

Food and Beverage Sector Update



EXPO WEST 2026 IN REVIEW

EXPO WEST 2026 HIGHLIGHTS

- Healthier Hydration is Here
- Protein Snacks Prevail
- Three Key Take-Aways from Expo West
- Latest Food & Beverage Valuations

EXPO WEST 2026 BY THE NUMBERS

Natural
Products
Expo's 45th
Year

80,000
attendees
from 130
countries

Over
3,300
Exhibitors



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Healthier Hydration is Here!

More than 200 beverage companies attended Expo West in Anaheim, CA with functional hydration as the leading category. Much of the beverage buzz revolved around the bigger players in gut-health – **Poppi**, **Simply Pop**, and **Culture Pop**.

Spindrift Beverages launched Spindrift® Tea, a line of non-carbonated iced teas made with real brewed tea and real squeezed fruit. The Expo West launch extends Spindrift's commitment to beverages made without ultra-processed shortcuts, and as the only beverage brand with the full portfolio verified under the Non-Ultraprocessed Food (Non-UPF) Standard

Notably, there were several mushroom-based, adaptogenic seltzers such as **Pokka Dot**, **Lift**, **Brēz**, **Elevate**, **Flow** and **Dream** that attracted much attention too.

Fast-growing, **Good Idea Drinks** sampled their line of functional drinks, clinically-proven to balance blood-sugar levels and improve metabolic-health.



Protein Snacks Prevail

Consumers are demanding more protein in their diet, especially when it comes to snacks and beverages. Recently launched **Protein Pop Plus** offers 30 grams of protein in a 12 -ounce serving, and **Gutsy Organic** smoothies offers 7 grams of protein and 8 grams of fiber per serving. Clearly, the increased adoption of GLP-1 drugs remains a key driver in greater protein and fiber consumption.

Chomps has always been a fan-favorite among beef-stick aficionados, and at this year’s Expo they launched their new Chicken meat stick to rave reviews.

Simply Protein is continuing to grow its strong portfolio of better-for-you protein snacks with two new Protein Tortilla Chip flavors — Kickin' Jalapeno Ranch and Fiesta Taco — alongside fan favorites like Sea Salt, Hint of Lime, and Hint of Habanero. Packed with 7 grams of plant-based protein per serving, these restaurant-style Protein Tortilla Chips hold up on their own or with dips, delivering a satisfying, flavorful crunch.

Inspired by the fan-favorite pizza combinations from Dobrik’s West Hollywood pizzeria, the **WAVERS** line captures the essence of fun and adventure in snacking. The brand’s mission is to deliver high-quality, flavorful snacks that bring people together, whether in a social setting or during a quiet night in.

Jenna, Kevin, and Katrina showcasing **Wild Fox’s** assortment of crunchy, clean trail, omega, energy, and protein mixes with no refined sugars. Also featured are their variety of protein bars and roasted nut snacks.



Key Takeaways from Expo West 2026

The crowds at Expo West this year were greeted by hundreds of new brand innovations that enable consumers to make healthier choices in food and nutrition. Increasingly it's clear that in 2026, consumers have expanded their purchase habits based on these three take-aways:

- Protein & Fiber will continue to drive growth in functional food and beverages:**
Newly revised federal dietary guidelines underscore the message, recommending significantly increasing daily protein intake to 1.2–1.6 grams per kilogram of body weight, almost double the previous recommendation—with a significant focus on animal protein including red meat and dairy. Meanwhile, Americans are falling short in other areas—especially fiber-rich foods like beans, peas, lentils, fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and nuts and seeds.
- Healthy hydration has become a lifestyle:**
Healthy hydration is growing due to a growing wellness culture, increased focus on preventative health, and the influence of social media trends that position reusable water bottles (like Stanley, Yeti) as lifestyle accessories. Driven by the desire to avoid sugary drinks, over 32% of U.S. adults are more motivated to pursue healthy lifestyles, boosting sales of bottled and functional water for better energy, skin, and metabolism.
- Private Label innovation is challenging big brands:** Leading retailers have increased their offerings of natural and organic private label products. According to the Private Label Manufacturers Association (PLMA), private label sales are growing 3x the rate of their name-brand competitors. Today, private label brands are competing on value, quality, health and sustainability – not just price. Expo West showcased many new examples of Private Label food and beverage brands that feature probiotics, protein, fiber and hydration.



M&A Expertise For Founders & Families



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CMG Industry Groups

Manufacturing	Services	HVAC	Consumer	Food & Beverage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aerospace & Defense • Tools & Equipment • Diversified Industrial • Niche Manufacturing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversified Services • Facilities & Residential • Industrial Services • Distribution & Logistics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manufacturing • Distribution • HVAC Services • Building Automation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pet Products • Infant & Juvenile Products • Sporting Goods • Apparel & Accessories • Household Goods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food • Alcoholic Beverages • Non-Alcoholic Beverages

1987
Founded

\$5 Billion
Aggregate Transaction Values

450+
Client Engagements

1 Objective
Successful Client Outcomes

Select Food & Beverage Transactions

 Beverage production assets have been acquired by 	 has signed a master distribution with 	 has been acquired by 	 has been acquired by 	 has been acquired by
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