

food & beverage

REPORTER

June 2026



THIRSTI'S NEXT CHAPTER:

Expansion innovation
and local growth drive
in R300mn investment

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CORE COMPETENCIES



From the editor

South Africa's food and beverage sector is being impacted by the need to invest confidently in long-term manufacturing capability and the responsibility to strengthen food safety systems across an increasingly complex value chain. This edition highlights both priorities through two powerful examples of industry leadership.

THIRSTI's R300 million investment in its new Tulbagh bottling facility is more than a business expansion; it is a vote of confidence in South Africa's manufacturing future. Built on the foundations of authenticity, innovation and responsible stewardship, the company's growth journey demonstrates how strategic investment in infrastructure, people and local production can create lasting economic value while responding to evolving consumer demand for healthier, wellness-driven products. At a time when supply chain resilience and operational agility have become business necessities, investments of this scale reinforce the importance of building industrial capacity that can support sustainable growth for generations to come.

Equally significant is the growing recognition that food safety remains the cornerstone of consumer trust and industry credibility. **The Food Safety Summit™ 2026** brought together leading experts, regulators, manufacturers and solution providers to address some of the sector's most pressing challenges. From emerging pathogens and food fraud to crisis communication, regulatory developments and advances in technology, the discussions underscored a critical reality: effective food safety requires alignment between science, policy and operational practice. As food systems become more interconnected, collaboration and knowledge-sharing are essential to protecting public health and maintaining confidence in the food supply.

Together, these stories reflect an industry that is not standing still. South African food and beverage businesses are investing, innovating and collaborating to build a more resilient, competitive and responsible future. Whether through world-class manufacturing facilities, stronger food safety governance or the development of products that meet changing consumer expectations, the message is clear: sustainable growth is achieved when long-term vision is matched by decisive action.

The future of the sector will be shaped not only by the products it produces, but by the quality of its investments, the strength of its partnerships and its commitment to continuous improvement. These are the foundations upon which a globally competitive and proudly South African food and beverage industry will continue to thrive.

As always we look forward to hearing from you with your latest news, expansion stories and insights.

Happy reading,

Simon

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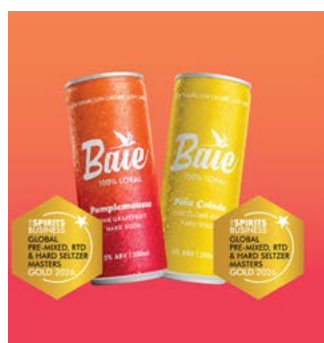
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FoodComply – Switching from paper to paperless
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Cape Town's Woodstock Brewery wins Best Beer in Africa at the 2026 African Beer Cup

South Africa's craft brewing sector received a major endorsement after Cape Town-based Woodstock Brewery secured the coveted Best Beer in Africa title at the 2026 African Beer Cup.

Its winning entry, Funky Monk's, outperformed 243 beers from 16 African countries, highlighting the growing sophistication and competitiveness of the continent's brewing industry. The victory also reflects the increasing demand for premium, artisanal products that combine innovation with technical excellence.

Industry trends emerging from this year's competition point to significant shifts in consumer preferences. Entries featuring African-grown ingredients increased notably, while non-alcoholic beers continued their rapid rise, mirroring global consumption patterns. Collaborative brewing projects also gained traction, reinforcing the sector's reputation for innovation and knowledge sharing.



For the food and beverage industry, the competition highlights how local ingredient sourcing, product differentiation and authentic African flavour profiles are becoming important competitive advantages. Soul Barrel Brewing's African Celebration Award for a beer made with 100% South African hops further illustrates how brewers are building distinctive regional identities while supporting local agricultural value chains.

With water stewardship, ingredient traceability and sustainability increasingly shaping purchasing decisions, Africa's brewing sector is positioning itself as a dynamic contributor to both manufacturing innovation and agricultural development.

Tiger Brands signs landmark electricity wheeling agreement to accelerate clean energy transition

Tiger Brands has taken a significant step towards achieving its 2030 sustainability goals through a new electricity wheeling agreement with renewable energy supplier Apollo Africa.

The agreement, scheduled to commence in 2028, will allow the food manufacturer to source renewable electricity generated off-site and delivered through South Africa's national grid to manufacturing facilities

in Gauteng. Sites supplied through the Ekurhuleni Municipality are expected to receive approximately 60% of their electricity requirements through the wheeling arrangement.

The move forms part of Tiger Brands' broader environmental stewardship strategy, which targets a 30% reduction in water and energy intensity, a 30% reduction in carbon emissions, and sourcing 31% of electrical energy from renewable sources by 2030.

For food manufacturers facing rising energy costs and growing pressure to reduce emissions, electricity wheeling is emerging as a practical pathway to decarbonisation without the constraints associated with on-site generation infrastructure. By securing access to renewable energy at scale, companies can improve operational resilience while supporting national climate objectives.

The agreement demonstrates how sustainability investments are increasingly being integrated with business performance objectives, helping manufacturers manage resource costs, strengthen supply chain resilience and meet evolving stakeholder expectations around environmental accountability.



Community growers gain market access as Shoprite strengthens food security ecosystem

Shoprite Group is deepening its role in regional food security by connecting community food gardens directly with consumers through its annual Market Day initiative, held on World Hunger Day.

Nearly 60 community gardeners and co-operatives from South Africa, Namibia and Botswana showcased and sold fresh produce at selected Shoprite and Checkers stores, highlighting the growing importance of localised food production in strengthening supply resilience and improving access to nutritious food.

The initiative forms part of the retailer's support for more than 300 community food gardens across southern Africa. Beyond creating a retail platform, Market Day equips participants with practical commercial skills including pricing, customer engagement and product presentation, helping



small-scale producers transition from subsistence growing to sustainable micro-enterprises.

Projects such as the Dirang Batswana Greenery Project in North West Province demonstrate the broader socio-economic impact of community agriculture, supporting household food production while supplying vegetables to a soup kitchen serving 300 children.

As climate pressures, water scarcity and food inflation continue to challenge food systems, community-based agriculture is increasingly recognised as a critical component of local food resilience. Shoprite's milestone 300th community garden, established near Bredasdorp in the Western Cape, underscores the retailer's long-term commitment to nurturing grassroots food production and creating pathways to market for emerging growers.

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The C6 energy chain in combination with the new e-spin upper run guide wheel allows for reliable energy and data supply with minimal particle emissions on travels of up to 30 metres.



Cutting-edge plastic Echain protects cables in cleanrooms

Advanced polymer manufacturer igus has developed a new cleanroom energy chain with an innovative guide system that allows for abrasion-resistant travels over distances of up to 30 metres.

It is ideal for applications where it is essential that surroundings to be free of particles while maintaining high production rates. With increasing automation and constantly growing systems, the routes for material transport are also becoming longer. A key challenge here is to ensure energy and data cables are able to move freely while minimising wear and tear.

According to igus managing director, Ian Hewat, standard energy chains usually require complex extraction systems for microparticles while the new igus C6 energy chain in combination with the new e-spin upper run guide wheel offers a solution that allows compact and durable energy supply in cleanrooms even for long travels.

“Cleanrooms have strict requirements for cleanliness and the exclusion of particles which makes manual transport within the cleanroom unfeasible. This has led to the development of cleanroom-compatible energy chains that are durable and cost-effective alternatives to costly hoist and manual system,” says Ian.

He explains that igus solved the dilemma by developing a special guide system called e-spin



Ian Hewat of igus

for the C6 cleanroom energy chain. It consists of guide wheels that, like all igus energy chains, are made of tribologically optimised high-performance plastic which is optimised for friction and wear. The wheels are located between the upper and lower run of the energy chain. As a result, the chain parts roll on top of each other instead of gliding in order to prevent particle emissions.

This allows it to be used without the need for an extraction unit and allows design engineers to reduce the complexity of energy supply in transport systems and save costs in the process. Laboratory tests showed that the high-performance plastics achieve the highest cleanroom Class ISO 1 at a speed of 0.5m/s. This is ideal for all sorts of applications where designers can collaborate with igus's technical team to specify the correct systems for their applications.

www.igus.co.za

Symrise expands logistics infrastructure to support global growth and supply chain efficiency

Global flavour and fragrance manufacturer Symrise has launched the second phase of construction of its new logistics centre in Holzminden, Germany, reinforcing its commitment to operational excellence and long-term growth.

The €25 million investment will expand capacity and improve supply chain efficiency through the development of a fully automated high-bay warehouse and integrated logistics infrastructure. Scheduled for completion in 2028, the project forms part of the company's Vision 2035 infrastructure programme.

As food and beverage manufacturers navigate increasingly complex global supply chains, investment in automated logistics systems is becoming essential to maintaining service levels, improving inventory management and reducing operational inefficiencies.



Symrise expects the facility to streamline material flows, support just-in-time deliveries and enhance responsiveness to customer requirements worldwide.

The development also aligns with broader sustainability objectives through more efficient transport structures and logistics processes, contributing to reduced traffic congestion and improved infrastructure planning in the surrounding region.

By combining automation, digitalisation and centralised logistics capabilities, Symrise is strengthening the foundations needed to support future growth while enhancing supply chain agility in an increasingly competitive global market.



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New cocoa butter equivalent overcomes enrobing challenges



AAK, a global leader in specialty vegetable fats and oils, has launched ILLEXAOTM EN 10, a new cocoa butter equivalent for enrobed applications that enhances performance and formulation flexibility. Manufacturers globally are increasing their use of cocoa butter equivalent – a vegetable fat alternative to cocoa butter – as they navigate cocoa price volatility, supply uncertainty and rising production costs. However, standard options can thicken chocolate mass, destabilise flow, and lead to buildup in enrobing equipment, impacting processing efficiency and product consistency.

The product has been developed specifically to address these challenges and deliver guaranteed enrobing performance even at high cocoa butter equivalent levels. It behaves much closer to cocoa butter, even as cocoa butter equivalent content increases, enabling manufacturers to maintain a stable, smooth flow, consistent coating performance, and a high-quality appearance and texture. It is suitable for use in any enrobing application, including chocolate bars, cookies, cakes, sandwich cookies and wafers.

Because of its fat composition, ILLEXAOTM EN 10 delivers reduced buildup, cleaner curtains, uniform coating weight, fewer line adjustments and cleaning stops, and greater stability in long production runs. This means manufacturers can

run faster, cleaner, and more consistently, even with higher levels of cocoa butter equivalent. Smoother processing also means lower energy consumption, as well as reduced waste, rework, cleaning cycles, and processing hours.

The product ensures premium sensory performance, offering a clean, fast melt without waxiness, a crisp snap with a smooth texture, authentic chocolate flavour release, and a glossy, stable appearance. These properties remain consistent even at elevated cocoa butter equivalent ratios, enabling manufacturers and brands to maintain indulgence while adapting to market realities. It also maintains resistance to fat bloom and supports stable crystallisation.

Morten Daugaard Andersen, Principal Research Scientist Chocolate Confectionery Fats at AAK, commented: “Manufacturers are facing unprecedented raw material price pressures, but consumer expectations remain unchanged. This means reformulation poses a risk and getting it wrong could prove costly. AAK’s new product solves the production challenges associated with the use of cocoa butter equivalent at high levels, ensuring a straightforward enrobing process and a superb end- product that consumers will love.”

www.aak.com

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EXTRAORDINARY BY NATURE



THIRSTI's next chapter: A R300 million investment in South Africa's beverage future

When the Hoatson family discovered a natural spring in the foothills of KwaZulu-Natal's Klein Drakensberg, the ambition was never simply to bottle water.

What began as a commitment to protecting and sharing a pristine natural resource has evolved into one of South Africa's most recognisable hydration brands. In 2025, that journey entered a significant new phase with the opening of THIRSTI's R300 million bottling facility in Tulbagh in the Western Cape.

For CEO Rob Hoatson, the investment represents far more than additional production capacity. It is the latest chapter in a long-term growth strategy focused on building a national spring water brand while preserving the quality, authenticity and provenance that have defined Thirsti from the beginning.

"Our focus has been on building infrastructure capable of supplying products at scale while maintaining the highest quality," he says.

The timing is significant. Across South Africa's food and beverage sector, manufacturers are navigating changing consumer preferences, increasing pressure on supply chains and growing demand for products aligned with health and wellness lifestyles. Against this backdrop, investments in local production capacity have become increasingly important, not only for business growth but also for strengthening industrial capability and creating long-term economic value.

THIRSTI's expansion reflects several of the forces reshaping the beverage industry today, from premiumisation and wellness-driven consumption to the rapid growth of hydration-focused product categories. It also highlights the growing sophistication of South African beverage manufacturing and the role local investment continues to play in building a more resilient industry.



Rob Hoatson

From natural spring to national brand

Many successful brands begin with a market opportunity. THIRSTI began with a natural resource.

When the Hoatson family acquired a farm in the foothills of the Klein Drakensberg, they discovered a natural spring characterised by exceptional purity, mineral composition and taste. Rather than viewing it solely as a commercial opportunity, they saw the potential to build a business around something increasingly valued by consumers: local authenticity.

"When our family acquired the farm and discovered that source, it immediately felt like something worth building around," Hoatson recalls. "As a second-generation Hoatson family business, we have always believed in building for the long term, not just creating something commercial, but something with real substance and meaning."

From the outset, the vision extended beyond the product itself.

"It was never about simply putting water in a bottle. It was about offering water exactly as nature intended, with a clear focus on purity, provenance and authenticity."

Those principles continue to shape the business today, even as it has expanded into new categories and markets.

A major turning point came in 2015 with the development of the company's Normandien facility in KwaZulu-Natal. The investment transformed THIRSTI from a regional operation into a business capable of competing nationally, providing the production platform required to support future growth.

As consumers increasingly shifted towards healthier lifestyles and wellness-focused products, THIRSTI found itself well positioned to respond.

The opening of the Tulbagh facility builds on that foundation. Together, the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal operations create a dual-source production model that strengthens national supply capabilities while maintaining the natural spring water credentials that remain central to the brand's identity.

The rise of hydration as a growth category

THIRSTI's evolution mirrors broader changes taking place across global beverage markets.

Consumers are increasingly seeking products that support active lifestyles, offer functional benefits and align with long-term health goals. As a result, categories such as premium bottled water, sports hydration and functional beverages continue to gain momentum.

For beverage manufacturers, this shift has created opportunities to innovate beyond traditional product segments.

Over the past decade, THIRSTI has expanded from natural spring water into sparkling water, flavoured water, sports hydration and, more recently, functional hydration solutions.

"We expanded into sparkling water, flavoured water and sports hydration while remaining true to our core. The expansion into Tulbagh added a second premium source and strengthened our ability to supply nationally."

Recent additions such as the Sugar Free Flavours Plus functional hydration range and Spring Water Mixers further demonstrate how Thirsti is responding to evolving consumer expectations.

For Hoatson, innovation is less about chasing trends than ensuring long-term relevance.

"Innovation has been central to our growth. It has allowed us to move beyond bottled water and into sports nutrition with the THIRSTI Sport range, and more recently into functional hydration through our Sugar Free Flavours Plus range."

"At its core, it is about staying relevant to a broad range of South African consumers and always offering the highest quality product. Consumer needs are evolving, and we need to evolve with them while remaining true to our foundation in pure, natural spring water."

Investing in manufacturing capability

The launch of the Tulbagh facility comes at a time when manufacturers are placing renewed focus on operational resilience, regional supply networks and production flexibility.

Large-scale investments in production infrastructure have become increasingly important as beverage producers seek to improve supply chain flexibility, reduce logistics complexity and respond more effectively to market demand.

