

# SupplySide® Food & Beverage Journal

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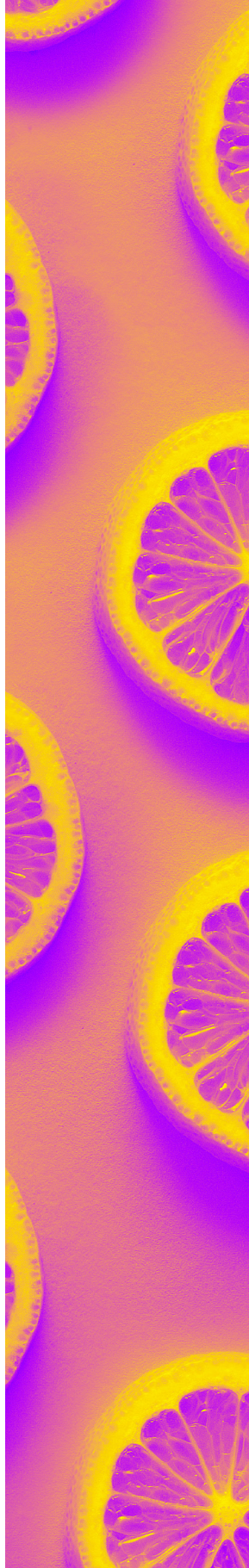
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**Shattering**  
the mold  
Food trends  
*changing*  
the game

Digital technologies • Ingredient innovation • Top 10 brands of the year

# SupplySide TRENDS 2024



December 2024

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## **Viewpoint: 2025 promises an uptick in tech, functional ingredients, more**

*by Audarshia Townsend*

From hosting 16 panels at SupplySide West to launching a complete rebrand, 2024 was a groundbreaking year. Dive in for a snapshot of the year's top trends and a glimpse at what's shaping 2025.

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## **Tech-driven transformation is on the rise**

*by Grant Gerke*

The food industry is embracing a new era of innovation, fueled by digital platforms, hybrid products and unconventional technologies like 2D printing and precision fermentation.

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## **The Game Changers features 10 brands that shattered the mold in 2024**

*by Scott Miller*

From hybrid burgers that combat food waste to high-protein pasta redefining nutrition, these category stars are rewriting the food and beverage innovation playbook.

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## **Consider dietary supplement ingredients to boost food and beverage**

*by Cindy Hazen*

As consumers seek foods that promote wellness, formulators are tapping into the dietary supplement aisle for inspiration, making functional ingredient powerhouses more accessible for a range of food applications.

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## 2025 promises an uptick in **tech, functional ingredients, more**

**W**e were busier than ever in 2024: 16 panel discussions at SupplySide West/Food ingredients North America, 10 digital magazines, eight education webinars, “The Month in 2” video series, and a daily website covering the latest in news and trends. Oh, and in September, we rebranded as SupplySide Food & Beverage Journal.

Along the way, we covered it all, from conducting deep dives into sensory science to next-gen plant-based ingredients to interviewing top experts developing functional beverages. The team attended the most notable industry events to stay on top of trends and connect with newsmakers, disruptors and pioneers. Just a short list of those events includes the Fancy Food Show, Natural Products Expo West, the Black Women in Food Summit, Organic Week, Food ingredients Europe, Newtopia Now, the National Restaurant Association Show and, of course, SupplySide West. We certainly pride ourselves on reading the pulse of the industry, and the year-end issue serves as a primer for what’s to come in 2025.

First up is Grant Gerke’s piece on food technology – his premiere in SupplySide Food & Beverage Journal’s digital magazine. As a seasoned editor entrenched in the world of food manufacturing, Gerke is familiar with tech advancements, including artificial intelligence (AI) and system software. Of note in the feature are evolutions in 2D printing and precision fermentation that are actually making better-for-you products *better*.

Additionally, this issue includes the third edition of The Game Changers column. Our talented staff writer Scott Miller grabs the reins this go-round, featuring 10 top brands that stood out in 2024. Showcasing upcycled marshmallow spreads, plant-based smoked salmon and single-serve craft espresso, these forward-looking products are helping redefine the industry by prioritizing ongoing innovation, plus sustainability and health.

