become an act of Canadian pride and patriotism — and it's your opportunity to introduce customers to a wonderful world of trend-setting treats made right here at home. ●



Proudly Canadian Fresh Baked Simplicity Delivered Frozen

4145 Spallumcheen Place, Spallumcheen, BC V4Y 0N1

E: info@okfrozendough.com | P: 250-546-0311

Check out our fresh new look www.okfrozendough.com

COFFEE FOR CONSUMERS



THE UPS AND MAYBE DOWNS OF COFFEE PRICES

Whether buying coffee at a grocery store or ordering a cappuccino at Starbucks, Canadians have felt the sharp taste of rising coffee prices over the last several years. While Canada's overall food prices rose by 3.5%, coffee prices increased by 20.3% in 2025. Beef by comparison was up 13.5% in 2025. Coffee prices have shot up by 73.5% in the last five years. It seems that prices continually go up. However, there are signs on the horizon that some relief for coffee prices is coming later this year.

Why Coffee Prices Matter So Much To Canadians

Canadians' love of coffee helps explain why price increases are so noticeable. On average, Canadians drink 2.8 cups of coffee per day, consuming approximately 663 million pounds

annually. That demand translated into \$6.2 billion in coffee sales in 2024. According to Statistics Canada, \$4.8 billion of those sales occurred at restaurants, with the remaining \$1.4 billion coming from grocery stores. It is reported that 71% of Canadians drink coffee on a daily basis.

While most coffee sales by dollar value occur at coffee shops and restaurants, the majority of coffee by volume is consumed at home. About 73% of coffee is brewed at home, with the remaining 27% consumed outside the home. Fast-food restaurant chains dominate the out-of-home market. Perhaps no surprise, Tim Hortons alone accounts for more than 70% of hot brewed coffee sales in Canada, followed by Starbucks and McDonald's. Both Tim Hortons and Starbucks also sell significant volumes of coffee through major grocery chains.

To understand why coffee prices have risen so sharply, it helps to understand where coffee is grown. Coffee beans come from red cherries grown on coffee plants in tropical regions between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn. Coffee requires stable temperatures between 15°C and 30°C, consistent rainfall, rich soil, and frost-free conditions. Arabica beans — generally milder and more aromatic — grow at higher elevations, while the hardier Robusta beans grow at lower altitudes. Brazil, Vietnam, Colombia, Indonesia, and Ethiopia collectively account for roughly 74% of global coffee production, with Brazil alone supplying about 30% of the world's coffee.

Why Coffee Prices Have Gone Up So Much

Over the last five years, several factors have caused the price of coffee to skyrocket.

Climate change has caused supply shortages.

Floods, droughts, rising temperatures, and increasingly erratic weather patterns have reduced coffee supplies worldwide. In 2025, Brazil's Arabica production fell by 18.4% due to poor flowering, frost, and an unusually dry summer. To offset these losses, Brazil has shifted some production toward Robusta beans, which are more tolerant of extreme conditions. Arabica accounts for 75% of the world's production, mostly grown in Brazil and Colombia. Robusta account for the remaining 25%, mostly grown in Vietnam and Indonesia.

Vietnam has faced similar challenges. Rising temperatures and drought caused coffee production there to decline by 15% in 2025. The Vietnam Coffee and Cocoa Association has warned that exports could fall by an additional 15% over the next two years if climate pressures persist. If global supply is constrained, prices will likely continue to rise.

U.S. Tariffs and Their Spillover Effects

In July 2025, the Trump administration imposed tariffs on coffee and other agricultural products imported into the United States, including a 50% tariff on Brazilian coffee and even higher rates for Vietnamese coffee. The merits of this move was highly questionable, given that the U.S. produces only about 1% of the coffee it consumes. The argument that tariffs were needed to protect US domestic producers simply does not hold water — or coffee.

These tariffs pushed roasted coffee prices in the U.S. up by 21% by September 2025. Although the tariffs were lifted in November, the higher prices largely remained due to ongoing supply shortages. Because Canada imports much of its roasted coffee from the U.S., higher American prices quickly translated into higher costs for Canadian consumers.

Adding to the cost of coffee, Canada imposed a 25% retaliatory tariff on various U.S. goods, including coffee, on March 4, 2025, in response to U.S. trade actions. While this tariff was lifted in September of 2025 this further contributed to higher coffee prices for Canadian consumers in 2025.

These factors resulted in higher costs for grocery stores. In its September 30, 2025 food inflation report, Loblaw reported a 40.9% year-over-year increase in the publicly

traded cost of raw coffee. The company cited U.S. tariffs on Brazilian products as a major contributor. The report also noted that Brazilian producers were holding back inventory amid market uncertainty, further tightening global supply.

