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REPORTER

February 2026

GLP-1 MEDICATIONS: Forcing a rethink in food formulations?

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From the editor

In food and beverage manufacturing, the margin for error has never been smaller — or the expectations higher. Cleanliness remains non-negotiable, not just as a regulatory requirement, but as the foundation of consumer trust, brand integrity and operational resilience. As production environments scale and complexity increases, maintaining uncompromising hygiene standards is mission-critical. In this issue, we explore how specialist solutions, such as industrial vacuuming systems from **Kärcher**, are helping manufacturers close the gap between compliance and best practice.

At the same time, the industry is being reshaped by powerful shifts in consumer behaviour. From the **GLP-1 effect**, which is fundamentally changing how much — and how — people eat, to the renaissance underway in **global bakery**, value is no longer measured in volume alone. Smaller portions demand smarter formulation, precision nutrition and flawless sensory delivery. Protein, fibre and flavour must now work harder in every bite.

Innovation is also unlocking opportunity across emerging markets. Our coverage of Africa's **blue food** economy highlights how coordinated investment, policy alignment and technology — from AI-enabled aquaculture to circular cold chains — could transform a high-potential sector into a driver of inclusive growth.

Finally, packaging continues to sit at the crossroads of sustainability, safety and performance. From fibre-based barriers to reusable systems and food-grade recycled plastics, manufacturers are navigating a new compliance landscape where packaging choices are strategic, not cosmetic. Discover all the latest trends **here**.

This edition reflects an industry in transition — one where precision, resilience and innovation define the next competitive edge.

Simon



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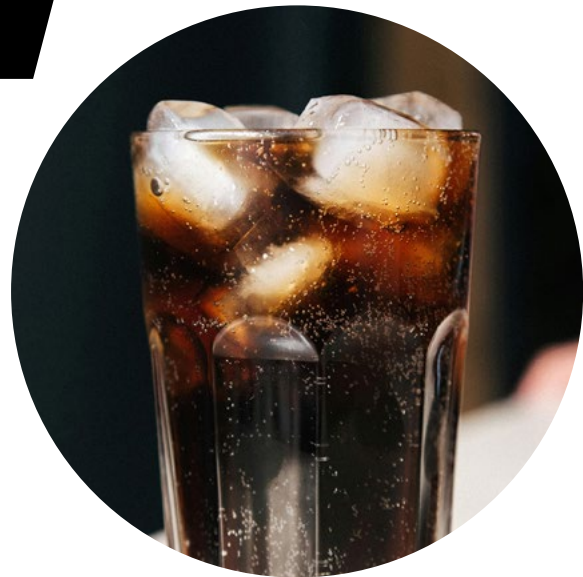
Editorial and advertising deadline 10 March 2026
Contact: editor@fbreporter.co.za

San Miguel invests R490m in Coega lemon processing plant

San Miguel has committed R490 million to establish a large-scale lemon processing facility in the Coega SEZ, marking a strategic shift toward higher-value agro-processing in South Africa.

The plant will process up to 100,000 tonnes of lemons annually by 2030, producing essential oils, juice concentrates and dehydrated peel for global food, beverage and fragrance markets. The investment reduces reliance on raw exports while increasing local value retention.

The project has already created 120 direct jobs, with a further 250 indirect roles expected. Proximity to the Port of Ngqura positions the facility to supply more than 200 customers across 50 countries.



Twizza acquired by Varun Beverages in R2.1bn deal

Indian beverage group Varun Beverages has agreed to acquire South African soft-drink manufacturer Twizza for approximately R2.1 billion, pending regulatory approval.

Twizza, founded in the Eastern Cape in 2003, operates three manufacturing facilities with an estimated annual capacity of 100 million cases. The acquisition strengthens Varun Beverages' Southern African footprint and adds a strong local brand positioned in value-conscious segments.

For Varun Beverages — PepsiCo's largest franchise bottler outside the US — the deal supports its strategy of expanding local manufacturing and distribution capacity in high-growth African markets. Twizza will become a step-down subsidiary once the transaction is finalised, expected by mid-2026.

South Africa aligns spirits ABV rules with global standard

South Africa has lowered the minimum alcohol by volume (ABV) requirement for spirits from 43% to 40%, aligning domestic regulations with international norms.

The amendment to the Liquor Product Act reduces regulatory friction for exporters and importers while easing excise tax pressure on producers. Industry estimates suggest the change cuts spirits excise by around R7 per 750ml bottle, offering partial relief amid above-inflation tax increases.

The revision also introduces new product categories, including flavoured spirits at a minimum ABV of 35%, enabling greater innovation. Higher-strength spirits remain legal, preserving producer and consumer choice.

Industry stakeholders have welcomed the move as a step toward a more competitive and globally integrated spirits market.



Symrise launches first-ever €400m share buyback

The company announced its inaugural share buyback programme, authorising the repurchase of up to €400 million in shares between 1 February and 31 October 2026. The initiative is supported by strong free cash flow generation and anticipated proceeds from recent portfolio actions.

The programme aims to reduce registered share capital and enhance shareholder value, while maintaining flexibility to invest in strategic priorities. CEO Jean-Yves Parisot said the move reflects



confidence in the company's long-term growth, underpinned by the ONE Symrise Strategy and ongoing transformation initiatives.

Symrise will continue prioritising organic investment in high-growth segments, targeted acquisitions and balance-sheet strength. The company holds investment-grade ratings from both S&P Global (BBB+) and Moody's (Baa1), each with stable outlooks, reinforcing its disciplined capital management approach.



Givaudan study shows performance gains from Cereboost

Givaudan has announced results from a collaborative study with Michigan State University and PitFit Inc, demonstrating measurable performance benefits from Cereboost™, its patented American ginseng extract.

In an open-label trial involving professional racecar drivers, two weeks of supplementation led to faster reaction times, improved throttle application and a three-second reduction in fastest lap times. Subjective feedback showed 94% of participants experienced improved focus, with most reporting faster perceived effects than comparable products.

The study reinforces Cereboost™'s positioning within the sports, energy and mental performance nutrition space, offering ingredient developers additional real-world performance data to support formulation and marketing claims.

Palsgaard begins Emulpals® emulsifier production in Brazil

Palsgaard has expanded production of its Emulpals® powdered cake emulsifiers to Brazil, strengthening supply security and reducing logistics costs for customers across the Americas.

Previously produced exclusively in Denmark, Emulpals® emulsifiers are plant-based, lean-label solutions designed to improve aeration, softness and processing efficiency in cake premixes. Local production supports growing regional demand while allowing tailored solutions for Latin American markets.

The move also improves inventory management and freight economics, particularly for customers seeking alternatives to saturated and trans-fats. Palsgaard Brazil will support manufacturers with local application expertise, backed by the group's global R&D and innovation network.



GNT earns EcoVadis Platinum for sustainability performance

Natural food colour specialist GNT has been awarded a Platinum medal by EcoVadis, placing the company in the top 1% of food manufacturers globally for sustainability performance.

The EXBERRY® colour supplier achieved an overall score of 86/100 in its latest assessment, reflecting improvements in energy and resource efficiency, waste reduction, supply-chain risk management and ethics compliance. GNT also strengthened supplier oversight through increased on-site audits and independent verification.

In 2025, the company formally committed to the UN Global Compact, aligning its operations with international principles on human rights, labour, environmental responsibility and anti-corruption. For customers, the recognition translates into improved supply security, lower carbon footprints and greater transparency around ethical sourcing — factors increasingly influencing procurement decisions across food and beverage manufacturing.



Clinical trial links Magtein® to cognitive and stress benefits

A new clinical trial has found that Magtein®, a patented form of magnesium L-threonate, is associated with measurable improvements in cognitive performance, sleep-related outcomes and physiological stress markers.

The six-week randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled study involved 100 healthy adults aged 18–45 with self-reported sleep dissatisfaction. Participants receiving Magtein® demonstrated improvements in memory, reaction time and overall cognitive performance, alongside reduced resting heart rate and improved heart-rate variability.

Researchers also reported an estimated 7.5-year reduction in “brain cognitive age” among the supplemented group. The study, conducted by Clinical Research Australia and published in *Frontiers in Nutrition*, adds to a growing body of evidence supporting Magtein®’s bioavailability and ability to cross the blood-brain barrier.

Established regional presence and expertise with our extensive network, we are well positioned to provide customers with an enhanced and more specialised product portfolio.”



McCain exits South African vegetable processing

McCain Foods has agreed to sell its South African vegetable manufacturing operations, including the Harvestime brand, to US-based investment group Enduring Ventures.

The transaction includes processing facilities in Springs and Marble Hall, employing more than 350 people. Enduring Ventures plans to expand Harvestime with a new premium vegetable range, signalling long-term investment rather than short-term asset stripping.

For McCain, the divestment allows greater focus on its core frozen potato portfolio, aligning with global portfolio optimisation efforts. The move mirrors recent international asset sales and follows McCain’s acquisition of US potato processor Penobscot McCrum to strengthen its North American position.





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Futurelife introduces zero sugar fruit & berry granola

The brand is expanding its zero added cane sugar portfolio with the exciting introduction of Futurelife Zero Granola Crunch in Fruit & Berry flavour. Recently launched in a convenient 600g bag, this tasty new offering caters to the rising demand from consumers seeking reduced sugar options for breakfast that don't compromise on flavour.

"South Africa's average daily sugar consumption sits between 12 and 24 teaspoons, well above the World Health Organisation's recommended limit of six," says Shaaista Kathree, Brand Manager. "At the same time, a growing number of individuals are looking to cut back on sugar, and the demand for lower or zero cane sugar cereals continues to rise. We are filling that gap with our new Zero Granola Crunch variant that combines smart nutrition with the great taste people expect."

She adds that this growing trend reflects a broader market shift demonstrated by the remarkable growth the zero cane sugar range has shown. Smart food™ Zero products have grown 104%, and Zero Granola Crunch specifically achieved growth of over 3,800%. But this success goes beyond just no added cane sugar.

"Consumers are also increasingly cognisant of gut health," notes Kathree, "and Zero Granola Crunch Fruit & Berry combines dietary fibre, probiotics, and inulin as a prebiotic to assist in supporting digestion." She explains that the ingredient list reflects a continued

focus on whole foods, with 55% rolled oats as the base, complemented by coconut, raisins, freeze-dried strawberries, and barley flakes. It's a source of protein, has a low GI, and maintains the satisfying crunch granola enthusiasts expect.

"But beyond making mindful choices that align with their wellness goals, shoppers also want convenience without the hassle of lengthy preparation," says Kathree. "Zero Granola Crunch Fruit & Berry delivers on both fronts, while also offering families a versatile option that fits seamlessly into busy schedules. It can be enjoyed in multiple ways: with milk or yoghurt for breakfast, sprinkled over a smoothie for extra crunch, mixed into chopped fruit for a wholesome snack, or even as a topping for frozen yoghurt. It's a really smart pick any time of the day."

The new Fruit & Berry flavour joins the popular Zero Granola Crunch Original, flavoured with desiccated coconut and cinnamon, creating a Zero Granola range that focuses on both ingredients and flavour.



SA's 10-Year-Old Brandy has a sophisticated new look

KWV's celebrated 10-Year-Old Potstill Brandy has entered a new era. Recently awarded Gold at the International Spirits Challenge (ISC) and contributing to KWV being named Producer of the Year, the brandy now arrives dressed in a refreshed, elegant new look that reflects its pedigree.

The packing upgrade marks a moment of renewed appreciation for one of South Africa's most iconic luxury spirits and serves as a reminder that craftsmanship, patience and heritage still matter in a fast-paced world.

The new design balances modern minimalism with premium cues. The gold and black detailing, paired with clean lines, feels at home on both the collector's shelf and at a modern home bar, signally understated sophistication.

The KWV 10-Year-Old potstill brandy is matured for a minimum of 10 years in small French oak barrels. Over the decade-long maturation, the spirit develops



layers of character that simply can't be rushed.

Aromas of prunes, ripe apricots and toasted oak unravel to reveal ripe fruit, warm spice with hints of vanilla and floral notes on the palate, ending with a long, velvety and balanced finish.

With its gold-medal success and striking new look, the KWV 10-Year-Old Brandy invites both loyal fans and new audiences to experience a South African masterpiece

Fairview White Rock introduces bold new savoury flavours and a fresh new look

White Rock cheese has always been a classic on South African cheese boards. This crowd-pleasing essential, due to the natural fruit essences completing the cheese flavour, now comes in a log shape, perfect for easy slicing.

Charles Back, a third-generation family owner of Fairview, explains, "As a family business, we're always exploring ways to delight our customers. Introducing savoury flavours brings something fresh to the White Rock range, while staying true to what people already enjoy about it."

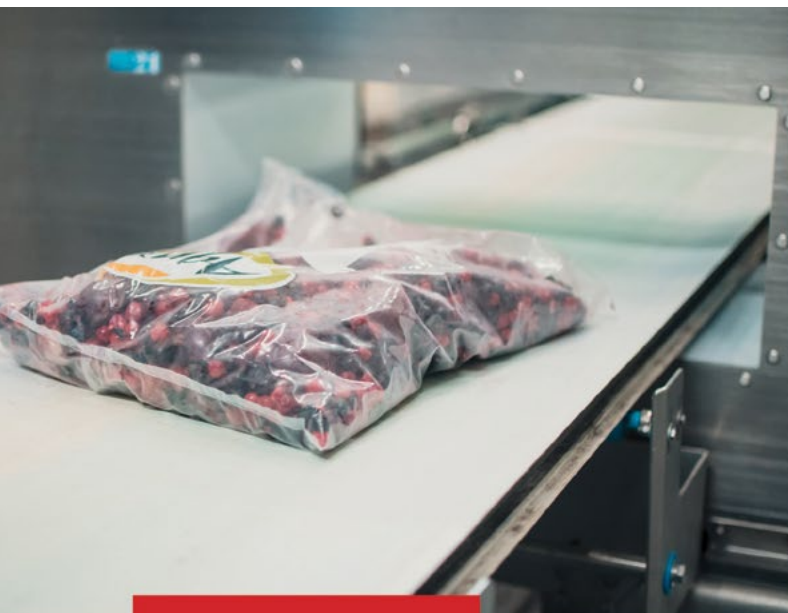
A new era of deliciousness

The introduction of savoury flavours opens a whole new world of pairing potential, from grilled vegetables and sharing boards to snacking moments and gourmet sandwiches. The newcomers include White Rock with Red Onion, made with onion flakes for

subtle umami depth, and White Rock with Garlic and Rosemary, which adds aromatic depth.

