

SPINS TRENDWATCH

2017

EXPO WEST *Recap*

As the SPINS team grazes along the miles of Expo aisles each year, we discover a selection of standout products made by companies who are paving the way toward what natural and organic categories can be. In this year's Expo recap, we explore some of the most innovative products we found and the brands behind them, working to advance our industry's standards around environmental concerns such as conservation and waste reduction, ingredient traceability and transparency, and social responsibility.

Here are three of the top macro trends spotted by our team at Expo West 2017, characterizing the growth and innovation of the moment and what's ahead.

PERSONALIZED WELLNESS

As continued research uncovers new wellness benefits for specific ingredients and nutrients, we see functional formulas expanding their role in the marketplace, extending past beauty and supplement categories into food and beverage. Couple this with an increasingly informed consumer base, and it's clear that brands are shifting their formulations, marketing, and new product development to meet the condition-specific functions that shoppers seek out.

An innovative supplement with a contemporary and highly specific health focus comes from **Source Naturals**. Featuring adaptogenic botanicals to assist the body's recovery from stress, amino acids for neurotransmitter support, botanically sourced caffeine, fat-soluble vitamins, and phytonutrients, Screen Time Stamina promises energy, focus, and resilience after prolonged daily exposure to technological tools.



Bulletproof fans maintain that morning coffee is better with butter. **Know Brainer** adds convenient functionality to the cup with its latest launch: single-serve packs of fair trade instant coffee with grass fed butter and MCT oil. Called the thinker's instant, the product continues the brand's personalized nutrition marketing for brain health and cognitive function and proclaims compatibility with the increasingly popular ketogenic diet.

SPINS' **Health Focus** attribute captures condition-specific marketing in body care and supplement segments with unparalleled granularity. Our coding leads the industry in insights on the specific aspects of health which consumers seek to improve with supplements.

Supplements marketed to support *Cognitive Health* are up 30% (\$31M) over last year's sales!



TRANSPARENT, TRIED, AND TRUE

Consumers desire transparency in more forms than ever, and natural brands today are answering the call. Clean label ingredient choices and healthy nutrition, however, are just the beginning. Consumers ask manufacturers to tell the whole story: from the identity of the farmer to the traceability of the catch, from the environmental impact of the process to the packaging, from charitable contributions to corporate culture and accountability.

A powerful testament to the importance consumers place on social conscience and transparency, B Corp certifications had a strong showing at Expo West. Environmental responsibility was affirmed with regenerative agriculture certifications such as Demeter Biodynamic. Eco-friendly standards were raised and met, from compostable packaging to zero-waste commitments which now feature as front-label selling points.



Item sales from Certified B Corporation brands are up 11% and \$1.8B cross-channel in frozen, refrigerated, and shelf-stable grocery categories!

Safe Catch is an excellent example of what's possible at the intersection of sustainability, technology, and transparency. The brand sources tuna from carefully managed wild fisheries in partnership with the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch, tests every single fish with proprietary technology for mercury levels to meet rigorous standards (three to 10 times lower than the FDA requires), and packs the fish in only its own oils. Adding to its cutting-edge mercury credentials and traceability, the brand has earned a slew of other certifications and validations from organizations like the American Pregnancy Association, Non-GMO Project, The Paleo Foundation, the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, and Whole30.

In addition to third-party metrics, consumers want to feel a human connection to their food and their farmers, and natural brands are bringing that story to life in impactful, vibrant ways. The narrative of localization is enriched with details about the regions and farms where food is grown, and this resonated across the Expo floor from big and small brands.



A highlight of traceability and transparency, **Quinn Snacks'** ancient grain pretzels also master the personal side of food provenance. The brand tells the story of its ingredients right on the bag and encourages customers to learn more by looking up specific batches online by lot numbers. The pretzels are made from sorghum that's grown on family farms in Kansas, and the snack bears the stamps of the Gluten-Free Certification Organization, Non-GMO Project, and Whole Grains Council.

