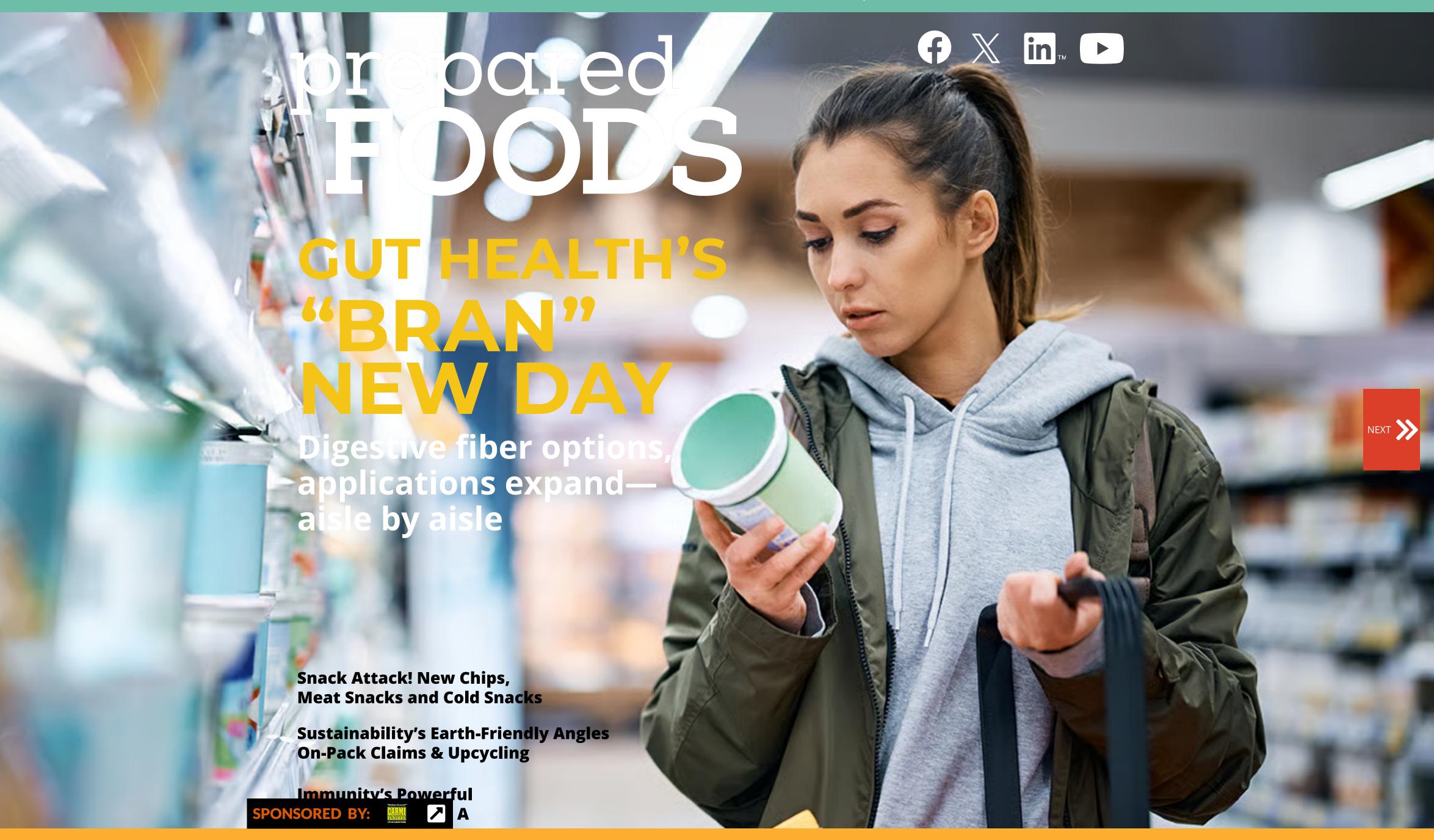
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R&D INSIGHTS AND INNOVATIONS - JULY 2025 VOL. 194, NO. 7



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NEW PRODUCTS: Trophy Time

Sweets & Snacks Expo announces 2025 "Most Innovative New Product Awards"



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Two related classes of vitamin
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Masthead



WHAT'S TRENDING

FOOD SCIENCE—FOR EYES & EARS

Want to listen to industry news and views on the way to work? Catch a quick video on a lunchbreak? Prepared Foods now goes anywhere and everywhere—to cover critical topics.



GLP-1 Medications, Artificial Intelligence and Food Technology in 2025

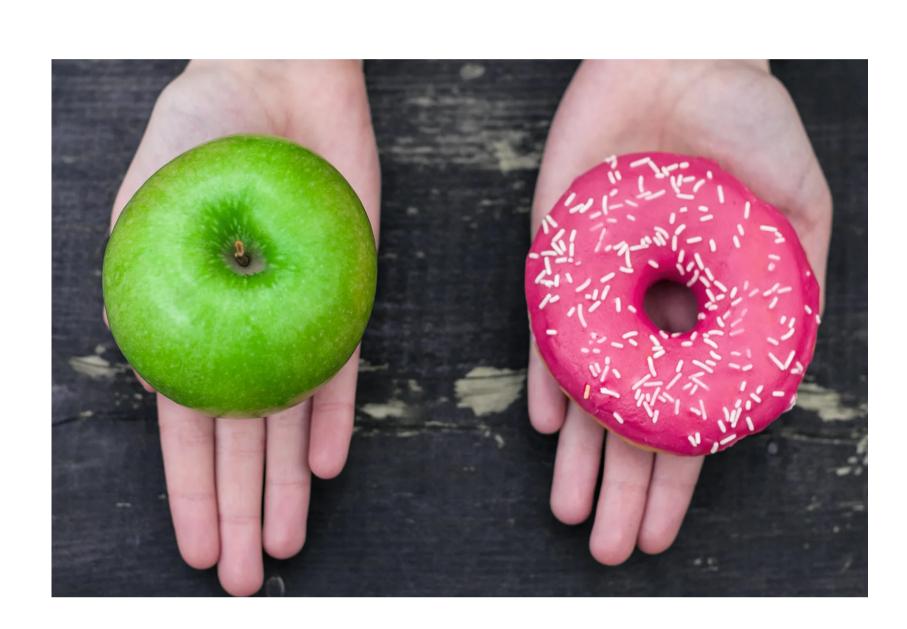
Science and policy experts identify trends that will shape the global food system in the year ahead.

READ NOW!

CREDIT: Image generated using artificial intelligence

Americans Struggle to **Eat Healthy**

Purdue's Consumer Food Insights Report reveals a gap between consumers' nutrition goals and their actual eating habits, highlighting taste and affordability as key barriers. **READ NOW!**





Sam's Club Sets New Standard for Ingredients Transparency

Driven by member insights, the brand's "Made Without" program removes artificial colors, sweeteners, and more from nearly all Member's Mark foods.

READ NOW!

CREDIT: Sam's Club / Walmart Inc.

What the Strengthening Organic Enforcement Rule **Means for Product Developers**

The new rule expands who must be certified, tightens documentation requirements and increases oversight of imported organic ingredients. **SEE INFOGRAPHIC**

Stronger CERTIFIED
ORGANIC **Organic Rules Are Here**

CREDIT: Getty Images









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NEXT >>>

New Products



The Campbell's Company, Camden, N.J., extended its Kettle Brand line with limited-edition Chili Crisp chips. Chili Crisp is the latest addition to the brand's portfolio, which has featured limited-edition flavors such as Spicy Pimento Cheese, 7 Layer Dip, and Gochujang. The limited-edition Kettle Brand Chili Crisp chips will be available at select retailers nationwide, including

Whole Foods Market and Sprouts Farmers Markets for a SRP of \$5.29. "At Kettle Brand, we're all about bold flavor experiences, and our new Chili Crisp chips are the perfect example of how we're bringing latest crave-worthy flavors to our signature kettle-cooked chips," said Campbell's. "Inspired by the global obsession with this spicy, crunchy condiment, we've created a chip that delivers a next-level fusion of heat, garlic, and umami in every bite."



Niche Hitter Calbee America Inc., Fairfield, Calif., introduced two lines to address those looking for ethnic adventure and

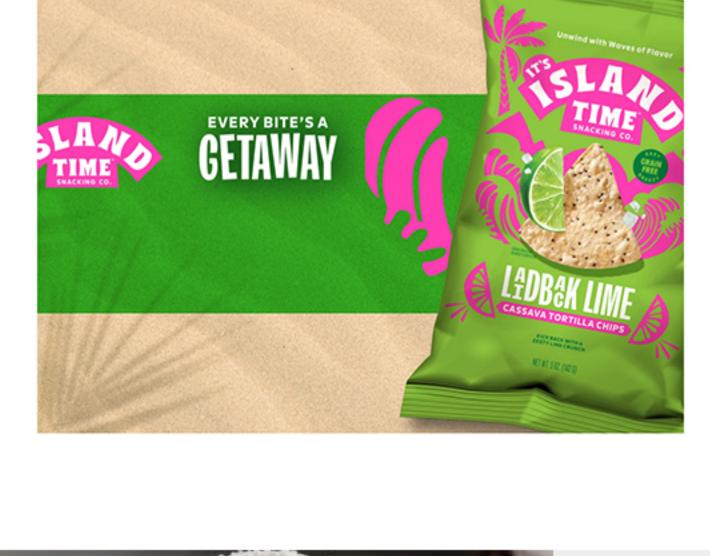
organic integrity. In February, it launched four varieties of Calbee Asian Style chips inspired by Japanese, Thai, Chinese, and Korean dishes. Varieties in 6oz packages include Umami Salt, Thai-Style Yellow Curry, Spicy Hot Pot, and Korean-Style Spicy BBQ. In a separate move this May, Calbee announced a three-item line of USDA certified organic potato chips (projected

for September debut) under the Weston's Family Farms brand. The line features single-sourced potatoes from Gold Dust & Walker Farms, Malin, Ore. Varieties will include Sea Salt, Sea Salt & Vinegar, and White Truffle. Suggested retail is \$4.69 per bag.

Summer Snacking >>> Tortilla chip maker Easy Foods Inc., Kissimmee, Fla.,

introduced three Island Time cassava chip varieties featuring cassava flour, avocado oil and chia seeds. Gluten-free, grain-free options include Surfin' Salt, Laidback Lime, and Simply Saltless. They debuted in June EasyFoods.com and Walmart.com. "Snacking can be gluten-free, grain-free and delicious

with our Island Time Chips designed for people who believe food should be fun, flavorful and free from labels," said Easy Foods Founder William Isaias.







With interest in sauces and condiments up 34% in 2024*, The Campbell's Company, Camden, N.J., said it wanted to be the first to introduce Awesome

Awesome Sauce!

Sauce, a "sweet, smoky and tangy condiment found at favorite restaurants" to the company's Goldfish cracker line. Campbell's also brought back two limited-edition flavors for the summer: Goldfish Spicy Dill Pickle and Goldfish OLD BAY Seasoned Crackers. "We're thrilled to debut our bold new flavor, Awesome Sauce, and bring back fan-favorite Spicy Dill Pickle," said Mike Fanelli, senior director of marketing,

Goldfish. "Whether you're at a backyard BBQ, road-tripping with the family, or just soaking up the sun, this awesome flavor combination packs a bold punch for a summer full of smiles." *Source: Innova Flavor Research 2023

Kellanova, Chicago, extended its Rice Krispies brand with Kellogg's Rice Krispies Treats Bliss bars in two varieties:

Cereal in Snack Form >>>

Chocolate Sea Salt Pretzel and Caramel Sea Salt Pretzel. Each features crispy rice and chewy marshmallow topped with semi-sweet chocolate chunks or caramel-flavored chips, and candied sea salt pretzels. They debuted nationwide in April with a SRP of \$3.99 for a six-count box. "The new Rice Krispies Treats Bliss flavors reimagine our bars as a canvas for gourmet topping combinations," said Danielle

Krispies Treats Bliss, we are bringing those confectioninspired creations straight to shelves, making it easier than ever to enjoy a next-level treat whenever the craving strikes."

Rappoport, brand director for Rice Krispies Treats. "With Rice









and clean avocado oil. They debuted for \$5.99 in 7oz bag at Whole Foods Market, with expanded distribution to Kroger stores coming in September. Varieties include Cowboy Cheddar and Blazin' Hot Cheddar.