"These new savoury flavours take the range in a different, yet complementary direction," says Charles. "They are versatile, crowd pleasing and perfect for anyone who prefers something savoury over sweet."

Alongside the new savoury flavours, Fairview is also celebrating the return of a beloved classic- White Rock with Sweet and Tangy Apricot. Previously, a fan favourite, the apricot flavour has been reintroduced due to overwhelming demand. The tangy apricots and gentle tang of the cheese complement the natural sweetness of the apricots, creating a delightful blend of fruity and cheesy flavours that loyal White Rock fans have been craving.



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Where foreign particles become a problem: Industrial vacuums as a safety factor in the food industry

In the food industry, cleanliness is not optional. It is fundamental for consumer safety, regulatory compliance, and brand protection. Even the smallest foreign particle can compromise product quality, lead to costly recalls, or damage reputations. As production environments grow more complex and output volumes increase, maintaining consistently high hygiene standards is one of the industry's most critical responsibilities.

Many food production facilities rely on extraction systems integrated into manufacturing processes, but these alone are not sufficient.

Manual cleaning using industrial vacuums plays a vital role in preventing contamination, controlling dust, and ensuring safe, hygienic production environments across all stages of processing and packaging.

Foreign particles in food production

Food manufacturing generates a wide range of residues, including powders, dust, liquids, and organic materials. In large bakeries, dairies, and milk powder facilities, fine airborne dust such as flour or powdered milk is a constant challenge. These particles can settle on machinery, conveyor belts, cable ducts, walls, and floors, increasing hygiene risks and complicating cleaning routines.

In high concentrations, fine dust also presents a serious explosion hazard. Flour dust, for example, is highly combustible and remains one of the most well-known risks in food processing. Airborne particles can enter food products during production or packaging, contaminating entire batches. In such cases, products must be discarded, resulting in financial losses, production delays, and potential recalls.



In addition to dust, food production facilities regularly deal with spilled liquids, fats, dough residues, and raw materials. If not removed quickly and thoroughly, these substances can promote bacterial growth, attract pests, and increase cross-contamination risks between production areas.

The importance of manual cleaning with industrial vacuums

Automated extraction systems are effective for continuous removal of particles at defined points. However, they cannot reach every surface or area within a facility. Manual cleaning with industrial vacuums is essential to ensure comprehensive cleanliness.

Production equipment, filling stations, ovens, conveyors, and packaging machinery all require regular manual cleaning. Peripheral areas such as supply and waste pipelines, cable ducts, floors, and walls must also be kept clean to meet hygiene standards. Floors are particularly critical, as accumulated residues increase contamination risk and create slipping hazards.

By integrating industrial vacuums into routine cleaning procedures, food manufacturers can reduce contamination risks while improving workplace safety and operational efficiency.

Hygienic design requirements

Food production environments place strict demands on cleaning equipment. Industrial vacuums must be robust, reliable, and designed to prevent them from becoming contamination sources.

Stainless steel construction is a key requirement. Smooth, non-porous surfaces are easy to clean and disinfect and do not harbour bacteria or particles. Painted machines are less suitable, as flaking paint can introduce foreign particles.

Ease of emptying and cleaning is equally important. Containers should allow hygienic disposal of collected materials without releasing dust back into the air. This protects product quality and supports employee health and safety.

“Airborne particles can enter food products during production or packaging, contaminating entire batches. In such cases, products must be discarded, resulting in financial losses, production delays, and potential recalls”

Performance matched to application

Selecting the right industrial vacuum depends on the type, quantity, and properties of substances being removed. Large hose diameters suit high volumes of coarse materials, while compact machines with smaller hoses are ideal for confined spaces or detailed equipment cleaning.

Suction power and drive performance must align with operating requirements. For extended daily use



or multi-shift operations, three-phase industrial vacuums are recommended due to durability and consistent performance. AC-powered units may suffice for shorter or intermittent cleaning tasks. In food production, the ability to handle dry, damp, and wet materials is particularly valuable. Industrial vacuums allow excess liquids to be removed efficiently without leaving residues, which is essential in dairies, beverage production, and wash-down areas.

Filtration and explosion protection

The filter system is one of the most important components of an industrial vacuum. Filters must be selected based on particle size, dust type, and health risk: as coarse as possible, as fine as necessary.

Dust class L covers slightly hazardous substances, dust class M applies to moderately hazardous materials, and dust class H is for highly hazardous substances, requiring strict procedures for filtration, emptying, and disposal. In bakeries and powder-processing facilities, effective filtration prevents fine dust from being re-released into the air, protecting employees and products. Where combustible dust is present, explosion protection in accordance with ATEX guidelines is essential for safe operation.

Industry-specific accessories

Food manufacturing often requires specialised accessories to meet hygiene and safety standards. In large bakeries, heat-resistant suction hoses and oven nozzles capable of withstanding temperatures of up to 200°C allow intermediate oven cleaning without disrupting production.

Another example is suction brushes with blue bristles. Since blue is rarely found in food products, any detached bristle can be easily identified during visual inspections, reducing foreign object contamination risks.

These application-specific details are important for meeting food safety standards and audit requirements.

“Food manufacturing often requires specialised accessories to meet hygiene and safety standards. In large bakeries, heat-resistant suction hoses and oven nozzles capable of withstanding temperatures of up to 200°C allow intermediate oven cleaning without disrupting production”

Cleaning as a quality driver

Cleaning is sometimes viewed as an interruption to production. However, when industrial vacuums are integrated into daily workflows, they become a key factor in maintaining quality and efficiency.

Professional suction solutions remove contaminants thoroughly and reliably, reducing repeated cleaning, rework, or downtime caused by contamination. By embedding cleaning processes into operations, food manufacturers can maintain consistent product quality while optimising labour and time resources.

Selecting the right solution

Choosing the appropriate industrial vacuum requires consideration of operating time, container capacity, substance type, filtration requirements, dust class compliance, ATEX certification, and suitable hoses and accessories.

Working with a manufacturer that understands the demands of the food industry ensures cleaning solutions support hygiene standards, employee safety, and production reliability.

In an industry where consumer trust is paramount, cleanliness is more than a regulatory requirement. With the right industrial vacuum solutions, food manufacturers can protect their products, their people, and their brand—making cleanliness a true competitive advantage.



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Eating less, demanding more: GLP-1 medications are forcing a fundamental rethink of food formulation

For decades, the food industry has been built around abundance. Bigger portions. Greater variety. More choice, more indulgence, more volume. But quietly — and then all at once — that logic is beginning to fracture.

GLP-1 medications such as Ozempic, Wegovy and Mounjaro are doing something no consumer trend, diet or regulatory framework has ever fully achieved: they are changing how much people want to eat. Not through willpower or restriction, but through biology. Appetite is reduced. Meals get smaller. Snacking declines. And suddenly, the value equation of food is being rewritten.

When people eat less, every bite must work harder.

This is the moment the industry is now facing — and ingredient suppliers, manufacturers and retailers are being pulled into a new era of formulation where nutrient density, bioavailability and sensory satisfaction matter more than ever.

From portion control to nutrient precision

The early conversation around GLP-1s focused on

what consumers would stop buying: fewer snacks, less alcohol, reduced impulse purchases. But the more interesting shift is what replaces volume when appetite disappears.

Smaller meals expose nutritional gaps quickly. Protein intake drops. Micronutrient sufficiency becomes harder to achieve. Muscle loss becomes a real concern. For food manufacturers, this creates a simple but uncompromising challenge: design food for maximum nutritional uptake, not maximum consumption.

This is where formulation strategy is changing — not just at brand level, but deep within the ingredient supply chain.

Traditionally, ingredient suppliers have been enablers — helping brands hit cost, texture, flavour or shelf-life targets. In the GLP-1 era, they are becoming co-architects of nutritional strategy.

Protein reimaged

Protein has become the non-negotiable nutrient in GLP-1-aware formulations. But adding protein is no longer enough — how digestible it is, how it tastes, and how much fits into a smaller portion are now critical. Arla Foods Ingredients has been particularly vocal about this shift. Its work on whey protein isolates, hydrolysed proteins and Lacprodan-based solutions reflects a recognition that consumers eating less need protein that is efficiently absorbed, easy to consume, and neutral in flavour — especially in beverages and compact meals.

ADM, meanwhile, is pushing hard on plant-based protein systems designed for improved mouthfeel and amino acid balance. Pea, soy and blended plant proteins are being reformulated to reduce bitterness and chalkiness — issues that become far more noticeable when portion sizes shrink and tolerance for compromise disappears.

The underlying insight is clear: in a smaller portion world, inefficient protein is wasted protein.

“Protein has become the non-negotiable nutrient in GLP-1-aware formulations. But adding protein is no longer enough — how digestible it is, how it tastes, and how much fits into a smaller portion are now critical”

Flavour without volume

When portion size drops, flavour perception changes. There is less food to carry aroma, sweetness or fat-based mouthfeel. Products that once tasted indulgent can suddenly feel thin, medicinal or unsatisfying. This is where flavour houses like Symrise and Sensient are becoming critical players in the GLP-1 reformulation landscape.

Symrise's work on taste modulation, sweetness enhancement and fat perception allows brands to maintain indulgence while reducing sugar and calories — without relying on aggressive sweeteners that can alienate health-conscious consumers. Their focus on holistic sensory experience — not just flavour notes — aligns perfectly with the need to make smaller portions feel complete.

Sensient, meanwhile, is leaning into natural colours, flavour masking and botanical extracts that allow for higher nutrient fortification without sensory penalties. As micronutrients like iron, B-vitamins and zinc are added back into foods, bitterness and metallic notes become formulation challenges — ones that Sensient's technology is increasingly designed to solve.

In this new context, flavour is no longer about indulgence alone. It is about compliance. If food

doesn't taste right, consumers simply won't eat it — especially when appetite is already suppressed.

Fiber, satiety & the gut

Fiber has always been talked about. In the GLP-1 era, it becomes strategic.

Soluble fibres, resistant starches and prebiotic ingredients help manage glycaemic response, support gut health and extend satiety — complementing the physiological effects of GLP-1 medications rather than competing with them.

Companies like Cargill and ADM are investing heavily in fibre systems that do more than bulk up products. The focus is on fermentability, tolerance and multifunctionality — fibre that contributes to texture, stability and mouthfeel while delivering metabolic benefits.

This is particularly important as brands design smaller meals that still feel sustaining. Fiber is no longer filler; it is structural.

Africa, Europe & emerging markets

While much of the GLP-1 conversation is framed through a US or European lens, suppliers in emerging markets are also responding — often with remarkable agility.

ACI Group, for example, plays a critical role in distributing functional ingredients across Africa and the Middle East, where nutrition gaps already exist and portion-appropriate, fortified foods are essential. As GLP-1 adoption expands globally, distributors like ACI become crucial connectors between innovation and access.

Similarly, Carst & Walker, with its strong footprint across sub-Saharan Africa, is increasingly focused on nutrient fortification systems, protein blends and functional ingredients that allow manufacturers to deliver more nutrition without increasing cost or complexity.

In regions where food must be affordable and nutrient-dense, the GLP-1 effect accelerates an existing imperative: smarter formulation, not just smaller packaging.

“Soluble fibres, resistant starches and prebiotic ingredients help manage glycaemic response, support gut health and extend satiety — complementing the physiological effects of GLP-1 medications rather than competing with them”

The rise of nutrient density

Against this backdrop, retailers are beginning to translate ingredient-level innovation into consumer-facing strategy.

Marks & Spencer's Nutrient Dense range is a signal moment. Rather than quietly reformulating, M&S has chosen to name the problem: people are eating less, and nutrition must be more concentrated. By designing products with higher protein, fibre and micronutrient content — explicitly aligned with smaller appetites — the retailer has legitimised a new category.

Importantly, the range is not marketed exclusively to GLP-1 users. That restraint matters. It positions nutrient density as universally relevant, not pharmacologically niche — a lesson many brands would be wise to learn.

The new formulation playbook

Across the industry, a new playbook is emerging:

- Design for uptake, not intake
- Prioritise protein efficiency over protein quantity
- Use flavour technology to maintain emotional satisfaction
- Leverage fibre and functional ingredients as structural elements
- Fortify intelligently, without sensory compromise

This requires closer collaboration than ever between brands and suppliers. Ingredient companies

are no longer just selling components — they are selling solutions to physiological change.

What comes next

As GLP-1 usage expands, the industry will move beyond reaction and into strategy. Expect to see:

- Ingredient systems explicitly designed for low-appetite consumers
- Co-development between pharma-adjacent nutrition science and food R&D
- New claims frameworks around “nutrients per bite”
- A reframing of value — away from size, toward effectiveness

The winners in this next phase will not be the brands that simply shrink portions. They will be the ones that recognise a deeper truth: when consumers eat less, food must matter more.

For ingredient suppliers like Arla, ADM, Symrise, Sensient, ACI Group and Carst & Walker, this is not a threat. It is an invitation — to step forward as architects of a more precise, more purposeful food system.

And for the industry, it marks a rare opportunity to align commercial success with genuine nutritional impact — one smaller portion at a time.

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Permissible indulgence: What it means in 2026?

For decades, food indulgence was strongly associated with excess: larger portions, richer formulations, and bold flavour and colour systems designed to maximise shelf impact. In product development, indulgence often meant more sugar, more fat, or simply the ability to offer a more intense mouthfeel through increased texture and organoleptic properties.