Finally, consumers continue turning to functional food and beverage products to help improve gut health, mental wellness, weight management and beyond. That means many formulators are considering the potential benefits dietary supplement ingredients may provide. Veteran journalist Cindy Hazen investigates adding the likes of turmeric, goji berries, hemp protein and omega-3 to a host of hot products.

The possibilities are endless in this space, and we’re looking forward to our 2025 coverage. We’ll return with our next issue in February.

In the meantime, be well. Eat well. Happy New Year!



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## Tech-driven transformation is on the rise

by Grant Gerke

**F**ormulators, ingredient suppliers and food companies understand the transformation age is here. As such, the industry has been investing in digital platforms and data visualization tools to propel product development and innovation.

“Increased desire among consumers for clean label ingredients, decarbonization efforts, less food waste and healthier lifestyles is part of what’s spurring these technology trends going into 2025.

### Hybrid products for flexitarians

For the food industry, combining traditional animal fats with plant-based ingredients produces hybrid food products catering to

healthy consumer demands. The growing “flexitarian” category is one to watch. These consumers balance meat and alternative protein in diets and have shown a desire to reduce animal-based meat consumption.

Alice Pilkington, senior global food and drink analyst at Mintel, noted, “Consumers showing interest in reducing their meat or dairy intake have been mostly neglected by the marketing of meat and dairy alternatives.”

One example of the hybrid product trend is U.S.-based Choppy and its blends of textured plant protein with animal byproducts such as collagen, beef, tallow and bone broth, providing consumers with the sensory experience of meat by using animal byproducts.

## Future focus



Oat milk paste is printed into sheets using a proprietary 2D-printing process and packed in compact, lightweight packaging.

Source: milkadamia

### 2D-printing technology moves oat milk forward

A great-tasting beverage is the bottom line for brands. Surveys show, however, that consumers also want innovation, sustainability and health benefits from their drinks. To answer this challenge, milkadamia offers 2D-printed sheets of oat milk solids.

Company CEO Jim Richards maintained, “2D-printing technology is a new, efficient method for manufacturing milkadamia’s Flat-Pack Organic Oat Milk. 2D printing of food sounds like science fiction, but it is a surprisingly simple, energy-efficient method to produce the sheets, and capacity increases are easy add-ons.” The consumer takes the oat milk paste, adds water and creates an at-home beverage for an on-the-go experience.

The flat-pack beverage features 94% less packaging, an 85% reduction in weight and lower prices for consumers compared to a shelf-stable format.

### Designer fats and precision fermentation

Precision fermentation – which uses microorganisms to produce specific functional ingredients – faces low consumer awareness among Americans. “Only 25% of U.S. consumers are at least somewhat familiar with the topic,” Good Food Institute’s upcoming report on fermentation concluded. Regardless, GFI’s principal scientist Adam Leman pointed out, “In the past few years, several startups have positioned themselves by partnerships with incumbent food and fermentation companies to leverage their food science know-how and scale-up experience.”

One company ready to scale precision fermentation production is Melt&Marble AB, based in Sweden. The precision fermentation platform company and its technology create different “designer fats” tailored to various market applications. “We’ve identified a demand for fats with enhanced taste and functionality from companies in the alternative meat space,

Melt&Marble’s prototype beef fat.



“We need to clearly demonstrate the value proposition of our fats in final products, and ensure we can reach price points that are attractive to our customers.”

– Anastasia Krivoruchko, co-founder and CEO

Source: Melt&Marble

Most of our company's footprint comes from **dairy ingredients** and sourcing fresh milk, so we have **more than 50% of emissions** today coming from dairy.

- Sara Lockwood, global regen ag director at Danone



which our first product specifically addresses," Anastasia Krivoruchko, the company's CEO and co-founder, said.

### Decarbonizing the supply chain

Methane has 80 times the warming potential versus carbon dioxide over 20 years. Brands have been taking action on CO<sub>2</sub> and methane emissions at a company level but now are tackling supply chain decarbonization.