For companies operating across geographically dispersed markets, regional manufacturing capability is increasingly becoming a strategic advantage.

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THIRSTI's investment reflects this reality. The facility strengthens the company's ability to service customers nationally while reducing logistical complexity and enhancing responsiveness to changing demand patterns.

More broadly, it signals confidence in the future of South African manufacturing.

At a time when investment decisions are scrutinised carefully, projects of this scale demonstrate the importance of maintaining and expanding local production capacity to support industry growth.

Building a brand beyond the bottle

As consumer expectations evolve, successful beverage brands are increasingly distinguished by the lifestyles and values they represent, rather than simply the products they sell.

THIRSTI has positioned itself at the intersection of hydration, performance and active living through a series of strategic partnerships across South African sport.

Partnerships with organisations including the Comrades Marathon, Bulls, Cheetahs, Cricket South Africa and the Nedbank Running Club have helped establish the brand as a recognised participant in South Africa's sporting culture.

According to Hoatson, these relationships have played an important role in shaping consumer perceptions.

"Partnerships with leading sporting platforms helped position THIRSTI as more than just a commodity product. THIRSTI became a brand associated with performance, endurance and a very real South African lifestyle."

The alignment reflects a broader shift taking place throughout the beverage industry, where health, wellness and performance have become increasingly important drivers of purchasing decisions.

Few partnerships embody these values more clearly than the company's long-standing relationship with the Comrades Marathon.

"Comrades is something very special to our THIRSTI family. It is more than just a race. It represents resilience, perseverance and what people are capable of when they push themselves to the limit."

As the official hydration partner, the company supports runners across the entire route, providing hydration infrastructure on one of the world's most demanding endurance events.

"We provide crucial hydration support across the full route, servicing 50 water points and delivering around 2.8 million water and sports sachets, along with more than 45 tonnes of ice."

For Hoatson, the partnership reflects the essence of the brand.

"We are there in the toughest moments of the race, providing ice-cold hydration when it matters most. That is where the brand really comes to life."

Values that scale with growth

While the business has evolved significantly, Hoatson believes the values underpinning the organisation have remained remarkably consistent.

"Integrity has always been at the centre of how we operate. It is about doing things properly, even when it is not the easiest route."

As a family-owned business, the company continues to place significant emphasis on accountability, respect and long-term thinking.

"We are a family business and have always been a people-driven organisation, with a culture grounded in respect, fairness and humility."

At the same time, maintaining an entrepreneurial mindset has enabled the business to remain agile as it grows.

"There is an entrepreneurial mindset that runs through the business, with the ability to move quickly, think clearly and make decisions when it matters."

That long-term perspective ultimately shapes every major investment decision.

"We are not building something for the next cycle. We are building something that will last for generations."

A vote of confidence in South Africa

Perhaps the most powerful message behind THIRSTI's continued expansion is what it says about confidence in South Africa itself.

While economic challenges remain, the company continues to invest in local manufacturing, people and communities, reflecting a belief in the country's long-term potential.

"Our confidence in South Africa really comes down to its people. We operate in a country with a young, growing population, and that brings energy, ambition and a strong appetite for entrepreneurial brands that feel relevant and deliver on what they stand for."

Having built the business entirely within South Africa, Hoatson believes resilience remains one of the country's defining characteristics.



"We have built this business entirely within South Africa, so we have experienced that resilience and adaptability firsthand."

"There is a willingness from consumers to embrace brands that are rooted in local communities and that are authentic."

That local connection remains central to the company's identity.

"For us, being a proudly South African brand is not just about operating locally. It is about how we build together with our people. It means investing in communities, creating opportunities, supporting active lifestyles and staying close to what South African consumers need and value."

At the same time, he emphasises the importance of maintaining international standards.

"It is about maintaining that balance, building something globally competitive while staying locally relevant."

Beyond the factory gate

The impact of manufacturing investment extends far beyond production facilities.

"The Normandien facility alone represents an investment of around R400 million in nominal value over time, but for us, it is not just about the plant itself. It is about the impact it has on the surrounding ecosystem."

As businesses expand, opportunities are created throughout supplier networks, logistics operations, engineering services and skills development programmes.

"As the business grows, it creates opportunities, from employment to supplier development and skills growth. You begin to see a broader economic impact in the region."

"We do not see investment as isolated. It is part of building something that contributes meaningfully to the long-term sustainability of the communities we operate in."

That philosophy extends to environmental stewardship.

As sustainability becomes increasingly important across the food and beverage sector, THIRSTI continues to invest in water stewardship initiatives, recycling programmes, waste reduction efforts and energy-efficiency projects supported by solar and backup systems.

"Our packaging is fully recyclable, and we have made a concerted effort to encourage responsible disposal by providing consumers with clear recycling guidance."

For a company built around natural spring water, responsible resource management remains fundamental.

"As a natural spring water company, we are committed to preserving and responsibly managing our water sources to ensure their long-term sustainability for future generations."

Creating opportunities and strengthening communities

THIRSTI's approach to growth extends beyond commercial performance.

The company supports schools surrounding its Normandien facility through investments in water

infrastructure, including filtration systems, rainwater harvesting projects, sanitation upgrades and pump replacements.

It also maintains a longstanding partnership with Gift of the Givers, providing water support during humanitarian crises and periods of supply disruption.

Beyond these initiatives, the company increasingly plays a role in supporting water security during municipal outages.

"During prolonged municipal supply disruptions, including outages linked to Rand Water supply failures, THIRSTI has been called on to supply bottled water to metropolitan communities that would otherwise go without safe drinking water."

Job creation and skills development remain equally important priorities.

Today, the broader group employs more than 3,000 people.

"We want to build long-term careers for them within THIRSTI by growing talent from within the organisation."

The company also works closely with local suppliers across engineering, logistics and packaging sectors, helping create opportunities throughout the value chain.

"It is a critical part of our approach. We invest in training, mentorship and internal development to create opportunities for people to grow within the business."

Through initiatives such as Sport For Lives, the company also supports youth development and community upliftment programmes.

"For us, investing in youth is ultimately about contributing to the future of the country."

Building for generations

The opening of THIRSTI's R300 million Tulbagh facility in 2025 represents more than the expansion of a successful beverage business.

It reflects the convergence of several powerful trends shaping the future of South Africa's food and beverage sector: growing consumer demand for healthier products, the increasing importance of manufacturing resilience, and the need for businesses willing to invest for the long term.

From a single natural spring in the foothills of the Klein Drakensberg to a nationally recognised hydration company employing thousands of people, THIRSTI's growth story has been built on patient investment, strategic expansion and a clear sense of purpose.

As the beverage industry continues to evolve, investments of this scale will play an increasingly important role in strengthening South Africa's manufacturing base, creating opportunities throughout the value chain and supporting a more competitive, resilient industry.

For THIRSTI, the Tulbagh facility is another milestone in a journey that began with a natural spring. For South African manufacturing, it stands as a reminder that long-term growth is built not only on products, but on infrastructure, people and the confidence to invest in the future.

www.thirsti.co.za



Savannah accelerates functional beverage innovation

The opening of THIRSTI's new Tulbagh facility represents more than added manufacturing capacity. It signals a firm confidence in South Africa's future, in the increasing sophistication of its beverage sector, and in the growing appetite for healthier, innovative products that combine genuine functionality with consumer appeal.

As beverage categories continue to evolve, manufacturers are moving beyond traditional refreshment offerings to develop products that support hydration, immunity, energy, recovery and overall wellness. Today's consumers expect more from the beverages they purchase, creating opportunities for brands to differentiate through nutritional value, reduced sugar formulations and enhanced functionality.

For beverage manufacturers, however, these opportunities come with increasing formulation complexity. Delivering multiple health benefits while maintaining great taste, product stability and processing efficiency requires access to advanced ingredient technologies and technical expertise.

This is where ingredient innovation becomes critical.

Beyond functionality itself, beverage innovation is increasingly being driven by a convergence of global consumer trends. One of the fastest-growing developments is the rise of "better-for-you" beverages that combine multiple benefits within a single product proposition. Consumers are actively seeking beverages

that support healthier lifestyles, creating demand for products that offer hydration, immunity support, energy management and nutritional enhancement in convenient formats.

At the same time, clean-label formulation continues to gain momentum. Beverage brands are looking for ingredient systems that support nutritional enhancement, sugar reduction and product stability while maintaining transparent ingredient declarations and consumer trust. This trend is driving greater demand for multifunctional ingredients that can simplify formulations without compromising performance.

Another emerging focus area is personalised nutrition, with beverage manufacturers increasingly developing products targeted at specific consumer needs, including active lifestyles, healthy ageing, cognitive performance and recovery. These applications require sophisticated formulation approaches and access to high-quality functional ingredients capable of delivering measurable benefits.

Through its partnership with Jungbunzlauer, Savannah is enabling South African beverage



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Ingredients to create brilliance!

manufacturers, including THIRSTI, to access globally recognised functional ingredient technologies designed specifically for modern beverage applications. From highly bioavailable mineral fortification systems to advanced sugar-reduction and stabilisation solutions, Savannah is helping local producers formulate products that meet evolving consumer expectations without compromising taste, stability or processing performance.

One of the most significant growth areas in functional beverages is mineral fortification, particularly in hydration and immunity-focused products. Zinc gluconate has emerged as a preferred organic zinc source due to its excellent bioavailability, fast dissolution and low taste impact at application level. Its functionality makes it particularly well suited to clear beverages, powdered drink systems, sports nutrition products and wellness beverages where sensory profile and mineral delivery are equally important.

Alongside zinc fortification, Jungbunzlauer's broader portfolio of organic mineral salts offers beverage developers formulation flexibility across calcium, magnesium and potassium applications. Unlike many inorganic mineral sources that can introduce bitterness, metallic notes or stability challenges, organic citrate and gluconate systems provide cleaner taste profiles, improved absorption and strong compatibility with modern beverage systems.

"The next generation of beverage innovation will be defined by products that successfully combine science-backed functionality, exceptional taste and consumer trust"

For beverage manufacturers, this means functional positioning can now be achieved without sacrificing flavour quality or consumer experience.

Importantly, the market is also moving beyond single-function products. Functional beverages are increasingly expected to deliver multiple benefits simultaneously – hydration, energy support, immunity, reduced sugar and improved mouthfeel within one formulation platform. Savannah's ingredient portfolio supports this trend through integrated beverage solutions rather than isolated ingredient supply.

Jungbunzlauer's ERYLITE® erythritol and stevia technologies, for example, allow beverage manufacturers to reduce sugar while maintaining sweetness quality and taste balance. These systems are particularly relevant as brands continue responding to consumer demand for lower-sugar beverages without the sensory compromises traditionally associated with high-intensity sweeteners.

At the same time, beverage stability remains essential in high-protein drinks, dairy alternatives and mineral-fortified systems. Hydrocolloid technologies such as TayaGel® gellan gum and xanthan gum help manufacturers optimise suspension

stability, reduce sedimentation and improve mouthfeel – all increasingly important considerations in premium functional beverage development.

What distinguishes Savannah's approach is the combination of global ingredient partnerships with local technical understanding and application support. As South African beverage producers continue investing in innovation, the ability to access world-class ingredient systems alongside practical formulation expertise is becoming a major competitive advantage.

The expansion of beverage manufacturing capacity through facilities such as THIRSTI's new Tulbagh operation signals growing confidence in the future of South African beverage innovation. Equally important is the ingredient technology ecosystem supporting that growth. Manufacturers are increasingly seeking partners that can help accelerate product development, overcome formulation challenges and bring differentiated products to market faster.

For Savannah, the focus extends beyond supplying ingredients. The company continues to position itself as a formulation and innovation partner to the South African food and beverage industry, connecting manufacturers with functional ingredient systems that improve nutritional performance, product stability, sensory quality and market relevance.

Looking ahead, the next generation of beverage innovation will be defined by products that successfully combine science-backed functionality, exceptional taste and consumer trust.

As manufacturers compete to deliver increasingly sophisticated beverage propositions, access to the right ingredients, technical expertise and formulation support will become a key differentiator.

Through its partnership with Jungbunzlauer and a growing network of global suppliers, Savannah is helping South African beverage manufacturers stay ahead of market trends and bring high-performance functional beverages to market faster. In an increasingly competitive landscape, that capability is becoming as valuable as the ingredients themselves.

www.savannah.co.za



SANBWA and THIRSTI: A working partnership in accredited bottled water

A credible industry body and a committed member show how shared standards protect both producers and consumers.

There is a moment in Thirsti CEO Rob Hoatson's telling of the company story that says everything about the relationship between a committed producer and a credible industry body. Eleven years ago, with a source of exceptional water on his family's farm at Normandien in KwaZulu-Natal and a vision to build a sustainable business, his very first call was to Charlotte Metcalf, CEO of the South African National Bottled Water Association (SANBWA).

"When we started, one of my first calls was to Charlotte. I flew to Johannesburg, we sat down, and I said: I'd like to get into this industry properly, and I want to understand what that actually takes," says Hoatson. "There was never a question of whether we were going to join SANBWA because from the outset I wanted to give our customers assurance of product quality."

That ethos has shaped everything that followed. Today, Thirsti is among the most visible bottled water brands in South Africa and it proudly carries the SANBWA logo on every bottle.

For Thirsti's new facility in the Tulbagh Valley, recently visited by a group of national media, SANBWA membership required a hydrogeologist-verified source assessment, independently audited production systems, continuous batch testing and a full traceability chain from source to sealed bottle. The Tulbagh plant, purpose-built on a 72-hectare farm beneath the Cape's Witzenberg mountains, is a working example of what accredited food-safe water production looks like.

Hoatson says: "Anyone can put water in a bottle. The real question is whether you can prove where it came from, how it was treated, and what happens if something goes wrong. That proof costs money, in equipment, in people, in audits and testing.. But it is the only basis on which consumers should ever trust a product."

For SANBWA, the relationship with Thirsti is also proof of concept. The association requires every prospective member to submit a qualified hydrogeologist's report confirming source sustainability before membership is granted. Facilities are audited. Products are tested. The SANBWA standard is benchmarked against international best practice and the SANBWA logo, carried by brands including All Aqua, Aquabella, Aqua Monte, aQuellé, Bené, Bonaqua, Designer Water, La Vie De Luc, Thirsti and Valpré, tells consumers that these steps have been independently verified.

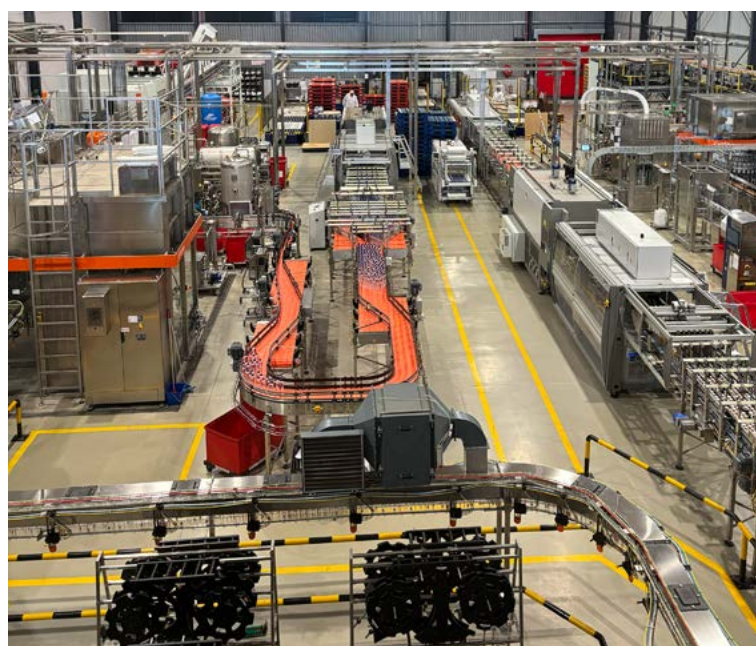
For Metcalf, this is precisely the kind of outcome SANBWA exists to create, not just for its members, but

for consumers navigating an increasingly complex market. Refill stations are proliferating across the country, many pre-filling and sealing bottles with unverified water; a practice that constitutes packaged water production under the law but that carries none of the safety obligations most operators are meeting. Environmental claims on packaging are adding further confusion.

