



# Game on

How to win in performance  
and sports nutrition





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## How to win in performance and sports nutrition

by Charlotte Bastiaanse

**F**rom the everyday health-conscious consumer to high performance athletes, the sports nutrition market has been through a wave of changes to deliver solutions for everyone. The sector is seeing considerable yearly growth, with many product developers seeking a unique path to market. Although full of untapped potential, success in the sports nutrition arena doesn't come without its challenges. With a history grounded in scepticism and consumer demands changing faster than brands can track, developers need a full picture of what the active consumer base wants, where innovation is happening, what type of challenges exist and how to win in this space.

### Market evolution


Rick Miller, associate director of specialised nutrition at Mintel, first started practicing as a sports dietitian over 10 years ago; he reflects that the vast majority of sports supplements were taken by athletes or very enthusiastic amateurs. In the past, he says, the average gym-goer didn't really take protein shakes or any of the more exotic compounds, such as creatine, beta-alanine or L-carnitine, as they


were really only available in specialist health or sports stores, which dissuaded uptake to a niche audience. The historic mindset of the average active consumer was very much, 'I'm not a professional athlete, so I don't need sports supplements.'

Fast forward a few years and the market as we know it today appeals to a wide pool of consumers—from weekend warriors to high-performance athletes—evident through the shakes, bars and fortified RTDs now retailing through local grocery stores and corner shops.

European Specialist Sport Nutrition Alliance (ESSNA) chair, Dr Adam Carey, notes that sports nutrition businesses are thriving and constantly innovating to attract an increasingly diverse consumer base.

Rising consumer interest in products for mental fitness is gaining traction in the sports nutrition space, with multiple offerings already available. Dr Julia Wiebe, director of R&D and director of technical marketing at Nektium, highlights gamers, or eAthletes, as emerging consumer targets who actively seek solutions for focus, attention and enhanced reaction time.





Additionally, she notes that working parents, shift workers, students, athletes and baby boomers in their late adult years also want to stave off cognitive impairment and lethargy. “These are significant opportunities for brands to focus on if they want to put perennial products on the market, as the mental and physical energy trend is here to stay.”



## Today’s consumer

A global uptake of proactive health is motivating consumers to be conscious of how their current diets and lifestyles may impact long-term quality of life. The current sports nutrition market extends from average gym-goers to high performance athletes.

Miller identifies the ‘serious amateur’ as a primary target consumer group, noting: “The birth of higher intensity exercise classes such as CrossFit, F45, Insanity and Tough Mudder are driving consumers toward more extreme approaches to exercise. With extreme exercise comes the need for more extreme solutions in nutrition to support recovery, and this is where sports nutrition brands need to focus their attention.” He adds there’s an opportunity to personalise formulations for consumers who are aiming for more.

When considering high performance athletes, Ian Craig, founder of the Nutritional Institute and the Centre for Integrative Sports Nutrition, says that professional sport is more pressured than ever before, with heavier training schedules imposed by coaches and more regular competitions within fixtures. “While recreational athletes aim to maintain good health within busy lives, professional athletes are now more reliant on good nutrition and supplementation to maintain balance in health and performance.”

In addition to professionals and semi-professionals competing on a regular basis wanting to biohack their body to optimise performance, recovery is another key concern as athletes look to move away from



conventional painkillers and anti-inflammatories and toward natural alternatives that don’t generally have undesirable side effects associated with chronic use.

Previously mentioned as new consumers within the sports nutrition market, the emerging group of gamers presents an interesting opportunity for developers as they continue to drive a dual need for mental and physical performance supplements. This group originally sought caffeinated drinks but interesting developments have taken place to bridge physical and digital sport. Wiebe shares: “We’re seeing the convergence of physical sports and eSports. Lifestyle and training regimens of professional athletes are being mirrored in gamers, and now the supplement industry is reaching them, too. Gaming is one of the favourite pastimes of millennials, and professional eSports are becoming a major spectator sport with a global audience of gamers.” This new audience is already drawing the attention and focus of companies like Coca-Cola and Red Bull looking to tap the potential. Just like other proactive consumers, gamers and eAthletes are seeking ways to boost healthy lifestyle and improve their unique performance needs. In particular, Wiebe says gamers desire caffeine-free nootropics (especially botanicals) to boost their focus, concentration and reaction times, as well as reduce fatigue.