Say Cheese! \wedge

"Cheese puffs are one of the most iconic, nostalgic snacks out there, but they've long been filled with ingredients most of us try to avoid," said Charles Coristine, president and CEO of LesserEvil. "Cheezmos take that classic experience and clean it up without compromising on taste. They're cheesy, crunchy, and snackable, with real

ingredients that are as good for you as they taste."



Association's 2025 Sweets & Snacks Expo to introduce a host of salty and sweet snacks. New offerings included Vlasic Pickle Balls in a new Spicy flavor, DAVID Seeds Cinnamon Churro

Snack Attack

Flavored Jumbo Sunflower Seeds, BiGS Taco Bell Fire! Sauce seeds, two flavors of new Glutino Wafer Bites (Chocolate Peanut Butter, Pink Lemonade), two new flavors of Angie's BOOMCHICKAPOP (Mango Habanero, Cinnamon Churro), and Andy Capp's Cheesy Tots. "The Sweets & Snacks Expo is a great forum to highlight our diverse snacks portfolio," said Jill Dexter, President, Grocery and Snacks for Conagra Brands.

Conagra Brands, Inc., Chicago, used the National Confectioners





⋘ васк







flavored potato chip created as a collaboration with Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation. Other new Utz items

Utz Brands, Inc., Hanover, Pa., used the 2025 Sweets & Snacks Expo to showcase new products in its Utz, Zapp's,

Boulder Canyon and On The Border lines. Utz refreshed its namesake line with a seasonal, summertime lemonade-



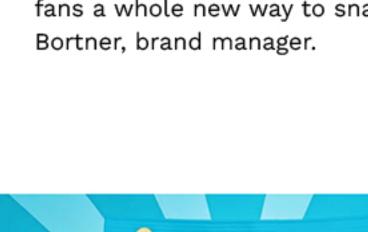




include Utz Cheese Pizza Mike's Hot Honey flavored Cheese Balls and Utz Sour Cream & Onion Mixed Minis Pretzels. Boulder Canyon introduced Mike's Hot Honey flavored kettle-cooked chips as well as Wavy Sea Salt and Wavy Cheddar Sour Cream flavors. Zapp's introduced Big Cheezy Sinfully Seasoned Pretzel Stix. On The Border expanded

its Café Style line with two new flavored varieties: Lime & Sea Salt and Garlic & Mexican Herb.

Partially Popped >>> Hormel Foods Corp., Austin, Minn., extended its



our new Partially Popped options, we're bringing fans a whole new way to snack," said Tim

CORN NUTS brand with Partially Popped corn

kernels in three flavors: White Cheddar, Movie

in a 3oz bag for a MSRP of \$1.99-\$2.49. This

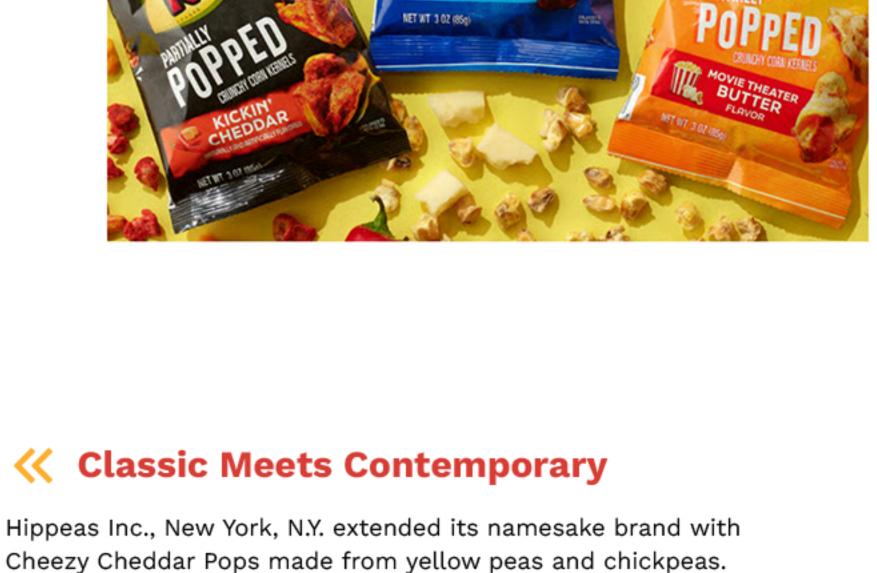
Speedway and Circle K locations.

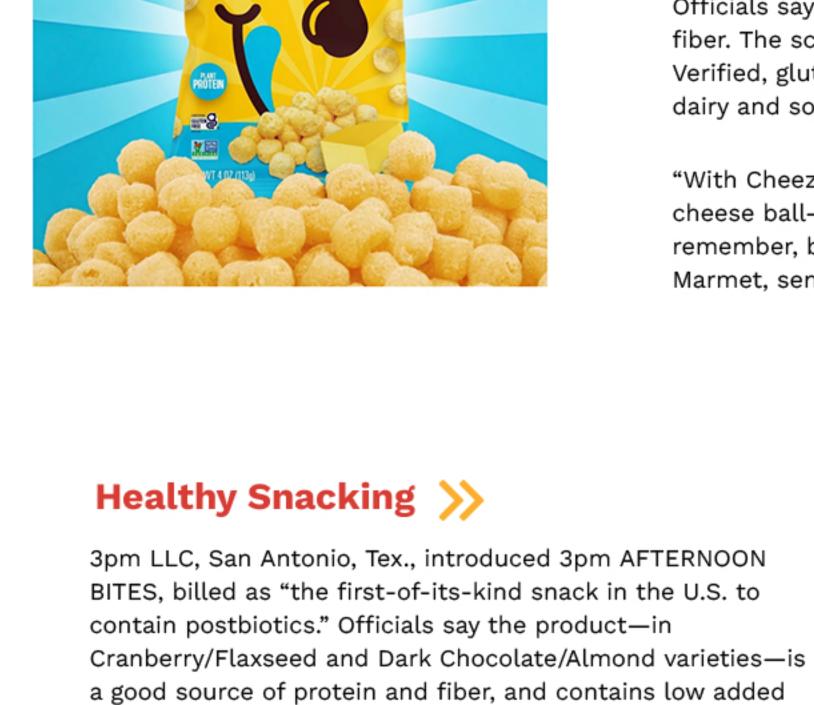
limited launch is available at select 7-Eleven,

"The CORN NUTS brand has always been about

big crunch and even bigger flavor, and now, with

Theater Butter, and Kickin' Cheddar. Items come





CHEEZY CHEDDAR

dairy and soy. "With Cheezy Cheddar Pops, we set out to reimagine the classic cheese ball—bringing back that nostalgic flavor and fun you

remember, but with a modern, better-for-you twist," said Nick Marmet, senior director of brand management and innovation.

Officials say each 1oz serving delivers 3g of protein and 2g of

Verified, gluten-free, vegan and free from allergens like nuts,

fiber. The school-safe pops also are also Non-GMO Project

BALANCED ENERGY FOR THE REST OF YOUR DA

five cookies carries a suggested retail of \$4.98. "By integrating postbiotics with plant-based proteins and nutrient-rich ingredients, we've developed a product that not only tastes amazing but also fuels your body in the healthiest 3pm's chief nutrition advisor.

way possible," said Dr. Sylvia Klinger, a nutrition expert and

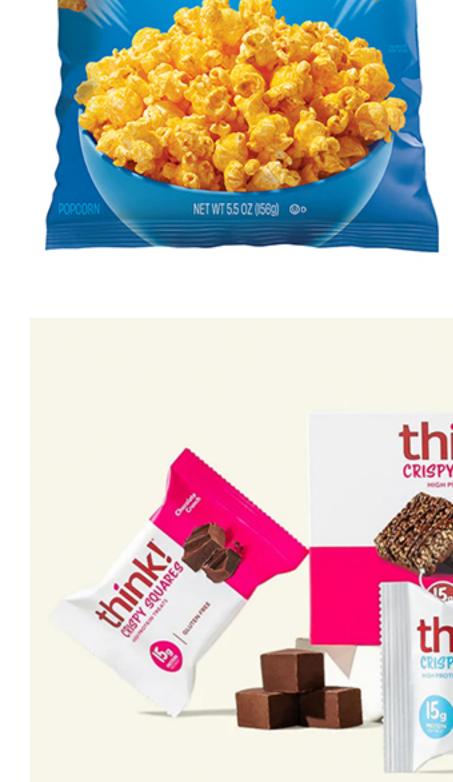
sugar, fat and sodium. AFTERNOON BITES contain a

postbiotic for broad range immune support. The offering

debuted in April at select H-E-B stores across Texas. A box of



AFTERNOON BIT



moment—not just for the brand, but for Our Home's mission to create craveable, high-quality snacks for every occasion," said Deb Holt, president of commercial, go-to-market at Our Home.

Health brand introduced Avocado Oil Veggie Stix, Straws, and

"The debut of Pop Secret's Ready-to-Eat Popcorn is a major

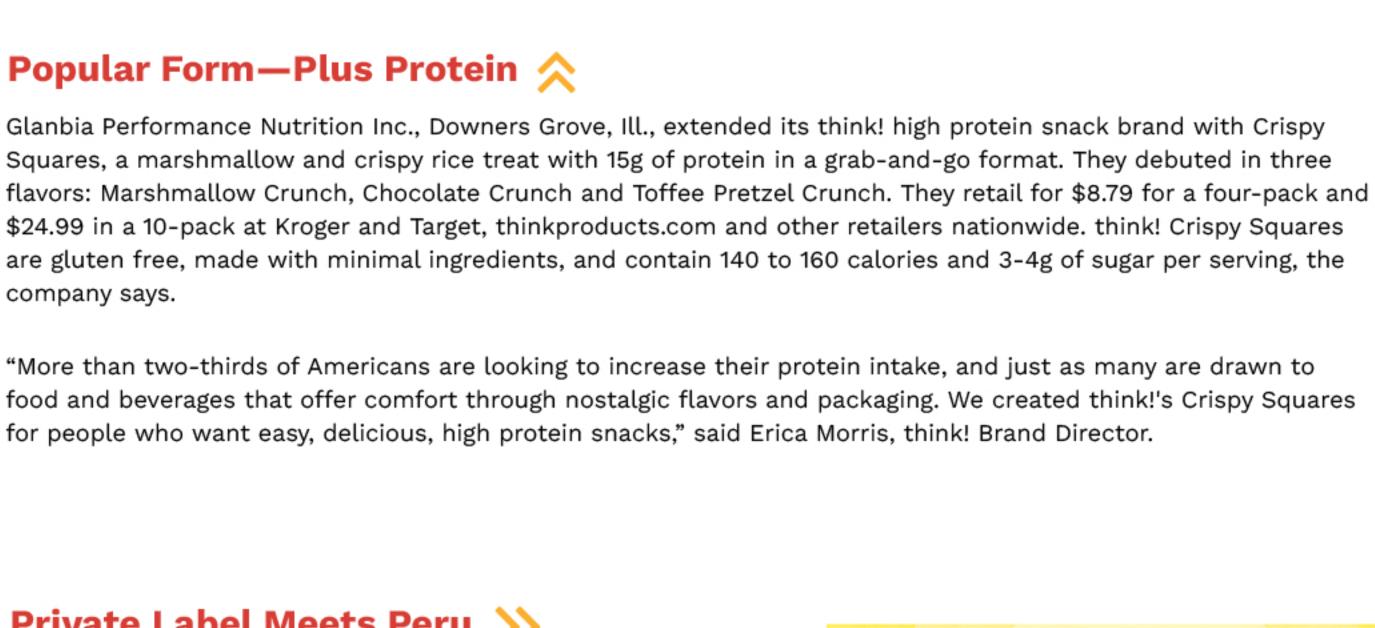
Chips. Popchips also introduced a Sweet Heat flavor.

Popular Form—Plus Protein 众

company says.

"More than two-thirds of Americans are looking to increase their protein intake, and just as many are drawn to food and beverages that offer comfort through nostalgic flavors and packaging. We created think!'s Crispy Squares for people who want easy, delicious, high protein snacks," said Erica Morris, think! Brand Director.