How Consumers Are Responding

Demand for coffee is largely, but not entirely, inelastic. While overall consumption may not decline much as prices rise, how and where consumers buy coffee is changing.

Grocery retailers report that some customers are trading down from premium brands to private-label alternatives, purchasing coffee only when it is on sale, or switching from single-serve pods to lower-cost options. Convenience comes at a price. Single-serve systems such as Keurig and Nespresso can cost about \$1.30 to \$1.70 per pod respectively. As a result, some consumers are abandoning pods altogether and returning to traditional ground coffee.

Traditionally coffee was, and sometimes still is, sold in grocery stores in one-pound (454 gram) packages. As part of the overall "shrinkflation" in the food industry where the package size of food is reduced to make higher prices less noticeable, coffee suppliers and grocery stores have also reduced the size of their coffee packages, now frequently down to 340 grams. The volume of coffee in a bag has dropped by 25% to provide cover for the more than 25% rise in the price of coffee.

At the restaurant level, higher coffee costs have also reshaped product offerings. Despite rising input prices, chains such as Tim Hortons, Starbucks, and McDonald's have maintained, or even increased, coffee revenue by expanding their offerings to include higher margin cold brew, specialty drinks, and customizable beverages.

Signs That Coffee Prices May Ease or Decline in 2026

While climate change may be a long-term challenge coffee prices may ease in 2026. Coffee production is expected to increase this year in Brazil and Colombia resulting in a surplus crop for 2026/2027. Some expect Brazil to increase production of coffee by over 37% this year. As a result, The World Bank expects the price of Arabica coffee to drop by 13% in 2026.

Arabica coffee on the futures market have fallen from the 2025 highs of over \$4/lb (US) to trade closer to \$2.80–\$3.00/lb (US) as of March 2026. While there are clear signs that prices at the international commodity level are heading down this year, consumers shouldn't expect to see sizeable declines in the price of coffee at the grocery store level and highly unlikely at coffee stores. Coffee prices tend to go up but are "sticky" on their way back down. Regardless of the price, Canadians seem more than willing to pay for their much-needed morning cup of coffee. ●

Douglas Hart, president, Hart & Associates Management Consultants Ltd.



FIRE UP THE SEASON!

HOW CANADIAN GROCERS CAN MAKE THE MOST OF BARBECUE SEASON

BBQ season is one of the most significant and reliable revenue opportunities on the Canadian grocery calendar. Just look at the numbers. Seventy-two per cent of Canadians have a barbecue at home or have regular access to one. A Dalhousie University Agri-Food Analytics Lab survey of more than 9,000 Canadians found that 42% barbecue multiple times a week during summer months, and that kind of habitual, recurring behaviour is what generates sustained consumer traffic throughout the season. Hamburgers and hot dogs top the list of favourite BBQ foods for 37% of Canadians, followed by beef steaks at 29% and chicken products at 17%, making the meat counter the undisputed centrepiece of summer grilling selections. Sauces, rubs and marinades, sides, and even charcoal and accessories are also all important categories that contribute to the season's sales.



Barbecue

The 2026 season arrives with an increasingly complex consumer backdrop, continuing challenges that grocers have experienced in recent years. Understanding the complexities, including both the challenges and opportunities, are key to effective and profitable merchandising.

Canada's Food Price Report 2026, produced by Dalhousie University and partner institutions, forecasts overall food prices will continue to rise 4% to 6% this year, with the average family of four expected to spend \$17,571 on food, an increase of nearly \$995 from last

OF THE THREE MAIN PROTEINS AT THE CENTRE OF THE CANADIAN BBQ PLATE, PORK MAY REPRESENT THE MOST INTERESTING OPPORTUNITY FOR GROCERS IN 2026.



photo shutterstock.com

year. Food prices are now 27% higher than they were five years ago, and meat products — central to grilling season — are driving much of that pressure. Beef prices have seen the most significant rise, at 16% over the past year, currently sitting at 35% above the five-year average, with the cattle herd at its lowest level in Canada since the 1980s. Experts also say prices will continue rising in 2026, though not at the same pace as in recent years. The squeeze on beef has pushed more consumers toward chicken, which saw its own price increases of 6.7% in the final quarter of 2025. For grocers, this protein pivot is both a challenge and an opportunity — shoppers are not abandoning the grill, they are rethinking what goes on it.



Mike Moorhouse, brand manager for Grimm's Fine Foods.