Metcalf explains: "When a consumer picks up a bottle of water, they should not need specialist knowledge to know whether it is safe. That is what the SANBWA logo is for. It means the source has been independently verified, the facility has been audited, the product has been batch-tested, and a traceability system is in place. Members like Thirsti demonstrate that doing this properly is the right thing, but it is also the smart business decision."

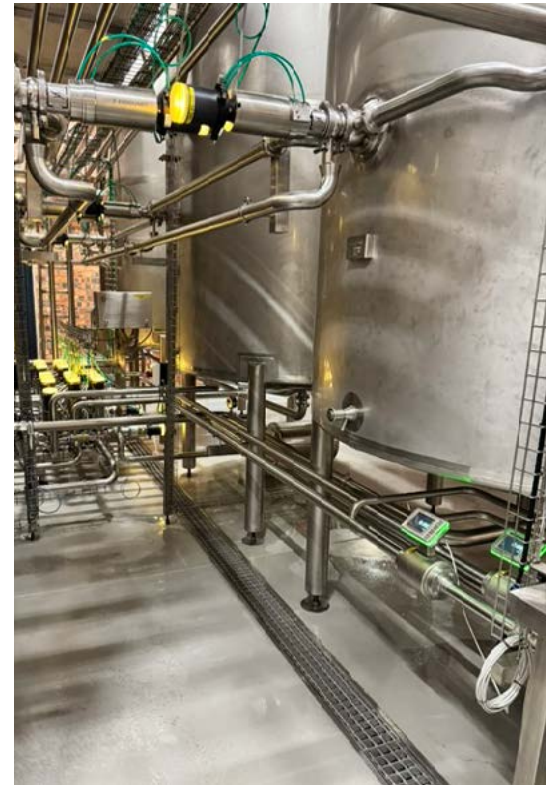
The media visit to Tulbagh, hosted by SANBWA and Thirsti together, was itself a reflection of how the partnership works in practice. Journalists were taken behind the label: through accredited bottling lines, into the lab and into an honest conversation about water safety, re-filler risks, and what responsible production actually requires.

It is the kind of access that only works when a producer is genuinely confident in their standards and when an industry body has the credibility to frame the story. For Thirsti, the visit was an opportunity to show what world-class production looks like. For SANBWA, it was a chance to make the case for why independently verified bottled water matters, with a facility that speaks for itself.



www.sanbwa.org.za

Celebrating a world-class food and beverage production facility



From the outset, this project was driven by a clear vision: to create a production facility built to the highest standards of hygiene, flexibility, operational efficiency, and long-term reliability. The result is a plant that stands among the finest in the country, capable of handling a wide variety of products while maintaining strict control over product safety, quality, and process consistency.

SEJO Engineering was proud to be involved in the design and delivery of several key areas of the facility, including the process design, process and utility piping, syrup room, CIP plant, and automation system. Each of these elements plays a critical role in ensuring that the facility operates efficiently, safely, and consistently across different production requirements.

The plant was designed with guidance from EHEDG principles, supporting hygienic design and cleanability throughout the process. Particular attention was given to product safety and the prevention of cross-contamination. As part of the design process, SEJO Engineering recommended the use of double-seat leakage-proof valve technology as a more robust and hygienic alternative to manual operation, providing clear separation between product lines and cleaning cycles. Rob Hoatson and his team recognised the long-term value of this approach and made the investment to implement the higher-standard

solution. This decision reflects a strong commitment to protecting product integrity and maintaining the highest standards of food safety.

“SEJO Engineering was proud to be involved in the design and delivery of several key areas of the facility, including the process design, process and utility piping, syrup room, CIP plant, and automation system”

The fully automated CIP station is another important part of the plant's hygienic design. The system is configured to ensure that cleaning cycles are carried out correctly and repeatably between product. Critical parameters such as temperature,

chemical concentration, flow conditions, and cleaning time are monitored and controlled to ensure that the required cleaning standards are achieved. These set points and process values are recorded through the SCADA system, providing data logs for traceability, verification, and operational review.

The automation and control system further supports consistent production, efficient operation, and strong visibility across the plant. By integrating process control, monitoring, and data recording, the facility is well positioned to meet the demands of modern beverage manufacturing while allowing for future growth and product flexibility.

Projects of this nature require close collaboration between the client, engineering team, suppliers, and installation teams. We are grateful to have had the opportunity to work alongside Rob Hoatson and his team, and to contribute our process engineering and hygienic installation experience to a facility of this standard.

We congratulate the owners and operating team on this significant achievement. Their investment in quality equipment, hygienic design, and advanced automation has resulted in a world-class production facility that sets a strong benchmark for the

industry. SEJO Engineering is proud to have played a part in bringing this vision to life, and we look forward to seeing the plant deliver high-quality products for many years to come.

**SEJO Engineering
would like to extend our
sincere congratulations to
Rob Hoatson and the entire team
on the successful completion
and commissioning of their new
production facility. It is a privilege
to see this plant being recognised
and showcased as an example
of modern food and beverage
manufacturing in
South Africa**
Bernd Rohrmüller

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Bernd Rohrmüller



bernd@sejoeng.com



www.sejoeng.com



Somerset West, South Africa

At THIRSTI, every label tells a story

Every bottle of THIRSTI is more than just water. It is a carefully crafted brand experience. Central to that experience is the label, which serves as both a visual identity and a communication tool. Through its partnership with CCL Label, THIRSTI continues to elevate its premium positioning with high-quality label solutions that reflect authenticity, freshness, and innovation.

As a global leader in label and packaging solutions, CCL brings extensive expertise in beverage decoration technologies, including pressure-sensitive labels, shrink sleeves, and sustainability-focused packaging innovations. The company's advanced printing capabilities and focus on premium finishes ensure that THIRSTI products achieve maximum shelf appeal while maintaining consistent quality standards across production.

Importantly, the partnership also aligns with growing industry demand for more sustainable packaging. CCL's ongoing investment in recyclable and wash-off label technologies, lightweight materials, and circular packaging solutions supports beverage manufacturers looking to reduce environmental impact without compromising brand aesthetics or performance.

“Supported by CCL’s innovation-driven approach to packaging and decoration, Thirsti is well positioned to strengthen its footprint in the competitive beverage market while continuing to deliver a premium consumer experience”

The opening of THIRSTI's new Tulbagh processing facility marks an exciting new chapter for the brand's expansion ambitions. Supported by CCL's innovation-driven approach to packaging and decoration, THIRSTI is now well positioned to strengthen its footprint in the competitive beverage market while continuing to deliver a premium consumer experience.



Together, the two companies demonstrate how collaboration between beverage producers and packaging specialists can drive both operational excellence and stronger brand differentiation in an increasingly demanding marketplace.

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Congratulations to Thirsti
on the opening of the new
production facility in Tulbagh!



The step-child of the spoilage organisms



If one is asked to name the organisms known to cause spoilage in food, the most commonly mentioned would always be coliforms, lactic acid bacteria, yeast and mould. While all these contribute to aerobic growth observed on plate count agar, a frequent challenge arises when products unexpectedly fail during shelf-life. It's not uncommon to hear: "The micro was clean when the batch was released, yet now the aerobic count is high, and no typical spoilage and pathogenic organisms show growth". In many such cases the underlying cause is sporeforming bacteria, specifically the *Bacillus* spp.

Of the over 260 identified *Bacillus* spp., the most well-known of the group is the pathogenic *Bacillus cereus*, which causes either emetic (nausea and vomiting) or diarrheal illnesses. Over the past few years there has been an increasing number of the emetic illness, which has caused cereulide, a preformed heat-stable toxin that, in severe cases, can be fatal.

These instances are often associated with precooked starch-based foods that have been either inadequately cooked, stored at a favourable temperature for bacterial growth (10° – 50°C) or inadequately/slowly cooled down. Other food sources associated with *Bacillus* include fruit, vegetables, dairy and meat.

Within the food industry, significant attention has always been on *B. cereus*, while other organisms belonging to this genus, though not necessarily pathogenic, are often overlooked despite their potential to cause spoilage. *Bacillus* spp. is highly adaptable and have the ability to grow over a wide pH- and temperature range. However their unique ability to form endospores is the biggest reason why they can overcome harsh processing environments and survive in end-products.

An endospore is a dormant, tough, non-reproductive structure that is ubiquitously found in the environment, especially in soil which has been identified as the primary reservoir and route to the food chain. The primary function of endospores is to ensure the survival of a bacterium through periods of environmental stress. Typically, these spores will remain dormant until triggered to germinate. Over decades of research, it has been well established that heat is one of the key triggers for germination. When exposed to elevated temperatures under favourable conditions, the spore loses its dormancy resulting in the development of a vegetative cell.

In food manufacturing, heat steps are mostly incorporated to eliminate spoilage organisms.

However, in the case of spores, heat can act as a catalyst for the spoilage to start by initiating germination. In its spore form, *Bacillus* spp. are not readily detected by routine microbiological testing due to it being "non-viable". However, once exposed to a heat shock, these organisms can be enumerated in tests known as aerobic mesophilic and thermophilic spore counts. The problem, however, is that these tests are rarely part of the testing

requirements for products, especially raw materials. Instead manufacturers solely rely on aerobic plate count and *B. cereus*, with these tests typically yielding a “no growth” result. As a result, contamination is often only identified once it has already occurred, whereas testing for these organisms in advance could prevent this from happening.

It is important to note that raw materials are not always the sole source of contamination. Some *Bacillus* spp. are also highly effective in forming biofilms due to its ability to attach to hydrophobic surfaces by utilising its high hydrophobicity and extending hair-like structures. A biofilm is defined as a community of various microorganisms attached to an inert or living surface by a self-produced polymeric matrix or an assemblage of microbial cells associated with a surface and enclosed in a matrix of primarily polysaccharide material. After they attach to stainless-steel food processing equipment, surfaces of heat exchangers or water piping systems, biofilms are difficult to remove, especially when it becomes an old and more established biofilm. Once *Bacillus* has formed the initial biofilm it also makes it easier for other organisms, including pathogenic organisms, to attach to this biofilm protecting it from basic cleaning chemicals. As production continues, clumps of the biofilm detach, contaminating the final products.

Dairy processing and manufacturing has been susceptible to *Bacillus* spoilage as the farm-to-product chain provides the ideal environment for these organisms to survive and thrive. Poor hygiene practices or are not followed or extended storage beyond 24h, further increases the risk. While vegetative *Bacillus* are typically present at low levels in raw milk, the spores are more prevalent and later germinate following pasteurisation.



During production of powdered dairy products e.g. milk powders, spores remain the biggest issue due to the low water activity of the final product. However, should spore levels be high, it will eventually germinate once the powder is used in products such as flavoured milk. *Bacillus licheniformis*, which can grow under mesophilic and thermophilic conditions, is the predominant species in milk powder. This is due to it mainly being found in raw milk and the farm environment. Although it cannot form biofilms, it produces various spoilage enzymes.

Spoilage enzymes, produced when the organisms are in a vegetative state and are responsible for structural defects and off-flavours in dairy products. The three most significant enzymes relating to dairy spoilage include proteases, lipases and azoreductases, with proteases being the primary contributor to spoilage.

Heat treatments such as pasteurisation or UHT do not fully inactivate all proteases, allowing them to remain active, even if final products are refrigerated. Proteases will hydrolyse casein over time, resulting in bitterness, off-odours as well as lumpiness and whey separation. In UHT milks this can lead to “age gelation”, caused by the formation of a tight protein network formed via interactions between whey (β -lactoglobulin) and para-K-casein. This irreversible gel complex, accompanied by syneresis, will be formed within 3 – 12 months of storage, depending on the severity of the spoilage.

Furthermore, while not causing gelation, lipase enzymes will result in a rancid off-flavour characterised by metallic, fruity or oxidised notes. This is due to the lipase breaking down the fat into fatty acids and glycerol. Azoreductase, mostly produced by *Bacillus subtilis*, targets the azo dyes which are widely used in many products. The impact of this enzyme will result in the fading or discolouration of the product, e.g. affected chocolate milk could yield a green tinge, which will become clear over the course of shelf-life.

Given the complexity of *Bacillus*-related spoilage, it is understandable that these issues catches many manufacturers off-guard and can be a difficult problem to diagnose and resolve once established in a facility. Although there are currently no set guidelines for spores, international food- and ingredient producers manufacturing products that are prone to harbour spores, e.g. milk powders, have started to implement internal guidelines. However, there is still a long way to go regarding guideline implementation across various food categories given the fact that mesophilic- and thermophilic aerobic spores remain tests that are rarely included in the testing requirements.

www.synercore.co.za

Author :
Anneri Carinus



VEGA's solutions give breweries the confidence to maintain consistency, reduce waste, and deliver the flavour profiles consumers expect, batch after batch

Brew true: smarter instrumentation is protecting quality in South Africa's competitive beer market

Consistency is the currency of modern brewing. Whether you are a craft producer scaling up or an established brewery protecting brand reputation, even small deviations in pressure, temperature, or ingredient dosing can shift a beer from exceptional to average. As South Africa's beer market grows increasingly competitive, brewers are turning to smarter, more reliable instrumentation to safeguard quality at every stage of production.

Where flavour is won or lost

The heart of flavour development happens when wort and hops meet. Achieving the right hop balance of bitterness, aroma, and stability depends on accurate dosing and tightly controlled cooking conditions. This is where pressure and point level measurement become mission critical, and where instrumentation earns its place as a strategic asset rather than a commodity purchase.

The measurement environment in a working brewery is genuinely demanding. Level ranges can extend to five metres, temperatures swing from 10°C to beyond 100°C, and pressures regularly exceed two bar. Add to this the persistent challenges of foam, condensation, and suspended solids, and it becomes clear why inferior sensors fail. Reliable instrumentation ensures that hop additions, boil intensity, and wort volumes remain consistent from batch to batch, directly influencing flavour, yield and production efficiency.

Engineered for food-grade environments

VEGA's process instrumentation is built specifically with food-grade environments in mind. All wetted materials comply with FDA and EC regulations, making these solutions well suited to breweries that prioritise hygiene, traceability, and export readiness. The equipment is also designed for maintenance-free operation, reducing downtime and long-term operating costs, a meaningful consideration for breweries managing tight margins. Setup is streamlined through a VDMA-compliant interface, allowing quick commissioning and straightforward integration into existing control systems.

Two solutions built for the brewery floor

The VEGAPOINT 23 is a compact capacitive limit switch designed for water-based liquids in brewing applications. Its tube extension options allow for flexible installation across a range of vessel

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Everything is possible. With VEGA.

configurations, while universal hygienic adapter compatibility reduces complexity at the point of setup. IO-Link connectivity enables continuous digital data transmission, offering improved process transparency and seamless communication with broader automation systems. For brewers, this translates to more reliable fill level monitoring in the hops dissolver and tighter control over dosing accuracy.