Private Label Meets Peru >>> INTRODUCING NEW Natural Grocers by Vitamin Cottage Inc., Lakewood, Colo., NATURAL GROCERS® BRAND bolstered its private label line with three varieties of non-**NON-GMO PERUVIAN CHIPS!** GMO Peruvian chips: Sea Salt Sweet Potato, Sea Salt Kettle and Sea Salt Cassava. The 5oz offerings carry a retail price of \$3.49. "At Natural Grocers, we believe that every snack should be as



and naturally bold flavors." TORTILLA CHIPS

NET WT 12 02 (\$40g)

delicious as it is thoughtfully sourced," said Raquel Isely, vice

president of marketing at Natural Grocers. "Our new non-

ingredients—offer the perfect balance of satisfying crunch

GMO Peruvian chips—crafted with simple, high-quality

Bursting with Flavor Hain Celestial Group Inc., Hoboken, N.J., extended its Garden Veggie Snacks line with two new varieties of Flavor Burst Tortilla Chips: Smoky BBQ and Sweet Tangy Chili. Flavor Burst Tortilla Chips are certified gluten-free and feature five kinds of vegetables (spinach, beet, red bell pepper, carrot and tomato) along with non-GMO corn. Smoky BBQ Tortilla Chips are exclusively available at Walmart in a 12oz size, while Sweet Tangy Chili Tortilla Chips are available at Kroger in a 6oz size.

Kaiser, senior director of marketing.

"We know snackers are increasingly looking for better-for-you

options that don't compromise on taste, and we're thrilled to meet

that demand with craveable new varieties of Flavor Burst," said Ed

Fourth Level of Texture Actor and social media influencer Brent Rivera partnered with Redbud Brands, Los Angeles, to develop LEVELS, a

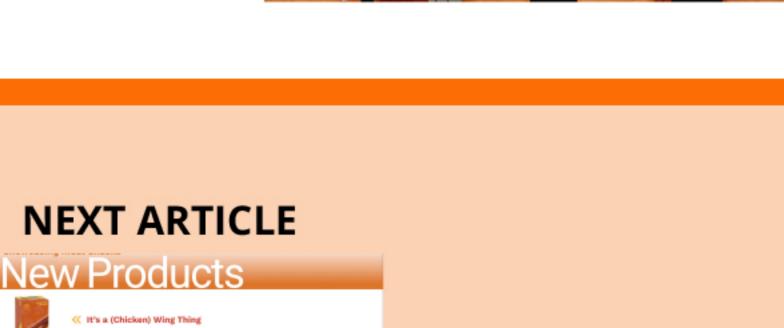
and are Non-GMO Project Verified. Flavors include Sweet Cinnamon Churro, Bold Nacho Cheese, and Fiery Chili Lime. "Not only do LEVELS taste delicious, but we've also

gluten free snacks also are made with 100% avocado oil

new "4D" snack line with a corn and potato base. The







iveets a treack supe in indianapolis to host an entire booth dedicated to its family If neat snack offerings across the Silm Jim, bulets, Pervose and FATTY brands.

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K Hot Stuff

New Products



It's a (Chicken) Wing Thing

Conagra Brands, Inc., Chicago, used the National Confectioners Association's 2025 Sweets & Snacks Expo in Indianapolis to showcase its family of meat snack offerings across the Slim Jim, Duke's, Penrose and FATTY brands.

Slim Jim is partnering with Buffalo Wild Wings to offer two new chicken sticks in Buffalo style and Hot flavors. These sticks feature bold, tangy heat inspired by Buffalo Wild Wings' signature sauces, the company says. Debuting this fall, both flavors are available in the classic Slim Jim Giant Stick size of 0.97oz., with a suggested retail price of \$1.99. Conagra noted chicken is one of the fastest growing proteins in meat snacks with 84% growth during the past three years (Circana LLC/CREST Latest 52 Weeks ending February 2025).



Growing Line \wedge

Country Archer Provisions, Los Angeles, bolstered its beef stick line with three new flavors sold in multipack formats: Pepperoni Style, Beef Taco and Prime Rib Style. In addition, the company announced expanded distribution at Target, Walmart and other retailers in hopes of surpassing \$300 million in annual sales in 2025.

"With the meat stick category growing exponentially, Archer is doubling down on the segment with our new offerings in classic and family-friendly flavors and expanded retailer availability to meet surging consumer demand," said Andrew Thomas, Archer vice president of marketing. "Our latest innovations give busy consumers and families even more convenient, high-protein snacking options made with the real, flavorful ingredients they crave, while providing the variety they need to keep their daily snack rotation fresh and exciting."

Sweet Heat >>>

Tillamook Country Smoker (TCS), Bay City, Ore., partnered with Mike's Hot Honey to create Tillamook Country Smoker Beef Sticks infused with Mike's Hot Honey. Officials said each 1oz beef stick has 8g of protein and is made with all natural ingredients, including 100% pure honey infused with real chili peppers.

"This collaboration between Tillamook Country Smoker and Mike's Hot Honey represents a union of two iconic brands, each with a steadfast commitment to delivering high-quality, flavorful products," said Bree Randall, TCS chief marketing officer. "Our delicious new beef sticks deliver the perfect balance of sweet, spicy and savory, crafted without any artificial ingredients—a true testament to our shared commitment to excellence."





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(double-click to add)



★ Time to Go PRO!

Wenzel's Farm LLC, Marshfield, Wis., extended its meat snacks line with a new PRO Snack Stick line with 16g of protein in each offering. Varieties include Original, Teriyaki, Jalapeno Cheddar and Pepperoni. Each comes in a single-serve 1.9oz package with a SRP of \$2.69.

"We wanted to develop a high quality, high protein, low sugar stick to appeal to people that push themselves hard or just want more protein in their diets," said Wenzel's President Mark Vieth. "We are extremely excited we were able to do so, and the flavor and

texture of this new line is incredible."

New Name in Snacks 众

Photo by Liz Parker Kuhn, BNP Media

Link Snacks Inc., Minong, Wis., announced a partnership with social media creator, businessman, and philanthropist, MrBeast (Jimmy Donaldson) for a new co-branded line of beef jerky and meat sticks in multipacks with "MrBeast's signature branding."

"We are incredibly excited to partner with MrBeast," said Troy Link, CEO of Jack Link's. "Jimmy's entrepreneurial spirit and dedication to his fans align perfectly with our values at Jack Link's. We believe this collaboration will drive a new generation of consumers into the meat snacks category, worldwide."





The New Primal, Charleston, S.C. introduced Rotisserie-Seasoned Chicken Sticks with a savory profile, with distinctive notes of garlic, white and black pepper, onion, and parsley, the company says. Each stick delivers 10g of protein with only 60 calories.

"Our customers have been asking for more meat snack options made with chicken. We couldn't think of a better way to expand our assortment than to make a meat snack inspired by familiar, comfort-food flavors," said Jason Burke, founder and CEO of New Primal.

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NEXT ARTICLE



New Products

Sensible Snacking >>>

Dr. Praeger's Sensible Foods, Saddle Brook, N.J., launched four cleaner, veggie-forward frozen snacks for kids and adults alike. New Dr. Praeger's Pizza Stars include real vegetables as the first ingredient—including cauliflower, zucchini, navy beans, and onions, blended with real mozzarella cheese, tomato paste, whole grain oats, and simple seasonings. This cheesy snack delivers 5g of protein, 4g of fiber, and only 170 calories per serving.

"For years, Dr. Praeger's has been a go-to for families looking for cleaner, better-for-you options, and we're excited to bring that same philosophy to one of the biggest snacking categories out there," says Andy Reichgut, CEO of Dr. Praeger's.

Other new additions include Taco Stars, featuring black beans, corn, red peppers, and mild taco seasoning; Ranch Crunchy Veggie Fries, made with 10 different vegetables; and Broccoli Cheddar Cheesy Bites, with real cheddar cheese and broccoli wrapped in a crispy bite-sized form.





Sweet Treat \wedge

Conagra Brands, Inc., Chicago, used the National Confectioners Association's 2025 Sweets & Snacks Expo in Indianapolis to introduce a wide range of new offerings. Included was new Snack Pack recipe crafted with the chocolate experts from DOVE Chocolate (Mars Wrigley).

New Snack Pack DOVE Dark Chocolate Pudding Cups feature three types of cocoa for "a rich, dark chocolate flavor, with a smooth, silky texture, thanks to twice the amount of milk as regular Snack Pack pudding," the company said. A pack of six, 3.25oz cups retails for \$3.19.

"The Sweets & Snacks Expo is a great forum to highlight our diverse snacks portfolio," said Jill Dexter, Conagra Brands president, Grocery and Snacks. "Our meat snacks, salty snacks, seeds and sweet treats appeal to a wide audience of consumers, and we're excited to showcase our newest offerings."



The Right Bite

Checkers Drive-In Restaurants, Inc., Tampa, Fla., partnered with John Soules Foods, Tyler, Tex., to introduce Checkers & Rally's Chicken Bites with crispy, fully cooked, all-white meat chicken. They debuted at Kroger, Dollar General, and Family Dollar stores nationwide with plans to expand to additional grocery retailers.

"Consumers are increasingly craving the convenience of enjoying their favorite restaurant items at home," said Michael Pierce, John Soules head of marketing. "We're thrilled to partner with Checkers & Rally's to bring the taste and quality of their signature Chicken Bites to grocery store freezers, making it easier than ever for fans to enjoy them."









Clean Label Fries >>>

Restaurant frozen French fry supplier Jesse & Ben's, Washington, D.C., went retail with a full product line launch at Sprouts nationwide. Officials say it's the only brand in the U.S. cooking its fries in grass-fed beef tallow "with restaurant-quality taste, simple ingredients, and no seed oils."

A new Sweet Potato Fries variety (made with beef tallow) joins the line. Other varieties include Classic Sea Salt, made with avocado oil; Rosemary & Garlic, seasoned with real rosemary and garlic; and a Tallow & Sea Salt, also cooked in beef tallow.



Popular Pairing >>>

The J. M. Smucker Co., Orrville, Ohio, extended its frozen Uncrustables line with its first limited-edition flavor, Smucker's Uncrustables Peanut Butter & Mixed Berry Spread Sandwiches. Debuting nationwide at select retailers this summer, the four-count product features Uncrustables soft bread, creamy peanut butter and a sweet mixed berry spread (made with a blend of strawberries and blueberries).

"Last fall, we introduced the brand's first new PB&J flavor in a decade with Uncrustables Peanut Butter & Raspberry Spread Sandwiches. The overwhelmingly positive reception from both new and loyal Uncrustables fans reflected the clear demand for new flavor innovations," said Chris Achenbach, director of brand strategy. "To deliver on the desire for even more ways to enjoy Uncrustables, we will be launching two limited-edition flavors in 2025. We're thrilled for consumers to enjoy the Peanut Butter & Mixed Berry Spread sandwiches and [are] excited to share our next flavor innovation later this year."

New Taste, Texture 众

J&J Snack Foods Corp., Mt. Laurel, N.J., introduced a reformulated version of its SUPERPRETZEL frozen soft pretzel with a "new recipe that delivers a softer texture and a richer, more robust flavor." Specifically, officials say the new version delivers "a heartier, Bavarian-style bite" with a softer texture.

"We have a passion for pretzels at J&J Snack Foods, and SUPERPRETZEL has been a household favorite for more than 50 years," said Chief Marketing Officer Lynwood Mallard. "We listened to our customers and made small but meaningful recipe updates to enhance the product while keeping the signature twist, convenience, and vegan-friendly recipe our fans love."





△ Say Cheese!

wheels.

Sartori Company, Plymouth, Wis., introduced snackable Cheese Bites in two signature flavors: MontAmoré Cheddar and Italian Herb Cheddar. Both come in 4.5oz packages, each containing six snackable cheese

Sartori says MontAmoré Cheddar Cheese Bites feature creamy white cheddar with robust notes of aged Parmesan. Italian Herb Cheddar Cheese Bites feature cheddar with a savory blend of fresh herbs, lemon and Aleppo pepper.

"We've been perfecting these Cheese Bites for quite a while, and we're happy that people will now be able to more easily enjoy their favorite Sartori cheese on the go," said CEO Bert Sartori.



No-Thaw, Dippable Treat >>>

The Kraft Heinz Company, Chicago and Pittsburgh, introduced Lunchables PB&J, which it bills as the "first-ever dippable, no-thaw crustless PB&J." Lunchables PB&J includes two crustless peanut butter sandwiches per pack along with a side of grape or strawberry flavored dip (with no artificial colors). It rolled out to select retailers nationwide for \$2.49 per pack.

