

U.S. FOODLINK

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SUSTAINABILITY AND HEALTH Continue As Dominating Trends In 2020

Sustainability is more important than ever as we head towards the new year, and 73% of shoppers are willing to pay more for products made with environmentally friendly and sustainable materials, according to Nielsen. Consumers are going to hold manufacturers to these standards, too: 48% say ingredient transparency influences them to try new products or switch brands.

Ugly fruits and vegetables are expected to continue their slow but steady rise to the mainstream as part of this overall trend. While acceptance has grown over the years, 40% of all the food produced in the U.S. goes uneaten because it is imperfect, according to Benchmark Global Hospitality. This trend is expected to affect supermarkets and restaurants alike.

Another aspect of sustainability that may gain traction is regenerative agriculture, which was flagged by Whole Foods Market as one of the top trends for the coming year. The term can have multiple definitions, but in general describes farming and grazing practices that restore degraded soil, improve biodiversity and increase carbon capture to create long-lasting environmental benefits. Whole Foods expects brands that take this approach to prosper as farmers, producers, retailers and other parties take a closer look at land and animal management practices.

Plant-based foods have been trendy as long as – if not longer than – sustainability, but Whole Foods expects 2020 to take these products in a new direction. Plant-based meals and snacks will still put an emphasis on their protein content, but more and more makers are looking beyond tofu and other soy product to fulfill this niche. Some companies will use blends to mimic the texture of dairy products, while others will remove soy from plant-based prepared foods and condiments to minimize allergy concerns.

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Sustainability and Health *Continued*

The new direction of the plant-based trend is also expected to create a renaissance for seed butters as manufacturers move beyond tahini to experiment with watermelon and pumpkin seeds. Nut butters like macadamia and chickpea butter, which is different from hummus, are also expected to get some time in the spotlight. These vegan spreads will also reduce their dependency on palm oil or seek Responsibly Sourced Palm Oil certification to further drive home the need for sustainability.

While stevia has been competing with sugar for years, other plant-based sweeteners will take their turn in 2020. Reductions from monk fruit, pomegranates, coconut and dates will bring unique flavors to desserts, glazes and marinades, while syrups from starches like sorghum and sweet potato offer a vegan alternative to honey. Swerve, a zero-calorie non-glycemic replacement for sugar, will give bakers a way to replicate granular, confectioners' and brown sugar with ingredients sourced from fruit and starchy root vegetables.

The figurehead of the plant-based craze, meatless meats, will continue in 2020 – and Beyond Meat's vegan product will now have a host of competitors with flexitarian takes on the idea. One direction is adding meat back into the equation, but reducing the quantity with plant-based ingredients such as through the James Beard Foundation's The Blended Burger Project, which includes at least 25% fresh mushrooms in its patties. Applegate Farms will



introduce a 30% plant-based burger, which will tout the reduction in fat and cholesterol to add health benefits to the usual sustainability claims.

For consumers looking to keep things simple and vegetarian, jackfruit may be appearing on menus in the near future, according to Benchmark Global Hospitality. The fruit naturally has the texture of pulled pork, and is a great source of iron, calcium and vitamin B, making it a potential contender for those who want to go meatless but aren't interested in the burger route.

The desire for health benefits doesn't stop with vegetarian and flexitarian meals, however. NACS found that 43% of Millennials purchase more food from convenience stores now than three years ago, and they are responding to this generation's demand for quick, healthy alternatives.

C-stores are carrying more and more items like fresh fruit and prepared salads, and this aligns with another trend predicted by Whole Foods: fresh snacks. Today's consumers are more interested in hard-boiled eggs with savory toppings, pickled vegetables and drinkable soups than granola bars and pretzel bags. Even nutrition bars



are adding fresh fruits and vegetables. This a trend that c-stores and supermarkets alike can get in on – all it takes is refrigerated space.

Functional foods are expected to continue growing as well, and may see yearly sales increases as high as 8% through 2021, according to Technavio. This trend includes probiotics making their way from drinks and yogurt into water, dried fruit and cereal, and adding functional ingredients to already healthy foods to create a combination that both grabs attention and gives consumers a reason to pay more.