PEOPLE, PETS, AND *Premium Ingredients*

The pet segment is a different space today than in previous years. Conscious consumers' passion for their own food purchases have translated into higher quality, human-grade ingredients for their animals. Today, many new products carry clean labels with ethically sourced meat, and vilified by-products have given way to more meaningful reuse of certain healthier ingredients as part of the whole animal utilization and zero-waste movements.



With proprietary **Brand Positioning** and **Positioning Group** attributes, SPINS' coding reflects how brands position products to consumers in the marketplace according to natural, specialty, and conventional product characteristics. Pet supplement items in the *Natural Positioning Group* saw 25% sales growth over the prior year!

SPINS notices burgeoning growth in supplements for pets. At Expo, our team was impressed with innovative offerings from several brands, including **Vibrant Health**, whose **Vibrant Companions** line caters to critters with many of the same key ingredients that appear in food-based supplements for people. Like its human formula for the urinary tract, the brand's U.T. Health supplement for pets contains D-Mannose and functional botanicals for analgesic, anti-inflammatory, antiseptic, and diuretic properties from blueberries, cranberries, dandelion, goldenrod, goldenseal, parsley, and uva ursi.

Dr. Brite's dual lines of oral care for humans and pets got our attention, too. The brand's Pet Pure Cleaning Oral Care Spray and Teeth & Gum Cleaning Pens use human-grade ingredients like organic coconut oil and stevia which also appear in products like the brand's Peroxide Free Teeth Whitening Pen for people.



EXPO'S BEST IN **BODY CARE**

Known for an already extensive line of balms, beauty products, bug repellents, oils, and sunscreens, the **Badger** company brought new Mom Care to Expo with a prenatal health focus. New Belly Butter, Belly Oil, and Nursing Balm in sustainable packaging carry cruelty free, gluten free, Natural Products Association, and USDA organic certifications in addition to the brand's B Corp certification. The new Mom Care line is a highlight in the growing personalized care trend and among emerging products with a focus on pregnancy.



Specifically geared toward athletes for recovery after a workout, time-honored Epsom salts make a splash with **San Francisco Salt Company's** Epsoak Sport. We've seen sports nutrition drive sales across any number of categories, and this extension of the Everyday Epsom line brings that personalized focus into body care with Energizing, Soothing, and Unscented varieties.



Proudly Paleo, **The Dirt** is all about MCT oil. Made from grass fed ghee, essential oils and stevia for flavor, MCT oil (fractionated coconut), sea buckthorn oil, and sesame oil, the brand's Oil Pulling Mouthwash does double duty to freshen breath and help remove toxins from teeth and gums without alcohol. The MCT Oil Toothpaste combines its namesake key ingredient with bentonite clay, theobromine from cacao pods, and more essential oils for its three unusual flavors: Cacao Mint, Royal Rose Cacao Mint, and Sweet Cinnamon.



As a burgeoning segment of the greater body care market, *Paleo Positioned* products grew 70% (\$230K) in sales over last year.

Frau Fowler set out to make one oral care product to do it all: a tooth powder that could brighten, clean, and remineralize teeth while healing and strengthening gums. The brand puts forth considerable scientific research around the ingredients it selects for anti-bacterial, anti-inflammatory, cleansing, and protective properties, and the formula combines baking soda, calcium carbonate (in lieu of fluoride), essential oils, extra virgin coconut oil, salts, and xylitol.



EXPO'S STAR SUPPLEMENTS

Personalized nutrition proves to be a powerful influence for today's natural consumer. We saw condition-specific marketing spreading far and wide with iterations of this trend taking the lion's share of our list for the supplement segment.

From **Bioray Kids** comes an intriguing line of herbal liquid formulas for brain and gut support with six unique health focuses: Calm, Focus, Happy, Shine, Sleepy, and the playfully named Pooper. The line aims to detoxify first to thereby support other neurological functions. In Shine, the brand connects healthy gut flora to neurotransmitter production with a benefit claim of improved communication and speech, pushing "bad bugs" as well as chemicals and heavy metals out of the digestive tract. Clinically formulated to include mushrooms and targeted botanicals, the formulas – also labeled dairy, gluten, and soy free – are not the only way the company works to help children with neurological issues: it also partners with Generation Rescue to provide research and treatment when families can't afford it.



