

## #1 Food Industry Trend for 2021 by An Ho ~ R&D Director

Food trends from 2020, such as functional and fortified foods, exotic flavors, plant based proteins, CBD, and clean label, will continue into 2021. But an unspoken food industry trend that is going to be bigger in 2021 is the topic of being responsible amidst Covid-19. Responsibility as a food manufacturer means insuring the foods you make are safe and sustainable.

In food manufacturing, it is not possible to work from home. It would be great if you could run the manufacturing line via Zoom, but that is not the case. So, a key focus for the workforce in 2021 is restoring trust and safety that their manufacturing facility is a secure environment. An enormous amount of confidence has been placed on manufacturers by regulators. Companies that are FDA-regulated must know their collective responsibility to safeguard the entire supply chain's integrity. Increased knowledge on the virus has led food companies to become more equipped to deal with protecting employees in production plants. With that, manufacturers should expect, and prepare for on-site inspections from the FDA or other respected agencies.

## Safety + Sustainability

In 2020, sustainability issues were not a priority as everyone was dealing with how to handle Covid-19. Prior to the pandemic, the world was trying to reduce the use of plastic. However, plastic became essential to avoid the spread of Covid-19. Large amounts of plexi-glass are used in every public establishment and the use of single use plastic for tableware was enormous. This has caused quite a regression in sustainability. Sustainability issues need to be a priority in 2021. It is important that the industry recognize there is a need to work towards eliminating plastics and single use plastics, which will likely happen throughout this year.

Not only is plastic waste a problem, but obviously food waste is an issue. 2021 will also be the year when the concerning issue of food waste gets some attention. The trend will be that food companies try to develop innovative ways to use materials that food consumers throw away. There are several companies that are already initiating this concept. For example, cocoa fiber is the by-product of processing cocoa. The fiber is quite nutritious as an insoluble fiber and promotes health and nutrition. Also, beer companies use grain, but only the sugar is needed to make the beer. Fiber and protein remain which are milled into a flour-like material that is used to make nutritional bars and snacks.

In summary, trends do not have to be glamorous and bizarre. They can also have a meaningful impact on our lives like the food industry trends taking place this year. We should all do our part to follow the trend of being food responsible.

## A Deluxe Experience!

Our R&D experts teamed up with California-based dairy partner, Crystal Creamery, to create a decadent chocolate milk! The milk is aptly titled Deluxe Whole Chocolate Milk. The rich chocolate flavor is the result of blended premium cocoas combined with Crystal Creamery's farm fresh milk and sweetened with pure cane sugar.

Flavored milks are ideal for drinking on their own or for skipping the coffee house and making your own indulgent latte at home! IFPC has developed over sixty milk flavors for our customers all across the United States. From cake flavors to holiday favorites, we have a flavor your customers will love. If you are looking to develop a custom flavored beverage, contact our R&D team at [info@ifpc.com](mailto:info@ifpc.com) for more information.



## Small But Mighty Dairies by Emily O'Chiu ~ Product Development Scientist

Micro-dairies are small, independent dairy producers that typically raise and milk cows and process finished dairy products in one location; some with a herd as small as four cows. Nationwide, micro-dairies are seeing great success in a challenging food industry environment. Here are some of the trends they are capitalizing on that other businesses can lean in to:

**Local** – Consumers are increasingly wanting to support local businesses and spend their money close to home. Food manufacturers can celebrate their hometown pride by creating new flavors or packaging inspired by local sports teams or nearby landmarks.

**Sustainability** – Care for the environment is a concern that is always at the forefront. Micro-dairies are able to advertise their pasture-raised cows and often use recyclable glass bottles. Sharing behind-the-scenes sustainability practices can build consumer confidence in a brand.

**Partnerships** – What goes together better than milk and cookies? Dairies partnering with bakeries is a natural choice for cross promotion and co-branding. Restaurants are another popular choice for food manufacturing partnerships.