Today, however, that definition is being re-examined. Food scientists, formulators, contract manufacturers and brands are increasingly asking the question: what drives indulgence, and how can it be delivered more efficiently, more responsibly, and with greater relevance to modern consumers?

A step back in time

For much of human history, food was primarily seen as fuel to work and survive, particularly when resources

were limited. Some research shows that humans are still biologically hardwired with an adaptive starvation response, a powerful evolutionary mechanism to survive periods of food scarcity. However, these ancient survival systems are being scrutinised to evaluate whether they can act as a driver of modern overeating, particularly of high-energy and indulgent foodstuffs.

The industrialisation of the food system in the 20th century altered that relationship. Convenience, mass production and processing shifted eating from necessity toward pleasure, and by the end of the century, indulgence had become a cultural shorthand for reward: bigger portions, richer recipes and high-impact flavours.

Today, indulgence remains closely tied to taste, comfort and sensory engagement. According to Innova Market Insights, indulgent food and beverage consumption is still strongly driven by emotional needs, lifting individuals' mood, for comfort, or simply hitting an umami high note in sensory stimulation.

What has changed, however, is the filter through which consumers make those choices as tighter budgets and sharper priorities around ingesting enough protein and fibre continue to grow.

Informed consumers are vested in ingredient quality, provenance, sustainability and ethical supply chains, particularly for botanical or naturally sourced products. This further underscores quality as a key aspect of indulgent product development.

This recalibration has given rise to the term 'permissible indulgence,' for products that deliver genuine sensory satisfaction without triggering regret or undermining broader health goals. Historically, permissible indulgence was often framed narrowly around weight management and calorie control. However, the rapid uptake of GLP-1 medications has accelerated this shift and fundamentally changed how some consumers relate to food.

“Consumers’ desire for pleasurable food is not disappearing. What is changing is how it is balanced against health, time, budget and mental load. Permissible indulgence reflects this balance for products that are controlled, emotionally satisfying and compatible with real life”

Not a diet, but a behavioural disruption

GLP-1 medications are not a passing wellness trend. Users consistently report sustained changes in appetite, portion size and food decision-making

while using the medication. One of the most widely reported effects is the reduction of 'food noise,' the constant mental preoccupation often characterised by cravings, emotional eating, and food-based routines.

It is not all smooth sailing, however. Research published in the British Medical Journal suggests that once medication is stopped, most consumers will regain 0,8kg of weight per month on average. This means that they can return to their pre-treatment weight within a year and a half. It is therefore important that lifestyle modifications, such as healthy eating and exercise, are made to keep the weight off.

However, for many consumers, this reduction is experienced as liberating as their relationship with food quietens down, becomes less dominant and more functional. However, this shift has consequences for how indulgence is perceived and valued by GLP1 users. Product categories that have traditionally relied on emotional cues, such as confectionery and baked goods, are already feeling pressure. When appetite is lower, and food decisions are more deliberate, the very concept of traditional indulgence will change.

Emotional eating may be declining, but food joy still matters

One of the more unexpected outcomes of GLP-1 adoption is a sense of emotional disconnection from food. Social eating rituals such as shared platters, takeaway nights, and celebratory treats, while not prohibited, often feel less compelling.

At the same time, many users report missing the enjoyment and social connection that food once



provided. The opportunity for brands lies here: not in reigniting overconsumption, but in restoring food joy through precision and offering more healthy choices.

In this context, indulgence shifts from quantity to quality. Texture, aroma, flavour clarity and visual appeal become primary tools for engagement. The objective is no longer to make food bigger or richer, but to make it more satisfying, memorable and worthwhile within smaller consumption moments and generally healthier and more functional.

Cognitive pressure

Beyond GLP-1, consumers are also experiencing fatigue from the wide range of foods available to them. An abundance of flavours, formats, claims and visual cues can dilute enjoyment rather than enhance it. Indulgence, once associated with abundance, is now being redefined around intentionality and satisfaction.

Consumers' desire for pleasurable food is not disappearing. What is changing is how it is balanced against health, time, budget and mental load. Permissible indulgence reflects this balance for products that are controlled, emotionally satisfying and compatible with real life.

For brands, the question is no longer how to formulate a more decadent product, but how to deliver the same sensory payoff through smarter formulation strategies. Read on as we unpack three areas that could shape this market in 2026.

1. Smaller moments, bigger impact

The rising cost-of-living pressures are shifting products away from occasional splurges toward smaller, more frequent rewards, and these micro-treats can carry disproportionate emotional value when the product or snack hits all the right consumer taste notes.

From a formulation perspective, this emphasis on efficiency around texture systems that deliver crunch, creaminess or melt; inclusions that create contrast; and layered flavour release can create a sense of fullness of experience without reliance on volume. In this space, ingredient selection, such as high-impact fibres and proteins are strategic. Systems that support mouthfeel, slow consumption and controlled flavour release can align with both portion awareness and reduced appetite.

2. No compromise

Health and luxurious treats are no longer positioned as opposing forces as consumers increasingly recognise that enjoyment of food contributes to emotional well-being.

Innova data shows that 22% of consumers believe snacks and treats help manage stress, slightly ahead of those who prioritise healthy eating alone. The implication is not to remove these products but to design it differently.



Permissible indulgence often focuses on positive nutrition rather than simple reduction. Protein, fibre and functional ingredients are being integrated into new formats, particularly in snacks and functional or sports recovery products. The technical challenge is maintaining texture, flavour and sensory perception while delivering nutritional uplift to food and beverages. Here, advanced ingredient systems are critical as they enable cleaner labels, functional benefits and sensory integrity to coexist.

3. Texture is a primary indulgence driver

Innova research identifies texture as a key driver of indulgent choice, particularly among Millennials and Gen X. The report indicates that crunch, crispness, chew and creaminess can extend enjoyment for consumers, thereby slowing consumption while increasing perceived satisfaction.

The popularity of globally inspired textures and sweet-savoury contrasts reflects a demand for sensory depth rather than sheer richness. For example, products such as Dubai chocolate or Cronuts (a hybrid croissant/doughnut) demonstrate how layered textures can deliver these impacts without escalating sugar or fat levels.

Indulgence is not disappearing, but it is evolving to be more deliberate, more sensorial and with a higher nutrient for consumers. For food manufacturers and brands, this shift places greater emphasis on formulations that work harder, deliver more satisfaction through ingredient choices rather than richness or volume. Texture, flavour and protein and fibre positioning are critical to create contrast and reward while still offering a nutrient-rich experience.

www.acigroup.biz

Author

By Greg Holgate, Business Development Manager (Pharma) at ACI Group

How hybrids, heritage and artistry are shaping the future of baking



The pastry world is entering a renaissance defined by creativity, comfort and curiosity, and nowhere is this more evident than in the rise of hybrid baking trends that continue to evolve at a dizzying pace.

What began as croissant-inspired experimentation has now moved far beyond the cronut era and into a global appetite for mashups that merge technique, tradition and pure indulgence. From Paris to Toronto, bakers are doubling down on unexpected creations that have transcended gimmick status to become mainstream staples.

One of the most headline-grabbing examples appeared on National Donut Day, when Philadelphia Cream Cheese unveiled the bonut - an uncut, doughnut-shaped bagel slathered with the brand's newest sweet flavours, Blueberry and Pineapple, developed in collaboration with Toronto's College Street Bagels and Montreal's Fairmount Bagel.

“According to Taste Tomorrow’s global insights, 63% of Gen Z and Millennials say they are drawn to bakery items that offer something unexpected, a sentiment fuelling the popularity of cruffins, croffles, bonuts, duffins, crookies and other playful hybrids”

With Nielsen IQ data showing that 89 percent of cream cheese sales sit firmly in the savoury category, despite nearly half of consumers preferring sweet, the bonut reveals a clear opportunity in the market. It also reflects a broader consumer mindset: while people still long for the familiarity of comfort foods, there is an equally powerful hunger for adventure and novelty.

According to Taste Tomorrow’s global insights, 63% of Gen Z and Millennials say they are drawn to bakery

items that offer something unexpected, a sentiment fuelling the popularity of cruffins, croffles, bonuts, duffins, crookies and other playful hybrids. Among these emerging icons, the crookie, a croissant-cookie mashup rumoured to have originated in Paris, has quickly gone international, blending buttery lamination with a soft, cookie-like centre to create a treat that feels both nostalgic and entirely new.

The trend extends to filled pastries, too, as bakers increasingly abandon plain croissants in favour of versions piped with pistachio, hazelnut or chocolate custards that peek temptingly from the edges. Equally eye-catching are cube-shaped croissants, which require specialised moulds and meticulous technique, often finished with colourful icing drips or elaborate toppings that highlight the baker's artistry. Laminated brioche has also risen in prominence, using brioche dough layered with butter to achieve visually striking loaves with distinct layers and rich texture. And while traditionalists may raise eyebrows at flattened croissants or spiral-shaped creations, these experiments reflect a willingness to push boundaries and blend novelty with recognisable flavours, a combination increasingly supported by advancements in shelf life that make such intricate pastries more feasible for commercial production.

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Alongside these indulgent innovations comes a growing commitment to sustainability, as bakeries adopt low- or no-waste practices that acknowledge both environmental responsibility and rising consumer expectations. Bakers are reimagining by-products, turning stale bread into bread pudding, for example, and reducing packaging by opting for durable, reusable bags. The movement also extends to maximizing whole ingredients, lowering energy consumption by using motion-activated lighting or renewable energy for ovens, recycling water and optimising overall utility usage. Smaller bakeries are even collaborating by sharing bulk ingredient shipments to reduce transportation impact and keep

costs manageable, reinforcing a sense of community within the craft.

The pursuit of sustainability dovetails naturally with another major trend: the revival of heritage grains. Celebrated for their deep flavours and nutritional density, these grains benefit from long fermentation, allowing complex enzymes to develop and giving breads hearty, nutty, or earthy profiles. Their high levels of vitamins, minerals and fibre appeal to health-conscious consumers, while their connection to tradition aligns beautifully with the artisanal baking movement. Bakers who use heritage grains are not just producing food; they are telling stories about origin, craftsmanship, authenticity and the rediscovery of ancient ingredients that lend character and meaning to modern loaves. At the same time, artisanal baking continues to thrive, powered by a renewed focus on long fermentation, visual artistry, ingredient quality and the storytelling that elevates a simple pastry into a crafted experience. Craft bakeries are multiplying despite operational challenges; driven by a consumer desire to know not only what they're eating but who made it and why.

Balancing these rich, layered trends is the rise of miniature and bite-sized desserts, offering indulgence without the guilt. Items like mini croissants, madeleines, petit fours and two-bite brownies have become staples for customers seeking portion control or variety without waste. Such tiny treats fit into more mindful eating habits while also serving the grab-and-go culture of cafés and retail bakeries, where they are priced for impulsive enjoyment. The hybrid landscape continues to expand as brands and bakeries test new ideas. Starbucks has explored muffin crossovers such as the seasonal Pumpkin Cheesecake Muffin, while in the frozen aisle, brands like Nestlé Toll House and Pillsbury have seen success with cookie-stuffed brownie bites and doughnut-glazed cake bars.

The croffle, made by pressing croissant dough in a waffle iron, has become another standout, joining a growing cast of inventive creations such as the Supreme, a spiral of croissant dough filled with Italian bomboloni cream; the Biski, a biscuit-cookie-cake trifecta developed by London's Cutter & Squidge; the pretzel-croissant hybrid known as the Cretzel; and the Baissant, which merges the chew of a bagel with the flakiness of croissant layers.

Taken together, these trends show a pastry world driven by imagination, global influence, and a desire to blend the comforting with the unexpected. Whether it's a cube croissant, a heritage-grain loaf, a guilt-free mini, or a wildly inventive mashup, today's pastries reflect the evolving tastes of consumers who crave stories, craftsmanship, and a sense of discovery in every bite.

Author

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Engineering the next masterpiece in confectionery innovation

For today's confectionery manufacturers, crafting a confectionery masterpiece means blending precise innovative production technology with bold creativity.

Manufacturers are reimagining jellies, gummies, marshmallows and liquorice through advanced processing systems that deliver consistent quality while enabling rapid innovation. From high-efficiency cooking and continuous depositing lines to smart, data-driven quality control, the modern factory floor is built for both reliability and experimentation.

For today's confectionery manufacturers, crafting a confectionery masterpiece means blending precise innovative production technology with bold creativity. Manufacturers are reimagining jellies, gummies, marshmallows and liquorice through advanced processing systems that deliver consistent quality while enabling rapid innovation. From high-efficiency cooking and continuous depositing lines to smart, data-driven quality control, the modern factory floor is built for both reliability and experimentation.

As consumer expectations shift, production teams are incorporating plant-based gels, functional ingredients, reduced-sugar formulations and exotic flavour pairings all without compromising texture or repeatability. Seasonal micro-batches, personalised shapes and premium finishes are becoming standard, powered by flexible automation and modular equipment.

At TNA Solutions, we are proven in consistently delivering the results a new generation of confectionery systems that is crafted with precision, inspired by global innovative trends, and engineered to delight every batch, every season, every time. Confectionery production can, at times, feel as much like composing a symphony as it does like orchestrating high-intensity operations.

On one hand are the familiar notes of classic gummies, marshmallows, and liquorice, whose repeatability consumers expect. On the other hand, there are the improvisations: new plant-based recipes, textural innovations, exotic flavour trends, and health-conscious functional gummies designed for wellness, emerging from a proactive approach to well-being. Consumers are redefining their gummy consumption as more conscious, with people buying only what they need, understanding the cleaner and greener ingredients derived from natural products.

Today's consumers want the best of both worlds: the familiar, dependable taste of their favourite jellies, gummies, marshmallows and liquorice, along with exciting new twists in the form of everything from plant-based and fortified varieties to seasonal creations and premium, indulgent flavours.