"The launch of Lunchables PB&J is a continuation in our mission to reinvent the refrigerated category by providing high quality, delicious, affordable and convenient solutions for snack time and beyond," said Danni Levin, Lunchables associate director of innovation. "We're remixing a classic, delivering on parents' desire for convenience and kids' love of dipping and customizing ... PB&Js will never be the same!"



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New Products

Trophy Time

Sweets & Snacks Expo announces 2025 "Most Innovative New Product Awards"

This spring saw the National Confectioners Association (NCA) announce winners of the 2025 Most Innovative New Product Awards during NCA's annual Sweets & Snacks Expo in Indianapolis.

"The Most Innovative New Product Awards are a celebration of the creativity and ingenuity that keeps people coming back to the candy and snack aisles," said John Downs, NCA president & CEO. "Consumers turn to confectionery and snack products to add a little sweet or salty touch to special occasions and everyday moments. This year's MINPA winners are outstanding examples of the ways in which the confectionery and snack industries are delivering products to meet consumers where they want to be met."

This year, more than 400 products were submitted for consideration in a variety of categories, with retail leaders specializing serving as judges.



The Most Innovative New Product Awards Winners are: 🙊



- Small Business Innovator: Nomad Snacks Pad Thai Flavored Ready-to-eat Popcorn
- Chocolate: Pop & Sol Coconut Flaked White Chocolate Covered Cashews
- Gourmet/Premium Confections: Mattigan's Dubai Style Chocolate Spread
- Gum & Mints: breathROX Popping Breath Mints Blue Raspberry

• Best in Show: Belle's Gourmet Popcorn Matcha Latte Popcorn

- Gummy Candy: Nerds Juicy Gummy Clusters Strawberry Punch
- Non-Chocolate Candy: Juicy Drop® Gummy Mystery Cube 5oz Original Flavor
- Novelty/Licensed: Ezee Freezee Freeze-n-Peel Strawberry Pop
- Seasonal: Amos Tastysounds JinglePop Graffiti
- Meat Snacks: Bavarian Meats Original Lil' Landjaeger Individually Wrapped Stick
- Salty Snacks: Belle's Gourmet Popcorn Dubai Chocolate Popcorn
- Savory Snacks: Snak Club Ramen flavored Snack Mix
- Sweet Snacks: Chunk Nibbles Toffee Sweet & Salty Clusters
- Baked Goods: Trashy Gourmet Shortbread Cookies with Mini Strawberry Boba from Molly Bz Cookies

About the National Confectioners Association (NCA)

The National Confectioners Association is the voice of the U.S. confectionery industry. Our member companies create moments of joy with chocolate, candy, gum, and mints, drive \$54 billion in retail sales, and add a little sweetness to life. NCA champions policies that help candy makers and other stakeholders in this unique category thrive while reminding consumers that chocolate and candy are treats. Learn more at CandyUSA.com or follow NCA on Facebook, X, and Instagram.

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July 22, 2025 at 2:00 PM EDT

Boost Flavour and Functionality in Plant-**Based Beverages**

With Bio-Based Solutions









Monica Garces ungbunzlauer



Emily Hutchinson Technical Support Jungbunzlauer

Demand for plant-based beverages is rising, driven by health, environmental, and dietary trends. Yet, challenges around taste, texture, stability, and nutrition remain.

In this webinar, we'll explore key formulation hurdles and share actionable solutions to help you create superior plant-based drinks. Discover how Jungbunzlauer's bio-based ingredients can enhance flavour, improve functionality, and meet evolving consumer expectations. Join us to gain valuable insights and practical strategies for developing beverages that are both enjoyable and sustainable.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand how Jungbunzlauer's multifunctional mineral salts can solve key formulation challenges in plant-based formulations.
- Explore clean-label strategies for masking off-notes and improving taste in plant-based formulations.
- Learn how biogums can optimise mouthfeel, improve suspension, and enhance the overall stability of plant-based drinks.
- Discover how to boost the nutritional value of dairy alternatives using Jungbunzlauer's highly bioavailable organic mineral salts.



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Jungbunzlauer



This May saw PepsiCo PepsiCo refine its long-term sustainability goals under its pep+ (PepsiCo Positive) initiative. It expands its ingredient purchasing goal and expects to source regenerative agriculture ingredients from as much as 10 million acres of land by 2030. Credit: PepsiCo Inc.

The 2024 Sustainable Market Share Index™ (SMSI), an annual research initiative at the NYU Stern Center for Sustainable Business (CSB) in partnership with Circana LLC, shows US consumer packaged goods (CPG) products with sustainable attributes marketed on the package enjoy 23.8% market share, up from 21.2% in the previous year.

For the first time, CSB also conducted the methodology on two European markets, the United Kingdom and Germany, to find a significantly higher market share in both countries.

Key findings include:

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- In 2024, the United States' market share of sustainable products was 23.8% (excludes private label/store brand purchases). The share of sustainable products and private label products are both steadily increasing at the expense of conventional products.
- The UK and German sustainable markets largely outweigh the U.S. share. In the UK, sustainable products make up 36.8% of the market share, and in Germany, 42.0%.
- Market share of sustainable products in the U.S. has increased by 9.2 percentage points since 2013.
- Products marketed as sustainable achieved a five-year CAGR of 12.4%, growing 2.3 times faster than conventionally marketed products and outpacing the total U.S. market's 6.8% CAGR.
- 19 of the 36 individual categories analyzed in the U.S. have seen a +10 percent point increase in the sustainable market share since first analyzed in 2013.
- Sustainable products in the U.S. still enjoy a significant price premium, costing an average of 26.6% more than their conventional counterparts. However, the price premium has stabilized, largely unchanged throughout the recent inflationary period. Moreover, the average price premium across all categories is at or below 5% in the European markets studied.

"Sustainability isn't just a trend; it's a business imperative," said Joan Driggs, vice president of Content and

Thought Leadership at Circana. "This research demonstrates that products marketed as sustainable are not only performing well but outpacing conventional goods in growth, proving their value for consumers and the bottom line alike."

CPG products marketed as sustainable in the U.S. have been steadily gaining market share, driving growth faster than conventionally marketed alternatives. However, the research reveals that current U.S. market performance falls significantly behind European counterparts studied. The gap highlights immense potential for innovation and investment in sustainable offerings to align with evolving consumer preferences.

"We continue to see sustainable products outpace the growth of conventional, with veteran brands adopting sustainable claims on legacy products and driving category shifts," said Randi Kronthal-Sacco, senior scholar at the NYU Stern CSB, who leads the research initiative. "We are encouraged to see that even with continued inflation, price premiums remain stable and sustainable products continue to eat into the market share of conventional products. We are also thrilled to finally bring the research methodology to Europe, where we see the U.K. and German market share dwarf that of the U.S."

The study underscores the advantages of capitalizing on sustainability-marketed products, which are proven drivers of value. Findings show that these products have enjoyed faster growth rates and higher price premiums, while also fostering stronger consumer loyalty. For U.S. retailers and manufacturers, bridging the sustainability gap offers a route to expanded market share and long-term profitability.

To learn more actionable insights on sustainable product growth, download the Sustainability: The CPG Growth Opportunity research report.



About Circana

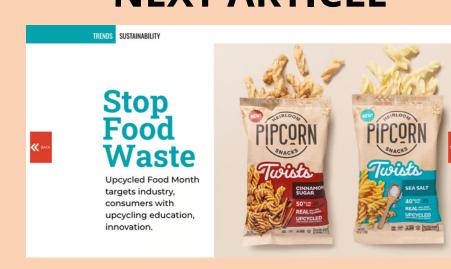
Circana is a leader in providing technology, AI, and data to fast-moving consumer packaged goods companies, durables manufacturers, and retailers seeking to optimize their businesses. Circana's predictive analytics and technology empower clients to measure their market share, understand the underlying consumer behavior driving it, and accelerate their growth. Circana's Liquid Data® technology platform is powered by an expansive, high-quality data set and intelligent algorithms trained on six decades of domain expertise. With Circana, clients can take immediate action to future-proof and evolve their growth strategies amid an increasingly complex, fast-paced, and ever-changing economy. Learn more at circana.com

About NYU Stern Center for Sustainable Business

The NYU Stern Center for Sustainable Business (CSB) was founded on the principle that sustainable business is good business. We provide education, conduct research, and influence industry practice by proving the financial value of sustainability for business management and performance. At CSB, we aim to equip future and current corporate leaders with updated business frameworks that embrace proactive and innovative mainstreaming of sustainability, resulting in competitive advantage and resiliency for their companies as well as a positive impact for society. The Sustainable Market Share Index is an annual research initiative to analyze the purchasing behaviors for consumer packaged goods marketed as sustainable.

Learn more at stern.nyu.edu/sustainability or follow us on LinkedIn @NYU Stern Center for Sustainable Business and Twitter @NYUSternCSB.

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TRENDS

SUSTAINABILITY

Upcycled Food Month targets industry, consumers with upcycling education, innovation.



New Twist on Snacking: Pipsnacks uses upcycled corn flour as key ingredient. Credit: Pipsnacks LLC

The Upcycled Food Association (UFA), an organization that represents global food leaders and businesses working to stop food waste at all levels of the supply chain, promoted June as Upcycled Food Month.

Globally, 30-40% of food produced is lost or wasted, valued at nearly \$1 trillion USD. In 2023 just in the United States, more than 70M tons of food did not reach human consumption, says ReFED, an organization working across the food system to reduce food loss and waste.

"Upcycling food is an inspiring and innovative way food companies and every eater can stop food waste and take action on climate," said Amanda Oenbring, CEO of the Upcycled Food Association.

Upcycling has the annual potential to reduce 5.56M Metric Tons CO2e (total emissions) and particularly reduce 71k Metric Tons CH4 (highly potent methane - food waste is a top source) as well as save 557B gallons of water by diverting 1.94M Tons of food in the U.S. alone as measured by ReFED.



UFA members Planet FWD and Matriark Foods worked together on Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) measurement to find that each carton of Matriark upcycled sauce diverts 0.4 lbs of tomatoes from landfill and saves 50 gallons of water, with total diversion of over 84,000 lbs of vegetables reaching human nutrition across their product range in 2023.

Matriark Foods is one of more than 100 companies that have certified more than 600 ingredients or products in 12 countries as Upcycled Certified, part of the family of standards administered by Where Food Comes From. Upcycled Certified continues to grow market presence with particular growth in pet products and snacks with certification reaching new audiences such as cosmetics, and home and personal care. An updated version of the standard debuted June 1, 2025 and total waste diverted since launch is now 1.35M Tons annually, enough to fill over 270M grocery bags.

Global companies of all sizes are growing the upcycled movement since UFA began in 2019. In 2021, the inaugural year of certification, Del Monte Foods launched the industry's first canned vegetable products to be Upcycled Certified and this year expanded to certify all JOYBA Bubble Teas, now made with upcycled sweetened syrups, reclaiming 265 tons of syrup during the past year.

NielsenIQ found upcycled and Upcycled Certified to be a "growth driver," among the fastest growing U.S. product claims in recent measures and SPINS found U.S. Upcycled Certified product sales grew 42% in 2024.

UFA also hosted a series of publicly available webinars throughout June:

Webinar: "Upcycling Food Waste: Trends and Predictions" with a collaborative discussion involving ReFED, Where Food Comes From, and Pipcorn Heirloom Snacks.

Virtual Symposium: The Upcycled Food Foundation (UFF), UFA's 501(c)(3) nonprofit, held a Global Scientific Research Community event. Students and academic researchers presented quantitative and qualitative upcycled food innovation findings.

Webinar: UFA members Del Monte, Planet FWD and Matriark Foods discussed about how good sustainability data can be a brand's purchase differentiator.

Webinar: UFA joined RTI Innovation Advisors and food systems experts to discuss the importance of global environmental, social and economic impacts of stopping food waste and how upcycled food is a key solution.

UFA leaders also marked Upcycled Day (June 24) and attended ReFED's annual Food Waste Solutions Summit in Seattle. They celebrated the reintroduction of the NO TIME TO Waste Act in bipartisan U.S. federal legislation, which points to UFA's definition of upcycled food.

UFA members continue to chart a collaborative course for global food systems change. UFA members represent all food channel sectors including retailers (such as Misfits Market), processors (such as The Spare Food Co.) and ingredient suppliers (such as ICL Food Specialties).