Mike Moorhouse, brand manager for Grimm's Fine Foods, sees this shift playing out directly in the category. "Beef is no longer automatically the default for many

households," he says. "As prices have risen, some families are reserving beef more for special occasions and leaning toward more affordable but equally versatile options like chicken thighs, pork shoulder, sausages, and whole birds." Even with rising prices protein is the dominant trend in food right now, and the grill is one of its most natural expressions, says Moorhouse. "A smoked sausage or a bratwurst off the grill is not a manufactured wellness product. It is real food cooked over fire. Shoppers don't need convincing. The occasion already delivers what they want."

Of the three main proteins at the centre of the Canadian BBQ plate, pork may represent the most interesting opportunity for grocers in 2026. Since 2022, pork prices at grocery stores have risen by just over 13%, modest compared to chicken's almost 22% rise and beef's 38% climb, according to Farm Credit Canada's 2026 Hog Outlook. FCC Senior Economist Justin Shepherd noted that by the end of 2025, consumers were increasingly choosing pork over other proteins on a dollar-per-kilogram basis. For retailers, Moorhouse is direct: "Giving sausages, pork, and chicken the floor positioning and visibility that premium beef used to occupy is no longer optional. The shopper migration is already happening. Products priced right and placed prominently are well positioned to capture that spending."



Limited edition beer bratwurst from Grimm's.

FOR EVERY BURGER

IT HAS TO BE HEINZ
ESTD 1869



*See your field sales representative for details

Barbecue merchandising display from Kraft Heinz Canada.



Another shift that is defining this BBQ season is the move toward more casual, spontaneous entertainment. Kelly Fleming, VP, Marketing & Strategy Canada at Kraft Heinz Canada also sees the home entertaining trend as an important one.



Kelly Fleming, VP, marketing & strategy, Kraft Heinz Canada.

“Canadians are feeling the pinch of higher prices, and that’s affecting summer behaviours,” she says. “We’re expecting to see more staycations and at-home entertaining- occasions when shoppers want to celebrate, and are willing to pay more for products that enhance the specialness of their meal, such as a new sauce or a premium protein.”

Instead of large, planned gatherings, people are hosting smaller, spontaneous

get-togethers, which often means they are buying closer to the occasion and in smaller

quantities,” says Moorhouse. “Smaller portions, more frequent eating, and less commitment to a single sit-down meal” is also reshaping what goes into the basket he says.

Grimm’s has responded to this directly with its Grimm’s Poppers launch — a bite-sized jalapeño-and-cheddar meat appetizer built around Bavarian smokies. “We took a recipe people already know and love, the jalapeño popper, and reimagined it as a high-protein appetizer,” says Moorhouse. “New to the refrigerated meat case and built for exactly that moment- the window where guests are arriving and food is being prepared. The consumer response confirmed the appetite is there.” This season also marks Grimm’s 75th anniversary, celebrated with two limited-time products rooted in the company’s German sausage-making roots- a Beer Bratwurst made with actual gluten-free beer, and a Beer

CONDIMENTS AND SAUCES — “CANADIANS ARE LOOKING FOR EXCITING FLAVOUR PROFILES THAT ELEVATE AT-HOME MEALS. WE’RE SEEING A RISE IN BOLD, SMOKY FLAVOURS.”

Stick, a German-style pepperoni built for the grill. “Nostalgia is one of the strongest emotional drivers in this category,” says Moorhouse. “These products bring our tradition to a new generation of grilling occasions.”

Condiments, accessories, and sides are where BBQ season increasingly gets won or lost in grocery stores. Fleming describes a clear push in the condiment and sauce category toward bold, globally inspired profiles. “Canadians are looking for exciting flavour profiles that elevate at-home meals,” she says. “We’re seeing a rise in bold, smoky flavours.”



photo shutterstock.com

75 years of craft worth celebrating

To celebrate our 75th anniversary, Grimm’s is launching limited edition Beer Bratwurst and Beer Sticks this Spring, a nod to our European sausage making roots.

To meet this demand, Kraft Heinz Canada is launching two new BULL'S EYE varieties — Buffalo BBQ Sauce and Applewood Smoked BBQ Sauce — alongside two new DIANA'S Sauces, Ginger & Soy BBQ Sauce and Carolina-Style Mustard BBQ Sauce. In the condiment aisle, the flavoured mayo segment is one of the fastest-growing opportunities according to Fleming. "They provide an easy, versatile base for on-trend flavours," she says. Kraft Heinz Canada recently expanded the HEINZ Flavoured Mayo lineup and is now adding three new varieties, Piri Piri, Smoky Mustard, and Chimichurri, along with a new HEINZ Burger Sauce, all supported under the "If it's a Burger, it has to be HEINZ" display program.