Reflecting on 2025

Confectionery in 2025 has been defined by the intersection of technical precision, consumer-driven flexibility, and manufacturing innovation. As demand shifts more toward plant-based, functional, clean-label and sensorially rich products, success has depended on the ability to optimise processes, adopt new technologies and maintain quality across increasingly complex product portfolios.

Manufacturers that invest in agile systems, smarter automation and advanced ingredient solutions will be best positioned to compose the next generation of confectionery masterpieces.

And the pressure to deliver these masterpieces is growing. The global confectionery market was valued at \$225 billion in 2024 and is forecast to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 3.6 per cent between 2025 and 2029. Sugar-free products are at the forefront of change, already accounting for 35 per cent of all new product launches in 2024.

Yet this growth has been tempered by volatility, with cocoa prices at record highs putting significant pressure on chocolate margins. For producers heavily dependent on chocolate, the cocoa shock was a defining feature of 2025. For manufacturers in the jelly, gummy and marshmallow categories, it created space to consolidate growth and demonstrate resilience.

Within the broader market of sugar confectionery, jellies and gummies stand out as a primary growth engine. The segment was valued at \$38.18 billion in

2024 and is projected to achieve a CAGR of 3.8 per cent through to 2030. North America holds the largest share, with gummies becoming a popular delivery format for functional and nutraceutical products.

Europe remains a stronghold for sugar-free and vegan confectionery, alongside a long-established pick-and-mix culture. Asia-Pacific continues to be the fastest-growing region, with annual growth rates of up to 12.9 per cent, fuelled by rising disposable incomes, rapid urbanisation and an increasingly health-aware consumer base.

Consumer expectations drove much of this momentum. Plant based formulations moved into high performance territory, functional and fortified wellness gummies gained market share and consumers sought transparency and clean labels. Indulgence retained its place in the composition, with berry flavours, hybrid textures, tropical blends and centre-filled or multi-layered textures providing variety and novelty. Innovation in format and texture became as important as flavour, with freeze-dried gummies and crunchy clusters adding new dimensions to the sensory experience.

As ever, convenience also played its role, with gummies and jellies thriving as portable, on-the-go treats, supported by seasonal tie-ins and brand collaborations that kept ranges vibrant and engaging.

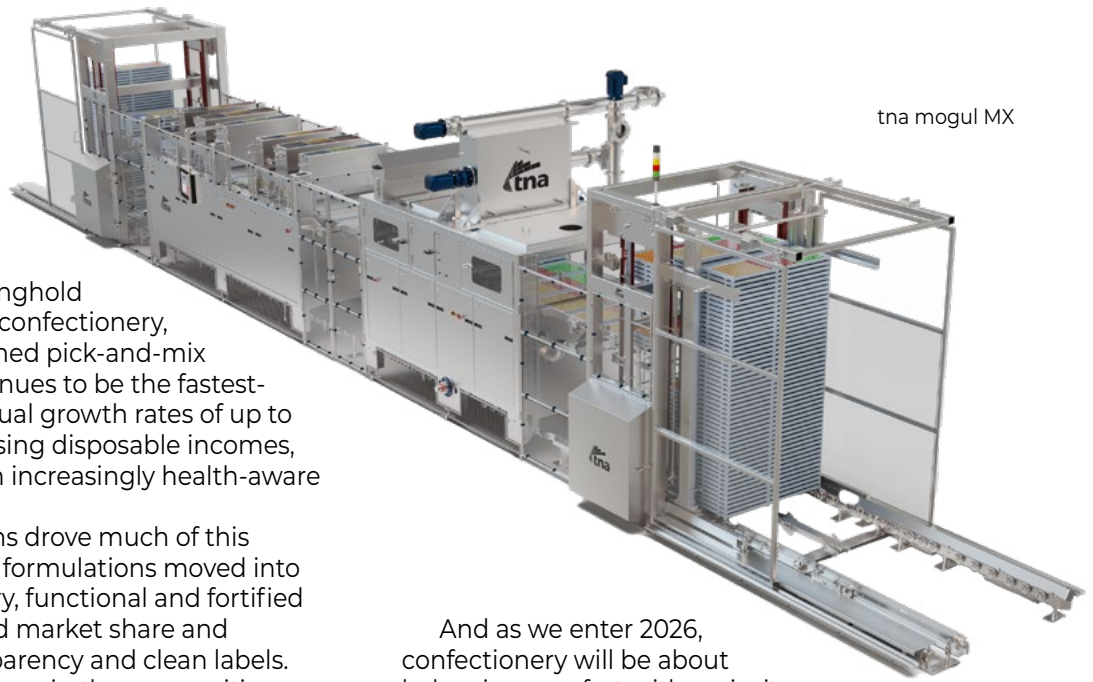
The challenge for confectionery manufacturers lay in keeping the rhythm steady while improvising where needed. Efficiency remained critical as rising input costs and energy prices squeezed margins.

Flexibility became indispensable, with short-run lines, seasonal SKUs and flavour rotations all requiring rapid changeovers and minimal downtime. Sustainability pressures continued to mount, with starch containment, reduced energy and water use, and recyclable packaging formats all on the agenda.

Ready for 2026

At TNA Solutions, these priorities come together in the way we support our customers. The tna mogul provides precision starch moulding for gummies, jellies, marshmallows, fondants, crème centres, liquorice and centre-in-shell gummies, combining the repeatability needed for established classics with the flexibility to create innovative new designs. Depositing systems allow fast format changes, supporting limited-edition runs and multi-layered products.

The tna robag® with auto-splice delivers high-speed bagging with minimal film waste, while the tna ropac® 5 enables efficient case-packing for small formats that reflect the rise in portion-controlled packs. Together, these systems create an integrated confectionery processing line that ensures every part of the production process plays in tune.



tna mogul MX

And as we enter 2026, confectionery will be about balancing comfort with curiosity, delivering the repeatability consumers trust while surprising them with bold new experiences. Functional and nutraceutical confectionery is expected to expand further, moving from niche to mainstream. Plant-based alternatives will grow in scale, even as producers continue to grapple with cost and textural challenges. Premium and seasonal lines will proliferate, increasing pressure on lines to manage rapid changeovers and shorter runs.

This may seem like more of the same from the past 12 months, but there is one critical new ingredient: regulation. The EU's Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation and its ban on PFAS in food-contact packaging will take practical effect in August 2026. In the United States, new traceability requirements under FSMA 204 will also apply from early in the year. Each of these changes demands reformulation, packaging redesign or digital record-keeping, placing greater pressure on manufacturers to adapt without compromising efficiency.

Confectionery's enduring appeal lies in its interplay of indulgence and innovation, comfort and surprise. In 2026, this duality will intensify as consumers, regulators and global markets demand greater variety, cleaner labels, and more sustainable production practices. Manufacturers will be challenged to deliver novelty without compromising consistency, efficiency or compliance. The leaders in this next era will be those who master composition: achieving a precise harmony between repeatability and adaptability, ensuring every product is both reliably crafted and dynamically responsive to emerging trends.

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By Luca Menassi, General Manager Asia, TNA Solutions

The truth about sugar substitutes: Are they safe?



Over the years, sugar has gained a reputation as public enemy number one when it comes to holistic health. Its overconsumption has been linked to a range of chronic conditions, including diabetes, heart disease and obesity. For many, the solution lies in switching to sugar substitutes, but not all sweeteners are created equal. Understanding the differences is key to choosing the right alternative, and as is often the case, consuming these in moderation is also important.

This is according to Marlene Ellmer, from Vergelegen Dietitians – a long-standing partner of Mediclinic Vergelegen. Ellmer and her team provide both in- and out-patient dietary support across the Mediclinic group, working closely with patients in intensive care, high care and general wards. As part of a multi-disciplinary approach, they complement the work of Mediclinic's admitting specialists with expert nutritional advice.



"Sweeteners can be a helpful tool if you're cutting back on sugar – especially for people with diabetes, those trying to lose weight, or anyone looking to prevent tooth decay," Ellmer explains. "The important thing to remember is that using sweeteners isn't a free pass to eat more sweet foods, as this can counter any positive results that come from cutting out traditional sugar. However, when used as recommended and in moderation, they are generally recognised as safe alternatives."

Sugar types decoded

The public is constantly reminded of the negative effects of excessive sugar consumption - and for good reason. However, as Ellmer explains, not all

sugars are inherently bad. For instance, the sugar found in sugary drinks and processed foods is called sucrose. Extensive national and global research confirms that high sucrose intake is associated with poor metabolic outcomes.

Naturally occurring sugars, such as fructose in fruit and lactose in dairy products, are different. These sugars are accompanied by fibre and nutrients, which help the body process them more effectively. "So, while sugar isn't inherently evil, it becomes 'ugly' when overconsumed – especially in the absence of nutritional balance and other imperative micro and macronutrients."

"... while sugar isn't inherently evil, it becomes 'ugly' when overconsumed – especially in the absence of nutritional balance and other imperative micro and macronutrients"

Artificial sweeteners: pros and cons

Artificial sweeteners are often much sweeter than sugar – sometimes up to 100 times – but contain no calories or usable energy. They typically pass through the digestive system without being fully absorbed.

Commonly found in 'diet' or 'zero' soft drinks, sugar-free gum and various processed foods, artificial sweeteners are generally considered safe. However, over-usage is not usually recommended, and some people do report a metallic or unpleasant aftertaste. Examples include saccharin, acesulfame, aspartame, neotame and sucralose.

Natural sweeteners: know your options

Natural sweeteners are derived from plant or fruit sources and vary widely in how they affect the body. Some, like stevia, are significantly sweeter than regular sugar but do not raise blood glucose levels.

Others, like honey or agave, contain calories and can impact blood sugar levels.

These sweeteners are often used in products marketed as healthier alternatives, but not all are suitable for people with diabetes. Popular natural options include stevia, agave syrup and monk fruit extract.

The lowdown on sugar alcohols

Sugar alcohols have grown in popularity in recent years, though they've long been used in products like sugar-free sweets and diabetic-friendly items. These are a type of carbohydrate that the body only partially absorbs, resulting in fewer calories and a milder impact on blood sugar.

They are generally less sweet than regular sugar and are considered a useful alternative in moderation. However, excessive consumption can lead to digestive issues such as bloating, gas or diarrhoea. Common examples include sorbitol, erythritol, xylitol and mannitol.

Sweetener safety: what's true?

For some, sweeteners remain a cause for concern, especially due to ongoing debate around potential links to cancer. According to the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), certain sweeteners like aspartame are classified as "Possibly carcinogenic to humans".

Research, however, is inconclusive, and most health authorities agree these sweeteners are safe when used in moderation and manufactured to appropriate standards.

As Ellmer concludes: "The same principle that applies to any kind of food also applies to sweeteners: 'everything in moderation.' Natural options like stevia and xylitol are often better choices because they come from plant sources and have a smaller effect on blood sugar levels.

However, not everyone reacts to food products the same way. That's why it's a good idea to talk to a healthcare professional to figure out what works best for your body and your health goals."

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**Your guide to key partners in
the food and beverage industry**





2026 Global Taste Charts: Defining the Future of Flavour

Kerry unveiled its 2026 Global Taste Charts - a comprehensive guide to the flavours set to inspire innovation in food and beverage. Drawing on the expertise of over 1,200 scientists, 100 flavourists, and extensive consumer research, these charts provide the actionable intelligence brands seek to find their flavour edge.

This year's initiative sets a new benchmark. The 2026 Taste Charts are now powered by a user-friendly, end-to-end digital platform, KerryNow™, that bridges the gap between insight and execution. For the first time, customers can instantly order samples of trending flavours at the touch of a button—leading the industry in turning insight into action.

A complex market

Behind the charts lies one of the most advanced flavour intelligence programmes in the industry. Kerry's insights team analysed hundreds of thousands of products and harnessed insight from a vast array of online data points, ranging from menu trends to social media conversations to uncover the patterns shaping global taste. This data-rich approach enables Kerry to identify dominant, emerging, and accelerating flavours with precision, ensuring manufacturers can anticipate consumer preferences rather than simply react to them.

“The 2026 Taste Charts are now powered by a user-friendly, end-to-end digital platform, KerryNow™, that bridges the gap between insight and execution”

Designed to fuel faster ideation and drive smarter, data-backed decisions, this year's edition expands from six to eight product categories. It offers a deeper dive into:

- Refreshing Beverages
- Alcohol & Alcohol-Inspired Beverages
- Tea, Coffee & Cocoa
- Savoury Snacks
- Sweet
- Soups, Sauces & Dressings
- Meat & Meals
- Supplements.

This comprehensive coverage empowers brands to create concepts that blend creativity with real consumer insight.

From exotic to iconic

The 2026 Taste Charts highlight a consumer landscape that seeks both novelty and nostalgia. Key insights include:

- **The Dragon Fruit phenomenon:** Traditionally rooted in Asian markets, Dragon Fruit has transcended its regional origins to become a breakout global flavour. With a 17% CAGR in new product launches projected through 2025, it is reshaping refreshment categories across Europe and the Americas. While over half of all launches remain in refreshing beverages, thanks to its mild, subtly sweet profile, the flavour is making waves in confectionary and alcoholic formats, with consumer interest surging during summer months.
- **Botanicals & florals:** As consumers gravitate towards complex, aromatic profiles, Orange Blossom and Hibiscus are forecasted as key 'Future Flavours' in the US and APAC beverage sectors, offering sophisticated, low-sugar alternatives. Meanwhile, Finger Lime is exploding in popularity across Europe for its unique textural pop and tart profile.
- **Global cross-pollination:** The charts reveal a rapid exchange of flavours across cultures. Korean Bulgogi and Gochujang are surging. In the USA, Gochujang launches have grown 120% over the past 12 months, while Bulgogi has leapt from an emerging flavour

in 2025 to become the #4 fastest-growing flavour in the 2026 Meat & Meals chart, with similar developments unfolding in European markets. Meanwhile, Sichuan Peppercorns are moving beyond niche Asian aisles to influence mainstream condiments across Europe. Mexican Birria and Chile Chiltepin are transcending borders to influence savoury snacks and meals globally. Simultaneously, the "Swicy" (Sweet + Spicy) trend is evolving, with Hot Honey and Spicy Mango driving double-digit growth in bakery and confectionery products.