The desires for health and sustainability go hand-in-hand with a push toward local ingredients which, along with manufacturing pressure and staff, are pushing 48% of food makers to try new products, according to Nielsen. New products will also meet another desire: 66% of consumers like to try new flavors from time to time, according to Technomic.

Manufacturers don't have to stray too far when making new flavors. Technomic also found that 69% of consumers define a new or unique flavor as one they have never had before, and 40% will also consider a flavor new if it's a unique twist on a familiar flavor.

However, price plays a role too: 46% of consumers are hesitant to try new flavors because they don't want to pay for something that they aren't sure they'll like. This inhibition is smaller among Millennials, 20% of whom say that they actively seek out new flavors to try on a regular basis, and in foodservice, where 68% of consumers agree that they're more likely to visit a restaurant that offers new flavors.

Taken together, the food trends of 2020 are similar to what has been changing over the past several years. Manufacturers will need to keep an eye on sustainability and health, while still launching new flavors and maintaining transparency, if they want to thrive in the coming year.



C-Stores To See New Beverage, Prepared Food And Snack Trends In 2020

The convenience store space is undergoing a transformation in 2020, with new beverages, new prepared foods and new snacks drawing in customers. The effects of these trends were on display at the 2019 NACS show, where experts discussed the changes coming to the industry.

Alternative non-alcoholic beverages, craft beer and mixed alcoholic drinks add more and more choices to the cold vault, according to CStore Decisions. Some of the top trends expected to hit the c-store space this year include plant-based milk and benefit-enhanced energy drinks, as well as new takes on bottled water, RTD coffee and kombucha.

"Seltzers are bringing new drinkers in, and it's keeping them in the category," said Sara Hillstrom, Senior Director Category Leadership, Anheuser-Busch InBev during a panel at the 2019 NACS. "I strongly believe this is a trend that's here to stay."

Sustainable packaging is also becoming more important for c-store beverages. Three quarters of all consumers are more willing to lead a lifestyle that's more sustainable or buy products that are more sustainable, and one of Coca Cola's goals is to make all of its bottles recyclable by 2030. The company currently diverts about 700 million recyclables away from landfills every year.

When it comes to prepared foods, 54% of consumers buy them from c-stores simply because they don't feel like cooking, according to a poll by Convenience Store News. Another 50% have a craving, 37% purchase prepared food as a reward for themselves and 33% buy something because they are specifically too tired to cook.

The top priority when buying prepared foods is convenience at 41%, followed by quality at 31% and selection at 25%. The desires for beverages are different: variety is prioritized by 37% of consumers, followed by convenience at 35% and price at 17%.

Snacks are meeting similar needs, though they help consumers fill the space between meals by satiating their hunger rather than serve as a replacement for them. This is combining with the trend towards healthier foods to create demand for better-for-you claims like high protein, less sugar and "free-from," which were among the top snack trends *Convenience Store News* spotted at the NACS Show.

Alternative snacks and meat snacks were the biggest driver of this trend, with examples including Conagra Brands introduced the David Energy-Packed Mix, which contains 7 grams of protein and only 1 to 2 grams of sugar per serving, and Lorissa's Kitchen Whole-Made Medley Bars, which are preservative free, dairy free, and contain no high fructose corn syrup.

EVENT CALENDAR

Meet our U.S. Suppliers exhibiting with us at these events.

FEBRUARY

12-14: SMTS 2020

Tokyo, Japan
Makuhari Messe
Booth 2-506
smts.jp/en

16-20: Gulfood

Dubai, United Arab Emirates
Dubai World Trade Centre
Booth S3-B60
gulfood.com

22-23: CHFA West

Vancouver, Canada
Vancouver Convention Centre
Booths 1441-1451
chfa.ca/en/Events/chfa-west

MARCH

9-11: VIV MEA 2020

Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre
Booth G054
vivmea.nl

10-13: FOODEX Japan

Tokyo, Japan
Makuhari Messe
jma.or.jp/foodex/en

18-20: Ildex Vietnam 2020

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
Saigon Exhibition and Convention Center
ildex-vietnam.com