The VEGABAR 39 is a universal pressure transmitter engineered for gases, vapours, and liquids at temperatures up to 130°C. A fully welded metallic measuring cell provides long-term reliability under continuous process conditions, while a 360° status display gives operators instant visual feedback without requiring them to reposition or crouch. On-site operation is supported through an integrated display, and IO-Link communication enables smooth integration into brewery automation systems. In practice, this means stable pressure control during wort boiling and hop addition — two stages where precision has a direct and measurable impact on product quality.



For brewers, employing the VEGABAR 39 means stable pressure control during wort boiling and hop addition; two stages where precision directly affects product quality.

VEGA instrumentation for brewing

- **VEGAPOINT 23:** Capacitive limit switch for water-based liquids. Tube extensions for flexible installation, universal hygienic adapter compatibility, and IO-Link connectivity for real-time digital data transmission.
- **VEGABAR 39:** Universal pressure transmitter rated to 130°C. Fully welded metallic measuring cell, 360° status display, and mIO-Link communication for seamless brewery automation integration.

Both solutions comply with FDA and EC food-grade regulations and are designed for maintenance-free operation.



www.vega.com

Raising the bar for breweries

Brewing is both craft and science. As local producers innovate with new styles and scale production to meet growing demand, the need for dependable, hygienic, and digitally integrated instrumentation becomes ever more pressing. VEGA's solutions give breweries the confidence to maintain consistency, reduce waste, and deliver the flavour profiles that consumers expect. Batch after batch, without compromise.



The VEGAPOINT 23 is a compact capacitive limit switch ideal for water based liquids in brewing applications.



Perfect fit for hygienic applications

The Liquiphant has been installed more than eight million times worldwide. Developed as a new measuring principle for customer challenges in the 1980s, it is considered the most reliable and safe point level detector in industrial plants. The latest generation of devices is ready for Industry 4.0 and, with the Liquiphant FTL63, ideally suited for applications with hygienic requirements.

At the end of the 1970s, Georg H. Endress asked his developers for an all-metal and thus permanently sealed sensor, that would switch reliably and trouble-free everywhere without adjustment to different media. It quickly became clear that the capacitive and conductive probes used until then could not fully meet these requirements. This was the birth of a new measuring principle: vibronics. Within a very short time, this new technology became the best-seller from Endress+Hauser and to this day the vibrating metal fork is known as the most reliable and safe limit switch. Whether utilized for overfill or dry-run protection, the Liquiphant performs many tasks in process automation. But even the best measuring principles have to bow to digital change. It was time to equip the sensor, which has proven itself a million times over, for the tasks of tomorrow.

The Liquiphant FTL51B can be used as an all-rounder in all pumpable liquids for point level detection. The Liquiphant FTL62 scores with its

coatings when used in aggressive liquids. At high process temperatures of up to 280 °C, the Liquiphant FTL64 is the preferred measuring instrument due to a special high-temperature design. The portfolio is now completed with the Liquiphant FTL63 - the perfect choice for the Food and Beverage and Life Sciences industries due to its hygienic design.

Expertise in hygienic applications

The Liquiphant FTL63 is used for point level detection in process and storage tanks, as well as in pipelines, and supports a wide range of typical use cases. These include empty level detection in milk tanks, dry-run protection for pump monitoring in the cleaning system of fermentation tanks for beer production and overfill protection in the concentrate tank in fruit juice production. In all these applications, the outstanding technology works reliably in all pumpable liquids the Liquiphant FTL63 is ideally suited for use in hygienic applications. The all-metal sensor meets the highest

requirements for robustness as well as hygienic design (3-A certified and ASME-BPE compliant), making the device reliable and nearly maintenance-free in operation. The completely welded sensor concept guarantees cleanability in the process (CIP/SIP) and thus ensures efficient operation.

The point level switch can be put into operation in a few minutes without adjustment to the respective medium. The Liquiphant FTL63 switches reliably even where other measuring principles reach their limits, e.g. due to changes in conductivity or dielectric constant, build-up, foam, turbulence or air bubbles. The technology of the Liquiphant is therefore ideal for replacing float switches, capacitive or optical sensors, and meets the current requirements for Industry 4.0.

“The Liquiphant FTL63 also allows operators to communicate with the sensor via Bluetooth® Technology and the SmartBlue-App from Endress+Hauser”

Digital potential

Migration to Industry 4.0 requires sensors that provide relevant data to trigger process optimization and efficiency gains. In the Technology Roadmap: "Process Sensors 4.0", NAMUR calls for an additional, mobile way of communicating with the sensor. This information is used for predictive maintenance and process optimizations. Furthermore, additional product information, such as manuals or certificates, is available online on site at any time.

The latest generation of the Liquiphant offers multiple ways to clearly know your process status. The first is ultra-bright LEDs that indicate switching status. The Liquiphant FTL63 also allows operators to communicate with the sensor via Bluetooth® Technology and the SmartBlue-App from Endress+Hauser. The app makes all product and diagnostic data easily available. Particularly in the case of installation locations that are difficult to access. The diagnostic function of the Heartbeat Technology can also be accessed via the SmartBlue-App.

In addition to current device diagnostics, Heartbeat Technology enables guided verification at the push of a button from the control room. Verification sets the foundation for predictive maintenance through frequency monitoring. By performing the verification, a trend can be detected, which then gives an indication of

Benefits of the new Liquiphant FTL63 at a glance

- Universal use in all pumpable liquids without adjustment to the media
- Easy commissioning (Plug and Play)
- High process and product safety thanks to certified hygienic design (3-A, EHEDG, ASME BPE)
- Proven material compliance and traceability (e.g. EC1935/2004, FDA und cGMP)
- Continuous diagnostics as well as traceable and documented on-demand verification without process interruption thanks to Heartbeat Technology
- Minimized maintenance effort: function test via test button or magnetic pin
- Intuitive operation via Bluetooth® Technology as well as optical process status indication via LED module
- Efficient operation due to cleanability in the process - CIP/SIP

corrosion or build-up on the sensor. As a result, plant shutdowns can be prevented, and plant availability can be increased. Verification is carried out via the SmartBlue-App directly from the control room without removing the device or interrupting the process, and is completed with an automatically generated, traceable verification protocol.

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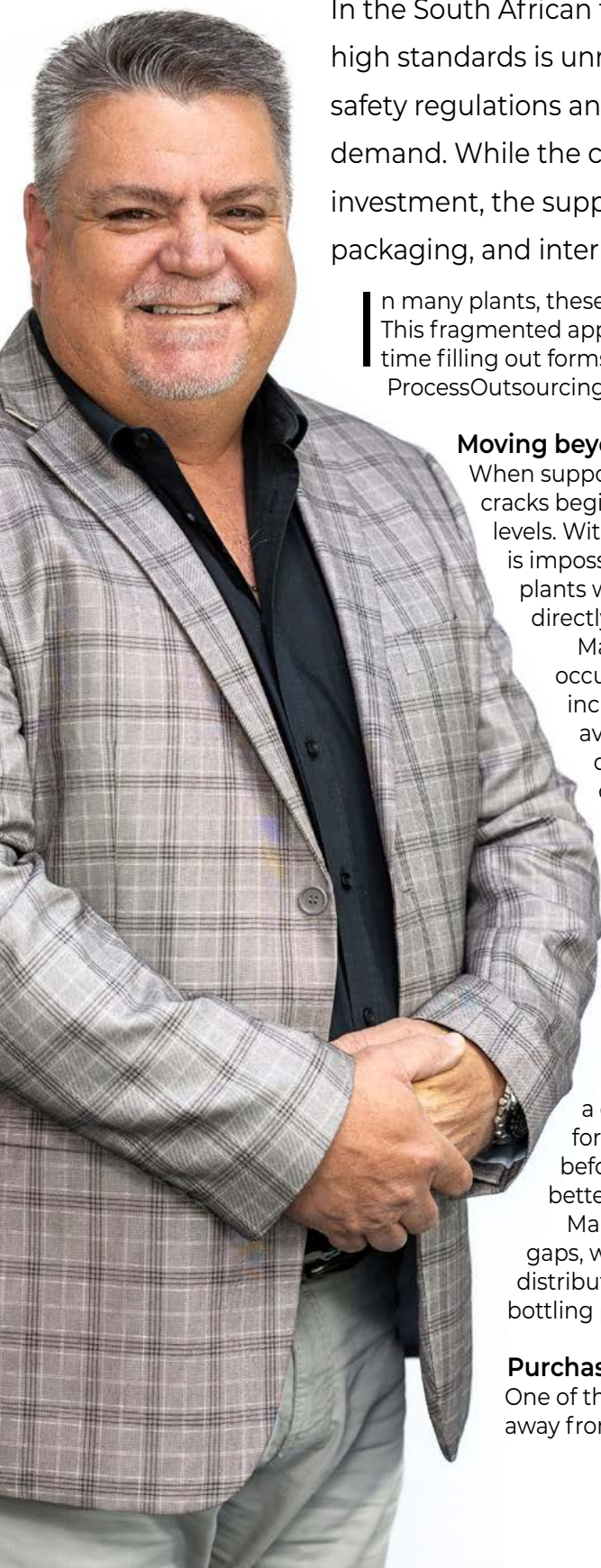
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Closing the operational gaps in food and beverage manufacturing with data-driven BPO



In the South African food and beverage industry, the pressure to maintain high standards is unrelenting. Manufacturers must balance strict food safety regulations and traceability with rising costs and unpredictable demand. While the core production line is often the focus of technology investment, the support functions, such as raw material staging, secondary packaging, and internal logistics, are frequently left behind.

In many plants, these critical areas still rely on manual checks and paper documents. This fragmented approach creates a compliance burden where staff spend more time filling out forms than improving flow. However, by partnering with a Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) provider, manufacturers can turn these manual

Moving beyond manual silos

When support functions are managed in silos using manual tools, the cracks begin to show in the form of stock losses, overtime, and missed service levels. Without a clear view of what is happening on the floor in real time, it is impossible to enforce the 'First In, First Out' method effectively. In food plants where products have a short shelf life, poor stock rotation leads directly to expired goods and cross contamination risks.

Managers often find themselves in a reactive cycle. If a bottleneck occurs, the typical response is to throw people at the problem, which increases labour costs without fixing the root cause. When data is only available at the end of a shift, the opportunity to fix a planning error or a mechanical breakdown has already passed. The result is a lack of visibility that makes it difficult to tell retailers exactly when an order will be ready for loading.

Turning data into decisions

A BPO partner introduces simple digital tools, such as handheld scanners and live performance dashboards, to replace the clipboard. This change provides instant access to information and instead of spending hours calculating numbers from paper notes, supervisors can see exactly how many units have been moved or packed at any moment.

This visibility allows for smarter, faster decisions. For example, if a dashboard shows that a warehouse is running out of storage space for an incoming batch of stock, the manager can solve the problem before the trucks even arrive. Furthermore, real time data allows for better maintenance scheduling.

Maintenance interventions can be planned around production gaps, which reduces unexpected downtime, and improves service to distributors, simply by tracking the actual output of equipment such as bottling plants.

Purchasing outputs instead of hours

One of the most significant shifts in a modern BPO partnership is the move away from a headcount model. Traditionally, businesses rent labour by

paying for hours worked, while a BPO model allows manufacturers to buy guaranteed outputs instead, such as a fixed cost per case handled or specific targets for picking accuracy and shrinkage.

This shift changes the behaviour of everyone on the floor. When the focus is on output, labour is used more effectively. Fixed labour costs are converted into a predictable cost per unit, which offers the manufacturer more flexibility as demand changes with the seasons. It also creates a data-driven culture where success is measured by units completed rather than time spent on site. This approach ensures that the right product is in the right place at the right time, reducing the need for expensive straight runs and unplanned overtime.

“When support functions are managed in silos using manual tools, the cracks begin to show in the form of stock losses, overtime, and missed service levels”

Real world impact and innovation

In the first 90 days of such a partnership, the focus is on stabilising the operation. A BPO partner can quickly identify where time is being wasted by creating

standard operating procedures and fixing the physical layout of the warehouse. This standardisation makes it easier to spot when a process is not followed, ensuring that audit readiness is built into the daily routine rather than being a last minute panic.

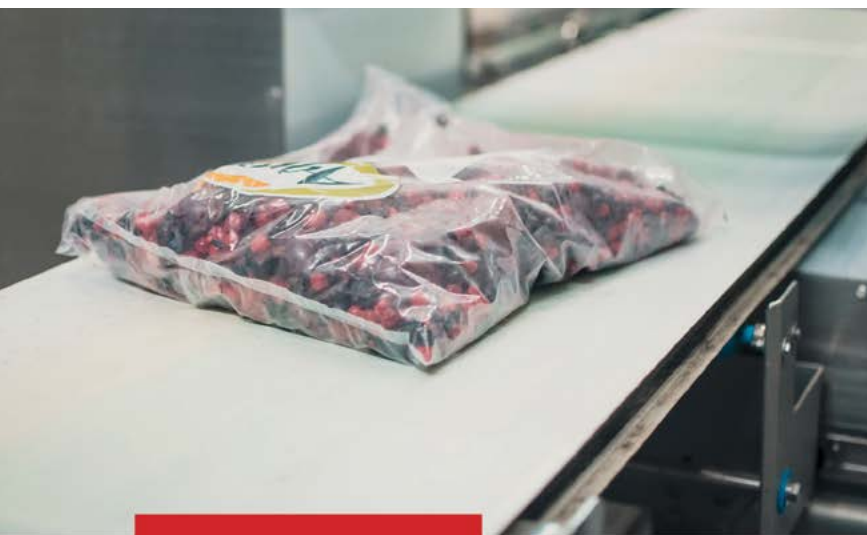
When these support processes are run as efficient, outsourced functions, the internal leadership team regains the bandwidth to focus on their core business. Instead of managing staff problems or warehouse bottlenecks, they can focus on product innovation and growing their brand.

A strategy for growth

Modern food and beverage production requires a level of agility that manual systems simply cannot provide. Moving to a data-driven model is more than cutting costs; it is about establishing a foundation of total operational control. Because visibility drives control and control drives efficiency, producers can manage market fluctuations with precision. This ensures that the back-end operation is as refined as the final product. For South African producers, trading the clipboard for a digital dashboard is the only way to secure a future of sustained growth.

About the author:

Willie du Preez, MD at Programmed Process Outsourcing



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Securing Africa's future through a circular water economy

Africa Day celebrated on 25 May provided an opportunity to reflect on the continent's shared future. In 2026, that future is increasingly being shaped by one issue that cuts across every sector of society and the economy: water.

Recognising the urgency of the challenge, the African Union has declared 2026 the Year of "Assuring Sustainable Water Availability and Safe Sanitation Systems to Achieve the Goals of Agenda 2063". In launching the theme earlier this year, African Union Commission Chairperson Mahmoud Ali Youssouf described water not only as a social necessity, but also as a driver of industrialisation, job creation and sustainable development across the continent.

The declaration reflects a growing recognition, echoed in global water governance frameworks such as UN-Water, and development research from the World Bank, that water security underpins public health, food security, economic productivity and social wellbeing throughout Africa. It is also a call for stronger political leadership, greater investment and more integrated approaches to water management across borders.

Across the continent, climate variability, rapid urbanisation, ageing infrastructure and rising demand are placing unprecedented strain on water systems. These pressures are consistently highlighted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which identifies water stress as one of the most direct impacts of climate change in vulnerable regions such as sub-Saharan Africa. In South Africa, shortages, pollution and deteriorating wastewater infrastructure are already affecting communities, municipalities and businesses. Water remains fundamental to life and dignity, yet for many it is becoming increasingly fragile.