The 2026 Taste Charts highlight a consumer landscape that seeks both novelty and nostalgia.

- **Elevated staples beyond Cheddar:** Consumers are redefining comfort by trading standard options for premium, texture-rich varieties. The charts map the evolution of 31 specific cheese varieties, revealing a shift toward heritage-rich profiles. Manchego and Pecorino are driving premiumisation in European savoury snacks, while versatile, texture-rich options are gaining share in North America – responding directly to the 68% of consumers who say cheese flavours bring a level of comfort with excitement to savoury snacks.

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Frosted star anise: Flavour of the Year 2026

dsm-firmenich, global innovators in nutrition, health and beauty, has announced 'Frosted Star Anise' as its Flavour of the Year 2026—a forward-looking choice that reflects a growing global appetite for balance, comfort and revitalisation.

Inspired by the Pantone Color of the Year 2026, PANTONE 11-4201 Cloud Dancer, a soft, lofty white, the flavour concept elevates both an ingredient and an emotion. Together, colour and flavour capture a shared cultural signal: a desire for calm and clarity amid accelerating lifestyles.

At its core, Frosted Star Anise blends the gentle warmth of star anise with a crisp, cooling sensation. The result is a multi-sensory profile that delivers comfort without heaviness and freshness without sharpness. According to dsm-firmenich, this duality mirrors modern consumer aspirations—seeking moments of tranquillity while remaining energised and optimistic.

"Innovation and cultural insight are at the heart of what we do at dsm-firmenich," said Maurizio Clementi, EVP for Taste at dsm-firmenich. "Building on star anise's quiet rise and the growing fascination with cooling and other trigeminal sensations, Frosted Star Anise fulfils today's craving for balance and a breath of fresh air."

A flavour with new dimensions

Star anise is instantly recognisable by its star-shaped form and sweet-spicy character, offering notes of liquorice, clove and cinnamon. Long embedded in global cuisines, it features in Vietnamese pho, Moroccan tagines, Mexican café de olla and Chinese five-spice blends, as well as familiar comfort formats such as chai, mulled wine and preserves.

Beyond tradition, star anise has proven its versatility in more adventurous applications,



"Star anise is ubiquitous yet underappreciated—now is its moment to shine"

from BBQ sauces and confectionery to savoury innovations and even nostalgic root beer floats, where it adds aromatic depth and complexity.

The "frosted" element introduces a new sensory layer through cooling ingredients such as mint, or via advanced solutions like dsm-firmenich's freezestorm™ technology, which creates a clean, refreshing cooling effect without overpowering flavour.

"Cooling isn't a taste—it's a complex sensation triggered by temperature-sensitive receptors," explained Jeffrey Schmoyer, VP Human Insights, Taste, Texture & Health at dsm-firmenich. "These trigeminal sensations—alongside warming, spiciness and numbing—allow flavour to become multidimensional and emotionally engaging."

Insights-driven innovation

The selection of Frosted Star Anise is grounded in extensive consumer, cultural and market analysis. dsm-firmenich's review of global product launches shows that nearly 10,000 products have included star anise over the past decade, yet only 10% highlighted it on front-of-pack—a sign of an ingredient long used but rarely celebrated.

That dynamic is now shifting. dsm-firmenich's

Emotion360 global ingredient perception survey reveals that while two-thirds of consumers recognise star anise, only 34% report having tasted it—creating a clear opportunity for brands to introduce and define the experience. The spice is also gaining traction in hot and alcoholic beverages, categories that often signal future flavour momentum.

A game changer in product formulations

This flavour concept can elevate a wide range of food and beverage categories by adding aromatic warmth, refreshing lift, or a compelling sensory twist:

Beverages

- Alcoholic drinks: Spiced cocktails, winter spritzers, anise-forward botanical gins, warming aperitifs
- Non-alcoholic drinks: Herbal tonics, craft sodas, iced teas, lemonades with cooling lift
- Specialty coffee & teas: Chai lattes, cold brew blends, chai-infused cold teas
- Functional drinks: Wellness shots, immunity beverages with a soothing finish

Dairy & Frozen

- Ice creams & gelatos: Especially spiced or creamy bases with a cooling overlay
- Yoghurts & kefirs: Swirled with fruit or honey for multidimensional balance
- Dessert sauces: Star anise caramel or cooling mint-anise drizzles

Confectionery & Snacks

- Chocolates & bonbons: Layered spice profiles with refreshing notes
- Gummies & chews: Dual spice + cooling concepts
- Snack bars: Premium fruit-nut-spice combinations

Savory & Condiments

- Marinades & BBQ sauces: Adding aromatic complexity
- Glazes & dressings: Chilled or room-temperature dressings with lift
- Soups & broths: Especially Scandinavian chilled soups and rich winter stews

Baked Goods & Sweet Treats

- Cookies & biscuits: Spiced classics with a modern touch
- Cakes & pastries: Layered with delicate cooling highlights
- Festive bakes: Pairing spicy warmth with an uplifting edge

“Star anise is a secret weapon,” said Schmoyer. “It’s familiar, versatile and emotionally resonant. It’s time this ingredient gets the attention it deserves.”

Cooling and “frosted” cues are also rising beyond beverages, appearing in jellies, shaved ice and chilled soups, while simultaneously influencing beauty and home care, where frosted aesthetics signal elegance, purity and uplifting freshness. Extending the concept further, dsm-firmenich has also created a fragrance inspired by Frosted Star Anise, blending shimmering spice with a light, cotton-candy-like softness reminiscent of stardust.

"Frosted Star Anise captures a global desire for warmth and freshness in one balanced flavour experience"

Flavour - an emotional experience

From trigeminal innovation to overlooked ingredient potential, dsm-firmenich positions flavour as a reflection of emotional and cultural shifts—not just taste preference.

“Flavour of the Year is more than a taste,” Clementi added. “It’s a distillation of cultural sentiment and what’s coming next translated into an experience that resonates emotionally with consumers. That philosophy underpins everything we do.”



For more information on Frosted Star Anise and dsm-firmenich's Flavour of the Year programme, visit: www.dsm-firmenich.com/2026-frosted-star-anise



Strategic investment in Blue Foods could unlock \$17B and 3.3m jobs across Africa

Africa could unlock \$17 billion in additional GDP, create up to 3.3 million jobs, and cut its protein gap with the rest of the world by a quarter by doubling its production of blue foods; fish, shellfish, crustaceans and aquatic plants; according to a new report from the World Economic Forum in collaboration with Boston Consulting Group (BCG).

The report, *Investing in Blue Foods: Innovation and Partnerships for Impact*, shows that targeted investment and innovation could transform one of the continent's most underdeveloped, high potential food sectors into a driver of inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

Africa currently produces 13.1 million tonnes of blue foods annually, yet the sector faces significant losses and constraints. Up to one-third of output is lost post-harvest, feed accounts for 70-80% of production costs (compared with about 60% globally), and fish disease outbreaks can wipe out entire harvests. Without strategic intervention, the continent risks falling further behind. By 2032, Africa may be only continent where per capita blue foods consumption declines, as production growth is expected to lag population growth.

"Africa has the resources, talent and demand to build a world class blue foods sector," said Tolu

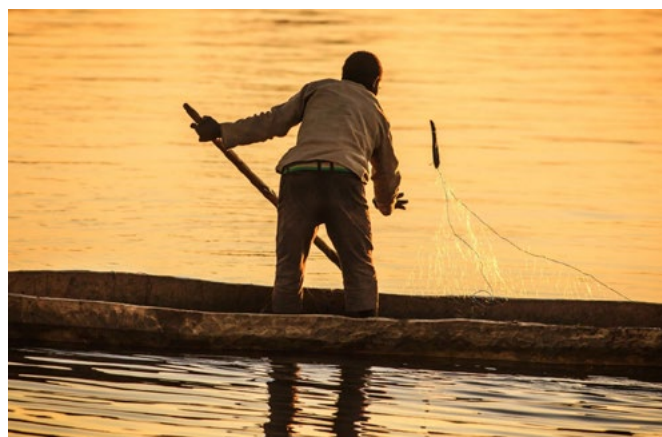
Oyekan, Managing Director and Partner at BCG and Head of BCG West Africa. "But fragmented value chains and underinvestment continue to constrain growth. This report outlines a practical, investible roadmap to unlock productivity, scale and competitiveness through innovation and coordinated action across public and private sectors."

Scaling for impact

The report identifies five areas where innovation can deliver step-change improvements in productivity, sustainability and value creation:

- **Inputs:** New feed solutions such as black soldier fly larvae and methane-fermented protein can reduce dependence on costly imports. In Ghana work is being done in turning organic waste into protein-rich aquafeed and fertilizer. While in Egypt and Kenya improved hatcheries and oral vaccines are boosting yields and reducing disease losses.

- **Production:** AI-powered tools for real-time fish monitoring and precision feeding are helping smallholder farmers reduce waste and improve survival rates. In South Africa the use of live diagnostics to prevent losses is being implemented. In Egypt and Bangladesh, better hatchery systems have increased fingerling survival by 30–50%.
- **Processing:** Affordable solar dryers in Uganda and AI-based grading systems in Morocco and Nigeria are improving quality and shelf life, especially for women-led processors.
- **Supply Chain:** Innovations such as solar-powered cold rooms in Nigeria (ColdHubs) and digital control towers in East Africa are cutting spoilage and improving logistics, enabling smallholders to access premium markets.
- **Circularity and Waste:** Insect-based waste conversion in Ghana and smart gear recovery systems for West African coastal fisheries can unlock new value streams while reducing pollution and resource loss.



Alignment on policy and partnership imperatives is also emphasised in the report, which highlights that interventions require coordinated action from regulators, financiers, development partners and the private sector particularly in designing derisking mechanisms that attract long term capital.

Lessons from countries such as Indonesia, China and New Zealand show that large-scale transformation is possible with the right alignment of policy, finance and innovation ecosystems. The report highlights the World Economic Forum's Food Innovation Hubs

Global Initiative as a key platform to accelerate these efforts.

"To realise the full potential of Africa's blue food economy, we must treat it as core infrastructure not a niche," said Oyekan in closing.

"This means embedding blue foods into national food strategies, investing in cold chains and rural logistics, and partnering with the private sector to scale what works."

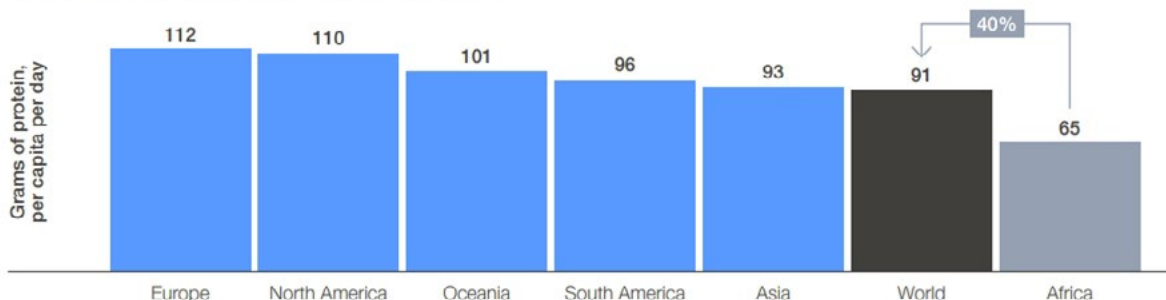
The full report is available for download

"AI-powered tools for real-time fish monitoring and precision feeding are helping smallholder farmers reduce waste and improve survival rates. In South Africa the use of live diagnostics to prevent losses is being implemented"

Doubling blue food production can reduce Africa's protein supply gap by ~25% – the most viable solution on cost, quality and cultural fit

Africa lags other regions in per capita protein supply at ~40% below global average

Average daily per capita protein supply (g) - all proteins



By 2032, Africa may be only continent where per capita blue foods consumption declines, as production growth is expected to lag population growth¹



Doctoral study highlights postharvest food waste crisis and solutions in SA

Reports indicate that over 63% of South African households experience varying levels of food insecurity. Yet, between 9 124 and 17 969 tonnes of fruits and vegetables, which is the equivalent of roughly 450 to 900 fully loaded large trucks, go to waste every year at the wholesale level — partly because of postharvest losses. Improved postharvest practices, infrastructure and policies are key to minimising this waste and enhancing food availability and food security.

This is according to food systems researcher Dr Ikechukwu Opara who recently obtained his doctorate in Food Science at Stellenbosch University.

As part of his study, Opara measured food waste at the biggest fresh produce market in South Africa, identified financial losses, and used machine learning models to predict waste. Opara says he focused on the later stages of the food value chain because they are often overlooked, resulting in an information gap in this area.

“The lack of comprehensive data on postharvest waste, particularly at critical points such as wholesale markets, makes it difficult to identify waste hotspots accurately and hinders the development of tailored interventions to reduce waste at specific stages of the food supply chain.”

He monitored and evaluated the operational processes at the fresh produce market and conducted laboratory simulations of wholesale storage conditions, measuring the physiological attributes and shelf



Dr Ikechukwu Opara



Snapshot

- Between 9 124 and 17 969 tonnes of fruits and vegetables go to waste every year.
- Break in cold chain a significant challenge in the market.
- Cold storage, transport, and how produce is handled must be improved.
- Over 63% of South African households experience varying levels of food insecurity.

life and identify quality issues of fresh produce before they are discarded at the market.

Noting that the issue of food waste at the wholesale level is complex and involves various factors, including infrastructural and operational challenges, Opara says his study identified a break in the cold chain as a significant challenge in the market.

"This often results from operational challenges that cause delays between the receipt of produce and its placement in optimal storage conditions. Additionally, the low availability of cold storage infrastructure, especially during summer, contributes to postharvest waste.