To learn more about Upcycled Food Month, register for webinars and explore resources, visit upcycledfoodmonth.org

For interviews or more information, please contact Amanda Oenbring, UFA's CEO at marketing@upcycledfood.org

About the Upcycled Food Association (UFA) and Upcycled Food Foundation (UFF):

UFA is a 501(c)(6) global membership-based trade association accelerating the upcycled food economy and unleashing innovation to stop food waste. By promoting industry collaboration, research, and education, UFA and UFF support worldwide leaders building a food system in which all food is elevated to its highest and best use. Learn more at upcycledfood.org.

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A late 2024 survey from Danone North America found that 84% of Americans have become more interested in foods or products that support gut health in the past several years, a trend that aligns with the rapid growth of the category, with the global probiotics market expected to reach \$119.5 billion by 2030.

However, while Google searches for "gut health" have more than doubled in the last three years, the survey found 41% of consumers remain unaware of the gut microbiome, and 50% don't realize it can impact gut health. The survey also shed light on several persistent myths that could be making it difficult for consumers to navigate and best leverage gut health promoting products in an increasingly crowded category.

For the record, Danone, White Plains, N.Y., and Louisville, Colo., is a leading player in the US food and beverage market including biotic ingredients. This includes the company's 2006 launch of Activia probiotic yogurt.

"Our mission at Danone North America is to bring health through food to as many people as possible, and research continues to suggest that gut health and the gut microbiome are important pieces of that puzzle in some incredibly far-reaching ways," said Miguel Freitas, PhD, vice president of nutrition and scientific affairs at Danone North America. "That's why it's important for us to not only help fund research that continues to unlock the power of the gut microbiome, but also to keep a pulse on consumer understanding and sentiment to help us identify and address knowledge gaps in this area and in turn empower consumers with science-backed information they can use in pursuit of their individual health goals."

Survey Findings

Conducted as a follow-up to a survey the company commissioned in 2021, Danone said its latest polling revealed that, although awareness around the gut microbiome has increased slightly, there remains significant work to be done on the education front.

Half of Americans are unaware that the gut microbiome can impact gut health, and even more do not realize that it may impact several other top health and wellness priorities for U.S. consumers, including: immune health (56%, down just 1% from 2021), mental well-being (63%, down 4%), healthy aging (54%) and sleep quality (61%).

Seventy-three percent do not know the gut microbiome is established within the first few years of life.

And most have difficulty identifying the eating habits and diets that best promote gut health. Only one in 10 consumers can correctly identify a Flexitarian eating pattern (which emphasizes plant-based foods while also incorporating nutrient-rich animal foods) as a diet that best promotes gut health as compared to more restrictive diets like keto and paleo.

Encouragingly, the survey did reveal that more consumers are becoming aware of biotics, which have been shown to support gut health and the gut microbiome. Most Americans are familiar with probiotics (88%, up 4% from 2021) and prebiotics (76%, up 11%) and 60% are familiar with postbiotics (up 11%).

Top Microbiome Myths

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Kristie Leigh, registered dietitian and director of nutrition and scientific affairs at Danone North America, helps bust several persistent myths that could be making it difficult for consumers to choose the right products in pursuit of better gut health.

Myth #1: All fermented foods and beverages contain probiotics. Nearly half of consumers who are familiar with probiotics (49%) assume all fermented foods and beverages provide them, down just 3% from 2021.

Fact. Fermented foods and beverages, like kombucha, sauerkraut or sourdough bread, may contain bacteria as part of the fermentation process, but that doesn't mean they contain probiotics. Many fermented foods and beverages undergo processes like pasteurization and baking that kill the live microbes, probiotic or not. Grocery shoppers should check a product label to ensure it contains a live probiotic strain.

Myth #2: All "live and active cultures" are probiotics. Forty-four percent of consumers familiar with probiotics believe all "live and active cultures" qualify (down 3% from 2021).

Fact: Not all bacteria are created equal. Even if a product contains live cultures, those cultures may not have been studied and shown to support health, which is what would make them a probiotic.

Myth #3: Probiotic supplements are equivalent to probiotics in food. Forty-five percent of consumers familiar with probiotics still believe that probiotic supplements are equivalent to probiotics in food (down 2% since 2021).

Fact: Foods are often considered a better vehicle for probiotics compared to supplements because they buffer stomach acidity, which can help probiotics reach the intestine. This includes dairy foods like yogurt.

Myth #4: Prebiotics and probiotics do the same thing for your body. Seventy-one percent of those familiar with probiotics think prebiotics do the same thing for your body (down 4% since 2021).

Fact: While both probiotics and prebiotics can support gut health, they do so by doing distinctly different things. Probiotics are live microorganisms that have been studied and shown to provide a health benefit, while prebiotics are dietary fibers that work as food for the good bacteria already in the gut. Both have a unique role, and both are important for gut health and gut microbiome support.

Danone notes that its commitment to continuing to advance the field of gut health and the gut microbiome is evident with initiatives such as the Danone North America Fellowship Grant program, which has awarded over \$500,000 to support studies on probiotics and human health since 2017. In 2024, for example, this program awarded \$25,000 each to Evan Chrisler of the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Arushana Maknojia of Baylor College of Medicine to support research that aims to advance probiotic and prebiotic development. Chrisler's research looks at how the timing and type of probiotic consumption affect metabolism and immunity, while Maknojia's examines the way gut microbes influence blood cell production.

Reference Note:

1 KRC Research conducted the 2024 DANONE Microbiome study using an online survey of n=1,008 U.S. adults 18 and older. The study was fielded between December 18 to December 20, 2024

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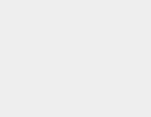


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By Lu Ann Williams

endangered species? Not that long ago, bran muffins were standard at coffee shops and bakeries as the healthy, high-fiber breakfast and snack option. Top food fiber sources also have changed. Although cereals and bakery foods still are top sources of dietary fiber,

Remember the bran muffin? Could it be that this classic—once so closely associated with fiber—has become an

soft drinks and dairy (two categories that lack naturally occurring fiber) also now are part of the larger discussion. That's because their fiber content comes from added prebiotic-type fiber ingredients. All things considered, the dietary fiber landscape continues to change.

FLOURA 5 bold flavors with

gut-friendly fiber for a healthier you.



Gut Health's Link to Lifestyle, Trends

Innova Market Insights sees trend lines impacting better-for-you nutrition—involving fiber and gut health—on many levels. Economic uncertainty can be a stressor for consumers worried about the cost of living. Consumers tell Innova Market Insights that—after paying for essentials—health and wellbeing is their top spending priority.

Lifestyle and demographic factors also impact consumer thoughts and behaviors. For starters, there's greater disease incidence and healthcare need with a large aging population and high levels of obesity. Meanwhile, there's increasing pressure on healthcare systems with increased costs and reduced care access. Sometimes, consumers may feel inclined to seek their own wellbeing solutions—including products for digestive health.

A closer behavioral look shows consumers spending more time socializing and entertaining at home and this also

impacts food choices. Consumers also tell Innova that they prefer small treats and moments of happiness as

compared to "bigger experiences." Here, food and beverage treats bring them that momentary joy. Healthy

indulgences, including those that boost gut health, are essential. Innova's Top 10 Trends for 2025 include three trends that support a focus on digestive health and fiber. Our top trend, "Ingredients and Beyond," emphasizes the relationship between ingredients and product quality. Fiber and prebiotic ingredients enhance product quality through their palpable gut health benefits.

Consumers personalize their diet planning and seek a personalized approach for improving the health of their gut. In response, processors can position their offerings for specific health needs, for example, gut health, as well as life stages and age demographics.

The second trend, "Precision Wellness," captures movement toward individualized, targeted nutrition solutions.

microbiome is opening the door for fiber ingredients for digestive wellness. Consumers of all ages worry about digestive health. In fact, nearly one-third of those surveyed say that digestive health is their main physical health concern. We observe that interest in products for gut health is higher among

Innova's fourth trend, "Gut Health: Flourish from Within," demonstrates how consumer awareness of the

Gen X and Boomer consumers than among younger generations. Purchase lags behind interest in targeted nutrition products for a physical condition like gut health, although

products for digestive health are purchased more often than products for other health issues. Manufacturers may find a receptive audience among consumers who worry about gut health—but have not yet found products to relieve their symptoms.



fiber, Keep Moving Inc. offers gutzy Organic Prebiotic Plant Protein Smoothie Pouches in the refrigerated produce section. Each 3.38 fl oz pouch contains 7g of plant protein and 7-8 g of fiber. Credit: Keep Moving Inc.

Expanding Fiber Landscape

Fiber ingredients include those categorized as food-based fibers, soluble fibers, and prebiotic ingredients.

Food-based fibers are found in cell walls of grains and other carbohydrate foods. Benefits include laxation, support of healthy blood lipid and glucose levels, satiety, and immune system support. Soluble fiber has its own set of health benefits. Prebiotics are a subset of soluble fiber that cannot be digested by humans and are digested by microbiota to produce a health benefit. We monitor new product innovation around a growing

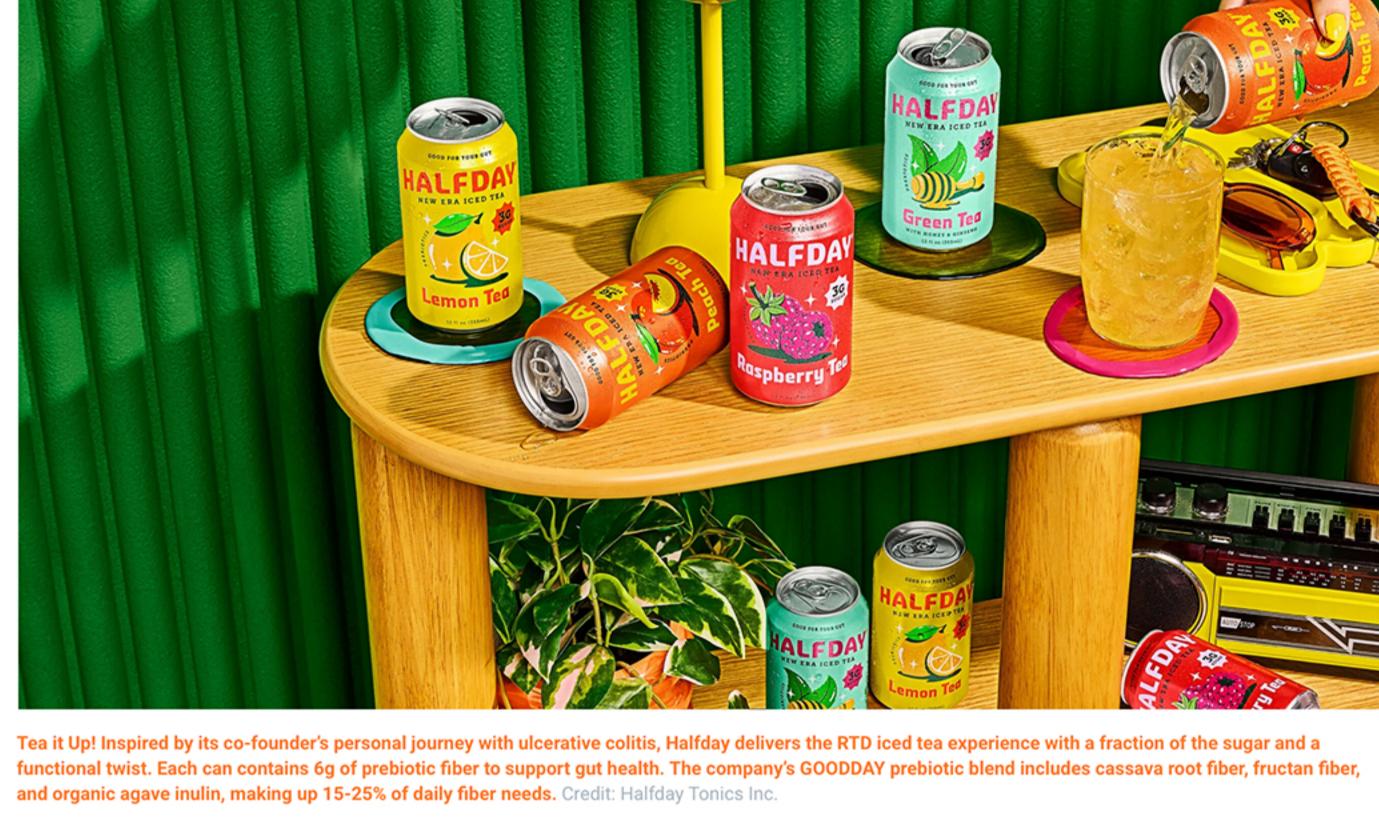
number of fiber ingredients, including chicory root fiber,

inulin, oligofructose, fructooligosaccharides (FOS), galactooligosaccharides (GOS), human milk oligosaccharides (HMOs), polydextrose, soluble corn fiber, soluble tapioca fiber, resistant starch, and plant fibers. Inulin fiber ingredients are well-established. Fibers that are named for their source, such as chicory root fiber, citrus fiber, tapioca fiber, chickpea fiber, and others, can be positioned in a way that sounds natural and is easy for consumers to understand. We see modest growth in food and beverage launches

with fiber and prebiotics claims, along with solid growth in prebiotic ingredients. Categories propelling this growth include meat substitutes, cold beverages, and hot beverages with fiber claims. The subset of HMO fiber ingredients demonstrates growth

in infant formula and other baby products as manufacturers innovate to create baby milk and formula products that mimic the composition of human milk. As prebiotic fibers, HMOs can help improve gut health in infants. Parents may need guidance in choosing products for their young children, given the increase in number and variety of HMOs in infant products.

