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INDUSTRY NEWS

Healthy Planet set to open new Toronto East store

GROCERYBUSINESS.CA 04/29

Healthy Planet is opening its latest location in the East Scarborough area on May 24.

In line with Healthy Planet's dedication to supporting the community, the new location will feature a curated selection of products, ranging from vitamins and supplements to fresh organic produce and a wide selection of meats. Customers will also have the opportunity to consult with in-store nutritionists, who will offer personalized advice and guidance to help individuals achieve their wellness goals.

Jumbo's friendlier anti-shoplifting measures

CANADIANGROCER.COM 04/25

In the Netherlands, grocer Jumbo is attempting to take the sting out of random checks of customers' bags at self-checkouts with its Jumbo Winwiel (win wheel). After customers pass a random bag check, they're rewarded with a spin of the big wheel where they can win free products.

Metro donates \$1M to a Quebec university to support innovation in health, agri-food

GROCERYBUSINESS.CA 04/27

Metro has made a \$1 million donation to the Université de Montréal to stimulate innovation among the next generation of pharmacists and to support progress in the agri-food sector for animal health.

An amount of \$500,000 has been granted to encourage training rooted in the current realities of pharmacists within the Quebec healthcare system.

An additional donation of \$500,000 goes to the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine for the development of research projects in collaboration with the industry to better meet its needs and improve agri-food production and animal health in Quebec and Canada.

INDUSTRY NEWS (cont'd)

Invafresh hires Andrew Cron as chief data officer

CANADIANGROCER.COM 04/25

Fresh grocery platform Invafresh has appointed Andrew Cron as chief data officer.

Walmart adds new grocery line to private brands portfolio

GROCERYDIVE.COM 04/30

Walmart announced a new private label grocery brand called bettergoods.

With most items priced under \$5, bettergoods focuses on three key components: culinary experiences, plant-based and “made without.”

The move comes at a time when private label sales are helping grocers and retailers appeal to price-sensitive consumers.

The line includes 300 items, spanning categories such as frozen, dairy, snacks, beverages, pasta, soups, coffee and chocolate.

The items range from under \$2 to under \$15 and are packaged in brightly colored packaging.

Private label sales accounted for nearly 21% of grocery industry unit sales in 2023 — an all-time high, according to the Private Label Manufacturers Association.

Sam’s Club rolls out receipt verification tech at 120 stores

SUPERMARKETNEWS.COM 04/30

Receipt verification technology unveiled by Sam’s Club is now available at about 20% of its stores.

The warehouse club said that the technology uses computer vision and artificial intelligence to capture images of shoppers’ carts and verify payment.

The technology builds on Sam’s Club’s Scan & Go tech, which enables shoppers to scan products with their smartphones and skip the traditional checkout.

C-Stores Upping the Ante for Food, Beverage and Meal Solutions

PROGRESSIVEGROCER.COM 04/30

According to a Placer.ai report, more consumers are shopping at c-stores, which have experienced consistent year-over-year growth. In its report, Placer.ai attributed the growth to innovation among leading chains.

Some of those innovations center on food, potentially siphoning sales from traditional grocers and quick-service restaurants.

“I think prepared meals have become a game-changer for c-stores. If we look at pre- and post-pandemic, c-stores have been a category where we have seen increases in visits, and they’ve done a good job on the food side of it. It’s not an afterthought anymore,” R.J. Hottovy, head of analytical research at Placer.ai, said.

INDUSTRY NEWS (cont'd)

Canada's supermarkets are losing the battle for your grocery bill

THEGLOBEANDMAIL.COM 04/25

Even as the federal government courts foreign grocery chains in an attempt to lure more competition to Canada, there's mounting evidence Canadian consumers have already shifted their grocery shopping away.

And the winners include Walmart and Costco.

While Statistics Canada reported a drop in retail sales, one exception was the general merchandise category. Compared to last year, general merchandisers saw inflation-adjusted sales climb 12 per cent, while food and beverage stores suffered a real sales decline of 0.9 per cent.

Retail commodity data released by Statscan shows that food sales at general merchandisers are outpacing those at traditional grocery stores.