"Cold storage units and operations should be improved, especially during summer, to effectively cater for the volume of produce supplied to the market in that period. This is important since summer is when the highest amount of produce is supplied to the market, and when susceptibility to waste is high due to increased temperature."

Opara adds that transportation conditions, both to and within the market, also led to waste.

"When fruit and vegetables are transported in unrefrigerated vehicles, they are subjected to unfavourable conditions such as inappropriate temperature and relative humidity levels, which accelerate processes like respiration and transpiration. This can result in weight loss and shrivelling. These issues diminish the physical appeal of the produce, which can lead to downgrading, and in extreme cases, this results in postharvest waste."

According to Opara machine learning can help reduce food waste in practical, everyday operations at fresh produce markets.

"Temperature control systems can be improved with machine learning tools that automatically monitor conditions and alert supervisors and people working in the market when temperature and humidity levels deviate from the set range"

He explains: "Additionally, machine learning can be used to forecast demand and optimise the process of ordering, storing, using and selling of products, especially in situations where this has been ineffective and contributing to food waste.

"Machine learning can also support dynamic pricing models. In this scenario, the system automatically tracks the supply date and shelf life of fresh produce, using that data to recommend prices that encourage quicker sales, thereby helping to minimise potential postharvest losses and waste."

Opara says it is crucial to reduce postharvest losses and waste to combat food insecurity, malnutrition, obesity, diabetes and other related health conditions.

A major economic consequence of postharvest losses and waste is the increased cost of food, adds Opara.

"Reduced availability of fruits and vegetables due to these postharvest losses and waste leads to higher prices. When low-income households must pay these elevated prices for fruits and vegetables, they are left with less money for other goods and services.

"This situation exacerbates poverty and traps households in cycles of debt and dependence on the government for social grants. It further widens the gap between the rich and the poor in one of the most unequal countries in the world. Considering these key points, addressing and reducing postharvest losses and waste not only enhances food security but also alleviates negative economic impacts."

Opara says he hopes his study will lay the groundwork for reducing postharvest losses and waste by using machine learning to generate insights that guide evidence-based interventions and strategies aimed at mitigating the negative effects of this issue.

Performance hydration accelerates growth in South Africa's bottled water market



Performance hydration is rapidly reshaping the global and South African bottled water landscape, as consumers increasingly demand products that deliver more than basic hydration. Functional and vitamin-enhanced waters—positioned around energy, recovery, immunity and mental performance—are emerging as one of the fastest-growing segments, aligned with the broader shift toward healthier, low-sugar beverage choices that support active lifestyles and everyday wellbeing.

Insight Survey's South African Bottled Water Industry Landscape Report 2026 provides a comprehensive view of this evolution, analysing global and local market dynamics, innovation pipelines, technology adoption, growth drivers and structural challenges shaping the future of the category.

Global momentum sets the pace

In 2025, the global bottled water market is estimated to reach US\$292.7 billion and is forecast to grow at a CAGR of 7.1%, reaching approximately US\$413.6 billion by 2030. Functional water is a major contributor to this expansion, as multinational players invest heavily in vitamin- and mineral-enriched formulations, zero-sugar enhancements and performance-led positioning.

Recent international launches highlight this trajectory. In the US, Coca-Cola introduced Powerade Power Water, a zero-sugar, electrolyte-enhanced functional water aimed at everyday hydration and performance. In India, NEVAS Vitamin B12 H2O entered the market with a focus on cognitive support and mental clarity through targeted vitamin fortification. These innovations are actively shaping global consumer expectations—and influencing local market strategies.

Strong growth outlook for South Africa

South Africa's bottled water market has outperformed many beverage categories, expanding by 53.4% between 2019 and 2024 at a CAGR of 8.9%. Growth is expected to accelerate further, with the market forecast to expand at a 10.1% CAGR



between 2024 and 2029. Functional and performance hydration products are a key driver of this momentum, particularly among urban, health-conscious consumers.

South Africa's bottled water market has outperformed many beverage categories, expanding by 53.4% between 2019 and 2024 at a CAGR of 8.9%. Growth is expected to accelerate further, with the market forecast to expand at a 10.1% CAGR between 2024 and 2029.

Local functional innovation gains traction

Functional bottled water in South Africa is expanding across energy, immunity, mental focus and fitness-oriented propositions. In March 2025, iPRO Hydrate launched locally, offering vitamin- and electrolyte-enhanced waters containing Vitamins C and B12, positioned squarely at consumers seeking low-sugar, nutrient-rich hydration for sport and daily wellness.

Similarly, aQuellé reinforced its functional credentials with four low-kilojoule still spring water variants fortified with Vitamins B3, B5, B7 and B12. The range combines flavour variety with nutritional functionality, appealing to consumers reducing sugar intake without compromising enjoyment. Performance-led innovation continues with THIRSTI SPORT, launched in November 2025. The brand offers natural spring water enriched with electrolytes and Vitamins B5, B6 and B12, targeting fitness-focused

consumers seeking sustained energy, hydration and recovery support.

Accessibility, technology and premiumisation

Beyond traditional bottled formats, functional hydration in South Africa is also being shaped by accessibility and technology. Manzi Water's automated refill store in Diepsloot delivers SANS 241-compliant purified water via IoT-enabled systems at fixed pricing of around R1 per litre, addressing affordability, quality and reliability—critical factors for functional hydration at community level.

At the premium end, brands are increasingly linking mineral composition and purity to performance and wellness cues. Mountain Falls has expanded into glass packaging, highlighting its balanced pH 7 mineral profile rich in calcium and magnesium. These intrinsic mineral attributes resonate with consumers who associate natural mineral content with superior hydration and health benefits.

Strategic outlook

The rise of functional and vitamin-enhanced bottled water is closely tied to premiumisation across the South African beverage sector. As disposable incomes stabilise and health-conscious behaviour strengthens, consumers are demonstrating a growing willingness to pay for hydration that delivers tangible benefits—whether improved performance, enhanced nutrition, superior purity or trusted mineral composition.

For manufacturers and investors, functional hydration represents a high-growth, innovation-driven opportunity that sits at the intersection of wellness, performance and premium value.

Full
brochure
available
HERE

Value of the global bottled water market: 2025* & 2030 (in US\$ billion)**



A 25 year milestone and R500 000 commitment to food security

Thokoman Peanut Butter, one of South Africa's biggest producers of peanut butter, celebrates 25 years of consistent quality and community support, marking the occasion with a significant R500,000 partnership with Hot 102.7's Hot Cares initiative for 2026.

What began as a small operation on the Van Randwijk family's smallholding has evolved into a market-leading manufacturer that has maintained unwavering product quality while achieving the highest level of food certification globally. Since its acquisition by the Basamh Group in 2009, Thokoman has scaled production capacity while keeping its focus on what matters: delivering accessible, high-quality peanut butter to South African families.

"Our sole purpose is to produce peanut butter that is of the highest quality using the best ingredients, that consumers will taste and love," said David Sieff, Head of Marketing for Thokoman Foods. "Twenty-five years of consistency speaks to more than just taste, it reflects our commitment to food safety, rigorous testing, and continuous improvement in how we serve South African households."

Responding to market evolution

The peanut butter market has grown steadily over the past decade with consumption increasing by an average annual rate of around 3.8% from 2013 to 2024. As one of the most accessible protein sources available, peanut butter remains a pantry staple.

Over the years, Thokoman has diversified their product range in response to shifting consumer priorities around health and wellness, taste exploration, and functional snacking. The brand now offers healthier alternatives such as no-salt and no-sugar options, a new squeezable and even smoother bread friendly alternative with nut butters in the pipeline, all while maintaining the traditional product that families have grown to trust.

The recent launch of a 400g tub positions the company to compete in the category's largest segment, while a new 125g mini tub addresses cash-constrained consumers and busy parents seeking convenient lunch box options.

Food Security and Community Investment

Thokoman's quarter-century milestone coincides with an expanded commitment to food security. The company has formalised its 2026 partnership with Hot Cares, an NGO that supports those in need, committing R500,000 worth of peanut butter products, including both human and pet varieties to support vulnerable communities.



The company has previously partnered with Gift of the Givers during natural disasters, providing essential protein to survivors when rapid nutrition intervention is critical and maintains ongoing support for local schools, contributing to the upkeep of safe, presentable learning environments.

"Using our resources and influence to improve lives, whether through product donations or creating employment and training opportunities, we recognise our responsibility extends beyond the supermarket shelf," said Anis Tannir, MD at Thokoman Foods.

Production excellence and environmental progress

By prioritising safety, testing protocols, and hygiene standards, Thokoman has achieved the highest level of food certification available globally. This foundation of operational excellence has enabled the company to scale significantly becoming one of South Africa's largest peanut butter manufacturers while also advancing packaging innovations that are both more user-friendly and environmentally responsible.

The South African FMCG sector has seen increased pressure to adopt sustainable packaging, with 34% of consumers reporting that environmental considerations influence purchasing decisions.

Packaging

REPORTER



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Stand-out bottle for nitrogen-dosed water

Sidel has introduced Nitro Square, a square bottle for still water using liquid nitrogen dosing, targeting producers in the South African food and beverage B2B market seeking packaging differentiation and supply chain performance.

The nitrogen-dosed water bottle segment is dominated by cylindrical containers due to internal pressure, yet Nitro Square maintains structure through controlled panel flexibility and resistance across filling, distribution, and retail handling.

The StarLITE®-R Nitro base supports stability and drop performance while enabling compatibility with rPET requirements and circular packaging goals within beverage packaging operations.

Design flexibility allows alignment with brand positioning across single-serve and multi-serve formats, integrating with Universal, Series 2, and EvoBLOW systems at speeds reaching 2,600 bottles per mould hourly.

For South African beverage manufacturers seeking nitrogen-dosed water packaging solutions, Sidel Nitro



Square supports shelf differentiation and efficient high-speed blow moulding lines.

The solution addresses South Africa food and beverage packaging requirements, supporting B2B buyers needing rPET bottles, production efficiency, and supply chain consistency for regional and export water brands. Producers can review applications and integration options through Sidel teams and partners. www.sidel.com

Fresh addition to its beverage portfolio

Coca-Cola has launched Mashsha, a 250ml PET pack developed to expand access to carbonated soft drinks within price-sensitive segments of the South African food and beverage B2B market. Priced at a recommended retail price of R6, the format supports higher sales volumes for spaza shops, convenience outlets and wholesale distributors serving on-the-go consumption occasions.

The pack includes Coca-Cola, Fanta, Sprite and Stoney variants, maintaining existing recipes with full nutritional labelling, including sugar content, to meet compliance and transparency requirements in beverage retail. Bottles use recyclable PET with HDPE caps, while KHS Plasmax technology provides an internal barrier layer that preserves carbonation and shelf life for up to eight months across distribution channels.

National rollout, excluding the Western Cape at launch, strengthens supply opportunities for traders seeking affordable soft drinks South Africa consumers purchase daily. Production and logistics are managed by Coca-Cola Beverages South Africa, enabling stable supply into township retail, forecourts and independent outlets.



Industry partners seeking product information or distribution alignment can access company updates through Coca-Cola South Africa's website, supporting informed procurement decisions across beverage wholesale and retail networks throughout regional and national markets today.

www.coca-cola.co.za

Propak Cape 2026

Uniting suppliers and buyers Propak Cape 2026 is a trade exhibition serving the South African food and beverage B2B market, enabling sourcing, partnerships, and investment in food processing, packaging, plastics, printing, and labelling solutions. The event connects machinery and packaging suppliers with export producers seeking food and beverage packaging solutions in the Western Cape, supporting supply chain expansion and compliance with recycling and producer responsibility requirements.

Market drivers include e-commerce, exports, cold-chain packaging, recycling partnerships, and value-added packaging investment, all addressed through technology displays and knowledge sharing on the exhibition floor. Visitor research shows that 83% of attendees held purchasing authority or influenced procurement, while directors, owners, and managers comprised most delegates, strengthening business outcomes for exhibitors.



Propak Cape 2026 runs at Cape Town International Conference Centre from 27–29 October 2026, hosting Pro-Plas, Print, Pro-Label, FoodPro, and Wine and Olive Oil Production expos, organised by Montgomery Group Africa. Industry stakeholders can plan participation and register via the website for South African food and beverage processing and packaging trade show opportunities supporting manufacturing capacity and export growth across supply networks in 2026 and beyond markets for processors and packaging buyers nationwide annually together efficiently today. www.propakcape.co.za

Nine WorldStar Awards for packaging innovation

Mondi, has secured nine WorldStar Packaging Awards 2026, reinforcing its relevance for South Africa's food and beverage B2B market. Organised by the World Packaging Organisation, the programme recognises packaging innovation, recyclability and supply chain performance worldwide.

For regional manufacturers seeking sustainable packaging solutions in South Africa, Mondi's portfolio supports recyclable food packaging materials and efficient transport packaging for beverages, eCommerce distribution and electronics, helping brands meet circular economy targets and retailer requirements.

CEO Andrew King said the recognition confirms progress in delivering recyclable alternatives at industrial scale through customer partnerships. The awards also recognised Werner & Mertz for the Frosch fabric softener pouch, developed with Mondi using post-consumer recycled plastic compatible with household collection systems. Food and beverage packaging suppliers in South Africa can leverage Mondi's expertise to improve product protection, reduce material use, and strengthen compliance across regional value chains.

Visit the company's website for details on recyclable packaging options for Africa's food and beverage sector, strategies for sustainable procurement, and



responsible packaging initiatives across South African markets and industry networks.

Mondi's WorldStar Packaging Awards 2026 winners:

- Protective Mailer – eCommerce
- FreshFood BOX – Food
- Ad/Vantage Smooth Brown Semi Extensible – Packaging Materials and Components
- re/cycle HiProtex Paper – Health and Personal Care
- re/cycle ProtectorBAG PocketForm – Transit
- re/cycle CompressWrap – Household
- re/cycle VacuumPack – Non-Alcoholic Beverages
- 3in1 Separator – Electronics
- Koala Display – Point of Sale

www.mondigroup.com



Packaging innovations and implications for the market

As consumer expectations evolve and food safety remains a pressing issue affecting public health, food security and economic stability, the South African food and beverage (F&B) industry is entering a period of structural change. Manufacturers, processors and brand owners are reassessing how food is produced, packaged and distributed, with resilience, transparency and compliance now central to long-term competitiveness in the local B2B market.