IFPC is proud to partner with micro-dairies across the United States including Rolling Lawns Farm in Greenville, IL, Shatto Milk Company in Osborn, MO, and Turner Dairy Farms in Pittsburgh, PA, just to name a few. Rolling Lawns Farm sells their pints of flavored milk in several local bakeries and in turn features their baked goods at their on-site café aptly named, The Milk House. Shatto Milk Company produced Red Velvet Milk in honor of the Kansas City Chiefs big game appearance. Turner Dairy Farms created birthday cake-flavored milk to commemorate its 90th birthday!



Photo Credit: [facebook.com/ShattoMilk](https://www.facebook.com/ShattoMilk)



Photo Credit: [facebook.com/rollinglawnsfarm](https://www.facebook.com/rollinglawnsfarm)



Photo Credit: [facebook.com/TurnerDairyFarms](https://www.facebook.com/TurnerDairyFarms)

## Food Industry Trend Predictions by Rachel Stefaniw ~ Lab Manager

The editors of *Food Technology* magazine recently shared their trend predictions for 2021. Not surprisingly, most of the anticipated trends are heavily influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic. Private-label retail offerings will continue to rise; with their restaurants closed, chefs and owners are using this avenue to keep their products and brands in front of consumers, and even grow their customer base to new markets. Alternately, ghost kitchens, restaurants that offer only delivery or take-out, will continue to surge. This will allow new concepts to open without the investment needed for a dine-in space. The pandemic has seen us in front of screens more than ever, and consequently, people are wondering about the effects on eye health. Expect to see foods with more nutrients like lutein and vitamins C and E to counteract symptoms like eye fatigue from prolonged screen time. While some consumers will spend without hesitation on food with health and wellness claims, others who have taken a pandemic-induced financial hit will be looking for more budget-conscious options in store aisles. Overall, though, the pandemic has brought the idea of “food as medicine” to the forefront, so the unique health benefits in different foods will be more strongly featured, and claims like organic, clean, and local could take a backseat.



Interest in fermented foods, with their prolonged shelf-life advantages, will provide a new vehicle for probiotics outside of dairy. Kefir, while dairy-based, is a lactose-free, fermented beverage. It will star as an ingredient in various recipes that might traditionally use milk or yogurt. The editors expect to see a rise in mushrooms as ingredients as well – boasting many health benefits, they are conveniently clean label and plant-based. One prediction that may seem strange in the era of masks and constant handwashing? Reusable packaging use will get more attention, but with the burden of cleanliness on retailers or third-party companies. Instead of the “bring your own” model, we will see more options for packaging that requires a deposit, much like the glass milk bottles associated with certain dairies.

### Did you know?

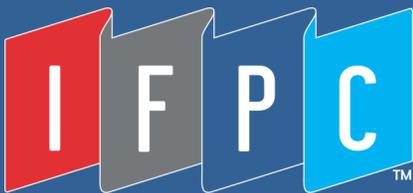
Daniel Chase created the first conversation heart in 1866. Today, over 8 million conversation heart sweet treats are sold with the traditional messages such as “Be Mine,” “Hug Me,” and “I Love You.” What message are you sending to your sweetheart this Valentine’s Day?

Reference: [food.ndtv.com/food-drinks](http://food.ndtv.com/food-drinks)



### Brought to you by IFPC’s Trends Teams

*The Secret Ingredient* is a quarterly newsletter summarizing the efforts of IFPC’s Trends Team. The Trends Team is comprised of An Ho, R&D Director; Jenn Adams, Business Development Manager; Renee Famula, Marketing Manager; Charlie Hall, Food Technologist, Product Development; Emily O’Chiu, Product Development Scientist; Rachel Stefaniw, Lab Manager, Product Development; Ted Busch, Director of Technical Services; and Mat Brady, Marketing Specialist. For story ideas and comments, please email [info@ifpc.com](mailto:info@ifpc.com).



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