"Methane is an absolute battle for us," Sara Lockwood, global regen ag director at Danone, explained. The organization's three main divisions include dairy, specialized nutrition and water. "Most of our company's footprint comes from dairy ingredients and sourcing fresh milk, so we have more than 50% of emissions today coming from dairy," she said. "Out of dairy

emissions, methane represents about 55%."

In a Sept. 2024 [press release](#), Ajinomoto Co. and Danone announced a new partnership to reduce manure emissions by adding an essential amino acid – which also acts as a nutrient – to farmers' feed. Based on in vitro studies, Ajinomoto calculated that incorporating the company's AjiPro-L lysine formulation can amplify the effect of the methane reduction additive by approximately 30%. Several additional potential benefits ranging cost, nutrition and environment are noted in the release.

### Modernizing traceability for suppliers and brands

The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) final rule on food traceability – with



## read

### Fermentation technology, ingredients and potential benefits

Requiring less land and water use than traditional food production methods, ingredients created via fermentation are less expensive, making them appealing to companies with lofty sustainability goals.



# Know **what's hot** in category trends? **We do.**

**To stay competitive amid constantly changing trends, you need to know what's hot now – and what's next.**

The new *What's Hot* resource platform from Cargill dishes up expert insights, product innovations and unique solutions in six key categories (and more to come):

- Bakery
- Confectionery
- Ready Meals
- Beverages
- Dairy
- Snacks

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## Future focus

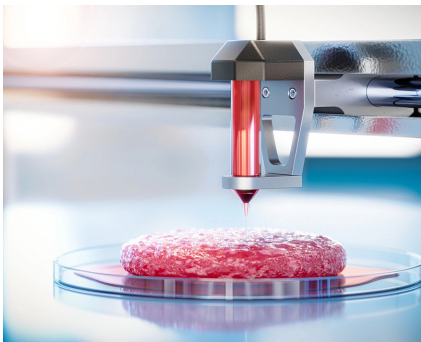
a compliance date of Jan. 20, 2026 – will enforce lot-level traceability for specific food materials in the U.S., and strengthen European ESG (environmental, social and governance) regulations across Europe.

With this rule coming, brands and suppliers are moving away from manual data recording and instead identifying system software opportunities. The goal is to promote transparency in ingredient sources between suppliers and brands. Paul Bradley, senior director of product marketing at TraceGains, suggested, “With increasing regulatory pressures and shifting consumer demands, outdated methods are putting companies at risk.”

Challenges to meeting the traceability mandate include data conversion, implementing standardizing data collection methods and building out software like enterprise resource planning (ERP) platforms. ■



[Grant Gerke](#) is a seasoned Industry 4.0 (digital transformation) editor reporting on manufacturing developments in the food and beverage industry. His career includes stops at Automation World magazine as a digital managing editor and freelance writer for Food Engineering and ProFood World magazines.



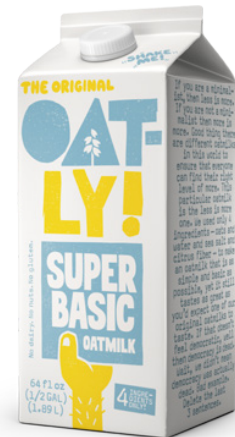
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### 3D-printed meat technology advances alt-protein category

Steakholder Foods strives to make meat more sustainable using 3D-printing technology. Learn more about the technology behind 3D-printed meat from the company's CEO.

# The Game Changers

Spotlight on 10 top brands leading the industry with successful concepts, mindful execution



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# These 10 food and beverage brands shattered the mold in 2024

by Scott Miller



From upcycled marshmallow spreads to plant-based smoked salmon, these forward-looking products are redefining the industry by prioritizing innovation, sustainability and health.

**C**hanging the game is never easy, especially in the food and beverage industry, which touches every part of the interconnected modern world.

One can try to shape the edible zeitgeist, but success almost always hinges on a factor most people overlook: Meaningful change usually only happens when someone dares to rethink the rules of the game.

And rethinking the rules is exactly what's needed these days, because the world faces big challenges. From supply and demand to more sustainable solutions, global food production can always benefit from improvement.