Barleans goes bold with its Platinum personalized formulas targeting highly specific conditions such as brain function; emotional, environmental, and liver detoxes; and intestinal repair with amino acids, botanical extracts, fibers, flower essences, and vitamins. Each selection is sugar free, sweetened with combinations of monk fruit, stevia, and xylitol, and comes in fun flavors like Strawberry Milkshake.

Brain Juice brings a cognitive health focus to the energy shot segment, marketing its unique use of active B-vitamins and focused amino acids for clarity, focus, memory, mood, and relaxed energy without caffeine. The flavor is mild and pleasant, sweetened lightly with coconut palm nectar and monk fruit.



Across supplement categories, items with *Functional Ingredient – Collagen* have grown 36% and \$11.6M in sales since last year.

KEEP AN EYE ON COLLAGEN

Avid bone broth drinkers avow that the collagen in their simmering soups has an all-over rejuvenating effect on bones, joints, and muscles. We're keeping our eye on collagen-based beverages for a few reasons, including specific marketing as a beauty boost for the skin. **BBGLO** functional shots promise 5,000 mg of collagen peptides per 2.4 oz bottle. Its three formulas all focus on skin, but two offer additional ingredients for joint health and relaxation. **Vital Proteins** also takes a unique approach with its Collagen Veggie Blend. Highlighting more holistic nutrition from whole foods (11 organic fruits and vegetables), the drink mix delivers collagen to a wider audience than it normally reaches using condition-specific marketing. The label does speak to collagen's benefit claims for bone, joints, and skin, but it's worth a mention that the message has moved from front-and-center to the back of the jar. Also free from dairy, gluten, and soy, the mix is marketed as Autoimmune Protocol (AIP) approved, Paleo-friendly, and Whole30 approved.



PERSONALIZED POTABLES

Several savvy brands showed off on-trend beverages with interesting functional focuses. Our team's top picks cover a range of lifestyles and nutritional needs.

From the Italian word for goodness, **Bonta Hydration** takes on the functional beverage category with a unique inspiration: the Mediterranean diet. Each of four flavors takes aim at targeted benefit claims (Immunity, Inflammation, Longevity, Radiance) and highlights the specific supporting polyphenol antioxidants in the fruits, herbs, and vitamins it contains. The personalized approach has certainly proven popular, but it will be interesting to see how the drinks perform based on their diet tribe association.



The Maple Guild markets maple in many forms (cream, syrup aged in bourbon barrels, and a vinegar that won the NEXTY for Best New Condiment), but our tasters also took note of two unique beverage integrations. Maple works well to lightly sweeten several flavors of iced black and green teas, and the brand takes a uniquely sporty approach to marketing its fruit flavored maple waters, too. Adding B-vitamins and electrolytes to the line, the appeal to athletes helped these enhanced maple waters stand out from others in the Expo aisles.



SPINS' REFRIGERATED and SHELF STABLE PLANT WATER categories capture aloe, cactus, coconut, maple, and other plant/tree water drinks to keep track of the trends in this key area of the refreshment beverage space. Combined, the two categories posted 18% and \$17.9M in cross-channel growth over the prior year. Representing a small but growing subset, shelf stable maple water products grew 77% (\$363K).



True Tonics touch on trends like Ayurveda-inspired botanicals, natural alternative sweeteners (erythritol, stevia, and sugar blend), and targeted benefit claim names like Brain, Fit, Immuno, and Zen. The carbonated tonics are certified organic by QAI and Non-GMO Project Verified, but you won't find either insignia on the front label: instead the brand faces the sugar-conscious consumer with each tonic's calorie count (between 5 and 45) per 12 oz can.

BAMBOO BREAKS OUT

From the makers of **blk** alkaline water, **Banu** is a functional water made from bamboo leaves. In addition to the bamboo plant's highly sustainable status for its quick regrowth, bamboo is well known as a source of the mineral silica, studied for its role in supporting the connective tissue matrix in the body's production of collagen. With four flavors on the way, this product certainly stands out among plant waters today. We look forward to seeing how bamboo water fares in the marketplace soon.