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Prevalent Health Claims Digestive and gut health has a solid presence in food and beverage launches. "High in/source of" fiber is the

second leading functional health claim on food and beverage launches—topped only by protein claims. Post-

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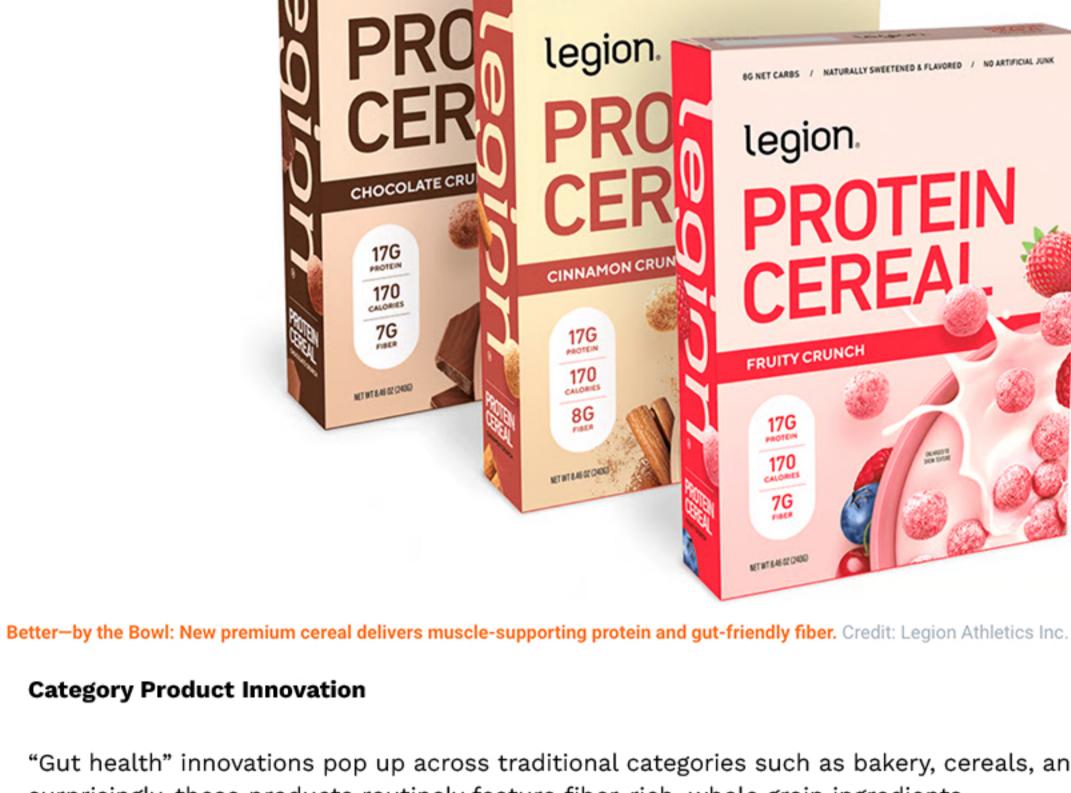
pandemic, there's been increasing consumer interest in gut health and fiber is a key product feature. Gluten-free and vegan claims often appear on products with a fiber-related claim or ingredient. Overall, Innova doesn't see as many claims involving prebiotic fiber. These claims are less well established and also may not be

leading ingredients associated with digestive health product claims. Gut health is linked to other aspects of health and healthy aging. Bone health claims and immune health claims show strong growth in product launches with a related gut health claim. Meanwhile, growing use of GLP-1 weight loss drugs has become another factor pushing fiber and gut health. These medications have increased and could

permitted in many countries. Product launch data show that fiber, vitamin D, and probiotic bacterial strains are the

continue to heighten consumer interest in products with fiber and protein for health, gut health, and satiety. We expect to see increased innovation around and sales of products with fiber for the GLP-1 user. 8G NET CARBS / NATURALLY SWEETENED & FLAVORED / NO ARTIFICIAL JUNK

76 NET CARBS / NATURALLY SWEETENED & FLAVORED



"Gut health" innovations pop up across traditional categories such as bakery, cereals, and cereal bars. Not surprisingly, these products routinely feature fiber-rich, whole grain ingredients.

legion.

as sweet biscuits and cookies, energy bars, and even coffee. Meat substitutes often carry fiber claims related to vegetable fibers used for texture. New carbonates positioned for gut health are driving growth with their prebiotic ingredients, which are well-suited

for addition to beverages. Even new desserts with fiber ingredients align with healthy indulgence trends.

Meanwhile, fiber claims and ingredients are becoming more prevalent for in other non-traditional categories such



There are plenty of product innovation opportunities in the fast-moving marketplace for fiber and gut health. Consumers want to reduce consumption of ultra-processed foods and—when you consider bans on certain food additives—it's more likely these same consumers will gravitate to products with naturally sourced ingredients such as fiber and prebiotic fiber.

Credit: Nestlé HealthCare Nutrition, Inc.

Opportunities and Challenges

Political and economic stresses in today's world highlight the importance of maintaining personal health and resiliency. Consumers may feel stress first in the gut, so products positioned for gut health could be highly appealing to these consumers. Gut health—paired with energy, mental acuity, sleep, immunity, sexual health, and other desirable benefits—could catch the eye of the health-minded consumer.

GLP-1 users comprise a ready audience for fiber for nutrition, and to help overcome the gut discomfort that is associated with these weight loss medications. Also, in this era of economic uncertainty, an attractive price point

consumer stress around spending. Reach out to Millennials, who have the highest level of interest in health among generations. They may respond to personal solutions and products for gut health. It may be possible to build lasting brand loyalty by providing

for gut health products could attract consumers since inflation and financial pressures are likely to increase

Millennials with effective and lasting digestive health solutions. Challenges exist. Crowding in the marketplace, especially in beverages with prebiotics, can confuse consumers by offering too many choices of drinks with similar benefits and ingredients. Consumers who incorporate too many of

fiber- and prebiotic-enriched products into their diet may experience gut discomfort.

greater consumer education to make product selection easier to match health needs.

prepared

Again, education is important. Budget-conscious consumers may refrain from purchasing products that don't deliver solid benefits. Consumers might not intuitively associate fiber with some new fiber-supplemented categories—including meat substitutes, confectionery, and desserts. As a result, more consumer education is needed.

What's Next?

Innova predicts several trends involving fiber and gut health. We expect to see fewer prebiotic carbonated beverage choices with some degree of contraction in that market. Conversely, we predict increased use of resistant starch as

a fiber source and continued growth of prebiotic ingredients over traditional fiber sources. Overall, we expect more growth opportunities for products with multiple health benefits. Moreover, we foresee

more products with protein and fiber to support weight management. In conjunction, there's an opportunity for

Lu Ann Williams is Global Insights Director at Innova Market Insights, provider of market research services including the Innova Database. With more than 25 years' experience in the food industry, Lu Ann is a trend expert and frequent public speaker at events worldwide. She leads a team of analysts and works with global clients. Contact her at luann.williams@innovami.com



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by Dana McCurdy, PhD, Contributing Technical Editor Vitamin A is a collective term referring to a group of related compounds known as retinoids. Sourced from animal

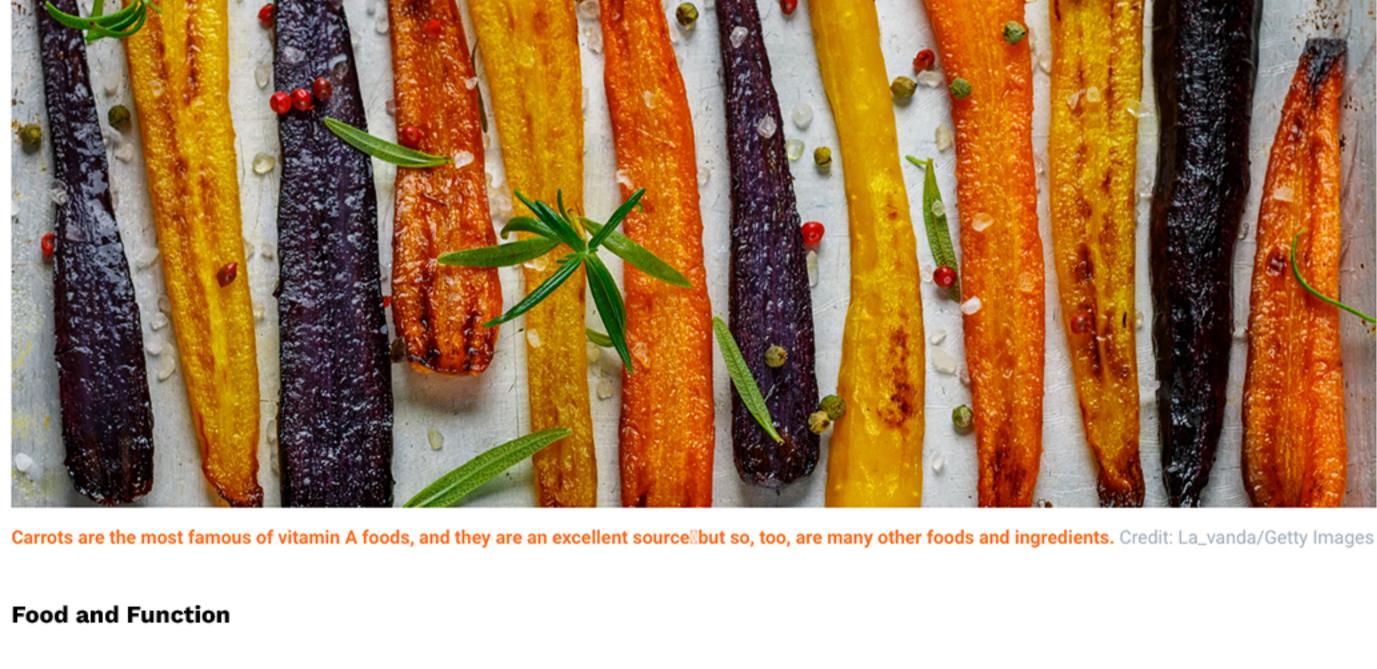
Two related classes of vitamin A-like compounds,

retinoids and carotenoids, show an impressive

range of immune-supporting benefits.

products, retinoids are present in food in their active form and include retinol, retinal, retinoic acid, and retinyl esters (such as retinyl palmitate and retinyl acetate). They are active forms of vitamin A and functional in their original forms. The plant-based group, called carotenoids, include some that also are a source of vitamin A-known as

provitamin-A carotenoids—and must be converted to active vitamin A during metabolism. But carotenoids also include other, non-provitamin-A forms. Both carotenoid groups have important functions that influence health and immune function.



Two of the most commonly appearing members of the family of vitamin A-like compounds are retinol (as the ester retinyl palmitate), a retinoid, and β -carotene, a carotenoid. Retinol and the other retinoids are found largely in

animal products including eggs, dairy, and liver. Carotenoids are found largely in plant products, especially those rich in yellow, orange, and red pigments.

amount of vitamin A currently in an individual's system.

which tend to have a longer shelf life than other foods.