With grilling proteins leading the seasonal lift in sales, condiments, buns, and prepared side tend to move with them as shoppers build out a full meal, says Moorhouse. "The less obvious lift comes from snackable proteins and easy appetizer formats. As eating patterns shift toward smaller portions and more frequent occasions, the grilling occasion has expanded. Products that work before the main meal, shareable and quick to serve, are increasingly part of the same basket as the primary protein."

When it comes to merchandising, Fleming is serious about timing. "It's vital to leverage displays early in the season," she says. "Canada's selling window is short, and the May long weekend is the highest-purchase week for Summer BBQ." With 40 per cent of Canadians spending that long weekend with friends and family,

she recommends deploying prominent displays before the window opens, anchored by core staples HEINZ Ketchup, Mustard and Mayo, BULL'S EYE BBQ sauce, and KRAFT salad dressings.

Moorhouse pushes back on the tendency to treat the season as a single sprint. "There is a tendency to push hard for a promotional window and then move on," he says. "The occasion runs from the first warm weekend through to fall for a lot of Canadian households. Stay visible. Rotate the product story. Keep something fresh in the set through August. The shoppers who grilled in May are still grilling in September."

He also flags a less obvious merchandising principle — grilling purchases are impulsive and weather-driven, which means more than one touchpoint in the store pays off. "One well-placed fixture is easy to walk past," he says. "Two reminders in the same trip are harder to ignore." Fleming adds, "retailers who can convert this curiosity into purchase through in-store and online storytelling are going to win. We need to excite them with prepared sauces, inspire them with fun recipes, or show them how they can elevate their traditional BBQ recipes."

The opportunity this season is straightforward, even if executing it well is not. "Retailers that make planning and hosting effortless will capture both trips and spend," says Fleming. Moorhouse puts it plainly- "Treat grilling as a season, not a campaign." Retailers who do both will be well positioned to own the backyard this summer. ●

HEINZ
ESTD 1869

BOLD FLAVOUR MEETS MAYO



FOR DCI MEMBERS AND PARTNERS ONLY

June 2 2026 | **CIGBA/DCI Business Summit**
Pearson Convention Centre
LEADERS UNITED:
BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS. DRIVING PERFORMANCE.
WWW.CIGBA.CA/SUMMIT

REGISTER TODAY!

WWW.CIGBA.CA/GOLF

June 3 2026 | **CIGBA/CFG Charity Golf Classic**
Royal Woodbine Golf Club
Unite, Network, and Support our Charity Initiative

OPEN TO EVERYONE

dci
Your Partner in Selling

dci
IN SUPPORT OF
Food Banks Canada

CANADIAN INDEPENDENT GROCERY BUYERS ALLIANCE



Supporting agri-food founders, feeders and leaders with growth, knowledge and community.



FEAD provides resources and support for women in agri-food.

FEAD Team: Nafisa Mahabub & Lindsay Toth

Join us with a FREE FEAD Membership!

Scan me to sign up!



FROM FIELD TO SHELF



SASKATCHEWAN'S GROWING GROCERY MARKET

As one of Canada's most agriculture intensive provinces, Saskatchewan's food sector spans everything from primary production and value-added processing to grocery retail and community food access. When it comes to Saskatchewan's grocery retail sector, it is one that is outperforming the national average, evolving rapidly, and sitting at the intersection of two powerful forces- a consumer base that is feeling sustained price pressure, and a provincial food economy that is producing more value-added products than ever before.

Understanding how those forces are shaping the retail landscape in the province is essential for anyone operating in or supplying to Saskatchewan's grocery market.

According to Statistics Canada's Monthly Retail Trade Survey, Saskatchewan recorded an 8.2 per cent year-over-year increase in retail trade sales from March 2024 to March 2025, ranking second among all Canadian provinces. Total retail trade in the province reached \$2.2 billion in March 2025 and climbed to \$2.3 billion by April and May, consistently well above the national average of 4.9 per cent.



"Joining FEAD was one of the best decisions I made when we started our business, I learned so many tips and tricks about being an entrepreneur, and I met some really great women in business that have become lifetime friends and mentors."

Sondra Pern, Lake Life Caesar Co.



"It was the push that I needed to start the business and to have a little less fear. Having people check in with how I'm doing has me feeling supported throughout."

Dalia Kohen, Wild Folk Beverages





The Agri-Food Innovation Centre and Food Centre Corporate office in Saskatchewan.

The broader economic foundation of the province is also strong, with Statistics Canada reporting that Saskatchewan's real GDP reached a record \$80.5 billion in 2024, a 3.4 per cent increase and the second highest provincial growth rate in the country, giving retailers a stable and growing consumer base to serve.