As sustainability regulation, food safety compliance, and logistics efficiency increasingly shape packaging requirements in the South African food and beverage sector, the shortlisted innovations demonstrate how global packaging suppliers are responding through materials science, circular economy systems and operational optimisation.

Packaging Innovations & Empack remains one of the leading international platforms where packaging suppliers, converters, machinery manufacturers and brand owners assess next-generation solutions. Further information on the exhibition can be found at www.packaginginnovations.com

Packaging innovation responding to market pressures

Food and beverage packaging in South Africa is

undergoing change driven by extended producer responsibility (EPR) regulations, retailer sustainability commitments and rising consumer scrutiny of packaging waste. Manufacturers must balance recyclability, barrier performance, shelf-life stability and cost efficiency while ensuring packaging integrity across distribution networks.

The Innovation Gallery 2026 selections highlight developments across fibre alternatives, compostable materials, reusable systems and recycled plastics that can support compliance and operational efficiency for food and beverage producers serving local and export markets.

Plastic-free barrier coatings for Cartonboard

Huhtamaki and Xampla's folded cartonboard coated with Morro™ demonstrates progress in replacing fossil-based polymer barriers. The plant-derived



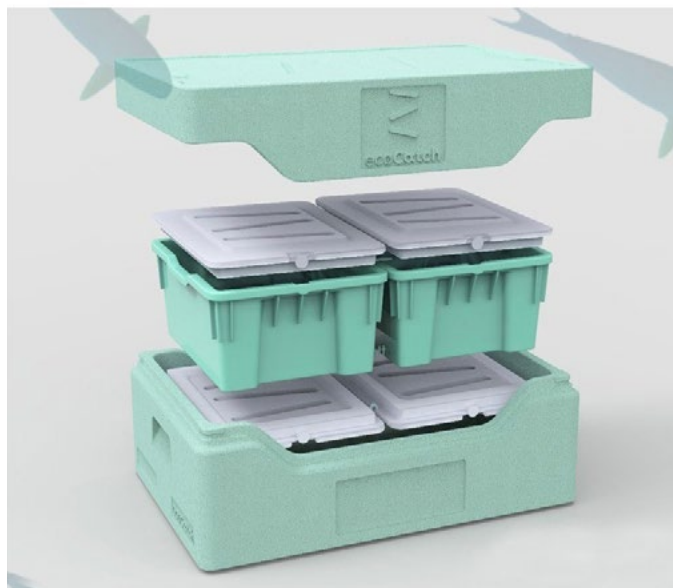
coating delivers grease and moisture resistance required for food applications while remaining compatible with fibre recycling and composting systems.

For South African food producers supplying ready meals, bakery products and takeaway packaging, fibre-based solutions with improved barrier performance offer pathways to reduce plastic use while meeting retailer sustainability targets.

Circular cold-chain transport for seafood

The Embalagem do Futuro® Intelligent Sustainable Fish Transport System introduces reusable insulated boxes manufactured using recycled fishing-industry waste, combined with PetriTag® bacterial detection technology and IoT monitoring.

Seafood exports from South Africa require temperature control and contamination risk management. Systems combining reusable logistics packaging with real-time monitoring can reduce spoilage losses while improving traceability across export supply chains serving Europe and Asia.



High-visibility barrier paper replacing plastic film

One.five's Glassleaf barrier paper delivers transparency, oxygen and moisture resistance with over 90% paper content. Confirmed recyclable and compatible with existing packing lines, the solution offers food producers alternatives to multilayer plastic films.

This innovation is particularly relevant for snack foods, bakery items and confectionery packaging, where product visibility supports consumer purchase decisions while sustainability commitments demand material reduction.

Plant-based reusable food containers

eGreen International's Atera range uses Oryzite®, derived from rice husk waste, to create reusable food containers and tableware suitable for foodservice operations.

South Africa's growing quick-service restaurant and food delivery sectors are under pressure to reduce single-use packaging. Reusable, plant-based food containers offer opportunities for restaurant chains and corporate catering services to implement circular packaging systems while maintaining food-contact safety compliance.

Compostable liquid sachets for food applications

Futamura UK's compostable liquid sachet addresses one of the most difficult packaging categories to replace: multilayer plastic sachets used for sauces, condiments and personal care products.

Developed using NatureFlex™ cellulose film, the sachets meet compostability standards while maintaining barrier properties and commercial packing speeds. For South African condiment producers and private-label suppliers, compostable sachets present an option for markets seeking sustainable packaging alternatives, particularly in export segments where plastic reduction policies are tightening.

Amaia Cowan of Futamura UK noted that collaboration with Repaq enabled the development of compostable sachets delivering shelf-life performance alongside compostable end-of-life options.

Food-grade recycled polypropylene

Prevented Ocean Plastic™ introduced food-safe recycled polypropylene pellets certified to European food-contact standards. Polypropylene remains one of the least recycled plastics globally, yet widely used in caps, tubs and closures.

Food-grade recycled content enables South African beverage and dairy producers to increase recycled material usage while maintaining compliance with safety standards, supporting EPR commitments and retailer procurement requirements.

Fibre-based pastry packaging solutions

PilloPak's Microflute Tray replaces plastic and glued cardboard pastry packaging through a patented locking mechanism that improves airflow during baking while remaining recyclable and oven-safe.

Retail bakeries and supermarket in-store bakeries in South Africa face pressure to reduce plastic clamshell usage. Fibre-based trays provide recyclable alternatives without sacrificing product presentation or operational efficiency.



Lightweight glass for beverage sustainability

Croxsons' Rightweight® Mountain Bottle range demonstrates how glass packaging can support sustainability goals through material reduction without compromising strength.

South Africa's beverage industry continues to rely heavily on glass for premium products, wine and craft beverages. Lightweight bottles reduce transport emissions and material costs, offering financial and environmental advantages across export supply chains.

Tamper-evident delivery packaging

Westpak Group's GrabLok™ linerless closure addresses operational challenges

facing food delivery and takeaway operations. The tamper-evident closure secures bags while reducing packaging waste and improving packing efficiency.

With food delivery services expanding across South African cities, packaging integrity remains critical to maintaining customer trust while controlling refund rates associated with tampered deliveries.

Fibre-based protection for glass bottles

Trakya Pack's UniGlass tray system provides moulded

fibre protection for bottles used in wine and spirits packaging. The adaptive structure reduces breakage while replacing plastic protective materials.

South Africa's wine export industry faces logistics challenges where breakage leads to losses and insurance claims. Fibre alternatives improve recyclability while protecting high-value shipments.

Aleksandrina Topalova of Trakya Pack noted that UniGlass was developed to address real-world transport challenges while simplifying logistics operations.

Strategic relevance

Paul Jenkins of ThePackHub emphasised that this year's Innovation Gallery demonstrates solutions delivering measurable operational benefits while supporting sustainability requirements.

For food and beverage producers, packaging innovation now intersects with regulatory compliance, export competitiveness and consumer expectations. Investments in sustainable packaging solutions, recycled materials and reusable logistics systems increasingly determine market access, particularly in export markets with stricter environmental regulations.

Packaging innovation driving competitive advantage

The Packaging Innovations & Empack Innovation Gallery illustrates how packaging suppliers are balancing sustainability targets with performance and operational practicality. For South African B2B food and beverage stakeholders, monitoring developments showcased internationally offers guidance for packaging procurement strategies over the coming decade.

As packaging continues to evolve under environmental, regulatory and commercial pressures, solutions combining recyclability, material reduction and operational efficiency are likely to influence procurement decisions across manufacturing, retail and export sectors.

Packaging innovation is no longer solely a design consideration; it is increasingly a strategic supply-chain decision shaping competitiveness across the food and beverage industry.



Validate plastic-free packaging

An innovative packaging approach developed by the National Physical Laboratory (NPL) and materials company Xampla is setting a new benchmark for verifying plastic-free packaging, offering practical value for the food and beverage B2B market as regulations and retailer requirements tighten around single-use plastics.

Xampla and NPL have developed a testing method that confirms Xampla's Morro™ materials are plastic-free under the EU REACH regulatory definition, providing clarity for manufacturers seeking compliant alternatives to conventional plastic packaging. The development also establishes the groundwork for internationally recognised standards to validate plastic-free claims.

Balance barrier performance

For food and beverage packaging suppliers the challenge remains balancing barrier performance, recyclability, and regulatory compliance while reducing dependence on single-use plastics. Many paper and board packaging formats used across food service and retail still contain plastic linings, making recycling difficult and contributing to landfill waste.

Through NPL's Measurement for Business programme, scientists applied spectroscopy and high-resolution microscopy to compare the chemical structure of Morro's plant-derived polymers before and after processing. Findings showed no chemical modification of the polymers, confirming the materials fall outside the EU definition of plastics and are therefore exempt from Single-Use Plastics Directive (SUPD) restrictions.

The breakthrough matters for companies exporting food and beverage products or supplying multinational brands operating under UK and EU packaging rules. Suppliers are under pressure to source sustainable food packaging solutions that meet performance requirements without introducing compliance risks.

Coatings and films

Xampla's Morro coatings and films, already adopted by major food delivery platforms, deliver grease and water resistance comparable to plastic coatings while remaining biodegradable, home compostable and compatible with existing recycling infrastructure. The materials are derived entirely from plant polymers and



are designed to replace plastic in barrier coatings used in paper and board packaging.

Credible validation

Dr Marc Rodriguez Garcia, Co-Founder and CTO at Xampla, notes that credible validation is increasingly critical as regulations evolve. Independent measurement provides assurance to packaging manufacturers and food service suppliers purchasing plastic-free alternatives at scale.

The commercial opportunity is significant. Market analysis from Smithers projects global demand for functional and barrier coatings for paper and board packaging will reach 4.25 million tonnes, valued at nearly US\$11 billion by 2028. Xampla aims to replace 10 billion items of single-use plastic within five years through adoption of Morro materials.

Professor Max Ryadnov of NPL adds that this validation approach could lead to global standards enabling regulators and manufacturers to assess plastic-free packaging claims using consistent benchmarks.

For food and beverage packaging manufacturers, distributors and brand owners, access to verified plastic-free packaging materials offers a pathway to future-proof supply chains, meet export compliance requirements and reduce plastic exposure across food service packaging formats.

www.xampla.com



Environmental impact of labelling

New research examining how consumers understand the environmental impact of food products is providing insights relevant to food manufacturers, retailers and supply chain operators serving South Africa's food and beverage sector. The findings point to persistent misconceptions that could influence purchasing decisions and highlight the growing role of environmental impact labelling in food retail.

Scientists from the University of Nottingham's School of Psychology conducted a study involving 168 UK participants who were asked to group supermarket food items into environmental impact categories of their own choosing. The results, published in the *Journal of Cleaner Production*, reveal that many consumers misjudge the environmental impact of everyday foods, supporting calls for clearer labelling to guide sustainable food choices.

Shape future demand

For the South African food and beverage B2B market, where retailers and producers are facing pressure to demonstrate sustainability credentials, the research offers direction on how environmental information could shape future demand.

Food production remains a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, water use and biodiversity loss. As sustainability becomes embedded in procurement and retail strategies, understanding how consumers perceive environmental impact becomes important for suppliers looking to maintain competitiveness in domestic and export markets.

Environmental impact is measured through life cycle assessment, which evaluates a product's footprint from raw material extraction through manufacturing, distribution, consumption and disposal. This process captures data relating to inputs such as energy, fertiliser and water, and outputs including emissions and waste. Impacts are then expressed across categories including carbon footprint, land use and water consumption.

Consumer perceptions

Previous studies typically examined consumer perceptions of a limited range of food types. This research, funded by UKRI's Smart Data Research UK, evaluated perceptions across a wide basket of supermarket food products, reflecting typical shopping behaviour.

Participants were also shown scientific environmental impact scores for products and asked whether they were surprised by the results. Many indicated that learning the actual impact figures would influence future purchasing decisions.

The study shows consumers generally interpret environmental impact through two main lenses:

whether a product is animal- or plant-based, and how processed the food appears. Meat, dairy and processed products are commonly viewed as having higher environmental impact. However, participants often overestimated the environmental impact of processed foods while underestimating the footprint of water-intensive products such as nuts.

Guide customers

Another finding relevant to meat producers and retailers was that consumers underestimated how much higher beef's environmental impact is compared with poultry. This gap in understanding creates challenges for businesses attempting to guide customers toward lower-impact alternatives.

Lead author Daniel Fletcher explained that the interactive task helped participants engage with environmental information in ways that influenced intentions to change consumption habits. Participants reported willingness to reduce purchases of products they learned had higher environmental impacts, while increasing consumption of products with lower impacts.

The study also suggests consumers struggle to compare impacts across product categories, particularly when weighing animal-based foods against processed plant-based alternatives. Researchers argue that simple environmental impact labels using a single score or grade could help consumers compare products more easily.

Create opportunities

Professor Alexa Spence, co-author of the study, noted that expanding access to environmental data on food products creates opportunities to improve consumer understanding and support informed purchasing decisions.

For South African food and beverage manufacturers, importers and retailers, the findings



point to potential commercial benefits of clearer sustainability communication. As large retailers and foodservice operators adopt environmental reporting standards, suppliers that can demonstrate transparent environmental impact data may strengthen their position in procurement processes.