THE GOOD BUGS OF **BEV**

Probiotics featured prominently across categories at Expo West, including in numerous enhanced waters. **Karma Probiotics and Wellness Waters'** differentiator is in the delivery. A separate compartment holds key ingredients in the KarmaCap for release just before consumption. The brand claims this packaging protects the potency of special ingredients like probiotics and vitamins in each of five probiotic flavors, plus added fiber marketed for digestive health, and six flavors of wellness waters with distinct functional benefit claims: Fitness Accelerator, Healthy Hydration, Immunity Booster, Mood Elevation, Natural Lift, and Sharper Thinking.

Drinking waters enhanced with probiotics have grown 622% and \$1.7M in sales over last year. Learn more about the success of probiotic waters in [BevNet's article featuring SPINS' VP of Content Services Judy Seybold!](#)



Among other probiotic drinks of note at the show, **Kevita's** recently launched root beer flavor is made with ashwaganda, astragalus, cinnamon, ginger, and sassafras. Recently acquired by **PepsiCo**, we like the brand's botanical approach to a familiar soft drink flavor with broad appeal. **Farmhouse Culture's** new Gut Punch sparkling probiotic drinks could compete with Kevita, offering soda flavors like Cola and Orange Cream as well as more unique Cherry Cacao and Strawberry Hibiscus selections in the organic line.

Brew Dr. kombucha flavors often take a personalized functional approach (Clear Mind, Uplift, etc.), but its newest seasonal brew takes a page from craft beer's book – although not in quite the same way as [the Citrus Hop flavor we featured in our Expo West 2016 review](#). This year's Vanilla Oak also includes interesting ingredients like angelica root, cherry bark, roasted chicory and dandelion roots, and its namesake vanilla bean and white oak bark.



We highlighted **Pressery's** coconut vinegar drinks as part of [our 2017 Trend Predictions webinar just before Expo West](#), but the brand presented two new organic products to maximize microbiome health at the show. Sparkling drinking vinegars proclaim their prebiotic properties from the front label. On-trend sippable soups in sweet and savory flavors (Coconut Carrot, Fruit Gazpacho, Honeydew Melon, Zesty Zucchini) shout out probiotics as well as 1,000 mg of collagen.

Dahlicious made its name with north Indian-inspired lassi in sophisticated flavors from grass fed, organic dairy milk. Its latest launch features cultured, plant-based alternatives in drinkable almond milk kefir and almond milk yogurt cups. On both dairy and non-dairy lines, each product proudly announces the billions of probiotics contained within.

NOT JUST FOR GROWN-UPS

While grass fed continues to grow across dairy categories, **Munchkin** is the first to source 100% grass fed milk for infant formula. The brand's standards are strict and transparent, sourcing milk from farms in New Zealand where the climate permits year-round grazing, and the formulas are also free from GMOs, grain, and rBGH.



DIFFERENT FROM **THE DAILY GRIND**

Clever natural brands are always stirring up new ways to drink coffee, but this year we found a great selection of new brews that change up the morning routine with exciting coffee alternatives.

Wize Monkey's farm in Nicaragua grows coffee, but they're not serving it the way you think. Instead of focusing on the beans, this brand harvests and dries the leaves of the coffee plant to be infused like a tea, which the brand says is high in antioxidants and low in caffeine. Because the leaves can be harvested year-round (as opposed to just three months for beans), the crop provides important economic stability to farm workers, who can put down roots instead of traveling in search of seasonal employment. The teas are packaged in biodegradable tea bags and post-consumer recycled paper, and they're labeled farm-direct and farmer-owned, gluten free, non-GMO, and vegan. All five flavors – Earl Grey, Jasmine, Mango Party, Minty Marvel, and Original – taste great, and the brand's community impact and inventive methods earned our admiration as well as a NEXTY Award for the Best Mission-Based Product at Expo West 2017.