Nafisa Mahabub, who leads programs and operations for the Female Entrepreneurs in Agri-Food Development (FEAD) program at the Saskatchewan Food Industry

In Saskatchewan, specifically, there's an increasing focus on local and regional food sourcing as a distinguishing feature of the retail grocery environment, one that separates the province from national norms.



Nafisa Mahabub, programs & operations, FEAD Program, Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Centre Inc.

Development Centre, points to the retail performance data as a sign of the province's economic momentum. "Retail activity in Saskatchewan has remained strong overall," she notes, pointing to the province's second-place ranking in retail trade growth and the continued investment in retail infrastructure including store upgrades, banner expansions, and improved consumer experiences. "Large retailers are modernizing stores," she says, "while smaller independent grocers are focusing on local products, specialty foods, and community-focused retail models."

Saskatchewan's grocery retail landscape is made up of a mix of national chains, regional discount banners, and a uniquely strong co-operative retail network that sets the province apart from much of the rest of Canada. On the national side, the province is served by Loblaw's Real Canadian Superstore and No Frills banners, Sobeys'

Safeway and FreshCo formats, Walmart Supercentres, and Save-On-Foods. The discount tier of grocery stores is also particularly active in the province, with FreshCo, Sobeys discount offering, expanding aggressively in Western Canada

One important player in the Saskatchewan grocery retail landscape is the Federated Co-operatives Limited (FCL), headquartered in Saskatoon, and is the largest company in Saskatchewan. It forms a system of approximately 1,500 stores with 1.9 million active members across Western Canada, with the Saskatoon Co-op alone operating six retail food stores with more than 109,000 members. In March 2025, FCL further strengthened its position by acquiring ColdStar Solutions Inc., a provider of transportation, warehousing, and grocery distribution, to optimize cold chain logistics for member stores across the region.



Mehmet Tulbek, president, Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Centre.

In response to constant pricing pressure, retailers in the province are expanding private label offerings, sharpened pricing strategies, and leaning more heavily on promotions and loyalty programs. Dr. Mehmet Caglar Tulbek, president of the Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Centre, describes the current retail landscape, saying that "many companies have expanded private label offerings and introduced more competitive pricing strategies to help consumers manage costs," while also noting that stores are concentrating on operational efficiency and supply chain improvements to maintain stable prices. In Saskatchewan specifically, he sees an increasing focus on local and regional food sourcing as a distinguishing feature of the



The Food Centre has facilities in three locations to help with development of food and ingredients. Photo courtesy of Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Centre.

STAR EGG

FROM HEN TO HOME

18 LARGE SIZE EGGS + 18 OEUFS CALIBRE GROS

FREE RUN BROWN

LES OEUFS BRUN EN LIBERTÉ

18 EGGS SIZE LARGE

18 OEUFS CALIBRE GROS

FREE RUN HARMAN EGGS

PRODUCED IN SASKATCHEWAN

PRODUCED IN SASKATCHEWAN

Visit US at **StarEGG.ca** Call US at **(306) 244-4041**



Courtesy of Tourism Saskatchewan.

Farm One Forty is a local and sustainable choice for Saskatoon's ethical eaters.



Courtesy of Tourism Saskatchewan.

the FEAD program, and adds that she sees a fundamental shift in how retail buyers are approaching new product selection, saying that clarity has become the defining factor. “Buyers want to quickly understand what a product is, who it is for, and why it deserves space on the shelf,” she says. “Brands that clearly communicate their value through packaging, pricing, and strong branding are far more likely to succeed in retail.” For food entrepreneurs in Saskatchewan, that means the work of building a market-ready brand has become just as important as the work of building the product itself.

Another trend that is affecting the grocery sector is a powerful surge in preference for Canadian-made products, intensified by trade tensions with the United States throughout 2025. A Leger 360 survey found that 81 percent of Canadians reported being more inclined to purchase Canadian-made products that year, with approx-

imately two-thirds actively reducing purchases of U.S.-origin goods both in-store and online. For Saskatchewan, a province that accounts for approximately 40 per cent of Canada's total farm area and is a global leader in crops including lentils, peas, wheat, and canola, this is a significant opportunity. Toth sees it playing out directly in conversations between food entrepreneurs and retail buyers. “Retail buyers are more open than ever to regional brands if they can demonstrate strong branding, consistent supply, and customer demand,” she says. The continued rise of regional Saskatchewan food brands entering grocery retail is, in her view, one of the top developments to watch over the coming year.

Mahabub reinforces the point from the perspective of what Saskatchewan produces. “The province already produces the raw ingredients,” she says. “The opportunity is turning more of



Courtesy of Tourism Saskatchewan.