In fact, for every dollar Canadians spent on food at grocery stores in the fourth quarter of 2023, they spent 42 cents on food at a general merchandiser. In 2019 it was just 26 cents.

MERGERS, ACQUISITIONS & JOINT VENTURES

Impossible Foods secures 'highly anticipated' retail deal with Whole Foods

FOODDIVE.COM 04/30

Impossible Foods and Whole Foods Markets are partnering to launch plant-based chicken products.

Impossible's Chicken Nugget and Chicken Patty products will be available at select U.S. Whole Foods locations.

CEO McGuinness said the company is making up for lost time in terms of its retail strategy.

"We have 15% awareness, meaning 85% of consumers have not heard of us," he said. "We want to be ubiquitous in terms of being available, and you have that choice when you're in grocery stores."

Canadian start-up Growcer secures \$3m to fuel brand expansion

FOODBEV.COM 04/24

Growcer plans to use the capital to expand its growth, extend its market presence into new regions, such as the northeast US, and broaden its product line beyond leafy greens and modular systems.

INTERNATIONAL

Getir pulls out of the US but says FreshDirect will keep operating

GROCERYDIVE.COM 04/29

Rapid delivery company Getir is winding down its operations in the United States as part of a broader plan to concentrate its resources on its home market of Turkey.

But Getir said FreshDirect, the e-grocer it bought, "will continue its operations."

Getir said it decided to leave the U.S., along with the U.K., Germany and the Netherlands, because those markets combined account for only 7% of its revenue.

INTERNATIONAL (cont'd)

McCain unveils products specifically designed for air frying

FOODBEV.COM 04/30

In the U.K., McCain Foods has introduced a new product line specifically designed for air fryers.

The new product range has been endorsed by air fryer brand Ninja.

The new line was developed due to the increasing popularity of air fryers, with reports showing that 45% of UK households own one.

UK food inflation to be 'low single digits' through 2024, says Sainsbury's boss

REUTERS.COM 04/25

In the U.K., Sainsbury's expects food inflation to remain in "low single digits" in 2024.

British food inflation leapt to a 45-year high of 19.2% in March 2023, but it fell to 4% in March, according to official data.

UK grocery inflation fell further to 3.2% this month.

GOVERNMENT

Federal govt. requires producers to take more responsibility for the plastic they put on the market

FOODINCANADA.COM 04/25

The federal government launches the Federal Plastics Registry, a tool to compel plastic producers and other companies across the plastics value chain to help monitor and track plastic from the time it is produced up to its end of life. By better tracking plastic through its full life cycle, both governments and industry will be better equipped to address plastic waste and pollution through increased transparency and sound, robust, evidence-based decision-making.

MARKETING/ADVERTISING

Metro to launch MOI Rewards program across 275 stores in Ontario

GROCERYBUSINESS.CA 04/24

Metro will launch MOI Rewards in all 275 Metro and Food Basics in Ontario this year.

Moi Rewards will allow members to save on their grocery purchases by accumulating and redeeming points in-store and online, and to receive personalized promotions from food banners reaching 75 per cent of households in Ontario.

The MOI Rewards program, launched in May of 2023, has over 2.5 million active Moi members in Quebec.

MARKETING/ADVERTISING (cont'd)

The Save Mart Companies to roll out in-store retail media network

GROCERYDIVE.COM 04/30

In the U.S., The Save Mart Companies plans to roll out In-Store Connect, an in-store retail media network powered by Quad/Graphics, Inc..

To start, 16 of the grocery company's stores will have digital screens, kiosks, end caps, shelf screens and vertical banners throughout, allowing CPG partners to showcase promotions, product information and recommendations to shoppers.

Quad will work closely with the grocer's vendor partners to create and deliver real-time promotions and product insight as customers shop while also integrating with The Save Mart Companies' existing in-store platform, according to the announcement.

With in-store shopping back in full swing, more grocers are finding ways to integrate digital media into their stores.