## Gaps in the market

Amateur and professional athletes today are far more informed about nutrition; yet, they suffer from the same challenges they had in the mid-20th century when sports nutrition was starting to come into fruition. But with

evolving needs and a growing consumer pool, it can be overwhelming for finished product developers to determine the gaps in the market on which to focus their investments and efforts.

Looking ahead, Mike Hughes, head of research and insight at FMCG Gurus (a consumer expert consultancy), predicts that the market will become increasingly fragmented. "On one hand, you will have consumers seeking out products for performance nutrition, who will be more aware about the products best suited for their needs yet also factor these in accordingly with their diets and exercise routines." The reality is that these consumers will continue to go down specialist and online channels when seeking out such products as opposed to simply picking something up in the supermarket because it is deemed better-for-you. At the other end of the spectrum, Hughes identifies consumers embracing the concept of active nutrition, who will continue to seek out more general products. He adds: "This group is less likely to be swayed around claims on issues such as specific protein sources, volume or amino acids, for example, and will simply want products that are positioned around being high in certain ingredients and low in others. These consumers are less likely to visit specialist and online channels and

instead seek out products when shopping in convenience stores and supermarkets."

Miller identifies personalisation as a prime opportunity with booming potential:

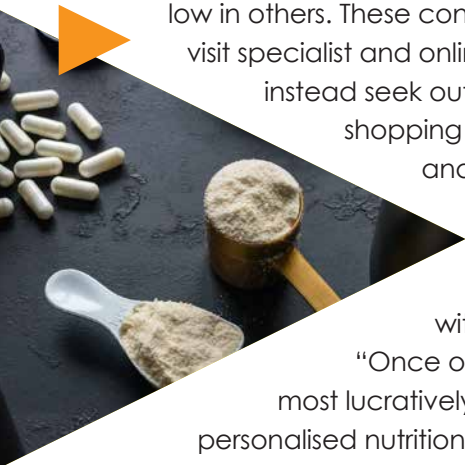
"Once only possible for the most lucratively funded of sports, personalised nutrition is now affordable for even less well funded professional sports. Brands have the opportunity to take advantage of new technologies such as at-home nutrient testing, nutrigenomics and

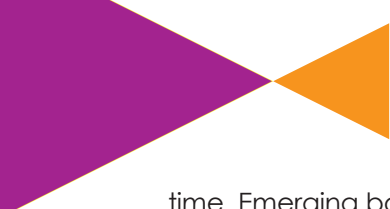
microbiome testing [to] create supplements that are not only high quality but reflect the exact nutrient needs of the professional." Aligning with accredited sports nutrition practitioners will further allow athletes to personalise their food intake and get one-to-one support and retain brand loyalty.

Plant-based, vegan, and natural or clean label (with few ingredients) products are increasingly popular trends across various market categories, but Carey shares that many ESSNA members are actively meeting these interests. He adds, "These options are growing and moving into mainstream channels and are mostly in ready-to-eat and ready-to-drink formats. We have also noted the trend of artisan and start-up brands fulfilling sector innovation while established, credible brands struggle somewhat with their right to play in this market."

When looking at the trends driving professional athlete interest in sports nutrition, this group is extremely fine-tuned mentally and physically as their day-to-day life revolves around training, sports and recovery. "For a supplement to be considered by this elite group, it has to have been thoroughly researched through controlled clinical studies in realistic conditions by leading sports scientists, with its results published in high impact peer-reviewed journals," says Wiebe. She adds that non-doping botanicals which provide increased power output and VO2max (maximal oxygen consumption) are the first thing athletes look for to achieve desired physical energy boosts. There's a certain trend amongst athletes to add nootropics to their regimens, as they're aware that in the end it is the brain that decides if the body can push a bit harder or give up.

In addition to the market opportunity for scientifically validated sports nutrition supplements, professional athletes are seeking painkiller and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) alternatives to reduce recovery





time. Emerging botanical products aimed at boosting performance, reducing pain and speeding up recovery are attracting the interest of elite athletes—offering still largely untapped opportunities for brands willing to invest in the necessary research.

Alongside the cognitive health and sports nutrition overlap, personalised nutrition is also trending as professional athletes and serious amateurs seek out performance-driven insights and solutions. Although athletes today are far more informed about nutrition with the luxury of information at their fingertips, Miller says they still suffer from the very same issue that was prevalent in the mid-20th century when sports nutrition was starting to come into fruition: a lack of personalisation.