Water insecurity is no longer a future risk confined to policy discussions. It is already affecting households, economic growth, food production and public health. Many communities continue to struggle with unsafe sanitation, while droughts and floods deepen vulnerability. As populations grow and climate pressures intensify, the need for resilient and sustainable water systems has become urgent.

Our wastewater challenge is already measurable

Recent assessments by the Department of Water and Sanitation show that around 64% of wastewater

treatment works are classified as high or critical risk, meaning they are likely to discharge partially treated or untreated effluent into the environment. This reinforces findings from the Water Research Commission, which has long highlighted declining infrastructure performance and the need to shift toward resource recovery.

The broader economic impact is equally significant. The African Development Bank has repeatedly emphasised that weak water infrastructure constrains growth, particularly in agriculture, energy and urban development, where water reliability is essential for investment and productivity.

The "Use and Dispose" model no longer works

For decades, wastewater was treated as something to discard. Systems followed a linear model: abstract, use, treat and dispose. However, global evidence from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) shows this approach is no longer viable in a water-scarce future, especially where agriculture accounts for the majority of freshwater use.

A circular water economy instead seeks to design out waste, keep water and resources in use for longer, and regenerate natural systems. Wastewater is reframed not as a burden, but as a resource that can support energy generation, agriculture, industry and ecosystem health.

The principle is simple: wastewater becomes the start of a new value cycle. Water is reused, nutrients recovered, and waste streams converted into energy and useful by-products.

Turning wastewater into opportunity

Across South Africa, circular approaches are already emerging. Wastewater treatment plants are increasingly being explored as resource recovery facilities, producing biogas through anaerobic digestion and generating biosolids for agricultural and land rehabilitation use. These approaches align with global evidence synthesised by the UNESCO World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP).

Research shows that anaerobic digestion of sludge can significantly reduce energy demand at treatment plants while producing biogas for electricity or heat. This is increasingly important given rising municipal energy costs and grid instability.

Nutrient recovery is another key opportunity. Nitrogen and phosphorus extracted from sludge can be reused as fertiliser inputs, reducing dependence on imported fertilisers and supporting agricultural productivity. This aligns with broader circular economy thinking promoted internationally and reinforced by FAO food security priorities.

Internationally, circular water systems are already improving drought resilience, reducing environmental pollution and creating green jobs in cities facing severe scarcity.

Collaboration will determine success

Technical solutions alone will not solve Africa's water challenges. Circular water systems depend on collaboration across municipalities, researchers, policymakers, businesses and communities. Engineers, regulators and civil society all play a role in ensuring systems are both effective and trusted.

Research partnerships across South Africa and globally continue to demonstrate the feasibility of water reuse, nutrient recovery, biogas production and nature-based solutions. However, scaling these solutions depends on governance capacity, skills development and sustained institutional investment.

Regional cooperation is also critical. African countries face shared challenges including water

scarcity, pollution, infrastructure failure and climate risk. Knowledge sharing and coordinated investment can significantly accelerate resilience across the continent.

A shared continental responsibility

Africa Day celebrates unity, cooperation and shared destiny, and water embodies all three.

A circular water economy offers African countries an opportunity to decouple development from rising water demand while strengthening food and energy security, creating jobs and improving environmental outcomes. It also offers a pathway to rebuild trust in public institutions by demonstrating that practical, forward-looking solutions already exist.

The circular water economy is no longer theoretical. It is already emerging through pilot projects, research collaboration and policy development across the continent. Africa Day, and the African Union's 2026 focus on water and sanitation, calls for this momentum to be accelerated.

By valuing every drop of water and every by-product within the system, Africa can build resilient water futures that serve both people and planet. On Africa Day, water is more than a resource. It is a shared responsibility and a shared opportunity for renewal.

About the authors:

Dr Harrison Pienaar, Chairperson of the Water Institute of Southern Africa (WISA) and Dr Lester Goldman, CEO of WISA





Can smart water create smart cities?

Digitising water systems reduces non-revenue water and operating costs, which is a prerequisite for any municipality attempting to modernise toward smart-city standards.

Cape Town is famous for its scenic bay, vibrant weather, and the towering presence of Table Mountain. It's also infamous for another towering presence, the unfinished highway called "Solly's Folly".

The stuff of legends, this road was abandoned in the Seventies, likely because of budget issues. Others blame bad engineering or a stubborn cafe owner who refused to sell their land. To this day, it remains a favourite talking point between locals and visitors who see the high bridge abruptly going nowhere.

Solly's Folly is also a reminder that urban areas are forces of nature. As much as one can rigidly plan and orchestrate our towns and cities, there are other factors as well. Economics, weather, and people's movements all have a say.

In the early 2000s, the idea of smart cities gained popularity. Using digital technology such as data and Internet of Things devices, we could bring order to urban chaos. It sounded very promising. Yet, two decades later, the results are still mixed.

There are successes, such as Singapore and Barcelona, but few other cities have reached the status of being comprehensively "smart". True smart cities remain elusive. Yet, if we zoom in, we can see

compartmentalised examples of smart city advances, such as dynamic traffic lights in New York and smart energy grids in Shenzhen. Smart-water adoption has outpaced most other smart-infrastructure initiatives because utilities can quantify the financial impact of leak reduction, pressure management, and regulatory compliance.

“By applying relatively simple and unobtrusive solutions like connecting smart meters to pipes, site managers quickly experience the benefit of accurate, data-driven reporting”

The reason is that smart cities are still cities. Top-down planning can help guide and shape them, but they emerge from the bottom up. What bottom-up forces can modernise a city? Water infrastructure is often the first viable entry point for smart-city

deployment because it delivers measurable economic outcomes such as lower NRW, reduced energy use in pumping, and improved asset uptime.

It can start with individual buildings. Smart-water systems generate actionable data that allows utilities and building owners to cut operating costs through leak detection, pressure optimisation, and predictive maintenance. According to the Global Infrastructure Hub, implementing smart meters retroactively on buildings reduces their consumption by as much as 22%. Leak detection is another example, reducing water waste and motivating lower insurance premiums because of lower water damage risks.

Smart water is a combination of technologies: sensors to monitor systems, data gathered from those sensors, and software that turns the data into actionable knowledge. Smart meters automate meter reading and provide clear usage metrics. Digital monitoring and analytics detect leaks, pressure anomalies, pump stress, and early asset failure indicators on both distribution and treatment infrastructure. They also extend into renewables such as rainwater capture and grey water recycling.

But how does that get us to smart cities? Smart water systems establish a foundation and culture for smart technologies. By applying relatively simple and unobtrusive solutions like connecting smart meters to pipes, site managers quickly experience the benefit of accurate, data-driven reporting. It encourages exploring other possibilities, including advanced technologies like artificial intelligence and

digital twins. Moreover, smart buildings can support municipalities through common standards and integrated reporting systems.

When multiple buildings adopt compatible smart-water technologies, municipalities gain access to standardised consumption and leak-pattern data that strengthens planning and reduces system losses. A municipality's effort to deliver on a smart city strategy gains momentum once its residents appreciate the benefits. The beauty of water systems is that we don't have to change how they work. Retrofittable sensors, telemetry, and analytics can be layered onto existing pump and treatment assets, reducing upgrade costs and accelerating adoption. That can be on a brand new development site or to enhance the city's oldest building.

Solly's Folly tells us why smart cities struggle to come into fruition. Cities don't just respond to command and control. They are organic, impulsive, and driven by different forces. But if we focus on making water smarter at the ground floor, among individual buildings, we'll start creating smarter cities.

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About the author:

Chetan Mistry is Strategy and Marketing Manager at Xylem WSS

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Food Safety Summit™ 2026: Bringing science, policy and practice together when it matters most

In an era where a single food safety incident can rapidly escalate into a public health crisis, erode consumer trust, disrupt trade, and threaten business continuity, the need for stronger collaboration across the food sector has become undeniable. Against this backdrop, Johannesburg hosted one of South Africa's most influential food safety events, the Food Safety Summit™ 2026, on 2–3 June 2026.

The Summit continues to grow in both scale and impact. Sustained increases in delegate registrations over recent years necessitated a move to a larger venue in 2026, providing enhanced facilities and creating a more dynamic environment for engagement between exhibitors and delegates. The decision proved timely, with the Summit achieving its highest attendance to date, alongside a record number of exhibitors showcasing an increasingly diverse range of products, services, technologies, and expertise.

Once again, the Summit was strategically aligned with the World Health Organization (WHO) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) World Food Safety Day, celebrated globally on 7 June.

Held under the theme **"Food Safety: Aligning Science, Policy and Industry Practice,"** the Summit brought together an exceptional mix of international and South African experts, regulators, manufacturers,



Prof Lucia Anelich



hospitality, retailers, academics, consultants, and service providers. The event created meaningful dialogue around the practical realities of building and sustaining effective food safety systems.

Emerging pathogens, food fraud, evolving consumer expectations, regulatory pressures, and technological advancements are all reshaping how food safety is managed. Success depends not only on scientific knowledge but also on the ability to translate that knowledge into sound policy and effective operational practice.

Convened and hosted by Prof Lucia Anelich, the Summit programme reflected this reality by



tackling some of the sector's most pressing issues. Day One opened with a keynote address on Crisis Communication: **The Front Line of Protecting and Enhancing Reputation**, highlighting the critical role communication plays during food safety incidents. A panel discussion followed, exploring how organisations can protect credibility and maintain stakeholder confidence when crises occur.

Scientific sessions throughout the day delved into subjects that remain central to public health and industry performance, including *Salmonella* in food, lessons learned from listeriosis outbreaks in Ready-To-Heat foods, and a closer examination of the true sources of foodborne pathogens and resulting illnesses. These discussions challenged conventional thinking while providing practical insights that can be applied across the food value chain.

Food fraud, an issue of growing global concern, also took centre stage. Experts debated whether industry is gaining ground in the fight against fraudulent practices and examined South African case studies that demonstrated both vulnerabilities and opportunities for improvement.

The first day concluded with a highly anticipated discussion on **FSSC 22000 Version 7**, which was released only weeks earlier. Food safety auditors and certification experts unpacked the implications of the new requirements and what organisations need to do to prepare for successful implementation.

Day Two shifted focus toward process control and verification through a dedicated **ICMSF Mini Workshop**, featuring internationally recognised experts from the International Commission on the Microbiological Specifications for Foods, discussing microbiological testing, sampling strategies, time series

“Scientific sessions throughout the day delved into subjects that remain central to public health and industry performance, including *Salmonella* in food, lessons learned from listeriosis outbreaks in Ready-To-Heat foods, and a closer examination of the true sources of foodborne pathogens and resulting illnesses”



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analysis for process control, data interpretation, and verification approaches.

Innovation was another prominent theme. Speakers explored the use of virtual reality kitchen induction training in transforming food safety, hygiene, occupational health and safety preparedness by allowing new employees to gain critical experience before stepping into a production environment. Once again, emphasis was placed on the importance of hygienic design of equipment, considering its vital importance in producing safe foods.

The last discussion of the Summit was a strategic panel titled **From Fragmentation to Fit-for-Purpose Food Safety Governance** – The South African Case. As South Africa continues to grapple with food safety governance challenges, this high-level conversation examined how stronger coordination, leadership, and system-wide alignment can contribute to a more effective national food safety framework.

Day Two ended with a keynote address on the work conducted by WHO on **estimating foodborne disease burdens**, the results of which were launched the day after the Summit. Updated figures show that an estimated 866 million people (almost 1 in 10) fall ill through the consumption of contaminated food, with 1.5 million deaths every year, resulting in 57 million Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs).

“Beyond the conference sessions, the Summit provided delegates with the opportunity to engage with leading solution providers through a dynamic exhibition, sponsor showcases, and extensive networking opportunities”

Beyond the conference sessions, the Summit provided delegates with the opportunity to engage with leading solution providers through a dynamic exhibition, sponsor showcases, and extensive networking opportunities. These interactions are often where ideas are transformed into partnerships and where challenges find practical solutions.

To stay informed, follow the Summit's updates via LinkedIn, Facebook, X, or subscribe to mailshots via www.anelichconsulting.co.za.

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FOOD SAFETY SUMMIT™ 2026

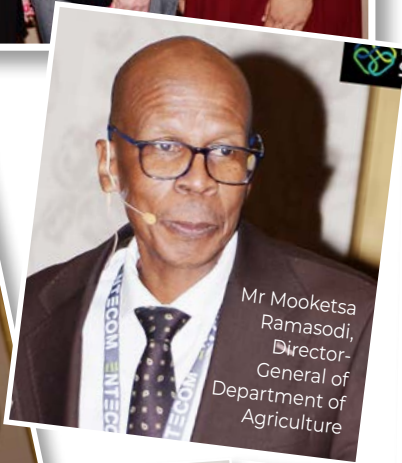
Panel discussion on FSSC 22000 version 7



Professor Logan
Rangasamy,
Executive
Director of
Wits Business
School



Professor
Karen Keddy,
Veterinary
Faculty,
University
of Pretoria



Mr Mooketsa
Ramasodi,
Director-
General of
Department of
Agriculture



Ms Zinhle Tyikwe,
CEO of GS1



Ms Prudence Moolwa, National Consumer Commission
and Ms Meisie Katz, General Manager of
Food and Associated Industries, NRCS



Ms Belinda Makhafola,
Director of Environmental Health,
Department of Health



Panel discussion on crisis communication





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In an era where food safety regulations and consumer expectations are at an all-time high, SMT has evolved from a laboratory service into a strategic national partner. Founded in 2013 by Managing Director Dr. Shirleen Coetzer, SMT has grown from a single SANAS-accredited facility in Bloemfontein into a premier network spanning Randburg, Centurion, Cape Town, and our specialised Cleaning Efficacy Hub in Bloemfontein.

Our 2026 vision, "Mad About Micro," isn't just a slogan; it's our operational DNA. With all branches being SANAS-accredited, we provide a 360-degree testing ecosystem. From the farm-level diagnostics of SMT VET to the specialised chemical and environmental validations of SMT CEH, we ensure that your safety protocols are scientifically bulletproof.

We understand the immense pressure placed on quality managers and industry leaders. To bridge the gap between complex lab data and operational reality, SMT has launched our advanced interactive client portal and dashboard.

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We believe that the best science happens when we truly understand your facility. Our team doesn't just sit in a lab; we regularly visit our clients to identify operational gaps where we can provide ethical, expert assistance aligned with standards. Whether it is validating your cleaning chemicals through SANS 51276, SANS 53697, SANS 53704, SANS 53610, SANS 490, SANS 51650, and EN1500 or ensuring your sampling is handled by our ANAB-accredited SMT IMPROVE team, we provide a level of technical advocacy that is always just a phone call away.

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From compliance to control: Bridging the gap between food safety design & operational reality

Food safety systems are often beautifully designed on paper. They include well-written policies, carefully developed procedures, risk assessments, monitoring records, corrective action forms, verification plans and audit schedules. In theory, everything lines up. The science is sound, the standard has been interpreted, the policy requirements have been translated into procedures, and the system appears complete.

But anyone who has spent time inside a food business knows that the real test of a food safety system does not happen in the boardroom, the training room or even during the certification audit. It happens in production, during a busy shift, when equipment fails, staff are under pressure, raw materials arrive late, a customer deadline is looming, and someone has to make a practical decision that could affect product safety.

This is where the gap often appears: the gap between food safety design and operational reality.

Where policy gives us direction, science gives us evidence. Industry practice is where both must prove their value. If these three areas are not aligned, food safety can easily become a compliance exercise rather than a working control system.