Both tea and cold brew coffee are important players in the ready-to-drink segment: at Expo West, two brands caught our eye with beverages borrowing some of the best characteristics from each subset. **B Sweet** and **Caveman Coffee** each offered cold brew hibiscus tea with a nitro boost, adding creamy complexity and texture to the tropical flavors of the tea. Caveman Coffee's version is unsweetened, nicely tart, and well suited to its 16 oz can. B Sweet's 11 oz version is sized right for its sweeter taste, too, and the brand's nitro cold brew matcha ranked high on our tasters' lists, as well.

Another on-trend coffee alternative comes from **Macaccino**. Roasted maca root, long praised for enhanced energy, is blended into a powder with other savory flavors like cinnamon, cocoa, mesquite, and nutmeg. In an original mocha flavor and a peppermint variation, the Non-GMO Project Verified, organic, and vegan superfood drink comes together with hot water as easily as instant coffee with none of the caffeine.

Functional Ingredient – Maca has grown 52% and \$1.4M in cross-channel sales over prior year in food and beverage segments.



With a focus on authentic, traditional flavors, ethical sourcing, and regenerative agriculture, **Cacoco** presents certified organic and Non-GMO Project Verified drinking chocolate from unroasted heirloom cacao in compostable, zero-waste packaging. Also Certified Paleo and Vegan, the four varieties feature different combinations of coconut sugar, lucuma, and whole leaf stevia for sweetness with a range of interesting flavors like cardamom, habanero, mesquite, orange peel, and vanilla bean, plus functional ingredients like maca, reishi, shilajit, and turmeric. With more assertive positioning as an alternative to coffee, **Crio Bru** offers eight organic varieties of ground cacao from the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Ghana, and Venezuela, ranging from light to French roast, and even has a few familiar flavors like peppermint and pumpkin spice. The brand praises cacao's high antioxidant content, minerals, and sustained energy from theobromine without coffee's caffeine.

From personalized nutrition to probiotics, pulses to traceability, whole animal to whole plant philosophies and more, countless Natural Products Industry trends crossed categories to converge on snacks at Expo West!



Hemp snacks were a highlight with two leading the pack: **Manitoba Harvest's** Sriracha seasoning coats and sticks to its toasted seeds perfectly, and **Evo Hemp** featured a U.S.-grown claim on crunchy, barbecue-flavored crisps with chia seeds.

If at first it seems strange to highlight a nut butter here, consider that **Crazy Richard's** positions its PB Burst in single-serve squeeze packs as a convenient snack for active consumers on the go. The peanut butter pouches offer enhanced performance, citing functional ingredients like astaxanthin from marine algae, B-vitamins, and decaffeinated green tea extract, supporting the targeted sports nutrition focus of the snack, too.



CHECKING IN *On Chips*



Classic natural potato chip brand **Kettle** tries on trendy new flavors: Korean Barbeque, Tropical Salsa (cooked in avocado oil), and one more that touches on the craft cocktail trend. The unusual Moscow Mule chips transpose the drink's tart lime and spicy ginger tastes for an interesting and decidedly unique snack from the established snack brand.

As a core natural brand with deep roots in sustainable agriculture, **Lundberg** launched new Organic Grounded Snacks made from quinoa and red rice. The new tortilla chips are certified by the Whole Grains Council as 100% whole grain, and they contain no corn or gluten. A few classic flavors appear with a sophisticated twist, such as cheesy Aged White Cheddar and French Onion with sour cream, but others skew more contemporary or experimental, such as smoky Ancho Chile and sweet Cinnamon Sugar.

Last year's haul included **Living Intention's** innovative inclusion of probiotics in superfood chips. This year, **Luke's Organic** debuted a sprouted chip with probiotics, and **Farmhouse Culture** launched probiotic Kraut Krisps in five flavors that mix their mainstay fermented veggies with masa in yet another extension of their offering.



In **SHELF STABLE CHIPS & PRETZELS & SNACKS**, items with prebiotic and probiotic content have grown 355% and \$1.7M over last year's sales!