“Once only possible for the most lucratively funded of sports, personalised nutrition is now affordable for even less well-funded professional sports. Brands have the opportunity to take advantage of new technologies, such as at-home nutrient testing, nutrigenomics and microbiome testing to create supplements that are not only high quality but also reflect the exact nutrient needs of the professional.”



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## Merging markets/ Personalised nutrition

It’s evident that cognitive health and personalised nutrition are the two markets that offer collaborative opportunities to drive innovative consumer solutions. However, before we explore these two areas more closely, Hughes cautions that when it comes to any form of evolution in the market, it has to be the right time for innovation. That means not diluting product appeal by trying to target all consumers and getting caught in the middle. “The reality is that many performance nutrition consumers know what products are best suited to their needs, they will conduct research into ingredients and also take advice from a variety of specialist sources,” Hughes says. “On the reverse, if sports nutrition products targeted at the mainstream are given too much of a functional positioning, consumers may be put off because they see products as too medicinal (as opposed to a better-for-you snack) or any higher price tags that emerge because of the this specialised approach.” There is certainly a market for personalised nutrition and that is something that will grow over the coming years; however, the sports nutrition market should not rush into this, especially if it means potentially alienating a mainstream audience.

## Personalised nutrition

Across all market sectors, the ‘one size doesn’t fit all’ approach applies. Every person has differing nutrition requirements dependent on genetic makeup, environment, lifestyle and existing medical conditions. Athletes are increasingly interested in the benefits of personalised nutrition and how tailored plans can make even small incremental differences.


“Personalisation needs to be the next step in sports nutrition,” Craig says. “We have nutrigenomic and microbiome testing capabilities, as well as many other ways to

personalise the 'needs analysis' for athletes. Personalisation will allow for focused nutrition recommendations for individual athletes," he adds.

At the end of the day, athletes have the same challenges as everyone else: finding time to prepare meals, balancing families, possibly balancing a second career, lack of education around cooking or preparing meals, and even medical issues or disabilities that mean a conventional approach just won't allow them to perform at their best. Any professional athlete will look beyond conventional diet plans or the advice of self-proclaimed social media experts.

Cost and scale are two significant hurdles preventing personalised nutrition from being mainstreamed at the consumer level. However, new developments and strategic collaborations are presenting solutions to reduce costs to the end consumer. Miller sees a further opportunity for brands to be open to negotiating a fair rate with their chosen nutrition professional and investigating options such as subscription plans, bundles or discounted rates on using technology to have appointments (such as through

teleconference calls). Additionally, brands should be open to the use of newer graduate practitioners who may



“Currently, only 2.5% of all sports nutrition products are customised to women, but the female sports community offers an opportunity for brands to tap into an unmet need.

be able to offer professional services at a reduced rate or offer consumers options: standard (which may be a graduate) or professional (those with more experience).

Within personalised nutrition, Wiebe identifies a trend still to be explored: tailored sports nutrition products for women. “Currently, only 2.5% of all sports nutrition products are customised to women, but the female sports community offers an opportunity for brands to tap into an unmet need,” she says.

## Nootropics

Interest in improved mental performance and enhanced focus is encouraging athletes to invest in cognitive health supplements—but the average consumer doesn't necessarily understand what nootropics are and the benefits they deliver. “There are many nutrients that are required to nourish neurotransmitter function, which have been in supplement form for many years, but if we change our description to 'focus,' 'concentration,' 'mood,' or 'motivation,' more people would understand nootropics,” Craig says.

Similarly, Hughes observes that while professional and amateur athletes have an interest in cognitive health products for energy and focus throughout the day, these same products can also help them to relax and unwind in the evening. “This creates an opportunity for sports nutrition products that contain CBD [cannabidiol], because the ingredient can not only help relax people and keep them focused, but also aid with muscle recovery after strenuous performance,” Hughes says.

Earlier in this report, Wiebe identified the rise in eSports and video gamers as an exciting new consumer group seeking processing speed solutions and cognitive recovery, rather



than muscular recovery. Miller adds: “The cognitive performance market is dominated by energy-enhancing products and sleep or stress-reduction representing less than 2% of all functional claims on launches of performance nutrition products—as a comparison, energy enhancement is close to 30% of all launches.” There’s huge scope for brands to target the recovery angle of cognitive health with innovative new products and services.