“Sustainability in the form of regenerative agriculture is moving from a niche sourcing topic to a larger part of the conversation,” Jill Houk, corporate R&D chef at Culinary Culture, said. “This year, I’ve seen an increase in products coming to market with regenerative agriculture claims, as well as discussions about sourcing using regenerative ingredients. The most likely reason behind this is increased interest in the environment, and a desire by consumers to act as good stewards of the earth.”

Beyond sustainability, this month’s game changers also stand out through attributes ranging from novel ingredients to formulations, nutritional value, convenience, quality and differentiation.



## **The SPARE Food Co. – Spare Burger**

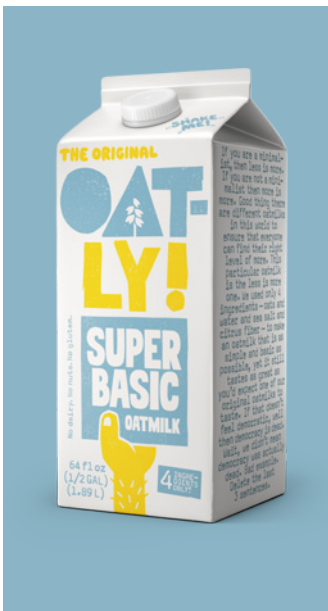
**Founders:** Adam and Jeremy Kaye

**The story:** The Spare Food Co. brings a mix of social awareness, global cultural appreciation and a love for high-quality food to the craft of upcycling, which involves repurposing overlooked yet nutritious ingredients. Jeremy, with a background in sustainable business practices, and Adam, a chef with decades of experience, combined their knowledge into a business model that emphasizes sustainable agriculture, human health and environmental stewardship.

**Why it's a game changer:** According to The Spare Food Co. website, "This is the burger-lover's burger." Quite a claim. By blending 70% responsibly raised beef with 30% surplus vegetables, the Kaye brothers created a juicy, flavorful alternative to traditional patties. They upcycled whole ingredients, not only to enhance the taste of an all-American classic, but also to address environmental concerns without sacrificing quality.

"All the key players in the food service industry are trying to solve for three consistent challenges: provide more plant-rich menu options, prevent food waste and measurably lower their carbon footprint," Jeremy opined. "Spare Burger is a single product that helps them do all three."

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## **Oatly – Super Basic Oatmilk**

**Founders:** Rickard and Björn Öste

**The story:** Oatly isn't new, but its Super Basic Oatmilk is. The company has been around for nearly three decades and, by its own admission, is run by people with strong opinions, such as this sentiment from the brand's website: "We believe we should grow stuff to eat instead of growing stuff to feed animals that we then eat."

**Why it's a game changer:** One might wonder what's so special about a self-proclaimed "super basic" oat milk. Doesn't that mean it's just oats, water and maybe some salt? Yes, but also no. Oatly's Super Basic Oatmilk contains a fourth ingredient: citrus zest fiber. This healthful, clean-label ingredient gives the new product a velvety texture while also acting as a stabilizer; and even better, it's an upcycled byproduct of making juice, which helps promote a more sustainable food system.



## **EQUII Foods – High-protein pasta**

**Founders:** Monica Bhatia and Baljit Singh Ghotra

**The story:** EQUII is transforming the way formulators think about pantry staples like flour, bread and most recently, pasta, by boosting taste and nutritional value through an innovative approach to fermentation. The technology focuses on environmentally friendly inputs, and the process produces traditionally carb-heavy products with a complete protein profile. EQUII’s “perfect” yeast protein comes out containing all nine essential amino acids in ideal proportions.

**Why it’s a game changer:** In a plant-based protein market estimated at over \$12 billion in 2023 in the U.S. and Europe, EQUII recently introduced two new pasta varieties, Mac & Cheese and Rigatoni. Each product contains 6-10 grams of fiber and 19-28 grams of protein, with less sugar and carbs than traditional options.