31-April 2: Expo ANTAD Alimentaria 2020

Guadalajara, Mexico
Expo Guadalajara
Booths N0729-0735
alimentariamexico.com/en

30-April 3: FHA-Food & Beverage

Singapore
Suntec Singapore Convention & Exhibition Centre
fhafnb.com

APRIL

15-17: SIAL Canada

Montreal, Canada
Palais des Congres Montreal
10times.com/sial-canada

20-23: Alimentaria

Barcelona, Spain
Barcelona - Gran Via Venue
alimentaria.com/en

21-23: Seafood Expo Global

Brussels, Belgium
Brussels Expo
seafoodexpo.com/global

MAY

6-9: Bakery China

Beijing, China
China International Exhibition Center
bakerychina.com/en

12-14: Vitafoods Europe

Geneva, Switzerland
Palexpo
vitafoods.eu.com/en

TOP CROPS

Corn
Soybeans
Meat Animals
Poultry & Eggs
Dairy

TOP EXPORTS

Soybeans
Corn
Feed Grains



56,649
FARMS



TOP CROPS

Maple Syrup
Dairy
Hay
Honey
Christmas Trees

TOP EXPORTS

Roasted Coffee
Chocolate
Dairy Products (Cheese)

7338
FARMS



TOP CROPS

Corn
Soybeans
Meat Animals
Poultry & Eggs
Dairy

TOP EXPORTS

Soybeans
Corn
Feed Grains

95,000+
FARMS

160,000+
ACRES

TOP CROPS
Aquaculture
Greenhouse and
Nursery Products
Dairy
Sweet Corn



1243
FARMS

60
Aquaculture
Operations

Greenhouse & Nursery
\$2.5 billion



TH Foods, Inc.

Loves Park, IL

The deliciously baked snack cracker consumers crave. Crunchmaster crackers pair perfectly with the active lifestyles of your consumers. They're packed with wholesome ingredients, free from gluten, artificial colors and flavors and many flavors are free of common allergens like eggs and dairy. Crunchmaster crackers are one of the top selling brands of gluten-free crackers in North America.

Give your consumers the simple, satisfying snacks they're craving – with over 15 varieties to choose from, including Grain-Free!

thfoods.com [crunchmastercrackers](https://www.instagram.com/crunchmastercrackers)



Godshall's Quality Meats

Telford, PA

Smokehouse Gold is the international export line of Godshall's Quality Meats (GQM Inc.). While the company smokes and prepares a wide variety of delicacies from an array of proteins, it's primary focus is healthier recipes and turkey protein. The company's turkey bacon, sold across the U.S., is notable in its achievement of 80% less fat than pork bacon (per USDA data), with 6 grams of protein per slice and the robust flavor of a real wood smokehouse. Bacons are available in Wood Smoked Traditional recipe, Uncured All-Natural, and Maple Flavored. In addition, Smokehouse Gold offers Beef Bacon, sausages, and a full line of snacks, including snack sticks, jerkies, and Turkey Bites, a softer, flavorful twist on traditional jerky recipes with no nitrites or nitrates and real all-natural flavors like Mango Sriracha, Teriyaki Pineapple, and Korean BBQ.

We are also proud of our Halal products including breakfast slices, sausages, pastramis and snacks – all certified Halal and prepared in accordance with Islamic Law.

The mission of Smokehouse Gold is to offer these better-for-you product lines to the wider international audience. Our three locations in Pennsylvania produce the finest quality meats employing 4000 state of the art solar panels, water recycling and zero-landfill programs. Our modern, clean production facilities are SQF level 3 Certified and SQF Edition 8 certified for Food Safety and Quality.

Much has changed since the Godshall's opened their Mill Road Butcher Shop in 1945, but dedication to providing delicious, wholesome meat delicacies has remained our guiding principal! godshalls.com



Small Batch Organics, LLC

Manchester Center, VT

Small Batch Organics is an artisanal healthy snack and granola company located in Vermont. At Small Batch Organics, we produce chocolate covered granola bark and granola cereal. All of our products are gluten free, certified organic and certified kosher. At Small Batch Organics, we pride ourselves in ingredient transparency and try when possible to buy our ingredients directly from farms and artisanal producers.