## Protein and energy

According to Hughes, protein remains the number one ingredient in the sports nutrition market and will continue to be. When it comes to targeting athletes and active gym goers, brands can look to differentiate through promoting different protein sources and linking this to more specialised and individualistic need states. When it comes to targeting everyday consumers, brands can use protein sources to help align with evolving dietary habits. “For instance, plant-based protein products can be marketed not just around protein content, but also how they align with consumers looking to adopt more sustainable dietary habits or those trying to reduce meat and dairy intake,” says Hughes.

However, he notes, it’s not just the protein content that will determine purchasing and consumption habits. Products need to be able to be easily facilitated into active regimes, meaning that packaging designs can be just as innovative and influential as the protein source itself.

The plant-based wave sweeping the globe is challenging conventional protein sources, and athletes are not exempt from this trend. Gradually, the recognised amount of protein needed by athletes has increased over the years, Craig says, but the quality and diversity of available protein powders has also increased.


Dr Orla O’Sullivan, senior computational biologist at Teagasc Food Research Centre,

notes new interest in protein’s relationship to maintaining a healthy gut microbiome. Recent research has demonstrated increased gut microbial diversity through intake of healthy and varying protein sources. She explains that diversity in the gut microbes is seen as a desirable trait and beneficial to overall health. “Presently this is just an association and more research needs to be undertaken to determine causality.” In order to maintain a healthy gut microbiome, it’s essential to eat a healthy and diverse diet. Complex foods that require many microbes to harvest the energy are more desirable than simpler, processed foods, she adds. Additionally, studies of the gut-brain axis further support advocating for maintaining a healthy gut microbiome to improve mental performance.

In addition to protein content, sports nutrition consumers are also interested in energy stores and the role carbohydrates play here. Consumer attitudes are constantly evolving and whilst carbohydrates have had a somewhat negative image over the last decade, Hughes says consumers still recognise that the ingredient is a vital part of the diet and one that produces energy. “Irrespective of the ingredient that consumers turn to for energy, the key is reassuring people that the energy source is from real and authentic ingredients that are in no way detrimental to health. Sustained energy is also key, be it for endurance when exercising or simply progressive fatigue throughout the day.”

Lastly, sports nutrition researchers still emphasise the importance of carbohydrates for athletic success, but discernment of carbohydrate quality needs to improve within this approach. Craig adds: “We need to be





considering the micronutrient needs to convert fuel to energy biochemically. Despite being a basic physiological understanding, we're still not seeing enough 'micro' focus within sports nutrition."

## New and emerging ingredients

With plenty of consumer preferences and behavioural changes influencing the sports nutrition market, new ingredients have floated to the surface, leading to the development of innovative finished products geared toward improved physical and mental athleticism.

"In conjunction with our patent database partners, Cipher, we've seen a big shift in the amount of patents filed for more novel botanical ingredients, specifically targeted at aspects of sports performance such as reducing fatigue, managing blood glucose, or targeting genes that increase protein synthesis," Miller says. "For instance, an extract from brown seaweed works in a similar fashion to alpha-glucosidase inhibitors, which prolongs the glucose release of carbohydrates into the bloodstream. This is very exciting, particularly as the industry moves towards more natural, plant-based ingredient profiles—the heightened use of botanicals is a great partnership."

Miller adds that the sports nutrition category is making progressive steps to integrate ingredients that deliver physical and cognitive benefits—with considerably more mushroom, herbal and traditional nootropic compounds (like acetyl L-carnitine) gradually making their way into the market.

Alongside botanicals, developers are integrating more vegetable- and fruit-based extracts to meet consumer demand for natural, sustainable and plant-based solutions. Craig cites the evolution of real foods, like beetroot and cherry juice, and adds, "Products of this nature have captured [imagination within sports nutrition, supported](#) by reported performance gains, but I'm actually more excited by the improved health and recovery potentials of these nutrient-dense 'real foods'."