“The province already produces the raw ingredients. The opportunity is turning more of those crops into finished food products that reach grocery shelves across Canada and internationally.”

Mahabub frames this consumer shift in terms of priorities, saying “Taste and price still matter — but increasingly, people are also considering value, local impact, health, and transparency when choosing what goes into their grocery carts.” She sees that shift as creating real opportunity for the wave of Saskatchewan food entrepreneurs currently entering the market, many of them building value-added products that highlight locally grown pulses, grains, and plant-based proteins. “More entrepreneurs are launching value-added products using local ingredients,” she says, “and many of these companies are building brands with the intention of scaling into regional and national retail markets.”

Lindsay Toth leads marketing and membership for

those crops into finished food products that reach grocery shelves across Canada and internationally.” She points to the growing integration between food innovation programs and retail buyers as a key piece — helping local companies gain shelf space faster and better understand what retailers are actually looking for.

Toth describes the brand-building shift she is seeing among Saskatchewan food founders as another important development, saying, “founders are increasingly thinking about their products as brands from the outside very beginning. Packaging, storytelling, and positioning are becoming just as important as the product itself, especially for companies that want to compete on grocery shelves.” When Saskatchewan's agricultural strength, and high-quality local ingredients are paired with that kind of brand clarity, Toth says the result is food products that can resonate with consumers both regionally and nationally.

In the coming year, discount and value format growth is expected to continue. With food prices still elevated and consumer confidence cautious, demand for value, private label products, and price-competitive formats is unlikely to go away. Dr. Tulbek points to expanded high-protein and plant-based food offerings and more automation and technology integration in stores as accompanying trends to watch alongside the value push.

The rise of Saskatchewan-made brands on grocery shelves is another major theme, and Mahabub anticipates continued growth in regional food brands entering

retail, particularly from entrepreneurs launching products that reflect the province's agricultural base. She sees the growing integration between food innovation programs and retail buyers as a critical part of this, saying, “As more founders access these resources, we can expect to see more Saskatchewan-made products reaching grocery shelves across Canada.” The FEAD program, supported by Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada through the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy, is at the centre of that effort, working with founders on accelerators, pitch competitions, and educational programming designed specifically to prepare them for retail.

Toth adds that the shifting relationship between retailers and the brands they carry is something to watch. Data-driven merchandising is becoming standard practice, with retailers using sales analytics to optimize shelf placement and product rotation. For food entrepreneurs seeking space on Saskatchewan grocery shelves, understanding those metrics, and being able to speak the language of retail buyers has become as important as having a great product. “The brands that will succeed,” Toth says, “are those that combine strong flavour, clear product benefits, and a compelling brand identity.”

For retailers, the message is consistent — Saskatchewan's grocery market is strong, its consumers are engaged and discerning, and its food production sector is generating a new generation of brands worth paying attention to. ●



H.B. KAYSONS LTD.
7890-134th STREET SURREY, BC, CANADA V3W 7T8
PH: +1 604-594-9800 FAX: +1 604-594-9852
hbkanada@yahoo.com

Grimm's Brings Zero Sugar to the Bulk Deli

Grimm's is expanding its bulk deli line nationally with zero sugar versions of two of the deli counter's most popular formats: Zero Sugar Smoked Chicken Breast and Zero Sugar Old Fashioned Ham.



Both deli classics are built around a cleaner ingredient list, without sacrificing on flavour or texture. No sugar, no added sodium nitrate or sodium nitrite.

The Old-Fashioned Ham is made with Verified Canadian Pork. The Smoked Chicken Breast uses formed whole breast meat rather than chopped or emulsified cuts, so it slices and eats more like a roast than a processed loaf.



For more information: <https://grimmsfinefoods.com>

From Little Red Wagon to National Brand: Everwell Water Kefir Co. Celebrates 10 Years of Gut Health Innovation



Born in 2015 out of a little red wagon in Squamish, BC. Founders Sabrina Horlyck and Kristin Campbell set out to make gut health fun, delicious, and accessible. What started as Squamish Water Kefir Co. has grown into a trusted national brand — and after a decade, they're celebrating this milestone with a new name: Everwell — reflects their belief in making everyday wellness tasty and accessible for everybody. Same team. Same guts. Same purpose.

Now, with the launch of their new Probiotics + Hydration on-the-go drink mixes, Everwell is scaling new peaks. Each packet delivers 1 billion probiotics, up to 264% of your daily Vitamin C, proven immunity enhancement, and hydrating Pink Himalayan salt — a functional powerhouse designed to keep your gut and immune system thriving, wherever the day takes you.

Their mission remains unchanged: to craft innovative, nutritious, and delicious functional products that put gut health first. They're just thinking a little bigger now.