Pop-Tarts debuts digital short to promote 'Unfrosted' feature film

BAKINGBUSINESS.COM 05/01

Pop-Tarts has unveiled a new digital short written by and starring comedian Jerry Seinfeld to promote his upcoming Netflix feature "Unfrosted," a fictional comedy about the making of Pop-Tarts, which was made without the brand's involvement.

The digital short is now available to watch on social and digital channels while "Unfrosted" will be available to stream on Netflix starting May 3.

Air Miles expands rewards program to wholesale clubs, alcohol retailers

CANADIANGROCER.COM 04/23

Air Miles collectors in Canada can now earn rewards at wholesale clubs and alcohol retailers in addition to grocers.

Air Miles credit card holders will earn two times the Miles at any eligible wholesale club or alcohol retailer..

Starting May 23, collectors can earn Bonus Miles on eligible purchases at alcohol retailers across Canada via receipt-scanning.

Finally, the company welcomed Instacart to airmilesshops.ca, allowing collectors to earn rewards on grocery delivery.

Fanta reprises 'Wanta Fanta' anthem with modern-day twist

DRUGSTORENEWS.COM 04/30

Fanta is going back to the 2000s with a new iteration of its "Wanta Fanta" jingle.

"Wanta Fanta is a shoutout to a generation craving more balance and time out for themselves." said Ibrahim Khan, global vice president of marketing Fanta at The Coca-Cola Company.

MARKETING/ADVERTISING (cont'd)

Gopuff Campaign Invites Consumers to Bring the Magic

CSNEWS.COM 04/29

Gopuff launched its largest-ever national brand campaign, "Bring the Magic," which demonstrates its ability to transform everyday moments into magical experiences, such as getting a forgotten ingredient in the middle of preparing dinner, quickly accessing medicine while home sick or virtually anything in between.

According to the company, the magic of the Gopuff experience is made possible by its vertically integrated business model, which allows it to ensure consistently fast speed, a relevant and reliable assortment and great value for customers.

The "Bring the Magic" campaign debuts with a 60-second hero film that utilizes mind-bending and reality-breaking visuals as the protagonist adds wonder to the world around him, and delivers the feeling one gets from the arrival of every Gopuff bag.

Walgreens has a cult 'peelable' candy, courtesy of a TikTok craze

CNN.COM 04/27

It's tiny, squishy, chewy. It's shaped like a cute baby mango and GenZers have gone crazy over it. Walgreens can't keep it in stock.

It arrived last fall in about 2,500 of its 8,700 US stores, and quickly sold out because, of course, TikTok.

In early January, a video explaining its uniqueness by TikToker @Trinhdoesthings got 8.9 million views.

In the video, she picks up a packet of the candy at a Walgreens store "after seeing it all over social media." She tears it open at her kitchen table and then peels off the outer skin of the mango-shaped gummy and pops the shiny smooth inner pulp into her mouth, proclaiming, "This is so fun." She then proceeds to eat the peel, too, while complimenting its chewy texture.

The timing meshed perfectly with the latest candy consumption trends. The non-chocolate segment overall, which includes gummy candies, has been on a tear primarily because of Gen Z and millennial consumers, according to the National Confectioners Association.

Younger consumers, especially Gen Z are enamored with anything retro and vintage and this trend translates into foods as well. According to industry publication The Food Institute, Millennial and Gen Z shoppers favor fruit-flavored gummies that they've grown up on.

Coke creates AI-powered instrument that only plays 'uplifting sounds'

MARKETINGDIVE.COM 04/24

Coca-Cola unveiled Coke SoundZ, an instrument that plays the "uplifting sounds" of its Zero Sugar soda using artificial intelligence (AI) technology.

Consumers in the U.S. and Europe can access the instrument as a digital app that turns sounds associated with the beverage into melodies. A bottle-shaped physical version has been rolled out to select producers, DJs and social creators around the world.

ENVIRONMENT

Consumers raise questions around sustainable ingredients

FOODDIVE.COM 04/25

Eighty-five percent of consumers consider ingredients to be a significant factor in their food purchasing decisions, according to the Trend to Table report from ingredients producer Ardent Mills. Additionally, 83% of consumers consistently check food labels, with three-quarters of them examining both the ingredient lists and nutrition profiles of food products.

