



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GSF 2026 KICKS-OFF WESTERN CANADA'S LARGEST MEETINGS, TRADE SHOW AND CONFERENCE EVENT! DAY ONE WRAP-UP.

April 21, 2026, VANCOUVER, B.C. — Today was **Day 1** of The Grocery & Specialty Food West 2026 conference and trade show - a two-day event filled with informative keynotes, innovative technologies and a wide array of new products that will soon make it to the grocery stores.

Day 1 began with breakfast and MORNING CONFERENCE at the Vancouver Convention Centre, East Building. **Ron Welke**, President and CEO of the Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers (CFIG) delivered welcome remarks, followed by “THE HEALTH BALANCING ACT: Navigating Wellness Goals in a Wallet-First World.” This session helped attendees understand the new balance between aspiration and affordability delivered by **Carman Allison** of NielsenIQ. At 10:00AM, **Stewart Samuel** of IGD presented “THE NEXT CHAPTER IN PREPARED FOODS: Winning the Battle for Shopper Attention,” highlighting what is already working today, alongside more forward-looking ideas that are reshaping how retailers compete in this space.

The trade show floor officially opened with a ceremonial ribbon cutting just before 11:00AM, followed by the official opening, where attendees were eager to explore the wide range of products and services.

The 2026 Best Booths awards were announced, and the winners were (in no particular order):

Single Booth

Level Ground Coffee Roasters

Booth #: 1416

Double Booth

Houweling Nurseries Ltd.

Booth #: 1108

Marketed Booth

Kraft Heinz Canada

Booth #: 715

Multi Booth

McCain Foods

Booth #: 1021

Then came the highly anticipated “TOP TEN IN GROCERY AWARDS”! In the morning, editors from leading trade publications, along with a retail committee, voted on their top picks for the "Top 10 in Grocery Awards" chosen amongst the New Product Showcase entries.

The 2026 winners of the Top TEN in Grocery are (in no particular order):

BEST DAIRY

Product Name: iÖGO Nanö Bubbles

Flavour: Banana Yogurt with Mango Flavoured Popping Bubbles

Booth #: 1015 - Lactalis Canada

BEST CONDIMENT

Product Name: Hellman's Mayonnaise Sauce

Flavour: Dijonnaise

Booth #: 905 - Unilever Canada

BEST CONVENIENCE

Product Name: Hobbs Pickles

Flavour: Dilly Chips

Booth #: 1906 - Hobbs Pickles Inc.

BEST DESSERT

Product Name: Premium Ice Cream

Flavour: Campfire S'mores

Booth #: 522 - Kawartha Dairy Inc.

BEST LOCAL

Product Name: The Grizzly Paw Soda Company

Flavour: Black Cherry Cola

Booth #: 1744 - The Grizzly Paw Soda Company

BEST READY TO EAT

Product Name: SUN RICE

Flavour: Protein+ Jasmine Rice with Collagen

Booth #: 605 - Libra National Inc.

BEST CANDY

Product Name: BOBAlicious Popping Candy

Flavour: Blue Raspberry Blast

Booth #: 1760 - Jimmy Zee's Distribution Inc.

BEST FRESH

Product Name: Rabbit River Farms

Flavour: Dark Yolk

Booth #: 1308 - Golden Valley Eggs (P&H Foods Inc.)

BEST FROZEN

Product Name: Red Baron Deep Dish Singles

Flavour: Supreme

Booth #: 1314+1315 - Acosta Group (CJ SCHWAN'S)

BEST SNACK

Product Name: Cretors Popcorn

Flavour: Hot Honey

Booth #: 915 - Advantage Solutions

The day wrapped with an 'All Welcome Networking Reception' at the **Insights & Innovations Stage** on the trade show floor, followed by an evening reception, Gala Dinner and Awards. The Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers CFGI celebrated the following Life Member honourees: Independent Grocer Doug Lovsin (Freson Bros.), Industry Partner Jamie Nelson (Pattison Food Group), and Life Partners Brooke & Linda Kynoch (Scotch Creek Market & Safety Mart Foods).

-30 -

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For graphics or images and links:

Top 10 in Grocery Pack Shots:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/17AAgS7cCx69rT8gTe-MTE7OlwVwFWHjy?usp=sharing>

Best Booth Pictures:

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