For more information: www.everwellwaterkefir.com

Fleischmann's Introduces Quick-Rise Plus Yeast



Fleischmann's, a trusted name in baking for over 150 years, has introduced Fleischmann's® Quick-Rise Plus, a new innovation designed to make baking with yeast simpler and more approachable, especially for beginner bakers.

With spring approaching and baking projects getting underway, Fleischmann's Quick-Rise Plus offers home bakers an easy entry point to begin.

For more information: www.bakegood.ca

Your Preference Kombucha Expands Lineup

Your Preference Kombucha Ltd., a craft nano-brewery based in Medicine Hat, Alberta, is expanding its functional wellness portfolio with the launch of its Kombucha and Water Kefir Gummies alongside Kombucha Vitamin Gummies. Designed for today's health-conscious consumers, the gummies are crafted using raw organic kombucha and water kefir cultures to deliver convenient probiotic and prebiotic support in a shelf-stable format.



The lineup also features targeted Kombucha Vitamin Gummies formulated with key nutrients including Vitamin D, Vitamin C

& Zinc, and Choline with Vitamin E & Zinc, supporting immunity, daily wellness, and overall vitality.

For more information: www.yourpreference.ca

Level Ground Coffee Introduces Trailhead

BC-based Level Ground Coffee Roasters has kicked off 2026 with their new dark roast coffee, Trailhead. This organic craft blend coffee was developed over the last year to get the taste profile ready to hit the market. This product will be rolling out across Canada spring 2026. Trailhead was previewed at CHFA to rave reviews and is now ready to order. Level Ground started in 1997, in Victoria BC with a focus on Fair Trade sourcing that continues today.

For more information: levelground.com/trailhead



Nutella Introduces Its First-Ever Taste Innovation: Nutella Peanut

After more than 60 years as a breakfast staple, Nutella is introducing its first-ever taste innovation, Nutella Peanut. The new spread blends the smooth, chocolate-hazelnut creaminess people know and love with the familiar, comforting taste of peanuts, creating something that's unique and entirely its own.



Originally unveiled at the 2025 Sweets and Snacks Expo, Nutella Peanut was developed specifically with North American tastes in mind, offering a new way to enjoy Nutella beyond the breakfast table and into afternoon snacking moments. The result is a carefully balanced recipe that delivers the signature Nutella experience, now with a rich peanut flavour that feels both indulgent and familiar.

For more information: Nutella.ca

New High in Protein Marble Cheddar from Armstrong Cheese Earns 2026 Product of the Year Award

Armstrong Cheese, voted Canada's Most Trusted Brand in the Cheddar Cheese Category, has introduced a new High in Protein Marble Cheddar Cheese — an innovation that has already earned them the 2026 Product of the Year in the Cheese Category by Kantar.



Rather than asking Canadians to rethink their meals, Armstrong's new High in Protein cheese offers a familiar, craveable way to boost protein through a food Canadians already know and love.

"With Armstrong High in Protein Marble Cheddar Cheese, we set out to deliver the great taste Canadians expect from Armstrong Cheese with the protein they are increasingly seeking," said Tina Galluccio, director of marketing, Saputo Canada. "Being recognized as Product of the Year is something we are incredibly proud of, because it reflects how strongly this product is resonating with Canadians and how naturally it fits into everyday meals and snacks."

Rao's Expands Lineup

Rao's expands its premium lineup with Creamy Marinara and Four Cheese. Tapping into demand for elevated comfort, these authentic recipes drive trial and repeat sales. Differentiate your shelf and boost category growth with these indulgent new skus.



For more information: <https://raoscanada.ca/>

iÖGO nanö Introduces Completely New Yogurt Experience with Bubbles Innovation

Canadian dairy leader Lactalis Canada today announced the launch of 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.

For more information: iögo.ca

McSweeney's Launches Spicy Dill Pickle Zero Sugar Pepperoni

Pickle lovers and heat seekers, this one's for you. McSweeney's has launched Spicy Dill Pickle Zero Sugar Pepperoni, a bold snack that delivers the tangy, spicy punch of dill pickle without any sugar.

Available in two formats: L'il Peps, a grab-and-share bag of bite-sized pepperoni pieces, and a 2-Pack of full-length sticks. Both come in a shelf ready caddy. Bold flavour, Zero sugar.



For more information: www.mcsweeneys.ca

Okanagan Frozen Dough Launches 2026 Spring/Easter LTO Collection



Okanagan Frozen Dough has introduced its 2026 Spring/Easter LTO Lineup, available March 2026: Carrot Cake Cookies (42 g / 1.5 oz and 85 g / 3 oz) and Lemon White Chocolate Blondies (112 g / 4 oz). Crafted for bakers & retailers seeking the most delicious & easy to handle, seasonal indulgences with freezer-to-oven convenience, these products deliver strong consumer appeal and dependable performance in-store.