MEATY *Matters*

Brands aren't slowing down on meat snacks in familiar forms or new ones. **The New Primal** delivered on last year's promise of Paleo snacks positioned specifically to kids. **EPIC** paved the way for natural pork rinds with an ethos of animal welfare and whole animal utilization, and this year **4505 Meats** followed suit with humane claims. **Southern Recipe Small Batch** also showed off its pork rinds in trendy specialty flavors like Korean Kimchi BBQ, Pineapple Ancho Chile, and Spicy Dill.



Paleo-positioned jerky and meat snacks grew 88% with an additional \$9M over last year's sales.



But bars, jerkies, sticks, and snack mixes aside, the most creative meat snack we saw at Expo came from **Wilde** in the form of crunchy chips made of free-range chicken. The brand lists the chips' high protein content (15g) prominently on the front of the bag along with a nod to the coconut oil used to cook the chips, gluten and grain free claims, and the Non-GMO Project Verified seal. The simple ingredient list stays short with just chicken, coconut oil, tapioca starch, and the spices that make up the three fairly traditional chip flavors: Barbeque, Jalapeno, and Sea Salt.

PORTABLE AND PROGRESSIVE

This year did not disappoint when it came to bars! We found three distinct examples of evolution in this key category of natural products innovation.



Growing from granola, **Purely Elizabeth** is branching out to new wellness bars with adaptogenic superfood mushrooms in partnership with **Om, Organic Mushroom Nutrition**. (We featured Om's fermented mushroom powders after Expo East last year. [Learn more here!](#)) Formulated for functional, personalized benefits including Energy, Immunity, Mind, Refresh, and Shine, the bars are also certified gluten free, organic, and vegan, and Non-GMO Project Verified.

Vegetarians and vegans have long looked to tofu for plant-based protein, but **House Foods** takes kitchen preparation out of the equation with a portable new snack. Geared toward active consumers on the go with a playful, sporty package design, refrigerated Go Umami baked tofu bars' high protein content features prominently on the label, followed by gluten free and kosher certifications and Non-GMO Project Verification. The bars are available in three flavors not entirely unlike those of the animal-based bar set: Hickory Smoke, Orange Teriyaki, and Savory.



Cheese and chocolate? It works for **Yooli's** refrigerated bars made from farmer's cheese with a dark chocolate coating. The unusual snacks come in Coconut, Strawberry, and Vanilla flavors with label claims like gluten free, low sodium, and 6-7 grams of protein in each bar.

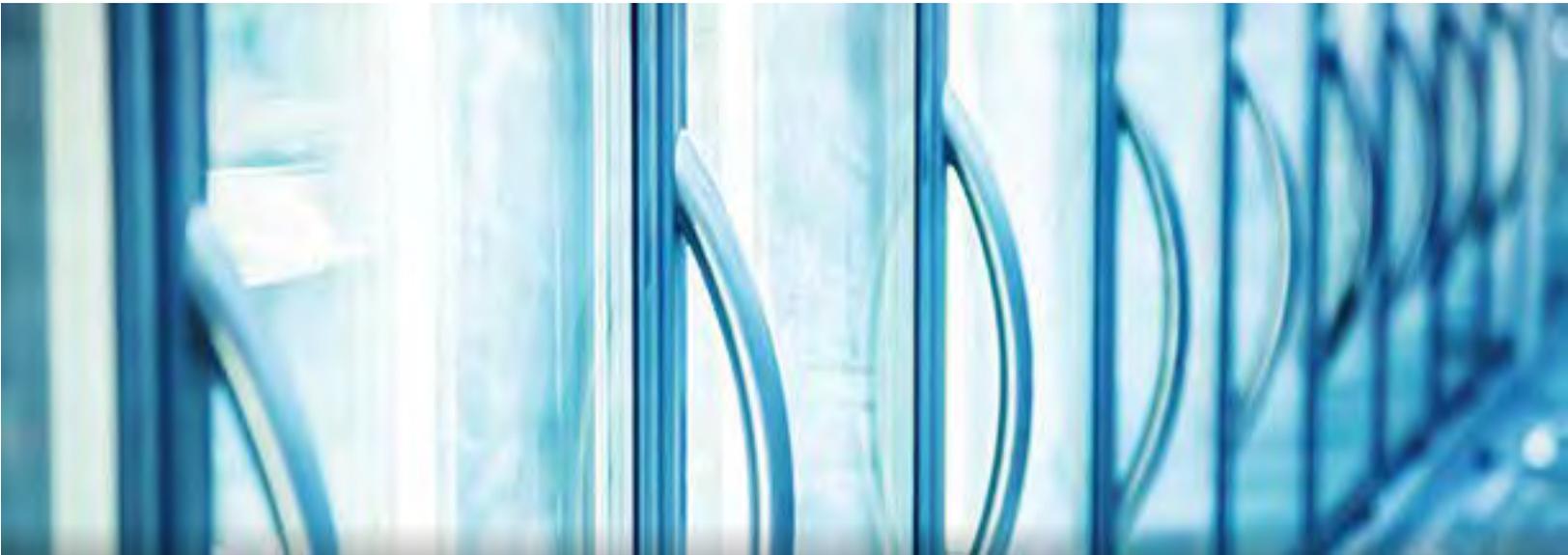
The **SHELF STABLE WELLNESS BARS & GELS** category is growing at 9% cross-channel over last year and represents a \$2.4T total market. While refrigerated bars are still a small subset, they outpace the total category growth rate: up 19% over last year!