At Progress Excellence, this is the space we work in every day. As a recognised food safety training provider, our focus is not only on helping businesses understand standards, legislation and technical requirements, but on helping people apply them in real production environments. Training should not simply explain what a clause says or what a procedure requires. It should help teams understand why the requirement matters, what could go wrong if it is not controlled, and how to make better decisions when conditions are less than ideal.

Too often, food safety training is treated as a once-off requirement: something to complete, record and file before an audit. But effective training is one of the most important bridges between science, policy and implementation.

- It turns technical requirements into shared understanding.
- It gives supervisors the confidence to challenge unsafe practices.
- It helps operators recognise when a control is drifting.
- It supports managers in building systems that are not only compliant, but usable.

This is especially important as food safety standards continue to evolve. New and updated requirements often bring stronger expectations around food safety culture, risk-based thinking, validation, verification, competence and continual improvement. These concepts are valuable, but they can also remain abstract unless they are translated into practical behaviours:

- What does “food safety culture” look like at line level?
- How does a team know whether a control measure is truly effective?
- When does a deviation require correction, and when does it require deeper investigation?

These are the kinds of questions that determine whether a system is merely documented or genuinely controlled.

The opportunity for industry is to move from compliance to control. Compliance asks, “Do we have the required system in place?” Control asks, “Is the system working, and do our people know how to keep it working?” Both are necessary, but control is where food safety becomes real.

Progress Excellence positions itself as a practical bridge in this process. Through our food safety training and development programmes, we help organisations connect scientific principles, standard requirements and day-to-day operational decisions. Our aim is to equip people at all levels of the business, from senior leaders to frontline teams, with the competence and confidence to implement food safety systems that work beyond the audit.

Because ultimately, food safety is not protected by documents alone. It is protected by people who understand the risks, systems that support good decisions, and organisations that are willing to close the gap between what is written and what is actually done.

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Temperature measurement: The hidden backbone of food safety

In today's food industry, temperature control has become one of the most critical factors in ensuring product quality, consumer safety and operational efficiency. From production facilities and cold storage warehouses to transportation and retail environments, maintaining the correct temperature throughout the cold chain is essential to preserving food integrity and preventing costly spoilage.

Modern food supply chains are increasingly complex. Products often travel long distances and pass through multiple handling points before reaching consumers. Along the way, even minor temperature deviations can have significant consequences. Perishable goods such as meat, seafood, dairy and fresh produce are particularly vulnerable, with small fluctuations potentially reducing shelf life, compromising quality or creating food safety risks.

One of the biggest misconceptions in temperature monitoring is assuming that air temperature alone accurately reflects product temperature. In reality, food products respond differently depending on their composition, packaging and storage conditions. Frozen goods, for example, react far more slowly to ambient temperature changes than fresh products. This means that refrigeration systems may display compliant temperatures while the actual product temperature tells a different story.

Accurate measurement therefore requires more than simply reading a display on a cooling unit. Environmental factors such as airflow patterns, storage layouts, wall proximity and loading density can all create temperature variations within refrigerated spaces. Selecting the correct measuring location and using the right instrument for the application are essential for obtaining reliable results.

The food industry today relies on a combination of spot-check inspections and continuous monitoring systems. Portable handheld instruments remain indispensable for quick quality checks during receiving, storage and transport inspections. At the same time, modern data logging systems have transformed how businesses monitor cold chains. Wireless and cloud-connected loggers now allow continuous temperature tracking, remote access to records and instant alarm notifications when critical thresholds are exceeded. This not only improves compliance but also enables faster corrective action before product losses occur.

Non-contact infrared thermometers have also become valuable tools in food safety applications. Their ability to quickly screen surface temperatures

without damaging packaging makes them highly efficient for routine inspections. However, while infrared technology offers speed and convenience, it must be used correctly to ensure reliable results. Surface conditions, measuring distance and environmental influences can all affect accuracy. For critical verification, direct contact measurements using penetration probes remain the gold standard for determining true core temperature.

An effective temperature control strategy often combines multiple measurement methods. Rapid infrared screening can identify potential problem areas, followed by contact or penetration measurements for precise validation where necessary. This layered approach improves both efficiency and measurement confidence while minimizing unnecessary product handling.

Equally important is the regular calibration of measuring instruments. Even the most advanced technology can produce inaccurate results if not properly maintained. Calibration ensures traceability, supports regulatory compliance and gives businesses confidence that their measurements remain reliable over time.

As food safety regulations continue to tighten and consumer expectations rise, temperature measurement is no longer just a technical task performed in the background. It has become a strategic component of quality assurance, risk management and brand protection. Businesses that invest in accurate measurement technology and robust monitoring procedures are not only protecting products - they are safeguarding customer trust and strengthening the resilience of the entire food supply chain.

www.testo.co.za

Reference:

1. https://www.testo.com/en-ZA/food/food-safety-experts?utm_source=FSS2026&utm_medium=magazine&utm_campaign=ZA-en-i-fo-ba-FoodSafetyExperts-2026-m

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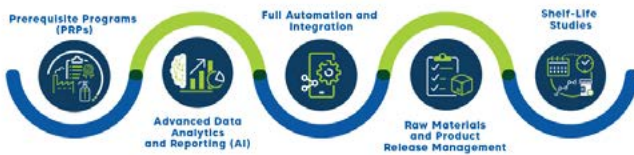
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World Cup and Powerade® Outlast

Powerade®, the official sports drink of FIFA World Cup 26™, has launched its global “Power Your Fate™” campaign in South Africa, alongside the introduction of the Limited Edition Powerade® Outlast sports drink.

The campaign highlights the role of sports hydration in athletic preparation, performance and recovery, aligning with growing demand for functional beverages in the South African sports drinks market. As part of the local activation, Powerade has partnered with Bafana Bafana captain and goalkeeper Ronwen Williams, who will lead the South African chapter of the campaign.

According to Powerade, the “Power Your Fate™” platform is designed to encourage athletes and football fans to focus on preparation, resilience and hydration as key performance drivers. Williams said the campaign reflects the importance of consistent preparation and readiness in achieving sporting goals.

To support the launch, Powerade has introduced Limited Edition Powerade® Outlast, formulated to help replenish the body and mind during football matches,

training sessions and fitness activities. The product reinforces the brand’s position within the sports hydration drinks category ahead of FIFA World Cup 26™.

Mario I. Garcia, Vice President and Managing Director of The Coca-Cola Company South Africa, said football remains deeply rooted in South African culture and that the campaign aims to connect with athletes and supporters as anticipation builds towards the tournament.

The campaign will be activated through digital, social media, outdoor and retail channels nationwide. Limited Edition Powerade® Outlast is available at retailers across South Africa.

www.coca-cola.com/za



Purpose-built adhesive solutions

Food and beverage manufacturers face increasing pressure to ensure product labels remain intact throughout production, distribution, retail display and consumer use. To support these requirements, UPM has introduced purpose-built adhesive solutions designed for demanding label applications in the beverage sector.

Part of the UPM Raflatac™ label materials portfolio, UPM Vetro™ has been developed specifically for wine and spirits labels, helping producers maintain label adhesion and presentation in challenging conditions, including refrigeration, humidity and ice bucket immersion.

For South Africa's wine industry and beverage producers, label performance is a critical packaging consideration. Labels serve as an important brand communication tool while supporting product traceability, regulatory compliance and consumer information requirements. Adhesive failure can affect brand perception and disrupt supply chains, particularly for products exported to international markets.

UPM says its adhesive technologies are backed by decades of experience and supported by pre-assessed performance data and technical documentation, helping label converters,

packaging suppliers and brand owners select materials suited to specific end-use environments.

According to Christian Szameit, Senior Vice President, Global Markets at UPM Adhesive Materials, adhesive selection is a key factor in achieving reliable label performance. The company's purpose-built solutions are designed to help customers match adhesive functionality with application requirements.

As South African food and beverage manufacturers continue to invest in packaging innovation, demand is growing for high-performance label materials, pressure-sensitive adhesives, wine label solutions and beverage packaging technologies that support product quality across the supply chain.

www.upm.com



Plastic reboot project advances circular solutions

The Global Environment Facility (GEF)-funded Plastic Reboot project has officially launched in South Africa, supporting efforts to reduce plastic waste and plastic pollution across the food and beverage industry.

Plastic Reboot is a global programme operating in 15 countries, focusing on upstream and midstream interventions that promote circular economy solutions for plastic packaging and short-lived plastic products. In South Africa, the initiative is implemented by the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), executed by WWF South Africa in partnership with GreenCape and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), and supported by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment.

According to CSIR principal environmental economist Anton Nahman, packaging and single-use plastics remain significant contributors to environmental pollution. The project seeks to accelerate the transition to circular packaging systems by improving the design, reduction, reuse and recycling of plastic materials used throughout the food and beverage value chain.

A key component of the five-year initiative is the development of a digital knowledge hub that will



provide centralised access to information on plastic circularity, sustainable packaging, recycling systems and plastic waste management. The CSIR will also lead knowledge-sharing activities, establish standardised circular economy metrics and develop measurement methodologies to support evidence-based decision-making.

The project aims to improve data collection on plastic material flows, enabling government and industry stakeholders to monitor progress and evaluate the effectiveness of circular economy interventions.

Plastic Reboot also supports skills development, job creation and inclusive economic participation while contributing to lower greenhouse gas emissions associated with plastic production and waste.

www.wwf.org.za

Tetra Pak's Sustainability Report

Tetra Pak has released its 27th Sustainability Report, detailing progress towards its climate targets and highlighting initiatives to strengthen resilience across the global food and beverage value chain.

According to the FY2025 Sustainability Report, the food processing and packaging solutions provider achieved a 34% reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions across its value chain compared with its 2019 baseline. The company also reduced emissions from its own operations by 56% and increased renewable energy consumption to 97%.

The latest results support Tetra Pak's strategy to build more resilient and sustainable food systems

through emissions reduction, operational efficiency and innovation. As part of this approach, the company launched an integrated climate and nature risk and opportunity assessment during 2025, identifying priority areas across its operations and supply chain.

For food and beverage manufacturers, Tetra Pak introduced several technologies designed to improve resource efficiency and reduce operating costs. These include Tetra Pak® Factory OST™, a digital automation ecosystem developed to help manufacturers monitor performance, reduce losses and improve production efficiency through data-driven decision-making.

The company also expanded its global innovation network with new facilities in France, Thailand and Sweden. These centres provide food and beverage producers with opportunities to develop, test and scale products while supporting sustainable food production and packaging innovation.

Tetra Pak remains on track to achieve its long-term climate commitments, including a 46% reduction in value chain emissions by 2030, 100% renewable electricity across operations by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2050.

www.tetrapak.com



A symbolic ground-breaking ceremony marked the start of construction of the new hall for the barrier technology product centre at KHS' Hamburg factory. The building will provide space for further growth in the coating segment and secure the site's future in the long term



A new facility for KHS

The KHS Group is writing a further chapter in its success story at its plant in Hamburg with the investment of 11 million euros in a new hall for its barrier technology product centre.

In the future, all Plasmax coating technology departments will be housed under one roof. The building covering around 4,300m² is to be constructed on new factory premises and due to start operation in spring 2027. With this new production shop, KHS will be optimising its processes and creating space for further growth.

"Our barrier technology is a key growth driver for the corporate success of the entire KHS Group. The demand for our machines in the InnoPET FreshSafe series has quadrupled over the past five years," said Kai Acker, CEO of KHS GmbH, at the official ground-breaking ceremony for the new production shop in May.

"The construction of our new hall and expansion of our factory premises secure jobs in the long term and are a clear sign of commitment to our production locations in Germany," Acker added.

Unique first-class KHS technology

The factory in Hamburg pools the resources of the PET technology competence centre within the KHS Group.

A pioneer in PET bottle production, systems and solutions that have shaped the beverage and packaging industry worldwide have been engineered here for over 50 years. These include high-performance stretch blow moulders in the InnoPET Blomax series, InnoPET BloFill fillers and coating machines featuring Plasmax technology that's unique on the market. KHS' InnoPET FreshSafe blocks coat PET bottles with a wafer-thin, transparent layer of glass in the Plasmax process. This reliably protects sensitive beverages against oxidation and loss of carbon dioxide. It therefore preserves taste, colour and quality for long periods of time and lengthens the product's shelf life.

"KHS' InnoPET FreshSafe blocks coat PET bottles with a wafer-thin, transparent layer of glass in the Plasmax process"

The two product centres for stretch blow moulding and barrier technology manage all key processes from development through assembly and installation to sale and commissioning. To date they shared three production shops. Strong growth in the barrier technology segment in particular means that these units have now reached the limits of their capacity. "To make our processes more

efficient and increase production, we're going to combine all relevant departments in a new hall," explains Dr. Joachim Konrad, head of the Large Machine Product Division at KHS.

Improved assembly and optimized preliminary testing

The benefits here include shorter distances that lighten the load on personnel and optimized processes to encourage close cooperation between the various departments. "Once we've convinced customers of our barrier system, most of them then opt for turnkey lines. This also benefits our other KHS production sites who subsequently receive orders for packaging technology, palletizers and other equipment," Konrad continues.

Assembly will also profit from the new production shop: instead of building entire machines all in one place, employees will be able to mount individual modules in parallel at defined workstations. These will then be assembled to create a full machine and commissioned.

"This allows us to work on several modules at the same time which can then be better subjected to preliminary testing," states Konrad. "These adapted processes shorten lead times and machine occupancy times in the shop. With this, we can deliver to our customers even faster."

What's more, the laboratory area, where KHS tests the coated bottles and develops new coatings and coating types, will be given a new paternoster system. This will enable bottle batches to be automatically stored and retrieved as required using a specific code. And finally, KHS has placed the bottle and temporary storage unit closer to the laboratory and production areas.

KHS is building its new investment so that it will be completely carbon neutral. This is ensured using green electricity, a photovoltaic system installed on the roof and a closed heating circuit with heat pumps and heat recovery from the coating machine cooling circuits.

www.khs.com



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Nondumiso Vicky Sibiya from Bonte ke Thlago



Highlighting businesses driving South Africa's circular economy

South Africa's recycling and packaging recovery sector continues to play a central role in advancing circular economy objectives, supporting Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) compliance, and creating employment opportunities across the country. The announcement of the latest Petco Awards has once again placed the spotlight on the entrepreneurs, community organisations, recyclers and packaging innovators that are strengthening South Africa's recycling value chain.

The annual awards recognise excellence in recycling, waste minimisation, environmental education and sustainable packaging design. This year's winners demonstrate how businesses and community-led initiatives are contributing to landfill diversion, job creation, recycling collection infrastructure and public awareness programmes across multiple provinces.

For stakeholders across the food and beverage industry, the awards provide valuable insight into the practical implementation of circular economy principles and the growing importance of packaging recovery systems within South Africa's evolving regulatory environment.

Recycling entrepreneurs deliver measurable impact

Among the standout winners is Morolo Recycling, which received the Entrepreneur of the Year award.

Founded by Tumelo Morolo in Orange Farm in 2017 with an initial investment of just R300, the business has grown into a significant community recycling operation.

Today, Morolo Recycling services approximately 1,500 households from two collection sites and diverted 600 tonnes of recyclable material from landfill during the past year alone. The achievement reflects the potential for small recycling enterprises to scale operations while addressing both environmental and socio-economic challenges.

The success of businesses such as Morolo Recycling highlights the important role played by small and medium-sized enterprises within South Africa's recycling ecosystem. These enterprises often provide the first point of collection for post-consumer packaging and help strengthen the supply of recyclable materials entering formal recycling streams.