100% Canadian, reliable, and retail-ready, Okanagan Frozen Dough's Spring & Easter LTO

collection offers a simple way to elevate any bakery offering – giving shoppers something truly unforgettable.

For more information: www.okfrozendough.com

KidStar Nutrients All-in-One Vegan Protein

Active, growing kids need nutrients. KidStar's All-in-One Vegan Protein is more than just a delicious protein mix. Each scoop provides a nutrient equivalent of 9 servings of fruits and vegetables with up to 20 vitamins and minerals. All-in-One Vegan Protein blends into a smooth and creamy texture with no gritty bits. Easily shake, mix, or bake it into the perfect after school snack for a yummy boost of nutrients in their diet.



For more information: kidstarnutrients.com

Natura Fiber: Your Daily Boost Fiber



Reclaim your digestive health with Natura Fiber's clean, organic, plant-based, whole food fiber. This modern, feel-good fiber brand merges the best ingredients with a functional approach designed to help your body reap the benefits. Its high-impact, five-ingredient daily formula delivers 14 grams of fiber to support health and well-being and tastes great mixed into smoothies, oatmeal, baking, or enjoyed on its own.

Natura Fiber is ideal for anyone looking to support gut health, daily energy, and overall wellness. The organic blend includes ground flaxseed

(with essential omega-3 & 6), psyllium husk, dandelion root powder, burdock root powder, and fenugreek seed powder.

This unique blend of soluble and insoluble fiber works together to bind and gently flush the digestive system. Combined with a synergistic mix of digestive herbs, it supports daily fiber intake and digestive health in a simple, whole-food form.

For more information: brightsideorganics.com

Bread with Benefits: Supergrain Sourdough Steals the Spotlight

Queen St. Bakery's Supergrain Sourdough Bread is a gut-friendly take on a classic loaf. Made with simple, nourishing ingredients like seeds, beans, and gluten-free whole grains, this is bread that not only tastes good, but helps you feel good too. Perfect for toast, sandwiches, or alongside your favourite meals, it's an easy way to add more fibre and gut-friendly foods to your day.



To learn more, visit Queen St. Bakery online and follow [@queenstreetbakery](https://www.instagram.com/queenstreetbakery) on social media.



NEW FLAVOURS!

New Cheesy Flavours.
Serious Sales.
RAO'S SAY CHEESE!

STOCK THE NEW FAVORITES TODAY

Distributed by ID FOODS.
INQUIRE NOW!
1-800-367-9157

advertisers index

A. Lassonde Inc	.....24	Distribution Canada Inc	.....52	Medallion Milk	.....26
Arneg Canada Inc	.....38	Fairtrade Canada	.....19	OK Frozen Dough	.....43
Biro Manufacturing Company	.....11	Ferrero	..... IFC	Olaf Packaging Group Inc	.....12
Canprev & Orange Naturals	.....31	Foothills Creamery	.....39	Ranch IV Provisions	.....7
CFIG	.....13	Great Little Box Company	.....39	Sask Food Industry Development	
Chapmans Ice Cream	.....40, 41	Guru Lucky Snacks	.....59	Centre Inc	.....54
Colnuck Ltd.	.....17	ID Foods Corporation	..... IBC	SIAL Canada	.....OBC
Danone Canada	.....34, 35	Italpasta Ltd	.....9	Star Egg Company Ltd	.....57
Digi Canada	.....36	Kraft Canada	.....49, 53	The Lump O'Coal Corp	.....10
Direct Plus Food Group	.....57	Level Ground Trading Ltd	.....25	Tru Earth	.....21
Discovery Organics	.....7	Lily of the Desert	.....17	Unique Foods (Canada) Inc	.....3



THE NORTH AMERICAN AGRI-FOOD BUSINESS ACCELERATOR

THE TRADE SHOW DEDICATED TO FOOD INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS

20 000 professionals

RETAIL • DISTRIBUTION • FOODSERVICE • MANUFACTURERS

800 canadian & international exhibitors

FOOD • GROCERANT • PACKAGING

3 live competitions

SIAL INNOVATION • STARTUP PITCH COMPETITION • BEST CHEESEMONGER

20 conference sessions

TRENDS & INNOVATION • HEALTH • AI & TECHNOLOGY • EXPORT...



**GET YOUR VISITOR
TICKET NOW**



SIALCANADA.COM



#SIALCANADA #SIALMTL2026