“Meeting sensory expectations is always the biggest goal,” Bhatia said. “When we are disrupting the nutrition label to this extent, there is bound to be some effect on the texture ... With EQUII, we have achieved quite a remarkable texture for the pasta. There is good absorption of the sauce, which makes taste nearly indistinguishable compared to normal pasta.”



## **Funky Mello – Dippsterz**

**Founders:** Zach and Delisa Harper

**The story:** Funky Mello started as a hobby but eventually secured an investment from Daymond John on Shark Tank. Now the company is moving into kids’ snacks and experimenting with desserts like cake jars. The Harpers are committed to combating food insecurity by donating proceeds and unused food to the homeless and local food banks.

**Why it’s a game changer:** Funky Mello uses upcycled chickpeas to mimic the taste and texture of marshmallow, which is traditionally made from whipped sugar, water and animal-based gelatin. Instead, these products use aquafaba, a viscous liquid extracted from cooked garbanzos. With a texture similar to egg whites, it acts as a natural stabilizer and offers a light, fluffy consistency. The refrigerated treats are vegan-friendly and free of allergens such as soy, nuts and gluten. The latest Dippsterz launch offers a better-for-you version of a popular on-the-go childhood snack – pairing flavored cremes with gluten-free pretzels, or apple or plantain chips.



## **Supergut – The Gut Healthy Prebiotic Bar**

**Founder:** Marc Washington

**The story:** Supergut makes a nutrition line grounded in the science of the gut microbiome while also being convenient for busy people. Founded in memory of Washington's sister Monica, the company aims to empower individuals to regain and maintain control over their health through gut-balancing prebiotics while bridging health disparity gaps in multicultural communities.

**Why it's a game changer:** It's no secret that GLP (glucagon-like peptide)-1 has launched a certified craze. The hunger-killing hormone is all over the news, thanks to weight loss drugs like Ozempic, but Supergut's mission is to boost the body's natural capabilities. The company does this through products such as bars packed with prebiotic fiber.

"There are other fibers that are more widely available, easy to formulate with and more soluble than our prebiotics in Supergut," Washington said. "However, they also aren't nearly as effective in helping regulate digestion and activating GLP-1 naturally, which supports healthy appetite control and blood sugar. So, we had to overcome a few technical hurdles while refining our formula to make sure it was enjoyable and as versatile as possible across different usage occasions."

*Check out the rest of the list of game-changing brands, on page 19.*



## read

### **Almond Board of California harnesses AI to drive food innovation**

The nonprofit is embracing artificial intelligence through a partnership with Tastewise to predict consumer trends and drive innovation in the food industry.

## Consider **dietary supplement ingredients** to boost food and beverage

by Cindy Hazen

**C**onsumers continue looking for foods that support well-being, which leaves marketers and developers with a need for ingredients that can boost a product's health halo. What better place to find these novel ingredients than the dietary supplement aisle? Savvy consumers already connect these ingredients with a health benefit. Read on for a handful of ideas for formulators.

### Turmeric

John Kathrein, senior account executive for Applied Food Sciences (AFS), calls turmeric (*Curcuma longa*) the “golden goose” ingredient because of its bright, golden appearance and increasing popularity. As a spice, it is commonly used in South Asian cuisines. In ayurvedic practices, turmeric's [medicinal properties](#) are well recognized due to the inherent curcuminoids, therapeutic compounds attributed to supporting arthritis and other ailments.

Smaro Kokkinidou, principal scientist at Cargill, describes turmeric's flavor as having earthy, musky and bitter notes. “It is fat soluble and has a distinct color,” she said, adding, “The latter two attributes could create challenges when trying to incorporate it in aqueous-based beverages, for example.”



Kathrein agreed the botanical can be insoluble, but that many high-quality ingredients are available that allow for solubility without any carriers or emulsifiers. “A high-quality extract can replace pressed turmeric and provide more consistency and less microbial contamination potential,” he noted. “The levels fully depend on the specific application and project's features. For beverage applications, we provide a highly water-soluble turmeric extract that is easy to formulate with.”

AFS also offers an encapsulated turmeric extract. “This technology improves the flow in production lines, as turmeric powder tends to cake and clog the lines.” Reduced staining and easier cleanup are additional benefits. Additionally, the company sells a high-quality curcumin extract with 95% curcuminoids.