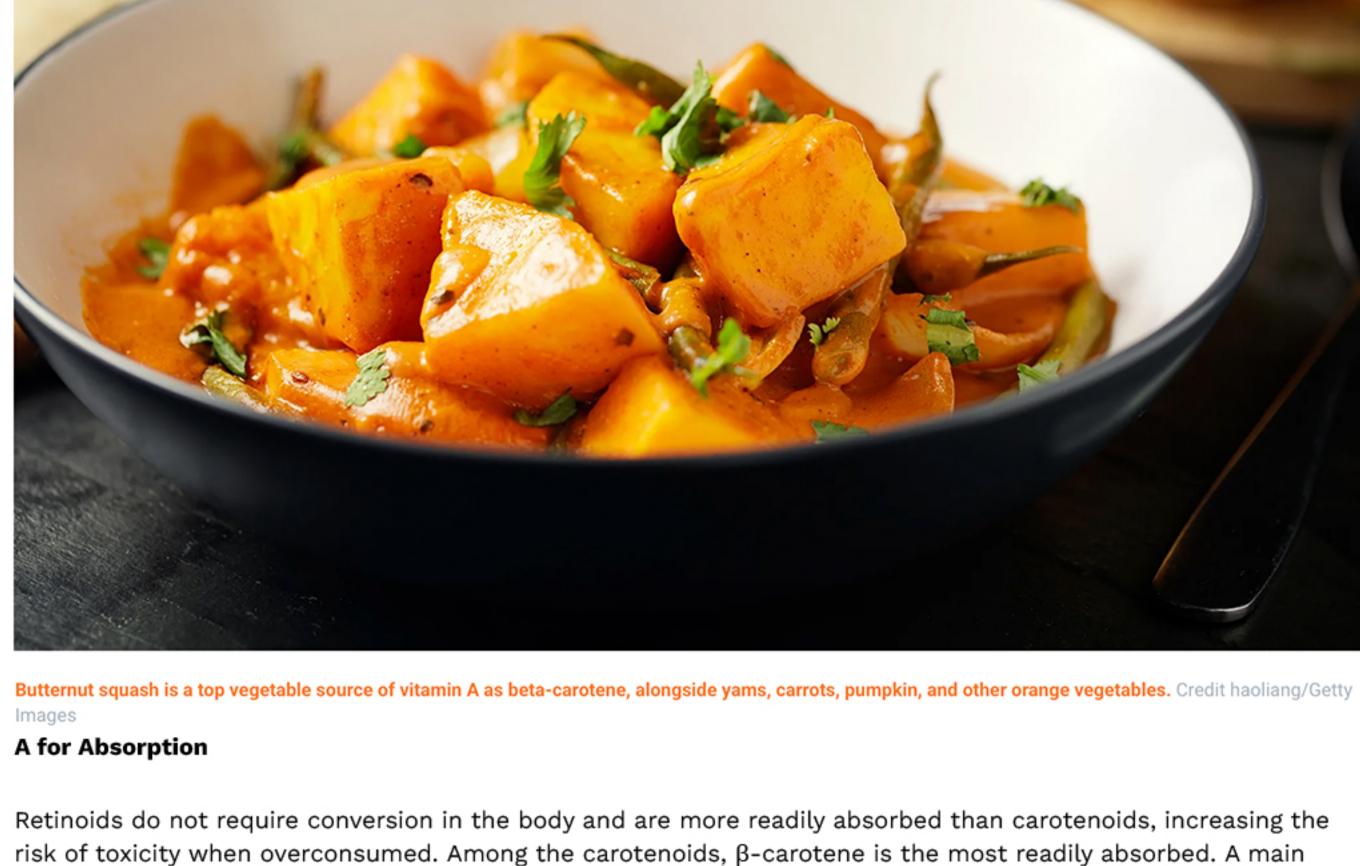
oxygen.

Among the non-provitamin-A carotenoids found in the human diet, the most familiar are lycopene, lutein, zeaxanthin, and astaxanthin. These are well-known for their roles in supporting health and immune function, especially in the eyes, cardiovascular system, and skin. As with all retinoids and carotenoids, they have demonstrated strong antioxidative and anti-inflammatory capacities.

metabolize. Also, as lipid-soluble compounds, they should be combined with a source of fat prior to consumption in order to promote absorption. The solution is as simple as cooking and adding a fat source to a plant-based formulation. However, absorption is highly variable for carotenoids, and the type and amount of triglyceride (fat) and carotenoid can have an impact. Provitamin-A compounds such as α -carotene and β -carotene circulate to different organs, each of which express

Since carotenoids are sourced from plant material, they must be released from the plant matrix to fully

enzymes capable of converting those compounds into bioavailable retinoids. This mechanism is dependent on the



there is a biological mechanism in place to protect from vitamin A toxicity from their overconsumption. In low-fat foods, retinyl esters are commonly used to supplement the vitamin A that is lost with fat reduction. Retinyl esters are more stable than retinol, and they have reduced capacity for oxidation during storage. There is

no reduction in biological activity, making these retinoids ideal for supplementation of products such as cereals,

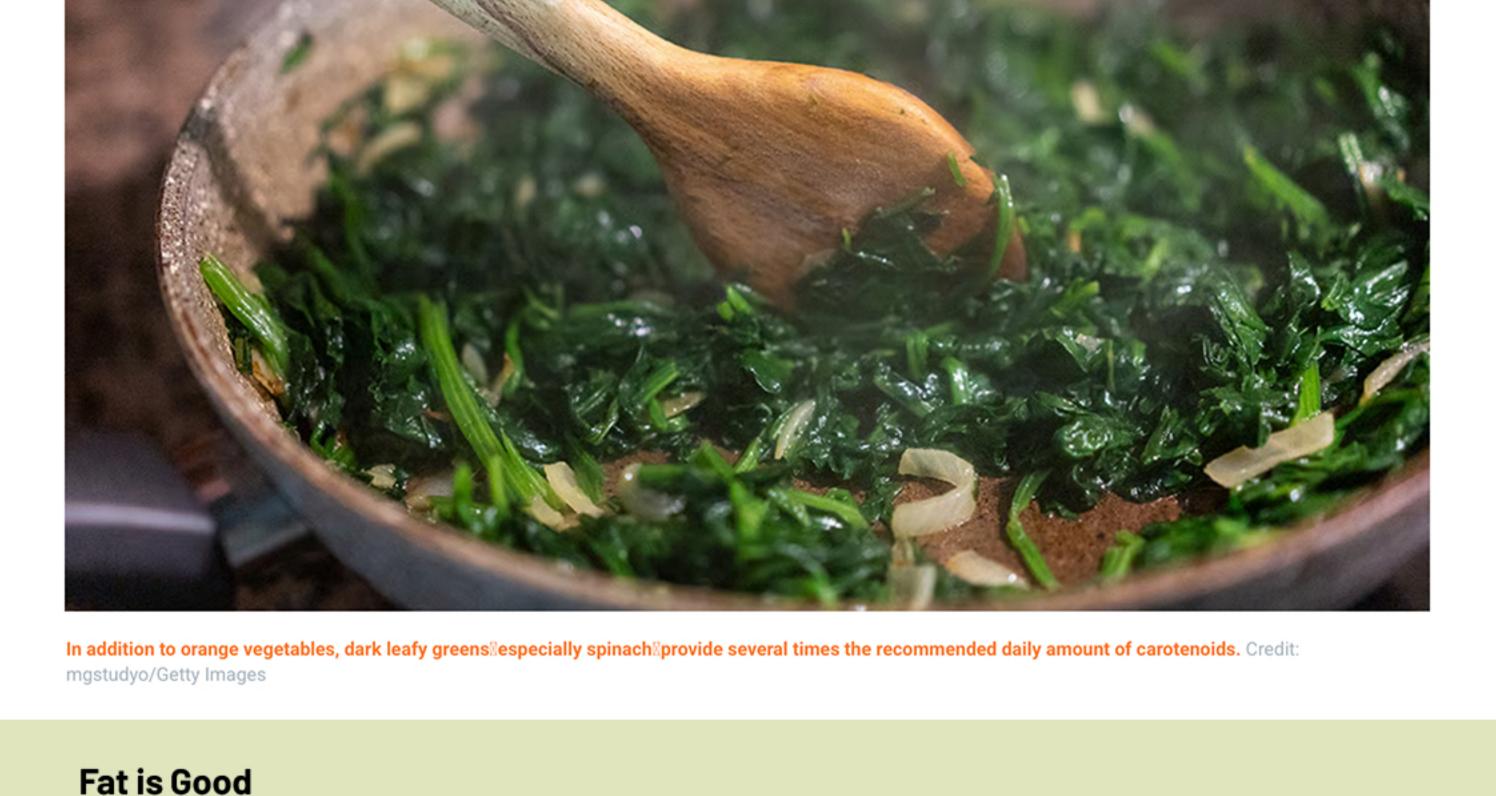
advantage of the carotenoids is that when excessive doses of these provitamin-A compounds are administered,

In beverage applications, it is important to note that vitamin A and retinyl esters are fat-soluble and dissolve poorly in aqueous solutions. However, microencapsulation or use of organic solvents such as ethanol or oils can improve solubility in beverage applications with little to no available fat. However, stability in a low- or no-fat beverage is dramatically reduced, increasing susceptibility for retinyl esters to degrade due to light, heat, and

As is well known with use of β-carotene as an ingredient, retinyl esters also can impart a yellow hue to

better shelf stability and is more widely used than retinyl acetate. However, retinyl acetate can be more stable in certain foods so it is important to identify the correct retinyl ester for each application. Ingredient suppliers can help with choosing the best form for the final product.

applications when used in large quantities. Comparing retinyl palmitate to retinyl acetate, retinyl palmitate has



transported in the bloodstream via compounds such as lipoproteins and cholesterol. Due to the antioxidative effects of vitamin A compounds, individuals with greater concentrations of vitamin A, both retinoids and carotenoids, in their plasma can have a significantly reduced risk of developing atherosclerosis and cardiovascular disease.

As fat-soluble compounds, retinoids and carotenoids are absorbed better in the presence of fats and oils and are

Preventive Function Retinal benefits are especially prominent in vision. The compound 11-cis-retinal is the visual chromophore that,

carotenoids.

lipid metabolism, bone health, and immune function.

addition to binding light, retinal has other impacts on the body. Some studies have indicated that retinal reduces adipose tissue accumulation from high-fat diets by inhibiting adipogenesis (fat cell production). Also, retinoid X receptors (RXR), which regulate retinoid signaling, are known to

positively influence physiological processes such as cell growth, differentiation, and apoptosis (cancer-cell suicide),

health, serum cholesterol, and adipose tissue accumulation. The immune support effect afforded by these vitamin