Community collection models continue to expand

The Kerbside Collection and Sorting Superhero award was presented to the Shomang Sebenzani Development Initiative, one of South Africa's longest-running separation-at-source programmes.

Operating in Alexandra township and surrounding communities since 2013, the women-led initiative, headed by Francina Rammabi, services approximately 1,800 households daily. Beyond collection activities, the programme has reached nearly 19,000 learners through recycling swap-shop initiatives implemented at local schools.

The project demonstrates how community-based recycling programmes can deliver multiple outcomes, including improved waste management, increased recycling participation rates and environmental education.

Source separation remains a critical component of improving recycling rates in South Africa, particularly for packaging materials commonly used within the food and beverage sector, including PET plastic bottles, paper packaging, cartons and metal containers.

Petco support helps businesses scale operations

The Level Up category recognises businesses that have successfully expanded after receiving equipment or training support from Petco.

One of the winners, Westworld Recycling, has transformed its operations into one of Gauteng's largest recycling hubs. Owner Lisa Steenkamp previously received support through Petco initiatives and has subsequently increased PET collection volumes from 1.7 million kilograms in 2022 to more than 2.1 million kilograms in 2025.

The Roodepoort-based operation now employs 44 permanent staff members and works with a network

of up to 300 waste pickers each day. The growth illustrates how targeted investment in recycling infrastructure can create significant economic opportunities while increasing packaging recovery volumes.

Sharing the award is Jola Family Solutions, a KwaZulu-Natal-based business that has expanded from a backyard collection operation into a formal recycling enterprise with two collection sites in Umlazi.

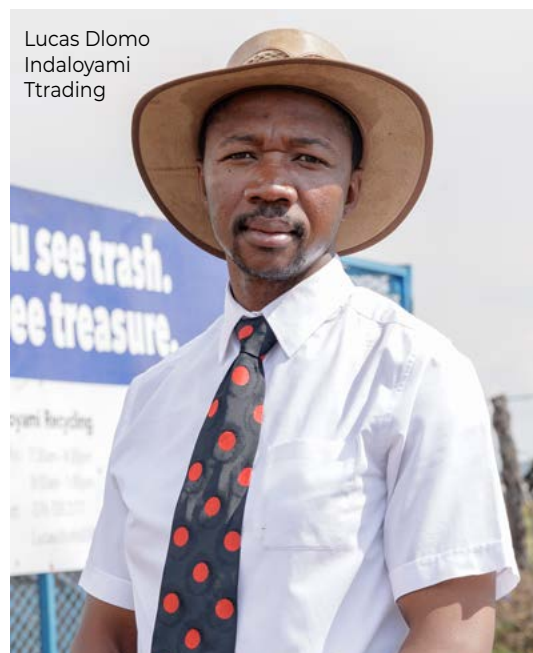
Following support that included a trailer, a weighing scale and personal protective equipment, the company significantly improved its collection capacity and operational efficiency. During 2025, Jola Family Solutions collected 120 tonnes of recyclable packaging material while creating employment opportunities for 14 young people and supporting more than 70 additional individuals through its buy-back centre model.

Environmental education remains essential

Recycling infrastructure alone is insufficient without public participation. This reality was reflected in the Environmental Education and Awareness Initiative category, which was jointly awarded to Dada Waste Management and Indaloyami Trading.

Dada Waste Management has developed a comprehensive environmental awareness programme to address illegal dumping in Johannesburg. The initiative now operates across 45 schools while engaging businesses and community groups through recycling campaigns and clean-up activities.

Indaloyami Trading, led by Lucas Dlomo, has established formal recycling education and collection partnerships with 26 schools across Vaalpark, Sasolburg and Zamdela. The programme continues to expand as neighbouring municipalities seek to replicate its approach.



Lucas Dlomo
Indaloyami
Trading



The Green Youth

Collectively, the initiatives reached more than 60,000 people, underlining the value of education in improving recycling participation and supporting long-term behavioural change.

Packaging design supports circular economy goals

For the food and beverage industry, one of the most relevant award categories is Responsible Packaging Design.

This year's award was presented to packaging producer Mpact for its collaboration with Highveld Honey. The project involved replacing a PVC bottle with a PET alternative designed to improve recyclability and collection outcomes.

The transition delivers multiple environmental benefits. PET is more widely collected and recycled within South Africa's existing recycling infrastructure, increasing the likelihood that packaging remains within the circular economy rather than entering landfill streams.

According to the project outcomes, the redesign has reduced PVC consumption at Mpact's Atlantis facility by approximately 150 tonnes annually. The bottle redesign has also improved palletisation efficiency, reducing the amount of secondary packaging required during transportation and lowering overall material usage.

The initiative demonstrates how packaging design decisions can directly influence recycling performance, material recovery rates and resource efficiency.

Extending recycling beyond traditional collection systems

The Away-from-Home Collection and Recycling award was presented to Mkwanzazi Management Services for its roadside recycling model in rural Mpumalanga.

The programme includes the maintenance and recovery of recyclable materials along a 72-kilometre stretch of the R23 route. The initiative collects approximately 250 kilograms of recyclable material each week while reducing litter in public spaces.

All category winners:

Environmental Education and Awareness Initiative (shared):

Dada Waste Management – Johannesburg, Gauteng
Indaloyami Trading – Sasolburg, Free State

Community Recycling Changemaker:

Bontle ke Tlhago – Diepsloot, Gauteng

Entrepreneur of the Year:

Morolo Recycling – Orange Farm, Gauteng

Kerbside Collection and Sorting Superhero:

Shomang Sebenzani Development Initiative – Alexandra, Gauteng

Away-from-Home Collection and Recycling:

Mkwanzazi Management Services – Standerton, Mpumalanga

Responsible Packaging Design:

Mpact: PVC to PET initiative – Cape Town, Western Cape

Circular Economy Facilitation:

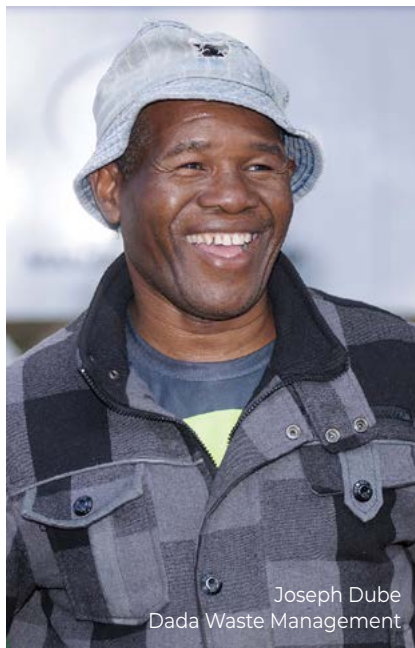
Green Youth Network – Centurion, Gauteng

Level Up Award (shared):

Westworld Recycling – Roodepoort, Gauteng
Jola Family Solutions – Umlazi, KwaZulu-Natal



Lindokuhle Msizi Zulu
Jola Family Solutions



Joseph Dube
Dada Waste Management



Lisa Steenkamp
Westworld Recycling

As South Africa seeks to increase packaging recovery rates, alternative collection systems such as roadside and public-space recycling are expected to play a growing role in capturing recyclable materials that might otherwise be lost to the environment.

Building an inclusive circular economy

Additional recognition was awarded to Bontle ke Tlhago, which received the Community Recycling Changemaker award for its work in Diepsloot. The co-operative operates a community recycling hub while conducting school outreach and environmental awareness programmes.

Meanwhile, the Green Youth Network received the Circular Economy Facilitation award for connecting stakeholders across the recycling value chain, including producer responsibility organisations, government departments, municipalities, recyclers, NGOs, academic institutions and community organisations.

The organisation's work highlights the importance of collaboration in achieving South Africa's circular economy objectives.

Recycling recognition supports industry development

According to Petco marketing manager Kara Rohleder, the awards were established in 2015 to recognise

excellence in recycling, reuse and waste minimisation within the packaging sector.

As one of South Africa's established producer responsibility organisations, Petco supports member companies in meeting their EPR obligations while strengthening collection and recycling systems nationwide.

The latest award winners illustrate the breadth of activity taking place across South Africa's recycling landscape. From packaging innovation and recycling entrepreneurship to environmental education and community collection programmes, these initiatives are contributing to higher recycling rates, improved waste management outcomes and increased economic participation.

For the food and beverage industry, the message is clear: effective packaging recovery depends on collaboration across the entire value chain. As EPR requirements continue to shape business priorities, partnerships with recyclers, community organisations and collection networks will remain critical to achieving sustainability targets and advancing South Africa's circular economy.

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POLYPET



SA Plastics Pact launches 2030 targets to accelerate circular plastic packaging



The South African plastics value chain is entering a new phase of transformation following the launch of the South African Plastics Pact's 2030 targets, unveiled alongside Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Willie Aucamp, at an industry event held on 1 June 2026.

The new targets mark a significant evolution from the Pact's original 2025 commitments and place a renewed focus on reducing virgin plastic use, improving packaging recyclability and expanding recycling outcomes across the country's food and beverage packaging sector.

For South Africa's food and beverage manufacturers, brand owners, packaging suppliers and retailers, the announcement signals a clear direction of travel as the industry responds to growing regulatory, environmental and market pressures around plastic packaging sustainability.

Building on five years of progress

The South African Plastics Pact, managed by GreenCape, was launched in 2020 as part of a global network of plastics pacts working to advance a circular economy for plastic packaging.

Since its inception, member companies have invested more than R4 billion in redesigning packaging formats, improving recycling infrastructure and supporting collection systems

across South Africa. The initiative has brought together stakeholders from across the plastics value chain, including government, packaging producers, recyclers, retailers and consumer goods companies.

While data from 2025 is still being analysed, the Pact's 2024 Impact Report highlighted measurable progress against its original targets and established a foundation for the next phase of industry action.

Addressing Pact members and industry stakeholders at the launch event, Minister Willie Aucamp highlighted the importance of continued collaboration between government and the private sector.

"I am proud that my Department has been part of the SA Plastics Pact since its launch in January 2020 and here we are again in 2026, to not only celebrate the achievements of this important initiative to date, but to also plan and collaborate for its next chapter," said Aucamp.

He added: "We would like to encourage more within the sector to take advantage of the opportunities that are presented by the Plastic

Pact. The launch of the SA Plastics Pact 2030 is a declaration of intent to achieve more. It signals our collective determination to move beyond business as usual and towards a future in which economic growth, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion go hand in hand."

The four new SA Plastics Pact 2030 targets

The newly launched roadmap introduces four targets designed to address both upstream packaging design and downstream recycling performance.

1. Reducing virgin fossil-based plastic packaging

The first target aims to achieve a 20% intensity reduction in virgin fossil-fuel-based plastic packaging through increased use of recycled content, the removal of problematic plastic items and the implementation of reuse and refill systems.

For food and beverage companies, this target places greater emphasis on packaging redesign, recycled polymer adoption and alternative delivery models that reduce dependence on virgin plastics.

2. Designing all rigid plastic packaging for recyclability

The second target commits Pact members to ensuring that 100% of rigid plastic packaging is designed for recyclability by 2030.

Rigid packaging formats remain widely used across the food and beverage sector, including beverage bottles, dairy containers, food tubs and household product packaging. Achieving full recyclability will require greater alignment between packaging design specifications and South Africa's existing recycling systems.

3. Improving flexible plastic packaging design

Flexible packaging remains one of the most challenging packaging streams to recover and recycle globally.

Under Target Three, the Pact aims for 70% of flexible plastic packaging to be designed for recyclability by 2030. This objective is expected to drive innovation in multilayer packaging design, material selection and collection systems.

The target is particularly relevant to food manufacturers, where flexible packaging plays a critical role in product protection, shelf-life extension and logistics efficiency.

4. Increasing plastic packaging recycling rates

The fourth target seeks to achieve a 55% output recycling rate for plastic packaging.

Unlike collection-based measurements, output recycling rates focus on the quantity of material that is successfully processed into recycled feedstock, providing a clearer indicator of circular economy performance.

Industry collaboration remains central

A recurring theme throughout the launch was the role of collaboration in delivering industry-wide change.

Outgoing SA Plastics Pact Steering Committee Chair and PepsiCo Public Policy & Government Affairs Manager, Blain van Wyk, reflected on the progress achieved since 2020.

"I am incredibly proud of what we have achieved during this first phase of Pact. Not only in measuring our progress against the 2025 targets, but in terms of the extensive collaboration that we have achieved. This we carry forward as we transition into this new phase," said van Wyk.

According to Saloshnee Naidoo, Circular Economy Programme Manager at GreenCape, the Pact's next phase will focus on implementing deeper structural interventions across the plastics value chain.

"The SA Plastics Pact has reached a point of maturity where ambition is increasingly being translated into measurable, cross-sector action," said Naidoo.

"With the formal launch of the 2030 targets alongside Minister Aucamp, we are sharpening our focus on the deep systemic changes necessary to drive South Africa toward a truly future-fit, resilient plastics economy."

Plastic reboot to support food and beverage sector transformation

Supporting the achievement of the 2030 targets is Plastic Reboot, a global five-year programme currently active in 15 countries.

In South Africa, the initiative is being delivered through a partnership between the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), WWF South Africa, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and GreenCape.

The programme focuses specifically on accelerating circular economy solutions within the food and beverage sector, making it particularly relevant to manufacturers, processors and packaging stakeholders.

WWF South Africa CEO Morne du Plessis introduced the initiative during the launch event and encouraged stakeholders to maintain momentum despite the progress already achieved.

As South Africa advances its circular economy agenda, the alignment between the SA Plastics Pact, Plastic Reboot and national environmental policy is expected to play a significant role in shaping the future of sustainable plastic packaging.

For food and beverage businesses, the message is clear: packaging design, recyclability, recycled content and circular economy principles are moving from sustainability objectives to business priorities.

www.saplasticspact.org.za

Steenberg Vineyards' contemporary label design strategy



South Africa's premium wine sector continues to invest in brand differentiation through packaging innovation, with Steenberg Vineyards unveiling a new visual identity for its Canvas Collection. The launch introduces a contemporary label design developed in collaboration with South African conceptual artist Athol Moul, positioning the collection as a creative extension of the estate's established fine wine portfolio.

The new packaging strategy reflects broader trends within the premium wine industry, where producers are increasingly leveraging design, storytelling and sensory brand experiences to engage consumers and strengthen shelf presence in competitive domestic and export markets.

Located in the Constantia wine region, Steenberg Vineyards has built its reputation on cool-climate winemaking. The Canvas Collection creates space within the estate's portfolio for more expressive approaches to site, blending and oak maturation while maintaining the quality standards associated with the Steenberg name.

According to Athol Moul, the design concept was rooted in the estate's connection to place and heritage: "At Steenberg Vineyards, everything begins with place," says Moul. "The swan sits at the heart of the farm's origin story, so I carved a swan feather as the first mark, a way of holding the memory of the land in a single form. It speaks to the vines rooted in ancient soils, the pull of the sea, the shelter of the mountains, the movement of wind, and the quiet rhythm of hands at work. From there, each wine becomes a brushstroke upon the canvas."

Premium wine packaging design driven by craftsmanship and authenticity

The Canvas Collection label design departs from conventional wine packaging approaches that often rely on detailed illustrations or heritage-focused imagery. Instead, the visual system embraces abstraction, using negative space and expressive brushstrokes to communicate the act of creation behind each wine.

The label itself functions as a symbolic canvas, representing the intersection of winemaking expertise, terroir and human craftsmanship. Two brushstrokes appear on each bottle, signifying the creative decisions involved in blending and production, while the carved feather motif serves as a subtle reference to Steenberg's heritage.