## ▶ ESSNA's view on regulation by Adam Carey

The EU has taken more action in recent years with world class legislation to make food products healthier and safer for consumers. ESSNA fully supports these efforts, particularly in light of increasing rates of obesity and noncommunicable diseases across Europe. Having said that, some adaptations are needed and ESSNA is working to ensure that the needs of sports people are taken into account appropriately in legislation. ESSNA continues to fully support the inclusion of sports food in General Food Law, in line with how the market is moving, but calls on policymakers to recognise the specific dietary needs of sportspeople.

The regulatory framework that covers sports nutrition products, under General Food Law, has supported innovation and continuous growth in the sector. Even more can be done to ensure that the industry can continue to serve its consumers and promote innovation in the sector, for instance, by promoting a greater evidence-based recognition of sports people's specific nutritional needs within this framework, and harmonisation of certain provisions across Europe and with Britain post-Brexit.

The Nutrition and Health Claims Regulation has become both the main framework for communicating to consumers the intended and responsible use of sports nutrition products, and the main obstacle to doing this. The sector needs a proportionate, consistent and evidence-based assessment and authorisation of health claims—taking due account of the specific needs of sports people.



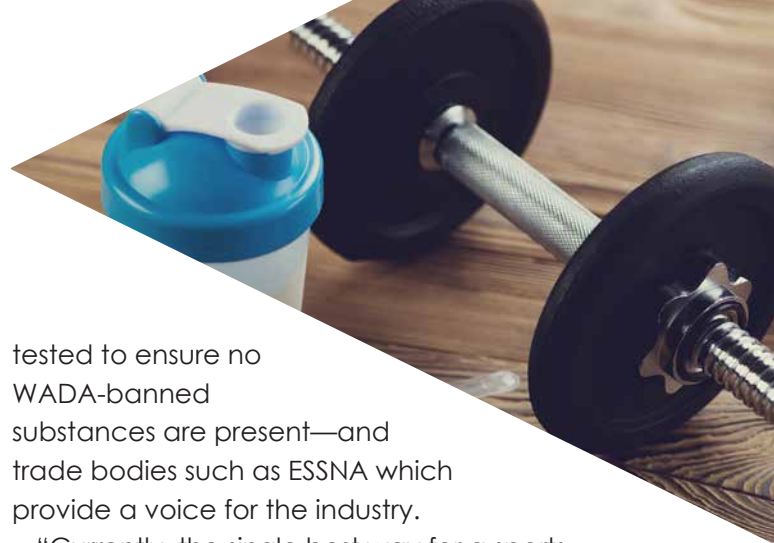


Ingredient and finished product manufacturers are asking consumers to consider new ingredient applications. Carey believes this is supported by the movement against sugar and confectionery and the retailers' drive to give way to healthy and adventurous options—insect sources included.

Something worth considering is that some ingredients are not necessarily new, but consumers may have changed their purchasing attitudes. As an example, Hughes refers to protein: "Protein is an ingredient that consumers have been aware of for decades and one that consumers are less likely to under-consume compared to ingredients such as fibre and omega-3 when it comes to everyday diets. Instead, consumers are becoming more aware of the health benefits, which in turn is giving these ingredients something of a trendier image." For instance, there has been a growth in plant-based ingredients being used in sports nutrition products, but few of these ingredients are new. It's more the case that consumers are becoming more accepting of them, and no longer seeing plant-based ingredients as bland and boring, but rather a vital source of nutrition, no matter how active or inactive the consumer is.

## Are brands doing enough around safety and efficacy?

In the past, products including banned substances named by the World Anti-Doping Association (WADA) have left holes in consumer trust. Being a category dedicated to optimal performance and tied to broader sporting laws and regulations, safety, efficacy and scientific validation mean everything. Miller believes that category security is starting to change for the better with the advent of initiatives, such as Informed Sport—a quality standard to advise consumers that products have been batch-




tested to ensure no WADA-banned substances are present—and trade bodies such as ESSNA which provide a voice for the industry.

"Currently, the single best way for a sports nutrition brand to illustrate their dedication to product safety and purity is through an independent, third-party audit," says Rebecca Adams, research toxicologist at NSF International, the public health and safety organisation. However, not all certifications are equal. "Brands striving to meet the needs of high-level athletes, both professional and amateur, should seek a certification that includes lot-specific testing against recognised contaminant databases like WADA's banned athletic substances list," she adds.