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HEAT-AND-EAT PLANT-BASED TREATS



Last year, prepared foods for Paleo consumers had a strong presence at Expo West. This year, many convenience foods catered to the plant-based crowd with easy, on-trend offerings.



As a veteran of vegetarian meat alternatives, **Lightlife** taps into two hot trends with its recent launch for the frozen aisle: bold global flavors and one-bowl meals. The five new bowls incorporating pulses, quinoa, tempeh, and veggies are all Certified Vegan, and most are gluten free.

Also in the frozen aisle but newer to the market, the **Sweet Earth Natural Foods** brand launched its line of Artisan Bowls with international flavors, calling on Cuban, French, Korean, Moroccan and other cuisines. Front labels call out 10-23 grams of plant-based protein in each serving.



Field Roast rolled out new vegan products, too, extending its line from center-of-the-plate protein to convenient frozen meals and snacks. New macaroni and cheese meals use the brand's own cheesy Chao sauce, and meatless Fruffalo Wings and Miniature Corn Dogs incorporate signature meatless sausages. **Upton's Naturals**, known for flavored jackfruit and seitan meat alternatives, also ventured into meals with vegan Ch'eesy Bacon Mac, featuring pre-cooked noodles, smoky seitan bacon, and a creamy sauce.



SPINS' **Plant Based Positioning** attribute focuses on categories that include alternatives to foods traditionally made with animal-based ingredients. The attribute affords a clear view of where consumers choose plant-based alternatives over dairy and meat options.

Plant Based Positioned items in the **FROZEN ENTREES** category are up 20%, posting an additional \$24M in sales over last year's numbers.



FRESH NEW FLAVORS

Three innovative condiments spiced up our Expo experience with category innovation, creative reuse, and international flavors.



Wildbrine impressed us at Expo West 2016 with probiotic gut shots made from the leftover juice of the veggies the brand ferments for kimchi and kraut. This year, the brand's resourceful flair resulted in one of our absolute favorite finds at the show. The new Probiotic Spicy Kimchi Sriracha is double fermented and delicious with fiery potential to please a wide range of natural, specialty, and conventional consumers.

Our Product Library team has had an eye on the growing trend of refrigerated hot sauces with probiotic content for some time! Last year, we created a specific **Product Type** value to capture this spicy segment's growth. Though they're still a relatively small section of the market, probiotic refrigerated hot sauces are growing: up 39% over last year!

An offshoot of two popular San Francisco restaurants, **Burma Love Natural Foods** brings Burmese cuisine to home cooks. On trend with fermented foods and tea for flavor, the Fermented Tea Aioli packs a punch of rich umami flavor that's also vegan.