Green Source Organics (GSO) sources both conventional and organic products. Its white



Turmeric can be used in a **wide variety of applications**, meaning food could be the **ideal vehicle** for ingesting this healthful spice.

turmeric has been decolorized to eliminate the high propensity for staining. According to company president Lawrence Blitz, “Currently the white colorless turmeric seems to be our most novel and sought-after turmeric.”

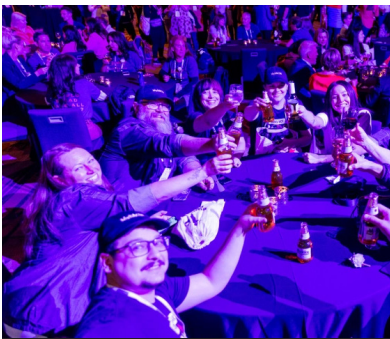
The product line also includes turmeric powder, turmeric oleoresins and curcumin extracts in 3%, 25%, 50% and 95% concentrations.

Turmeric can be used in a wide variety of applications, meaning food could be the ideal vehicle for ingesting this healthful spice. [A Johns Hopkins article](#) suggested dietary supplements contain higher active concentrations than can be consumed in food or beverages, but that too much turmeric can be harmful as it can [increase the risk](#) of kidney stones. But there’s another reason turmeric is best delivered in a food system – curcumin is not readily bioavailable. Studies [have shown](#) that pairing curcumin with piperine (a substance in black pepper) increased bioavailability by 2,000%. That combination is definitely food-worthy.

### Goji berries

Along with antioxidant benefits, goji berries (*Lycium barbarum*) provide a deep red to pink color to a variety of foods and beverages. The ingredient is commonly offered whole or in powders, and can be found in nutrition bars, granola, novel baked goods, smoothies, fillings, dairy products, ice creams, sports nutrition beverages and nutritional supplements. Blitz noted, “We recently had a company serving mixologists (aka bartenders) goji powder for specialty cocktail garnishes.”

Depending on the format, the flavor of goji berries may be mildly sweet. Kokkinidou cautioned they can also be tart and sour with a bitter aftertaste. “They require the right sweetness intensity and temporal profile to deliver a balanced flavor profile,” she said.



## read

### **NEXTY Awards 2024: Coconut yogurt and plant-based salmon win big at spirited celebration – article**

The most recent NEXTY Awards featured winners like The Coconut Cult and Kconscious Foods. Scott Miller detailed the awards that recognize creativity and integrity in the food and beverage industry.



**Naturally, chlorella contains 40%-60% protein, which is unrivaled by any other plant source.**

### Microalgae

Over 500,000 strains of microalgae exist. Yonatan Golan, Brevel's co-founder and CEO, explained that microalgae are difficult and expensive to produce and have a strong sea-like flavor. As a result, microalgae are mostly used as supplements in small doses; however, a breakthrough is enabling microalgae to become a main ingredient in food applications well beyond being a supplement or low-concentration additive. He maintained that a unique proprietary technology has allowed the company to "significantly reduce costs, extract the protein in its pure form without any flavor or color, and maintain and even increase the high quality and full-amino acid profile."

Brevel's marine protein is derived from the Chlorella microalgae strain. Golan described it as nonallergenic with a full amino-acid profile and high digestibility. "Naturally, chlorella contains 40%-60% protein, which is unrivaled by any other plant source," he said. It can be incorporated in plant-based dairy, plant-

based meat, beverages, pastries and more. Blitz added Brevel's product can be added at concentrations exceeding 10% and even up to 15%, compared to the current content rate of just 1%-2%.

### Hemp protein

Hemp is a low input, fast growing, high yield crop. Sustainability and a neutral sensory profile are a couple of reasons its use is growing, especially in dairy alternatives such as cheese, creams and milk. A hemp protein, PurHP-75, produced by AFS, appears in extruded meats, textured vegetable protein and extruded snacks. "It will perform well in a high- or low-moisture extrusion process," Kathrein added. "With the high-water holding capacity, it will hold form in alt-meat formulations. Also, this hemp protein will seamlessly provide high nutrition in an extruded puff snack."