In Carey's view, brands are increasing their efforts to ensure their products are safe and tested. Evidence from Informed Sport's list of certified products shows solid evidence that the industry has embraced third-party testing and certification in recent years. Products are only certified by Informed Sport after passing a rigorous review of the ingredients, and a review of the manufacturing process, and Informed Sport requires every batch of a certified product to be tested, he says. However, Adams identifies a consistent challenge for sports nutrition regulation, which is keeping up the pace with the marketplace. "New products and product combinations are moving to market very rapidly, and it takes time to perform the responsible, rigorous science needed to understand the public health impact of new products and ingredients."

One way to ensure products are safe and law-abiding is by only buying from reputable companies. But how do you separate the




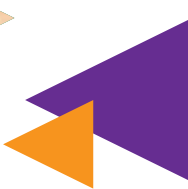
good from the bad? Carey explains that all members of ESSNA sign its strict Code of Conduct, which require that they abide by all industry regulations. “Complying with our Code of Conduct requires trained staff and a deep understanding of rules and technical challenges. Full manufacturing audits and third-party lab testing are ways to minimise risks.” Additional testing protocols, third party audits, and other mechanisms exist to provide the sports nutrition market with the same necessary tools as the food industry.

Despite initiatives and trade bodies in place, the vast work has to lie with the brand. Transparency is at the heart of trust and various brands across the dietary supplement and sports nutrition industry are investing in innovative strategies to prove that their manufacturing practices are clean, honest and that the supplements deliver on their label promises.

## What’s next for sports nutrition?

Converging markets, the focus on sustainable sources, and efforts concentrated around testing, certification and science are giving rise to an amazing array of products.

Powders, waters, pods, sticks, gels and sachets—brands have developed new formats



“Being a category dedicated to optimal performance and tied to broader sporting laws and regulations, safety, efficacy and scientific validation mean everything.

and delivery systems that delight consumers. Looking forward, the future of this market is exciting and bright with many changes predicted to come in the next few years.


While the emergence of the active lifestyle subcategory has blurred category lines over the last few years, Miller would like to see sports nutrition return to its performance roots and distinguish itself from the plethora of mainstream food and drink with a sports nutrition stamp.

Similarly, Hughes believes the concept of sports nutrition will become increasingly redundant in the mainstream. Instead, sports nutrition products will continue to be seen as better-for-you options in comparison to traditional snack products and drinks. “At the same time, these consumers will also continue to have reservations about issues such as after-taste and price. Evolution will come not necessarily in ingredients used but instead, how easy these products can be incorporated into daily diets—such as launching products in new flavors beyond traditional flavours such as chocolate and vanilla,” he predicts.

In the future, sustainable sports nutrition will likely become the evolution of clean label and plant-based, says Miller. “Companies that start the journey early into demonstrating green practices and carbon-neutral (or even carbon negative) manufacturing could be set to take the lead in the race.”

There is a clear trend towards clean-label, caffeine-free, natural products in sports nutrition as there is growing understanding that these products have underlying pharmacologically active compounds that can have a positive effect on performance and energy levels, and are safer than synthetic compounds—yet also resonate with the trend of natural products for healthy lifestyle, Wiebe says.

In the coming years, Wiebe foresees the next wave of trends to be around natural pain relief for decreased perception of pain during training,



and for natural anti-inflammatory activity during recovery. “Elite athletes, weekend warriors and even the recreational gym-goers know that getting fitter involves more than training harder. They’re increasingly considerate of their body’s recovery, as insufficient recovery leads to excessive muscular fatigue, soft tissue injury, and compromised immune systems.” The side effects associated with regular use of pharmaceutical pain killers and NSAIDs are underestimated and can cause severe long-term damage and also raises safety concerns. For this reason, athletes are starting to seek healthier, natural solutions for healthy pain relief to improve performance and recovery.

Tied to personalised solutions, O’Sullivan hopes to see athletes include microbiome profiling as part of their medical regimes and subsequently tailor nutrition and exercise plans. “In future, probiotics and prebiotics developed for performance and recovery will have increased uptake,” she says. Craig adds that ‘functional’ lab tests deliver significant depth of personalised food and supplement guidance from new microbiome testing—tailored to the health of each athlete’s gut.

Finally, validation is the name of the game. Across all market sectors, consumers and product developers alike aren’t willing to take the risk on ingredients that don’t meet regulatory requirements or deliver on their label promises.