Most flavored nut butters get a sweet treatment: chocolate, fruit, honey, vanilla, etc. In two new Nutty Infusions, **Ellyndale Foods** adds a twist to the category with spicy Ginger Wasabi and Mango Chili cashew butters. The bold savory flavors work well in dips, sauces, and spreads as well as to shake up a sandwich, and both flavors are labeled gluten free, kosher, Non-GMO Project Verified, vegan, and made in a peanut-free facility.

SAVING ROOM FOR SOMETHING SWEET

As shoppers grow ever more conscious of the sugar they consume, daily decadence could become a tougher sell. Natural brands know a thing or two about combining fun and functional foods, though, and we're inclined to treat ourselves to these three desserts we found circling the intersection of health and indulgence.

Eatpops turns health food into a frosty treat with minimalist recipes redolent of trendy juice bars. Three of seven flavors feature the words cleanse or detox right in their name – not your typical dessert!

Cocoa percentages climbed in several chocolate bars we saw across the show, but we're especially sweet on the craft confections of **Olivia Chocolat**. With no milk solids, the company makes decidedly dark, dairy free, organic, raw chocolate from fair trade, single origin beans. Our standouts are the totally sugar free 100% cocoa bar and the 92% bar that's lightly sweetened with maple sugar.

Overall, shelf stable chocolate candy declined 2.1% in cross-channel sales since last year, but *Raw Positioned* chocolate grew 13%!

Luna & Larry's Organic Coconut Bliss covers a lot of bases with dairy free desserts and close attention to cross-contamination of other allergens. The brand's newest treat sandwiches its trademark coconut milk ice cream between cookies made with flax, hemp, and sprouted flours. Both Dark Chocolate and Vanilla flavors are free of gluten and soy and Non-GMO Project Verified.



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PARITY *for Pets*

In addition to the growing number of animal welfare claims and certifications we found across the pet segment at Expo West, another qualification stood out. Human-grade claims level the playing field between premium food for people and pets.



The Association of American Feed Control Officials qualifies a human-grade claim as one that meets standards to be edible for humans and follows Good Manufacturing Practices. [Learn more about these standards here.](#)



Open Farm's pet foods are held to high standards for nutrition, responsible and sustainable farming, and transparency across the supply chain. The Catch-of-the-Season Whitefish Recipe for cats is 100% grain free, Ocean Wise Recommended and Seafood Watch approved, and packed with non-GMO ingredients like chicory root, dandelion greens, garbanzo beans, and organic coconut oil. The brand is also the first from the pet industry to partner with Humane Farm Animal Care, and each package featuring beef, chicken, or pork proudly displays the Certified Humane seal.

Riley's Organics features flavors dogs love like peanut butter and pumpkin in organic treats their owners can appreciate, too. All five flavors of treats are labeled 100% human grade, certified organic, made in the U.S.A., and non-GMO, as well as free from corn, soy, and wheat. There's one Beef & Barley flavor, and four others (Peanut Butter & Molasses, Pumpkin & Coconut, Sweet Potato, and Tasty Apple) are all Certified Vegan.



This brand doesn't make an explicit human grade claim on the package, but **Buckley's** brand ambassadors did sample Ruff Puff Light & Crunchy Dog Treats to human visitors at their Expo West booth. (Not bad, our taster says!) The treats are made from navy beans, pearled sorghum, and rice and come in Sweet Potato & Apple and White Cheddar flavors. Liberty Grain Free dog foods call out a single animal protein in each flavor, Chicken or Lamb, which is mixed with flax, fruits, pulses like garbanzo beans and peas, and other vegetables without any artificial colors, flavors, or preservatives, or corn, soy, or wheat.



In a combined view of pet food (for cats and dogs) and pet treat subcategories, SPINS measures the sales growth of items from the *Natural Positioning Group* at 14.5% – a strong contrast to the total segment's flatter 1.1% change over last year.



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The SPINS Product Library is the most comprehensive source of Natural, Organic, and Specialty Products Industry information. In our database of nearly 2 million UPCs, we track each product for an expansive list of key attributes, allowing for trillions of nuanced insights.

Our team of experts provides a panoramic view of the industry, lending over 250 years of collective experience to its unique perspective of emerging trends.

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