Granola bark is available in 2 oz. snack size or 8 oz. stand up pouch. Granola is available in a 12 oz stand up pouch. smallbatchgranola.com



Young G's BBQ Sauce

Des Moines, IA

While serving in Afghanistan, Gerald Young missed many of the comforts of home, which included his father's homemade sauce. Already popular with family and friends, Young hoped the sauce would also be a hit around his community.

As a homecoming gift from active duty, his father, Ronald, gave Young the secret recipe to the barbeque sauce, along with his blessing to make it a success. Young has been able to spread his Young G's BBQ sauce across Iowa and the Midwest. "It's a healthy, tasty sauce for American families," he said.

Young G's BBQ Sauce with zero compromises on taste provides dietary excellence:

- Gluten-free, with barbeque sauce made for any type of meat or food.
- Low sodium for those with health considerations
- No high fructose corn syrup is culinary wise a key to use as a glazing source and dietary for diabetics
- Made in the USA – quality product from the heartland of North America
- Versatile culinary uses include, glaze for BBQ or roasting, dipping sauce, cooking sauce, as well as many more!

We haven't met a meat that Young G's BBQ Sauce didn't pair well with. It's also great on pizza, meatloaf, tofu vegetable stir fry and even pasta!

YoungGsBBQ.com @YoungGsBBQ

For more information about these or other Featured Products please email: FoodLink@foodexport.org.



Bella Lucia Inc.

Altoona, PA

Named after the owner's mother, Bella Lucia, Inc. is the only name associated with gluten free pizzelle waffle cookies and has grown throughout the U.S. and Canada over the past 10 years. Italian pizzelle have been a favorite and a traditional must-have holiday item. Still made two-at-a-time by hand, Bella Lucia takes great pride to produce the best quality products.

Six flavors of anise, vanilla, lemon, chocolate, cinnamon, and seasonally Chocolate Strip (with real Gardner's Chocolate striped on vanilla cookies) leaves you wanting more! Non-GMO verified, all natural, preservative free, additive free, gluten free, and made in the USA. glutenfreepizzelles.com



Mrs. Pruitt's Gourmet CHA CHA

Detroit, MI

Fall Harvest Urban Farms, LLC (founded in 2010) launched their regional brand, Mrs. Pruitt's Gourmet CHA CHA in 2014; a family recipe dating back to the early 1830's. CHA CHA is a condiment, relish, sauce, an authentic southern cuisine, with deeply rooted traditions. The main ingredients include cabbage, green tomatoes and Mrs. Pruitt's blend of herbs and spices. A burst of unforgettable, unique, delightful pickled, apple cider vinegar taste that comes in Mild, Hot, Motor City Heat, Turbo Heat and Super Charge flavors. Awesome on hamburgers, hot dogs, veggie burgers, bratwurst, polish and Italian sausages, tacos, burritos, pulled pork, chicken, seafood; or added to chicken salad, potato salad, tuna salad, pastas, meatloaf; on eggs, rice and beans, vegetables, micro-greens, salads; or as a chip dip!

New products launching soon include Mrs. Pruitt's Gourmet CHA CHA Seasoning (a blend of CHA CHA dehydrated vegetables) and our Mrs. Pruitt's Gourmet CHA CHA Bar-B-Cue Sauce.

This Michigan Supplier is on a mission to let the world know about Mrs. Pruitt's Gourmet CHA CHA. A high-quality value-added product, gourmet filled, gluten free and vegan. High in vitamins A and C and low in sodium. Shelf stable for 12 month shelf life. mrspruittschacha.com



Father Sams Bakery Inc.

Buffalo, NY

Father Sam's Bakery is a commercial bakery founded in 1977 based in Buffalo, New York and Charlotte, North Carolina. Started over 40 years ago in a converted garage, the company has grown to be a well-know supplier of breads, tortillas and wraps located on the East Coast of the U.S.