Despite the desire for ethical purchasing, 57% of consumers struggle to access information on sourcing and product origins.

Ardent Mills conducted the recent report based on 10,000 consumer responses to help manufacturers understand consumer behavior.

TECHNOLOGY

Sainsbury's testing AI to combat theft

CANADIANGROCER.COM 04/25

To curb alcohol theft in its stores, U.K. retailer Sainsbury's is turning to artificial intelligence (AI). At a handful of locations, the grocer is trialing AI-powered security cabinets from Indyme. To access the higher-priced alcohol items locked away in the cabinets, customers are guided through four quick steps on a touchscreen after which they receive a response from the security centre alerting them that the cabinet will open and product can be removed. Unlike with other locked cases, customers don't have to wait around for an employee to come and unlock it; according to Indyme, wait times that exceed just one minute leads to shopper dissatisfaction.

How Heineken is using AI to gain a competitive advantage

FOODDIVE.COM 04/23

Swedish tech platform Stravito launched generative AI platform Assistant, which helps food and beverage companies gain better access to consumer insights and stay competitive with other food brands.

Stravito's platform is a chatbot that allows companies to input large datasets and ask it to drill down specific insights.

Heineken, one of the first business customers to use the AI producer's assistant functionality, said the platform will help it boost productivity and reduce the time-to-market for its products.

Heineken's new AI platform partner will bring it closer to consumers' demands with the help of a system that can sift through thousands of data points and provide intelligent analysis, the company says.

Heineken has almost doubled the amount of internal data accessed within in its operations, going from using less than 30 percent to now using close to 60 percent with the help of the platform. The beer maker can now find answers to specific questions that they might have previously conducted in a time-consuming research project, such as what percent of young adults are interested in purchasing nonalcoholic beer.

TECHNOLOGY (cont'd)

Germany's largest grocery chain rolls out AI age-verification tech

SUPERMARKETNEWS.COM 04/30

Germany's largest grocery chain, Edeka Group, is deploying AI-powered age-verification technology at one of its micro locations at Stuttgart Airport.

Diebold Nixdorf's Vynamic Smart Vision Age Verification tech uses AI to estimate the age of customers for purchase of products like alcoholic beverages.

The tech also uses computer vision to determine if customers have failed to scan items, accidentally add an item without scanning, or use false barcodes.

RESEARCH/MARKETING RESEARCH

Canadians more inclined to eat near-expired or expired foods as prices remain high: Survey

CANADIANGROCER.COM 04/25

Dalhousie University's Agri-Food Analytics Lab, with Caddle, surveyed 9,109 Canadians about how they're managing food safety risks.

Half of Canadians believe food inflation and higher food prices have forced them to take more risks with their food.

Fifty eight per cent of respondents said, as a result of inflation, they are more inclined to consume food close to or past its "best before date."

Nearly half of the Canadians who reported consuming potentially risky food were uncertain about its safety. A total of 48% were unsure whether they could get sick.

Twenty per cent of Canadians claim that they have gotten sick after consuming food that was close to or past its best before date.

Nearly half (47%) of respondents said they are conserving their food differently to extend the shelf life of products, such as freezing bread and using vacuum-sealed containers.

Grocery e-commerce sales predicted to grow 3 times faster than in-store sales, report finds

GROCERYDIVE.COM 04/25

Grocery e-commerce sales are predicted to increase at a compound annual growth rate of 4.5% over the next five years — more than three times faster than the 1.3% rate forecasted for in-store grocery sales, Brick Meets Click reported in its U.S. eGrocery Sales Forecast: 2024-28 report.

Excluding ship-to-home, which is a service most grocers don't offer, delivery and pickup sales combined will represent 10.7% of total grocery sales by 2028, according to Brick Meets Click.

Separately, pickup is expected to grow faster (5.4%) than delivery (4.4%) and ship-to-home (2.8%) with pickup predicted to account for nearly 47% of all online grocery sales come 2028.