This approach aligns with growing consumer demand for authenticity and premiumisation within

the South African wine industry. Packaging has become an increasingly important touchpoint for communicating brand values, particularly among younger wine consumers seeking meaningful connections with producers and products.

Material selection also plays a central role in the Canvas Collection's market positioning. Tactile, canvas-inspired label stock and refined finishing techniques reinforce the emphasis on handcrafted quality, supporting perceptions of exclusivity and premium value.

"Luxury, for me, lies in restraint, precision and a moment of emotional expression," explains Moul. "The design had to feel refined and premium, but also human. The brushstroke is deliberate, imperfect and tactile, much like the process of winemaking itself."

Building brand equity through visual storytelling

For wine producers operating in competitive local and international markets, packaging design increasingly serves as a strategic business tool rather than simply a product identifier.

The Canvas Collection demonstrates how visual identity can reinforce brand positioning while creating opportunities for portfolio segmentation. By establishing a distinct design language, Steenberg Vineyards can introduce new expressions and limited releases without compromising the consistency of its broader brand architecture.

The project was developed in close collaboration with the estate's leadership team, ensuring alignment with Steenberg's long-term vision and winemaking philosophy. The design process drew inspiration from the story of founder Catharina Ras, whose entrepreneurial legacy remains central to the estate's identity today.

The collection also reflects Steenberg's internal "Hand That Leads" philosophy, which highlights the role of human expertise throughout the production journey, from vineyard management and harvesting to winemaking and final presentation.

"What distinguishes the Canvas Collection visually is its emphasis on authorship and process," says Moul. "It feels like an evolution of the estate's visual language, rooted in history, but confidently contemporary. It invites interpretation rather than explaining itself."

Canvas Collection showcases three distinct wines

The Canvas Collection comprises three wines: Semillon, Nebbiolo and Blanc. Each wine is presented as an equal creative expression within the collection, avoiding hierarchical design cues that typically differentiate flagship products from supporting ranges.

Beyond the packaging itself, the visual identity extends into the collection's launch campaign. Moul has created three large-scale canvas artworks inspired by the labels, providing an immersive brand experience that connects wine, art and craftsmanship.

For South African wine producers, the Canvas Collection offers an example of how packaging innovation can support premium positioning, strengthen consumer engagement and create additional value within established portfolios.

As competition intensifies across domestic and export markets, investment in distinctive wine label design, premium packaging solutions and authentic brand storytelling is expected to remain a key driver of differentiation for wine brands seeking long-term growth.

www.steenbergfarm.com



Food label scanner helps consumers understand ingredients at point of purchase

Understanding food labels remains a challenge for many consumers, despite growing interest in nutrition, wellness and informed food purchasing decisions. To address this gap, South African wellness brand Chilled Lifestyle has launched a new digital tool designed to simplify ingredient lists and make food label information more accessible

The company's new What The Food (WTF) scanner allows consumers to scan ingredient panels on food packaging and receive a simplified wellness score based on the ingredients identified.

The launch comes at a time when consumer demand for food transparency, clean-label products and ingredient awareness continues to increase across South Africa and global markets.

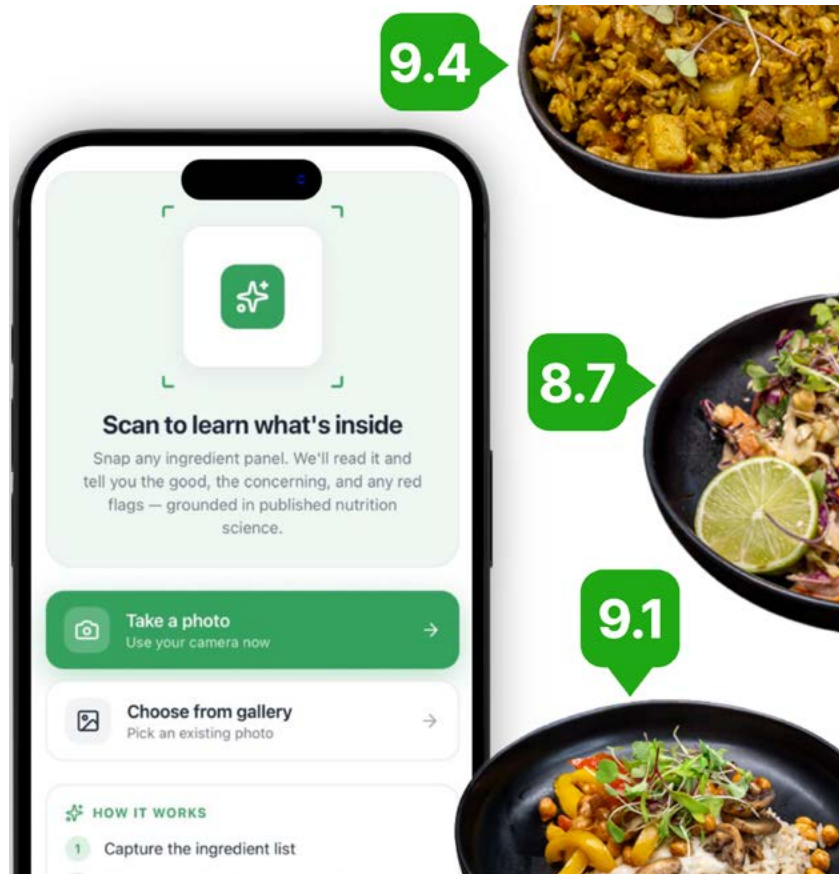
Addressing consumer confusion around food labels

For many shoppers, ingredient lists can be difficult to interpret. While nutritional information is intended to support informed purchasing decisions, consumers are often confronted with technical ingredient names, unfamiliar additives and multiple forms of the same ingredient.

Sugar, for example, can appear under a range of names including glucose, fructose, sucrose, dextrose and maltose. Preservatives, colourants, emulsifiers and stabilisers can add another layer of complexity, particularly when consumers are making purchasing decisions in-store and under time constraints.

Research into South African food labelling has highlighted ongoing challenges around consumer understanding, awareness and effective use of label information. As a result, digital tools that simplify ingredient information are becoming increasingly relevant within the broader food and beverage landscape.

The WTF scanner has been developed to bridge this information gap by converting ingredient lists into a format that consumers can interpret quickly.



How the WTF scanner works

Using the scanner, consumers can photograph or scan an ingredient panel directly from food packaging. The app then analyses the ingredient list and generates a wellness score that highlights ingredients generally regarded as positive, those that may warrant further attention and ingredients that consumers may wish to investigate further.

According to Chilled Lifestyle, the objective is not to replace nutritional guidance, food regulations or professional dietary advice. Instead, the tool aims to provide greater visibility into ingredient information at the point of purchase.

"People should not need a chemistry degree to understand what they are eating," says Yaron Assabi of Chilled Lifestyle.

"The WTF scanner gives consumers a faster way to decode labels, understand ingredients, and make choices that feel right for them. It is not about creating panic but giving people confidence in the food they buy."

Growing focus on ingredient transparency

Consumer scrutiny of food ingredients continues to increase globally, particularly regarding additives and ultra-processed foods.

Food advocacy organisations and consumer watchdog groups regularly publish guidance on ingredients that consumers may wish to monitor more closely. The Environmental Working Group's 2026 consumer guide, for example, identifies ingredients such as titanium dioxide, BHA, BHT, sodium nitrite and certain artificial colourants as substances consumers may want to understand in greater detail before making purchasing decisions.

While regulatory frameworks vary between countries, the broader trend is consistent: consumers increasingly want clear information about what is contained in the products they purchase and consume.

This trend is influencing product development, packaging strategies and marketing approaches across the food and beverage sector, with ingredient transparency becoming a competitive differentiator for many brands.

Supporting informed food choices

In South Africa, food additives, sweeteners, contaminants and colourants are regulated by the Department of Health through established food safety regulations.

The WTF scanner operates within this regulatory environment by providing consumers with an additional layer of information rather than serving as a regulatory or medical assessment tool.

Assabi says the feature aligns with Chilled's broader mission to make healthier eating more accessible and practical for everyday consumers.

"Chilled has always been about wellness without the drama. This feature extends that purpose into the shopping moment. If something needs explaining, people should be able to understand it quickly, clearly, and without feeling overwhelmed."

Digital innovation in food and beverage engagement

The launch also reflects a broader shift towards digital consumer engagement within the food and beverage sector. Mobile applications, ingredient-scanning technology, and AI-driven nutrition tools are increasingly used to support purchasing decisions and strengthen consumer trust.

Known for its range of plant-based ready meals and artisanal ice cream, Chilled Lifestyle is extending its wellness-focused approach beyond its product portfolio by introducing the WTF scanner.

As consumer demand for ingredient transparency continues to shape purchasing behaviour, tools that simplify food labels and improve ingredient understanding are likely to play an increasingly important role in the South African food and beverage market.

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As the food and beverage industry faces increasing pressure to reduce packaging waste and improve sustainability performance, International Plastic Free Day has reignited debate around the role of plastic in the circular economy. While many brands are actively pursuing plastic-free packaging strategies, logistics and contract-packing specialist Prism eLogistics argues that eliminating plastic altogether may not always yield the lowest environmental impact.



Plastic-free packaging isn't always greener

For South African food and beverage manufacturers navigating Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) regulations, sustainability targets and consumer expectations, packaging decisions are becoming increasingly complex. The challenge lies not simply in removing plastic, but in selecting packaging materials that deliver measurable environmental benefits across their full lifecycle.

Recent life cycle analysis (LCA) data suggest that recycled and recyclable plastics can outperform alternative packaging materials across several key environmental metrics. According to a comparative cradle-to-grave study, multipack handles manufactured from 100% recycled high-density polyethylene (rHDPE) demonstrated significantly lower environmental impacts than paperboard alternatives. The analysis found that recycled plastic handles generated approximately two to five times lower carbon dioxide emissions than comparable four-pack and six-pack paperboard solutions, while also performing better across acidification, eutrophication, smog formation, health impact and energy demand indicators.

These findings highlight an important consideration for beverage manufacturers seeking to reduce their carbon footprint while maintaining packaging functionality and product protection.

The conversation around plastic packaging has evolved considerably in recent years. While virgin plastic reduction remains a critical sustainability objective, experts argue that existing plastic materials represent a valuable resource that can be repeatedly recycled within a circular system.

Ian Wright, Managing Director of Prism eLogistics, believes the industry must take a more evidence-based approach to packaging sustainability: "For some, plastic remains a controversial material, but the reality is that

repurposing existing plastic in a format which can then be recycled again can be more sustainable than perceived 'greener' alternatives. What's more, in light of current regulations, the lower volume of packaging associated with recycled plastic solutions can translate to savings when it comes to EPR fees."

For beverage producers, advances in shrink sleeve technology also offer new opportunities to improve packaging recyclability without compromising brand identity.

Traditionally, coloured PET bottles and non-recyclable labels have presented challenges within recycling streams. Although clear PET bottles are widely recyclable, coloured containers and certain label materials can limit recycling outcomes, often resulting in downcycling rather than closed-loop recycling.

New-generation recyclable shrink sleeves, including EcoFloat technology, are designed to address this issue. These sleeves are engineered to separate effectively during the sink-float process used in PET recycling facilities, allowing brands to retain shelf appeal while improving recyclability.

According to Wright, such innovations demonstrate why plastic should remain part of sustainability discussions: "As well as making use of the abundance of pre-existing plastic, contemporary sleeving options designed to improve the sink-float separation process relating to PET bottles can transform the environmental impact of brands which have previously used coloured or printed bottles. If we want to raise the level of overall sustainability in packaging, and to support the transition to a circular economy, it's vital that plastic remains part of the conversation."

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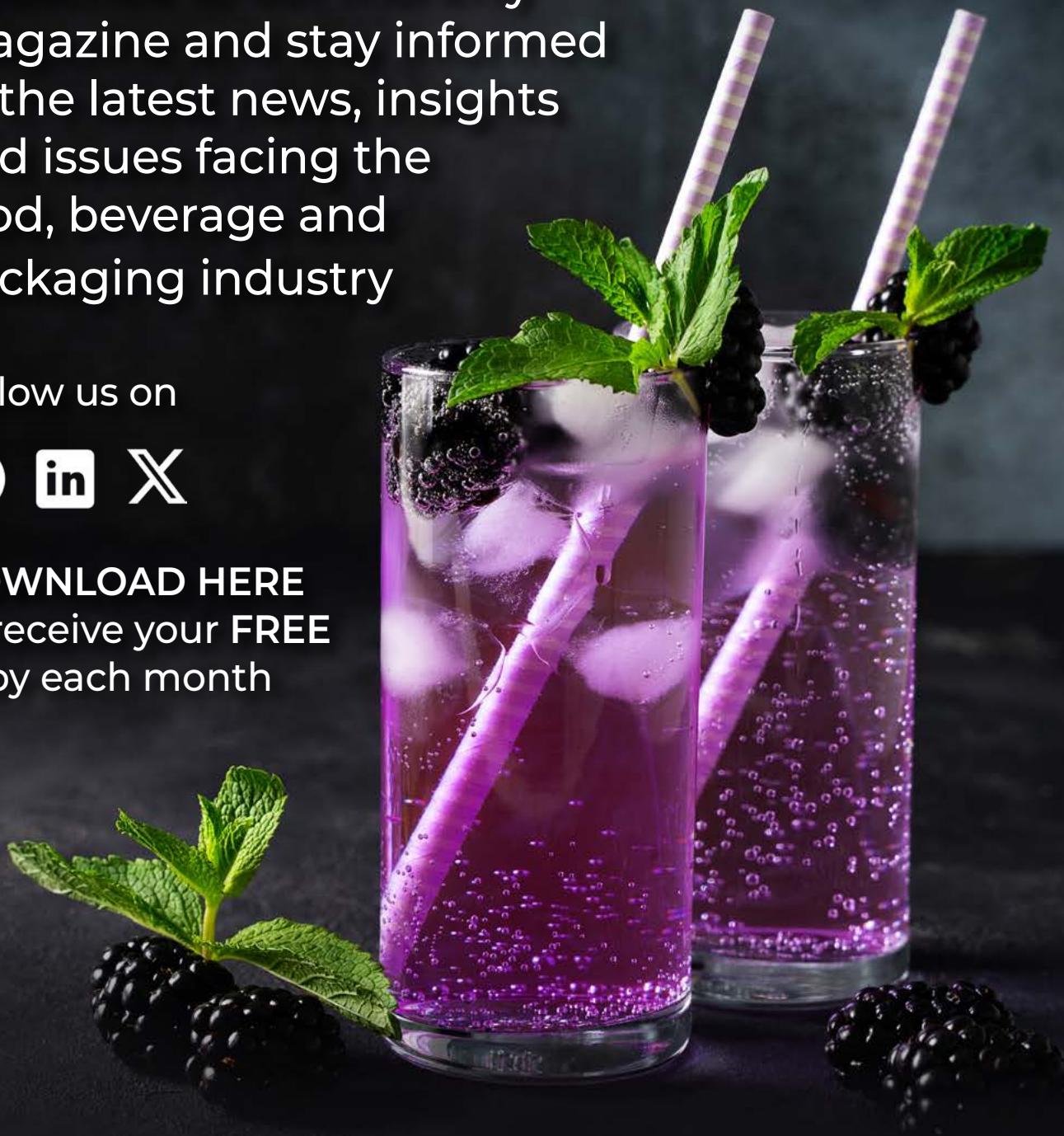
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