The company makes a variety of flour tortillas and flavored wraps as well as signature style flatbreads, pitas, and pre-sliced sliders. For more information visit their website: fathersams.com [f](https://www.facebook.com/Fathersamsbakery) Fathersamsbakery [i](https://www.instagram.com/fathersamsbakery) fathersamsbakery



Herr Foods, Inc.

Nottingham, PA

Herr's export line of quality snacks consists of more than 40 items, including potato chips, tortilla chips and cheese curls and is complimented by salsas, dips and other unique products specially selected for export success. Herr's is committed to service and is dedicated to providing the flexibility to meet distributors' needs.

Herr's is family-owned and operated and has experienced over 65 years of success in the U.S. market, continually introducing innovative products and packaging to satisfy ever-changing appetites and tastes. We remain true to the founding principles, which have guaranteed satisfaction to our customers year after year. Herr's snacks are distributed in 12 states throughout the Northeast/Mid-Atlantic region through company owned routes and nationally by way of independent distributors and National Retailers. Internationally we export to 50 countries. herr.com

For more information about these or other Featured Products please email: FoodLink@foodexport.org.

news briefs

U.S. consumers will place increased pressure on manufacturers to produce locally. This will also create pressure to import fewer goods and keep costs down in 2020, according to Nielsen's 2020 Vision for U.S. Retail and Beyond. Almost half of Americans say local ingredients, manufacturing or staff influence them to try new products. It also predicts 5G will revolutionize the internet of things for retail and time and trust will dictate consumer relationships.

Consumers are less likely to experiment with flavors when ordering delivery rather than dine-in or takeout. Forty-six percent of consumers are hesitant to try new flavors because they don't want to pay for something they may not like, but 68% agree they're more likely to visit a restaurant that offers new flavors, according to Technomic. Twenty percent of millennials seek out new flavors on a regular basis.

Cool colors, quicker adoption of fads and sustainability efforts are some of the foodservice trends for 2020. Shifting demands for health and flavor innovation are guiding menus toward new sustainably grown and sourced ingredients, which connects to an elevated prioritization around waste reduction, according to Technomic.

Perspectives on meat alternatives are shifting rapidly. In February 2018, 48% of respondents said they were unlikely to purchase plant-based meat alternatives, but by September 2019 that number had fallen to 40%, according to a study from Michigan State University. During the previous 12 months, 35% of respondents had consumed plant-based meat alternatives, with 90% saying they would do so again.

Shoppers are expected to spend \$1,496 per household during the holiday season this year. Nearly two-thirds of consumers plan to shop at online retailers, with e-commerce holiday sales projected to grow 14-18% over 2018, according to Deloitte's 2019 holiday retail survey. As food and liquor gifting become more popular, there has been a 10% increase in the supermarket/grocery store format as a gift category.



Fresh meat represents 89% of the total volume of meat sold globally and is expected to grow by 2% annually through 2023. Western Europe will see the slowest growth in fresh and processed meat during that period while the Middle East and Africa will record the most impressive growth at 4%, according to Euromonitor. With 21% of global consumers trying to limit meat intake, sales of meat substitutes are projected to reach \$23 billion by 2023.

Seventy percent of Millennials are willing to spend more on high quality foods. Specialized diets were important among the cohort, with 63% trying to incorporate plant-based and unprocessed foods into their diets, according to a survey from Whole Foods Market and YouGov. More than half of Millennials reported the maintenance of an alternative diet was inconvenient and would pay more for ready-made meals that meet their needs.

Grocery shoppers buying the Impossible Burger spent 72% more than the average shopper. Over one-third of all consumers placed at least two 12-oz. packages in their cart and the most commonly cross-shopped items were brioche buns, marinara sauce and cheddar slices.

The majority of U.S. consumers want more variety from their snacks and other food items. More than two-thirds say they indulge on globally inspired foods and flavors at least once a month, and more than three-fourths like to try flavors from places and cultures that are not their own, according to Frito-Lay's U.S. Snack Index survey.

Half of American consumers trust the Fairtrade label. Another 64% of customers would recommend Fairtrade products to a friend or colleague, according to a survey from Fairtrade America. Seventy-six percent of consumers would view a brand they already buy more favorably if it carried a Fairtrade label.

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