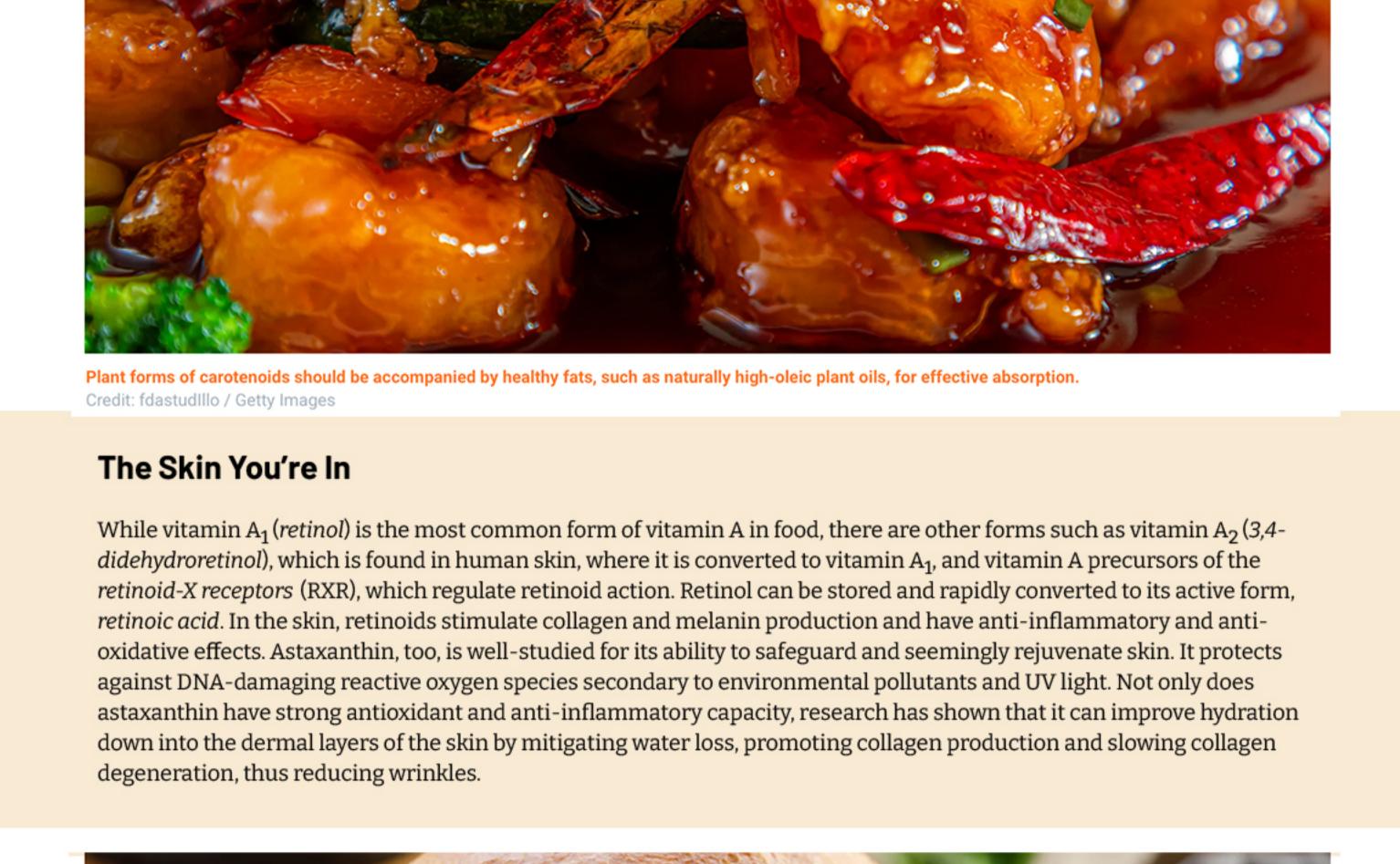
pigmentosa, macular degeneration, and certain types of cancer. Since retinoids are fat-soluble vitamins, and RXR is

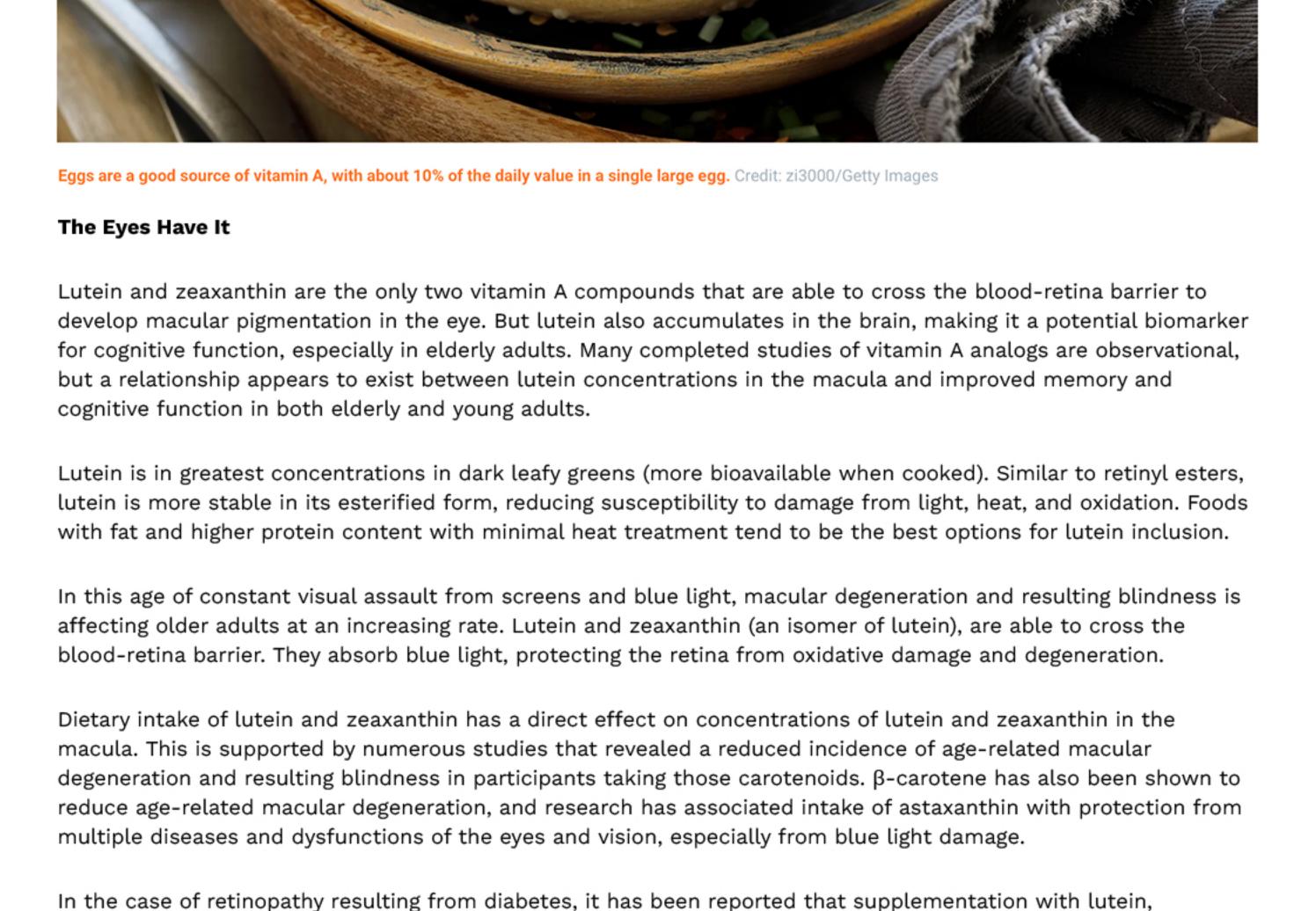
In lipid metabolism, RXR regulates the breakdown and synthesis of lipids, which has a direct impact on heart

A compounds is that dysregulation of RXR can lead to atherosclerosis, heart failure, obesity, diabetes, retinitis

when bonded with opsin proteins, enables the phototransduction cascade that allows the eye to perceive light. In

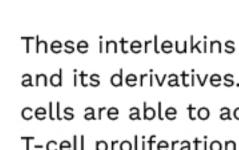
highly involved in regulation of adipose tissue and energy metabolism, it is notable that adipogenesis or inhibition of adipogenesis is strongly influenced by retinoids. Among other carotenoids, a-carotene, β -cryptoxanthin, lutein, and zeaxanthin concentrations have been positively correlated with HDL-cholesterol levels. Lutein and zeaxanthin have also been connected to reductions in LDLcholesterol, further supporting the importance of a balanced diet and the benefits of non-provitamin-A





zeaxanthin, and astaxanthin has a positive impact on preserving vision by reducing retinal degradation,

inflammation, cataracts, and oxidative stress. Some studies have even positively correlate β-carotene intake with



immune function and reaction time.

breast cancer, among others.

cytokine).

General Immunity

reduced cataract progression.

systems, specifically via immune cell differentiation and function, as well as inflammatory responses. Retinoic acid also maintains homeostasis in the gut and moderates immune responses in conjunction with immune tolerance, which is important in control of bowel inflammation and other inflammatory actions, such as tissue inflammation in the central nervous system and pulmonary mucosa. Due to their impact on macrophage and monocyte activation, and the subsequent initiation of immune response

against pathogenic organisms, retinoic acids play a crucial role in immunity and defense in the g.i. tract. They also

pro-inflammatory cytokine), and nitrous oxide production, while enhancing secretion of IL-10 (an anti-inflammatory

have shown a strong inhibitory effect on tumor necrosis factor, an inflammatory cytokine, interleukin-12 (IL-12, a

Liver provides more than four times the vitamin A as do plant sources, at around 2.2mg/oz., or 2.5 times the total daily value. Credit: YvanDube/Getty Images

Retinoic acid functions through multiple mechanisms, primarily regulation of the innate and adaptive immune

These interleukins are produced by macrophage and dendritic cells, both of which are influenced by retinoic acid and its derivatives. Dendritic cells are key in the activation and development of adaptive immunity. Since dendritic cells are able to activate T cells, retinoic acid enhances the ability of these cells to present antigens and improve T-cell proliferation. Retinoic acid also induces gut-homing markers on T cells, directing their migration to the gut and protecting the body from possible pathogenic organisms.

Vitamin A homologs also positively influence the functionality of B cells, which produce antibodies. In the presence

indirectly on B cells, improving and sustaining critical production of immunoglobulin G (IgG) antibodies, improving

of retinoic acid, B cells differentiate to produce antibody secreting cells. Retinoic acid works both directly and



research suggests that some vitamin A compounds might help lower the risk of specific cancers. For example, in some studies. β-carotene has exhibited a positive impact on the reduction of risk of breast cancer. Similar observations were made between colorectal cancer and \(\beta\)-carotene concentrations. In the instance of prostate cancer, lycopene has been the subject of a wealth of studies indicating a strong impact

on reducing the risk of prostate cancer and improving survivability. Numerous research studies into astaxanthin

have disclosed impressive evidence of protective support against skin cancer.

prepared

While studies of all vitamin A compounds revealed possible capacities to help reduce the risk of certain cancers,

between blood concentrations of carotenoids and retinoids and lung cancer, prostate cancer, skin cancer, and

Results of some preliminary studies suggest greater concentrations of both β-cryptoxanthin and lycopene reduce the risk of throat and mouth cancers but there is a great deal of noise surrounding these studies. Similarly, in the instance of lung cancer, both β-cryptoxanthin and lycopene concentrations have a negative correlation with morbidity in lung cancer.

While there is a need for more research on the interactions between vitamin A analogs and their impact on various cancers, what is clear is that carotenoid and retinoid compounds demonstrate many possible benefits related to immune support and overall health. Developers of foods and beverages targeting immunity and general health are fortunate to have multiple members of this vitamin A family to consider.

Dana McCurdy, PhD, is an analytical chemist, nutrition biochemist, and fermentation scientist with strong industry experience. Her expertise is in

fermented dairy, nutrition-mediated immunity, and the application of live bioactive cultures in food and beverage formulation with a focus on

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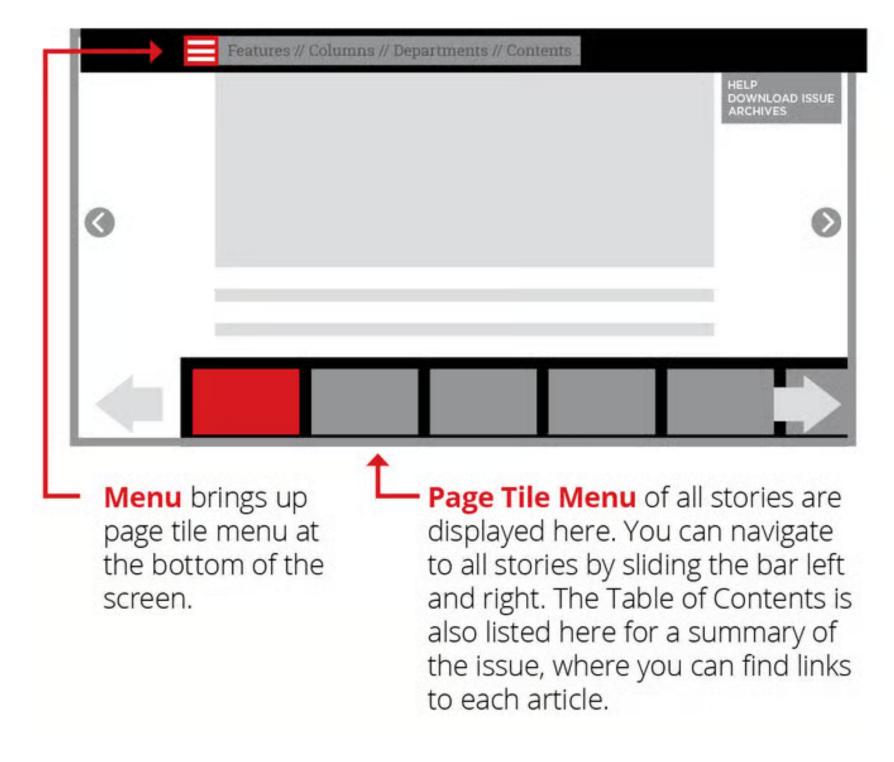
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