With some exceptions, the demand for evidence is outstripping the internal research capacities and R&D budgets of ingredient companies, says Wiebe. “Collaborations with reputable sports performance research organisations, leading academics, sports physiologists and physicians is essential in order to properly interrogate any ingredient innovation,” she notes. “At the same time, ingredient companies are finding it increasingly challenging to produce real innovations that hold up to such intense scientific scrutiny, so we can anticipate companies forming strategic alliances and other forms of cooperation to pool their R&D pipelines, internal capacities,

## ▶ The case for botanicals

by Julie Wiebe

Many sports nutrition products claim activities that have not been proven, but are extrapolated from blood markers or in-vivo studies or because they have key active compounds in common with other sports nutrition products that have been clinically studied. However, it is essential that companies demonstrate the efficacy of their own product, including in the combinations that are being consumed. Botanicals are complex, polymolecular ingredients, and the raw material source, time of harvest, post-harvesting processes and production processes all need to be tightly controlled and audited to make a great botanical ingredient. The resulting ingredient needs its own double-blind placebo-controlled clinical studies—ideally conducted by leading academic experts in sports medicine or sports physiology. Peer-reviewed publication of sports nutrition studies in a high impact journal not only give credibility to the ingredient, but also to the sports nutrition industry as a whole. Regularly audited supply chain, botanical identity and quality, good manufacturing practices (GMP), and quality assurance programs contribute to clean label verification and build confidence in customers and consumers. It’s necessary to ensure that sports nutrition products are manufactured to GMP standards, clinically studied, and verified doping-free by credible independent organisations.

Consumers are very concerned about the safety and quality of their food, but this has never been more tightly controlled than it is today. In Europe, the regulatory process is sometimes so tight that

research networks and share expenses.” Consumers are already starting to see scientific excellence in emerging sports nutrition ingredients, and the entire product landscape will change as perennial, evidence-based brands become recognised.

With any market, there is always the potential for backlash. This is especially true when it comes to everyday consumers who can sometimes think that simply turning to these products—without making any changes to other areas of their diets and lifestyles—will improve health, says Hughes. When this doesn't happen, they can become increasingly sceptical about the products and market. To counter this, brands should look to increasingly broaden the concept of sports nutrition, moving products with functionality and trendy positioning into the spotlight to encourage consumers to adopt a broader and well-balanced approach to healthy living. ●



innovation, which could help to improve health and wellness, is held back pending Novel Food approval. This has reached a stage where the Novel Food status of well-known plants are questioned, such kiwi fruit, maqui berry or even curcuma as extracts. The volumes of these extracts sold before 1997 might not have been significant enough to warrant 'not Novel Food' status, but pre-1997, the nutraceutical industry was in its infancy—for standardised botanical extracts in particular. Even well-known traditional botanicals like nettle, described in many pharmacopeias, are being considered as a Novel Food because some of the compounds to which it was standardised were only recently considered to be key bioactives. Thus, it's impossible to prove that these standardised extracts were on the market before 1997.

The time and capital investment necessary for innovative new product development is daunting, and taking into consideration the possibility of failure of a Novel Food approval prevents many companies—small and large—from innovating. We are faced with the challenge of tired old ingredients being reworked into combination products, while exciting developments in scientific and clinical research cannot reach the consumer.



## Biographies

**Dr Adam Carey**, chair, The European Specialist Sport Nutrition Alliance

After initially training as a doctor, specialising obstetrics and gynaecology with a sub-specialist interests in reproductive endocrinology and nutrition, Dr Carey left the NHS in 1998 to deliver nutritional and lifestyle solutions to improve personal performance, health and wellbeing. In his capacity as ESSNA chair and CEO at CorLife and Corperformance, Dr Carey works to deliver solutions for the elite sport deliver in the elite sport space. ESSNA is the trade association representing the interests of the sport nutrition sector across the European Union.

**Rick Miller**, associate director, specialised nutrition, Mintel

Miller provides expert perspective insight into emerging innovations and opportunities within the specialised nutrition sector. He has an established clinical background in dietetics and performance nutrition from his 15-year career in hospitals and working with professional teams and athletes up to Olympic level. Miller is experienced within FMCG, FSMP and supplementation sectors, supporting NPD, regulatory affairs and scientific communication to multiple global brands.