PurHP-75 has 75% protein with a protein digestibility-corrected amino acid score (PDCAAS) of 0.63. Lysine is the limiting amino acid.

GSO's hemp powders come in various protein levels from 70-20%. "The lower end of the scale provides higher fiber content with the prebiotic component, and the higher levels are to meet protein RDAs [recommended dietary allowances] for everything from analogue meats, sports nutrition products and bakery segments," Blitz said.



## Category crossover

### Omega-3s

Fish oil is a popular supplement because of the potential health benefits of omega-3s. Justin White, Nuseed's global commercial lead for human nutrition, said, "Every cell in the human body [requires](#) omega-3 for optimal function, and DHA [docosahexaenoic acid] is especially supportive of [heart](#) and [eye](#) and [brain health](#)." But supplements containing fish oil often have a fishy taste and can bring on an unpleasant burp-back. Fish such as salmon are a natural food source, but some consumers may perceive sustainability as an issue.

Sustainably derived from canola crops, Nuseed's Nutriterra is being formulated in salad dressings, beverages and yogurt. "We see a lot of potential in plant-based seafood too, as Nutriterra can deliver DHA nutrition from a truly plant-based source," White said. He added it can also be used as a suitable drop-in for any oil application.

The ingredient's unique omega-3 composition includes DHA and EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid) levels similar to some marine oils, double the ALA (alpha-linolenic acid) of conventional canola, and small amounts of other long-chain omega-3s. Nutriterra is approved for food uses in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, with

regulatory approval pending in the U.S. and other key markets.

### Managing flavor

While plant-based functional ingredients are trending, Kokkinidou cautioned they sometimes come with undesirable effects on flavor. "Bitterness, astringency, metallic notes, chalkiness and earthy undertones are just a few of the unwanted elements that may need to be addressed. The key is finding masking

solutions that provide a neutral profile and work in harmony with – or even enhance – the finished product's planned flavor profile."

But added costs may be an unexpected consequence. "Typically when we use flavor modifiers to manage off-notes, we're also forced to bump up expensive characterizing flavor loads because everything gets muted," she said. When a natural sweetener is in the mix, she recommended using EverSweet + ClearFlo. This stevia

product helps manage off-flavors from other ingredients used in formulation, including earthy and beany notes from plant-based proteins. At the same time, she said it enhances many characterizing flavor profiles, including light, fruity notes and rich, chocolatey tones. ■

**Every cell** in the human body **requires omega-3** for optimal function.



[Cindy Hazen](#) is a food industry professional with decades of experience in food formulation and food safety. She is PCQI, HACCP and ISO 22000 trained.



## **Diamond Brew – Single-Serve Craft Espresso**

**Founder:** Douglas Yu

**The story:** Diamond Brew revolutionizes the coffee experience by combining convenience with luxury, allowing consumers to enjoy high-quality coffee instantly without any brewing equipment. Inspired by Japanese chemist Satori Kato's early soluble coffee, this unique soluble instant coffee has a flavor profile that, according to Yu, surpasses traditional coffee.

**Why it's a game changer:** Yu's goal was simple when he founded Diamond Brew: Create a sensory experience that matched (or transcended) traditional coffee without the hassle of beans and grinders or the mess of cleaning up soggy grounds. Once he achieved that, the next step was getting buy-in.

"One of the biggest challenges was convincing consumers that Diamond Brew isn't just another instant coffee, typically packaged in sachets, stick bags or heavy glass jars," Yu said. "Our Brewless craft espresso is on a whole different level. Not only does Diamond Brew deliver the same machine-quality coffee in both taste and appearance without any residue, but the product also comes in our unique hexagon-shaped aluminum pods, which took a tremendous amount of time and effort to engineer but ultimately set us apart."

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## **Fable – Cannabis-infused cocktails**

**Founders:** Ben and Kristin Kennedy

**The story:** Fable started after founder Ben Kennedy realized why his wife Kristin preferred alcohol to cannabis: the methods of consumption. He figured others might be willing to drink cannabis as well, so he set out to create a one-of-a-kind RTD (ready-to-drink) nonalcoholic beverage with its own intoxicating properties, which is possible in the U.S. – within specific parameters – thanks to the 2018 [Farm Bill](#).