RESEARCH/MARKETING RESEARCH (cont'd)

Uber Eats Gauges Partner Satisfaction in 'Merchant Impact Report'

PROGRESSIVEGROCER.COM 04/26

According to Uber Eats' 2023 "Merchant Impact Report," in the past year alone, Uber Eats drove billions of dollars in orders to local restaurants, grocery, retail, alcohol and convenience stores across the United States and Canada, and it helped its merchant partners make deliveries to more than 50 million customers. As a result, U.S. and Canadian merchants earned \$15 billion-plus in sales through Uber Eats last year.

Small and medium-sized (SMBs) merchants reported that Uber Eats is a major driver of higher revenue and profitability for them, particularly in a changing economic climate. The service's data showed that among merchants:

- 81% (U.S.) and 83% (Canada) said that using Uber Eats has increased their revenue since joining the platform; of those who said that their revenue has grown, the median increase was 10% in both the United States and Canada.
- 89% (U.S.) and 91% (Canada) anticipated that their revenue from Uber Eats would stay the same or increase in the next year.
- 81% (U.S.) and 83% (Canada) said that their businesses were more profitable with Uber Eats than they would have been without it.
- 71% (U.S.) and 70% (Canada) felt that Uber Eats had a positive impact on their business' ability to navigate current economic challenges.
- 85% (U.S.) and 83% (Canada) reported that offering delivery or pickup services with Uber Eats has benefited their business.

PRODUCT NEWS

Velveeta launches queso in a jar, new Shells & Cheese varieties

FOODDIVE.COM 04/30

Kraft Heinz is bringing its Velveeta cheese brand into queso in a resealable jar.

Velveeta also is launching two new varieties of Shells & Cheese — pizza and buffalo — marking the first additions to the lineup in twelve years. In addition, Kraft Heinz is introducing its first-ever Gluten-Free Shells & Cheese offering for the Velveeta brand.

As consumers look to snack more and value convenience in the products they buy, the jars are positioned to benefit.

Oreo's latest cookie collaboration is a little sour

FOODDIVE.COM 04/26

Sour Patch Kids is working with Oreo to create a sweet and sour version of the popular cookie. The collaboration is inspired by Sour Patch's "playfulness and mischievousness," the company said in a press release.

The cookie will resemble the Golden Oreo, but have flavor profiles of Sour Patch Kids like watermelon and strawberry. While Oreos usually have a creme filling, the Sour Patch versions will feature colored fillings based on the Sour Patch flavor they replicate.

In addition to the flavor combinations, the brands also are teaming up to create exclusive merchandise for the launch. The collection includes a bucket hat, cross-body bag, hair clip and socks.

PRODUCT NEWS (cont'd)

Lindt expands plant-based portfolio with Lindor Oatmilk Truffles

FOODDIVE.COM 04/23

Lindt Lindor launched a plant-based version of its truffles using oatmilk.

The truffles contain a smooth melting center with an outer shell with oat milk chocolate.

While plant-based foods have struggled recently, plant-based chocolate remains a fast-growing segment.

A 2021 survey by Barry Callebaut found that while six in 10 consumers ages 18 to 44 expect each food brand to have plant-based options, only 45% of them were satisfied with current plant-based chocolate offerings.

Mars Wrigley debuts latest confectionery product: Skittles Giants Gooley

FOODBEV.COM 04/30

Mars Wrigley has introduced Skittles Giants Gooley candies, featuring large, soft fruit-flavoured shells filled with a gooley citrus centre.

This latest innovation capitalises on the trend for adventurous and unexpected flavours while tapping into the growing demand for fruit-inspired confectionery.

Riviana's Minute Rice revamps its packaging across the full product range

FOODINCANADA.COM 04/26

Riviana Foods Canada Corporation has unveiled new packaging for all Minute Rice products.

Garima Jain Patodia, Senior Brand Manager of Rice Portfolio for Riviana said that the brand recognizes that Canadians are changing, and they are focusing on the needs of the younger generation.

"Gen-Z and millennials are going into new life stages and have more purchasing power...our instant and microwavable cups fit right into their lifestyles," she said.