As environmental impact labelling gains attention in global markets, South African suppliers targeting both domestic and export channels may find increased value in adopting transparent environmental metrics to meet evolving buyer and consumer expectations.

www.nottingham.ac.uk/psychology/

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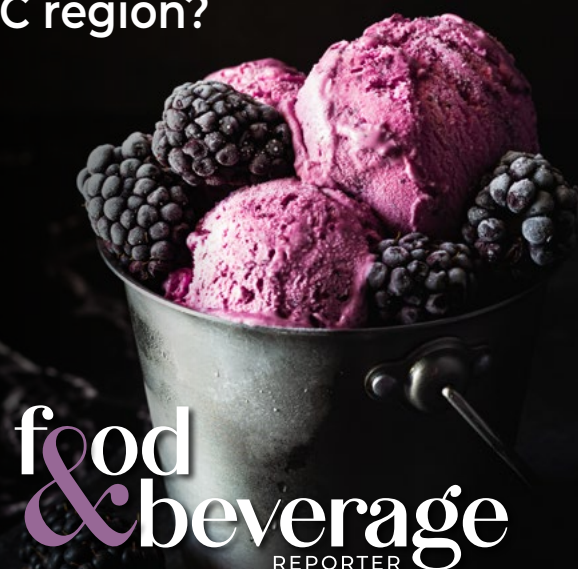


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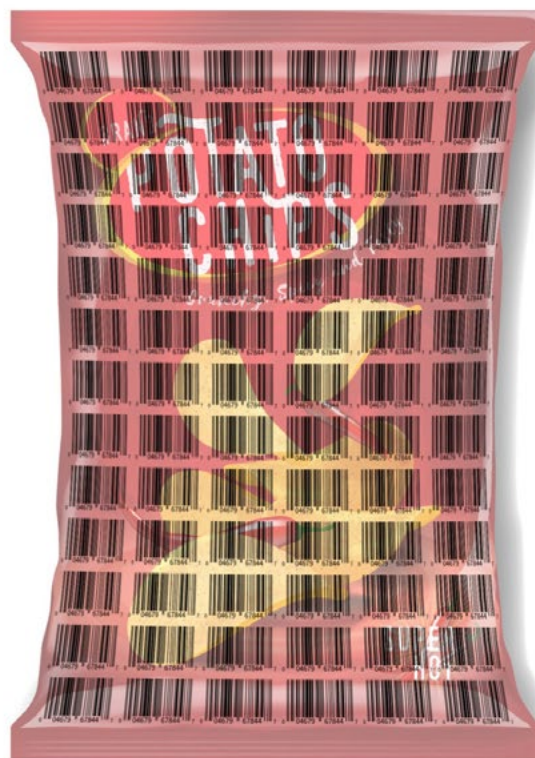
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Smarter traceability with digital watermarks



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Food product recalls are increasing across global and South African food and beverage markets, creating operational, regulatory and financial pressure for manufacturers and brand owners. Industry data shows recall incidents have risen by as much as 80% over the past year, driven largely by labelling errors, undeclared allergens, contamination risks and packaging mix-ups. For South African food and beverage manufacturers serving both domestic and export markets, strengthening product traceability and packaging verification is now a commercial priority.

Most food recalls originate from unlisted ingredients or allergen mislabelling. However, bacterial contamination, metal fragments and foreign bodies remain persistent risks. At the same time, production complexity continues to grow. Shorter production runs, frequent product reformulations, private label expansion, and packaging redesign cycles increase the risk of packaging errors and incorrect labelling entering supply chains.

Accurate and verifiable labelling, including pre-printed packaging and variable data such as batch numbers and best-before dates, is essential. Retailer compliance standards and export requirements further demand robust inline inspection, offline testing and contaminant detection. South African

manufacturers supplying regional and international markets must therefore adopt inspection and traceability technologies that operate reliably at full production speeds.

Digital watermarking strengthens packaging verification

To address traceability challenges, Digimarc and industrial automation company OMRON have combined digital watermarking technology with advanced machine vision systems. This partnership enables manufacturers to deploy automated packaging inspection and product verification systems capable of identifying packaging at speed, even in challenging production environments.

Unlike visible QR codes or DataMatrix codes that depend on orientation and clear visibility, digital watermarks embed machine-readable information invisibly across the entire packaging surface. This allows packaging to be read from any angle and under variable lighting conditions. Digital watermarks remain detectable on curved containers, reflective materials, transparent films and flexible packaging commonly used across food and beverage production lines.

For manufacturers, this means production lines can automatically verify that the correct packaging is paired with the correct product, reducing the risk of allergen mislabelling or product mix-ups. Automated inspection systems replace manual checks that are prone to error, helping prevent costly recalls and supply chain disruptions.

Powered by OMRON's FH Vision System and FHV7 Smart Camera, digital watermark data can be decoded in high-speed production environments without reducing throughput. This approach supports continuous quality control and reduces downtime caused by packaging verification failures.

Supporting sustainability and packaging optimisation

Beyond recall prevention, digital watermarking supports sustainability objectives increasingly important to South African producers supplying global retailers. Packaging redesign programmes often aim to reduce plastic use while maintaining product integrity and brand recognition.

Digital watermarks remove the need for additional printed or plastic labelling components. In one production case, a manufacturer replaced plastic shrink sleeves with foil lids carrying embedded digital watermarks, eliminating several tonnes of single-use plastic annually. Similar approaches are now under review by beverage and dairy producers seeking to reduce packaging waste and improve recyclability.

Digital watermarking also assists downstream recycling operations. Packaging materials can be automatically identified during sorting, supporting circular economy initiatives and helping producers meet emerging extended producer responsibility requirements.

Production data improves operational control

Digital watermark scanning also generates valuable production data that strengthens decision-making across manufacturing operations. Real-time visibility enables improved inventory control, production planning and quality assurance, supporting end-to-end traceability across supply chains.

Manufacturers benefit from earlier identification of process deviations, allowing corrective action before packaging or sealing failures lead to product spoilage or recall risks. For example, monitoring sealing temperature trends in primary packaging operations

helps maintain seal integrity and extend product shelf life.

OMRON vision systems have demonstrated performance in real manufacturing environments, where colour cameras simultaneously detect digital watermarks, verify date codes, inspect lid alignment and check packaging placement. Operating at speeds approaching 800 units per minute, systems integrate with existing production lines without requiring major redesigns.

Vision inspection reduces recall risk in food manufacturing

Modern machine vision systems now verify packaging graphics, barcode accuracy, label presence, colour consistency, print quality and optical character recognition at production speed. When linked to production databases, these systems support compliance reporting, audit readiness and trend analysis.

Data integration allows predictive maintenance and preventative quality control strategies to reduce unplanned downtime and avoid contamination risks. South African manufacturers adopting automation are increasingly aligning with global pharmaceutical production standards, where automation and inspection systems are standard practice.

Although concerns around capital investment remain, manufacturers and machine builders increasingly recognise that recall prevention and production reliability deliver measurable returns. With recalls becoming more frequent and costly, automated traceability and inspection systems are no longer optional investments.

Automation enables future-ready manufacturing

New generation machine controllers now combine motion control, robotics, vision inspection and safety systems on a single platform. This connectivity enables manufacturers to create smarter production environments capable of adapting to product changes without compromising compliance or efficiency.

For South African food and beverage producers competing in regional and export markets, adopting digital watermarking and integrated vision inspection provides a pathway to improved traceability, reduced waste and stronger operational resilience.

As production complexity increases and regulatory scrutiny tightens, smarter traceability solutions such as the Digimarc and OMRON collaboration offer manufacturers practical tools to reduce recall risk while strengthening long-term competitiveness in the food and beverage sector.

<https://industrial.omron.co.za/en/home>



Transforming South Africa's circular paper economy

Fibre Circle, the Producer Responsibility Organisation (PRO) for South Africa's paper and paper packaging sector, has called for deeper collaboration across the recycling value chain to strengthen the country's circular paper economy. The message emerged during the organisation's Speaking Together Colloquium in Johannesburg, where government, municipalities, packaging producers, brand owners, recyclers, reclaimers, small businesses and researchers examined how to increase collection rates and build sustainable recycling-driven employment.

For South Africa's food and beverage B2B market, the discussions carry direct implications. Paper and paper packaging remain central to food and beverage distribution, including cartons, corrugated transport packaging, paper-based retail packaging and food service applications. Improvements in paper packaging recycling in South Africa directly influence supply security, costs, sustainability compliance and brand commitments across the food and beverage sector.

Waste to work

Held under the theme From Waste to Work, the colloquium focused on practical cooperation to improve material recovery, support waste reclaimers and develop infrastructure required for a functioning circular economy for paper packaging. Fibre Circle CEO Edith Leeuta stressed that coordinated industry action is necessary to understand and solve structural challenges across the recycling system.

Leeuta noted that reliable data remains critical. Understanding how much paper and packaging

material is recovered, where leakages occur and how collection systems perform enables investment decisions that strengthen recycling capacity and supply chains. For manufacturers and brand owners in the food and beverage industry, this data informs packaging design, recycled content adoption and extended producer responsibility compliance strategies.

Government representatives reinforced that the circular economy is becoming a central component of economic policy. Pamela Nxumalo, Provincial Director of Waste Management at the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning, positioned extended producer responsibility (EPR) as a key policy tool supporting South Africa's transition toward circular material use.

EPR regulations

Under EPR regulations, producers must support collection and recycling of materials they introduce into the market. For companies involved in food and beverage packaging in South Africa, participation in PRO structures such as Fibre Circle is becoming essential to meet compliance requirements while ensuring packaging remains recyclable within existing infrastructure.

Municipalities face operational pressure as waste volumes increase while landfill space declines. Pikitup Johannesburg General Manager Aluoneswi Elvis Mafunzwaini highlighted that Johannesburg collects roughly 1.9 million tonnes of waste annually but diverts only a fraction from landfill. Despite diversion improvements, the city remains below its waste diversion targets.

Improved separation at source remains one of the most effective methods to increase recovery rates. However, municipalities cannot achieve this without cooperation from producers, PROs and community-based waste reclaimers. For food and beverage manufacturers, packaging that supports easier sorting and recycling directly influences diversion outcomes.

ARO

The African Reclaimers Organisation (ARO) presented data demonstrating the role reclaimers play in keeping recyclable materials in circulation. In one monitored project, reclaimers collected 46,000 tonnes of recyclable material over 18 months. These volumes contribute significantly to national recycling statistics while providing livelihoods for thousands of workers.

Supporting reclaimers through formal partnerships, access to infrastructure and safer working conditions can improve material quality entering recycling streams. For food and beverage companies seeking reliable recycled fibre supply for packaging production, collaboration with recovery networks becomes increasingly strategic.

Participants agreed that strengthening South Africa's circular paper economy requires alignment across all actors. Manufacturers need consistent

recycled fibre supply. Retailers and food brands must stimulate demand for recyclable and recycled-content packaging. Municipalities and PROs must coordinate collection systems. Researchers must supply data guiding investment and packaging decisions.

Data sets

Professor Kevin Harding from the University of the Witwatersrand emphasised that South Africa lacks many of the data sets needed to evaluate packaging impacts, including life-cycle assessments and carbon footprint measurements. Universities and research institutions increasingly support industry by analysing system bottlenecks and environmental performance of packaging formats.

For the food and beverage industry, designing packaging with recycling in mind is becoming standard practice. Don Mac Farlane, Packaging Senior at Woolworths, described how collaboration across raw material suppliers, packaging manufacturers and recyclers ensures packaging is developed with end-of-life recovery in view. This approach reduces contamination risks and improves recyclability within South African waste management systems.

However, stakeholders also emphasised that consumer participation remains critical. Even well-designed packaging fails to re-enter recycling systems if households do not separate waste correctly. Consumer education campaigns, municipal collection improvements and consistent messaging from brands all influence recovery rates.

Obligation and opportunity

For South Africa's food and beverage B2B sector, the transformation of the circular paper economy presents both obligation and opportunity. Compliance with extended producer responsibility regulations now intersects with commercial considerations such as packaging cost stability, recycled content availability and corporate sustainability reporting.

Industry leaders at the colloquium agreed that partnerships are the most effective route to achieving national recycling and waste diversion targets. When reclaimers are integrated into formal systems, municipalities coordinate collection infrastructure and producers design packaging for recycling, the entire value chain becomes more efficient.

This collaboration ultimately supports job creation, stabilises recycling feedstock supply, reduces landfill pressure and strengthens domestic manufacturing competitiveness. As demand for sustainable food and beverage packaging grows, effective cooperation across South Africa's recycling ecosystem will determine how quickly the sector transitions from waste management challenges to circular economic growth.

www.fibrecircle.co.za

High safety and quality standards

Air Products is known for maintaining high safety and quality standards, and the latest ISO/IEC 17025:2017 accreditation obtained from the South African National Accreditation System (SANAS), is testimony to the company's drive to ensure a specified level of testing and calibration in laboratories. Although it is referred to as an accreditation, it is a standard to which Air Products' laboratories are accredited.

The ISO/IEC 17025:2017 accreditation can be added to Air Products' extensive list, which includes ISO 9001 (Quality), ISO 45001 (Health and Safety), ISO 14001 (Environment) and FSSC 22000 (Food Safety). This newly acquired accreditation provides numerous benefits for laboratories, including enhanced credibility, increased customer confidence, and improved operational efficiency. In essence, the accreditation's core focus is to establish and maintain a reliable and competent laboratory.

Developed by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the ISO/IEC 17025:2017 accreditation is a globally recognized standard for testing and calibration laboratories. It provides a framework for laboratories to demonstrate their competence, impartiality, and consistent operation, ensuring the accuracy and reliability of their results.



According to Thapelo Mogapi, Specialty Gas Manager at Air Products, the process to apply for the accreditation started in 2016; the project formally started in October 2018 after extensive planning and was completed in early 2025. He explains the process in further detail: "The application started with training to understand the standard. This was followed by a process to ensure the technical competency of the laboratory personnel, equipment calibration, and the traceability of measurements, including validation test methods."

"The accreditation is essentially the implementation of a quality management system and ensuring that specific technical requirements are met. It is valid for a period of five years, with periodic audits conducted by an accredited body", says Mogapi.

Mogapi concludes by stating that it is important to produce reliable and accurate results, as this is crucial to build trust with customers and regulatory bodies.



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