**Why it's a game changer:** Fable is the only product on this list that wasn't initially launched this year, but in 2024, it started generating serious buzz because it offers a sophisticated cocktail replacement with unique, earthy, spicy flavors and, well, a buzz.

"There's two ways to make a [cannabis] drink," Ben explained. "You can make a drink, then add the cannabis, and then mask the cannabis. So, this is what you'll see with imitation products. But you end up with the world's worst beer, the world's worst wine, the world's worst margarita ... a question I get a lot is, what's Fable taste like? And my answer is a Fable. It tastes like a Fable."



## **Konscious Foods – Plant-Based Smoked Salmon**

**Founder:** Yves Potvin

**The story:** Potvin is a chef who was inspired by the growing health-consciousness movement and started creating healthier foods to meet that need. He eventually launched Yves Veggie Cuisine and later helped expand the plant-based market with Gardein, a line of frozen plant-based foods. Today, he continues his streak of health-based innovation with Konscious Foods.

**Why it's a game changer:** The company specializes in plant-based seafood products such as frozen sushi and poke bowls. Potvin, however, wanted to go beyond the basics with Plant-Based Smoked Salmon – which is made from ingredients such as carrots and konjac – all while pricing the product competitively compared to traditional seafood.

“There’s a lot of controversy right now about farm-raised salmon,” Potvin shared. “The way they feed them, with artificial colors and artificial flavors, and the way they pack them creates disease. But if you can deliver a product that’s as good and cheaper ... we’re the first company to match the price or be cheaper than traditional seafood.”

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## **Coconut Cult – Honey Mama’s Raspberry Chocolate Truffle yogurt**

**CEO:** Jay Shetty and Radhi Devlukia-Shetty

**The story:** The Coconut Cult crafts its unique yogurts from coconuts, but it also enriches the products with live probiotics to promote regularity in a deliciously innovative way. Unlike traditional yogurts, where pasteurization can kill off some of the beneficial bacteria, this brand ferments the goods to preserve these vital probiotics while prioritizing organic, fair-trade ingredients. With both prebiotic and probiotic properties, the yogurt is a potent, whole food alternative to supplements, with each 1-ounce serving containing about 50 billion probiotic CFUs (colony-forming units).

**Why it's a game changer:** For this unique flavor, the Coconut Cult added a whole Honey Mama’s raspberry chocolate truffle bar to its Raspberry Yogurt to create an indulgent experience that sold out within a few weeks. But creating a complex custom flavor isn’t without its challenges.

“Initially, we had a lot of trouble with the chocolate; it would melt too quickly ... the yogurt would come out of our filling machine too warm,” Raz explained. “The solve for this was to keep the bars as cold as possible before placing them in the jars, and then refrigerating the yogurt to cool it off before filling the jars.”



## **Oktane Energy – Blueberry Surge zero-sugar energy drink**

**Founders:** Toni Covington and ISupreme Watkins

**The story:** Energy drink sales are surging, experiencing nearly 10% growth from 2021 to 2023. Although the booming category is dominated by giants like Red Bull and Monster, a new challenger recently entered the ring.

Founded by former bodybuilder Covington and Marine Corps veteran Watkins, Oktane Energy stands out not only for its energy-boosting properties but also for promoting overall wellness. The drink is carefully formulated with ingredients like branched-chain amino acids (BCAAs) and monk fruit, making it diabetic-friendly and suitable for various dietary programs.

**Why it's a game changer:** The energy drink was originally sweetened with sucralose but switched to monk fruit due to its health halo. Besides not raising blood sugar levels, monk fruit may offer a cleaner, more pleasant sweetness without the bitter aftertaste associated with many artificial sweeteners.

“Additionally, monk fruit contains antioxidants and does not condition taste buds to crave excessive sweetness, promoting better overall diet quality and providing a more wholesome option for our consumers,” Covington maintained. ■