**Ian Craig**, founder, Centre for Integrative Sports Nutrition

Craig, MSc, DipCNE INLPTA, is an exercise physiologist, nutritional therapist, NLP practitioner and an endurance coach. He leads the Certificate of Integrative Sports Nutrition course at Kingston University and online. Clinically and within a team dynamic, Craig works with sporting individuals and complex health cases. Additionally, he has published his Struik Lifestyle book, Wholesome Nutrition and developed a lifestyle intervention programme, 12 Steps to Wholesome Nutrition.

**Dr Julia Wiebe**, director of R&D and director of technical marketing, Nektium Pharma

Dr Wiebe is a trained biologist and agricultural engineer with a doctorate in molecular biology and immunology. Nektium Pharma's multiple innovation ingredient is Zynamite®, a patent-pending, clinically studied, botanical developed as a clean-label, caffeine-free ingredient for mental and physical energy. First launched in 2018, the product has already won five prestigious international awards.

**Mike Hughes**, head of research and insights, FMCG Gurus

Hughes has over 13 years' experience analysing consumer trends, attitudes and behaviours and currently heads up the research and insight division at FMCG Gurus. He has a particular interest in highlighting how consumer attitudes and behaviours can often differ and what the true meaning of trends are for the industry.

**Dr Orla O'Sullivan**, senior research officer, Teagasc Food Research Centre

Dr O'Sullivan is a computational biologist focusing on elucidating the microbiome from a variety of ecosystems including soil, food, rumen and human gut. Of particular interest to her is the role of exercise and diet, specifically whey protein, on the human gut microbiome both in healthy and diseased cohorts.

**Rebecca Adams**, research toxicologist, NSF International

Adams evaluates dietary supplement and functional food product labels to the requirements of NSF/ANSI 173 and NSF certification guidelines 229 and 306, ensuring the ingredients and any potential contaminants or adulterants in the products do not present a significant public health risk or a reputational risk to consumers, athletes or the brand. She has experience in multiple disciplines including toxic tort litigation, occupational health/industrial hygiene, exposure assessment, and public health and safety.



Company Name: Natural Origins  
 Contact: Emilie LECONTE  
 Title: Key Accounts Manager & Product Manager  
 mynaturalorigins.com

## 1 What are your latest advancements and innovations that support innovation in the sports nutrition category?

To answer the needs of transparency and quality product of the market, Natural Origins has decided to develop a 100% organic botanical formula dedicated to sportlovers. Rewin(d) aims at reducing DOMS (Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness) allowing your body to recover faster. This active is backed up with a clinical study that proved the effects of Rewin(d) on muscle pain and performance on athletes.

## 2 What are some of the delivery systems and applications best suited for your ingredients

Rewin(d) is initially made of organic botanical powders but can be used in many forms. It aims at being consumed on the go. We developed 3 available applications:

- ▶ a 100% organic gel to be eaten during sport practice. One pouch of gel provides fuel for 30 min of running.
- ▶ a rehydration drink, essential during your sport session.
- ▶ caps for a monthly cure.

## 3 What specific ingredients or specialized strategy do you offer for products that support athletic performance?

Rewin(d) is a natural ingredient obtained from a synergistic blend of botanicals. It's a low process powders blend, no extraction, no carrier, no solvent: only botanicals. Rewin(d) is 100% organic and can be used to prepare a competition. Natural Origins offers another reference in its sports range with Exten(d). This 100% organic blend of powders helps to reduce joint pain and therefore enhance your efficiency. It's backed up with a clinical study too.

## 4 How do you define your company's point of differentiation and advantages in the market?

Natural Origins an expert in botanical sourcing for 2 decades offers his knowledge to answer and anticipates customers' needs. We give access to more than 60 countries most of them with dedicated channels. As a CSR company, Natural Origins promotes sustainable sourcing and strong partnership with our suppliers. Our will is to highlight the origin and therefore upgrade sustainable existing channels through dedicated certification (For Life, Fair For Life) ... We possess our own factory to design selected botanicals into tailor-made ingredient. Our R&D team, from Botanical Studio, support your innovation.





## **Empowering industry thinkers**

As the official media for Vitafoods Europe and Asia, Vitafoods Insights explores emerging areas and key issues across the global health and nutrition industry, helping business executives make informed, strategic decisions. Vitafoods Insights reaches a broad audience of professionals, and shares the passion of enriching industry knowledge and growing the health and nutrition market.

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