



# From Beef Tallow to Blue Spirulina: 12 Trends from Expo West

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## Expo West 2026 trends point to one clear consumer demand: intentional, transparent, multi-functional wellness.

Shoppers want to know exactly what's in their food (clean protein, beef tallow over seed oils, regenerative sourcing) while getting **maximum** benefit from every bite or sip (stacked functional ingredients, GLP-1 support, beauty-from-within).

At the same time, there's a strong pull toward **nostalgia** with a **modern twist**—whether it's childhood treats upgraded with protein and fiber, or the candy-aisle flavors of a Tokyo konbini reimaged in **functional** beverages.

Next slide, we break down **12 standout trends** that will **shape the specialty food landscape in 2026 and beyond**.



# 12 Trends Expo West 2026

Natural  
Products  
EXPO WEST®



Return of Beef  
Tallow



Regenerative Agriculture  
Gains Momentum



Water Gets an  
Elegant Upgrade



Clean Protein Gets  
Cleaner



Functional Stacking



Nostalgic Treats get  
Functional Makeover



The GLP-1  
Companion



Dates Step Into the  
Spotlight



Ingestible Beauty  
Goes Mainstream



Protein in  
Unexpected Places



Konbini Culture  
Becomes Functional



Blue Tide Superfood:  
The Erewhon Effect

# The Return of Beef Tallow

The seed oil backlash is here. Beef tallow is making a major comeback as a "cleaner" fat alternative, showing up first in chips and sKonnacks—with sweet treats likely next.

Examples:

- Marianne's Organic Beef Tallow
- Hola Mija Organic Tortilla Chips
- Beefy's Own Beef Tallow Potato Chips
- Vandy Classic Potato Chips
- Vaca Chips
- Legacy Roots Beef Tallow Kettle Chips



# Clean Protein Gets Cleaner

Transparency is everything. Consumers want to know exactly where their protein comes from—whether it's eggs, bone broth, or grass-fed whey.

Examples:

- Blue Hour Instant Scrambled Eggs (12g)
- OU-EGG Natural Protein Egg White Chips (12g)
- Clean Simple Clear Protein Powder (20g grass-fed whey)
- HOL Protein Bar with chicken bone broth (20g)
- Oolie Egg Based Yogurt (11g)
- Elmhurst Clean Protein shake (27g plant-based)
- Frozen One (40g)



# The GLP-1 Companion

Diet drug support goes mainstream. Brands are now explicitly marketing products as companions for those on GLP-1 medications or following GLP-1 supportive diets.

Examples:

- Krrush Norwegian Bone Broth (protein, B vitamins, electrolytes)
- Verdant Daily System – GLP-1 Companion (11 core ingredients)
- Todo Protein & Fiber Shakes (natural GLP-1 support)



# Protein in Unexpected Places

Protein where you least expect it. High-protein innovation is infiltrating every comfort food category imaginable.

Examples:

- Chick Protein Iced Coffee (20g)
- Semii Protein Noodles (24g+)
- Zen Pudding (20g)
- Crisp Power Protein Pretzels
- Genius Gourmet Protein Puffs (15g)
- Boba Tea Protein

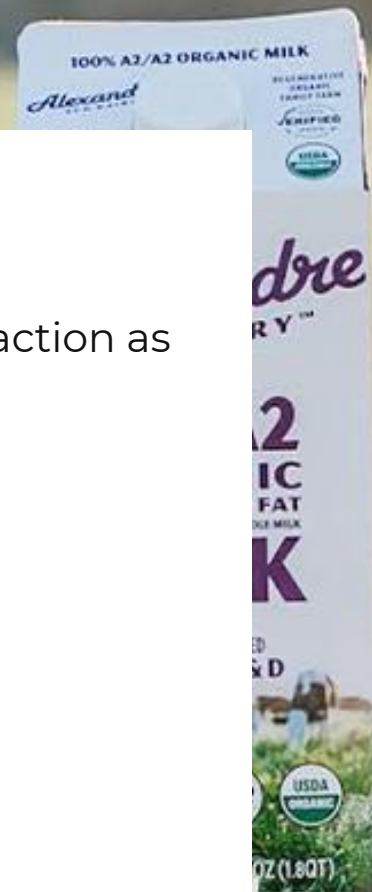


# Regenerative Agriculture Gains Momentum

Beyond organic. Regenerative farming is gaining serious traction as brands prioritize soil health and sustainability in sourcing.

Examples:

- Forecast Coffee Company
- BrightLeaf Sparkling Tea
- CatSpring Yaupon (Texas native tea, matcha)
- New Barn Organics (pasture-raised eggs, plant milk)
- Alexandre Family Farm (100% grass-fed A2 organic dairy)



# Functional Stacking

Why choose one benefit when you can have them all? Products are stacking multiple functional ingredients into single formats.

Examples:

- Hrbvor Herbal Tea (prebiotics, polyphenols, electrolytes)
- Sparkling pre & probiotic drinks with adaptogens & nootropics
- Ringa Holistic Hydration (moringa + apple cider vinegar)
- Thunder Coffee Milk (caffeine + 26g protein)
- Good Belly Protein & Probiotic Smoothie



## Dates Step Into the Spotlight

Dates break out of the health aisle. No longer just for stuffing with nut butter—dates are now showing up candy-coated, dusted, and blended into new formats.

Examples:

- Tamar Date Coffee
- Daddl Candy Dates
- Smood Sweets Candy Dates
- Datefix (medjool dates + orange blossom water)





# Konbini Culture Comes to Functional Beverages

Konbini nostalgia hits functional beverages. The bright, sweet fruit flavors of Japanese and Korean convenience store candies—lychee, melon, concord grape, soursop—are inspiring a new wave of teas and drinks.

Examples:

- Kace Fruit Tea Passion Fruit Lychee
- Liquid IV – Lychee
- Bitte – Soursop Bitter Shots



# Water Gets an Elegant Upgrade

Hydration gets elevated. Water is moving beyond basic electrolytes into sophisticated, botanical-infused offerings in premium packaging.

Examples:

- Cinnamon Water
- Check Check Adzuki Rice Water
- Everflora (osmanthus & peach herbal still water)
- Loonen Water



# Nostalgic Treats Get a Functional Makeover

Childhood favorites, grown-up ingredients. Classic comfort treats get reimagined with functional benefits and better-for-you upgrades.

Examples:

- Mojave Mallows (dipped marshmallows)
- Flings Protein Pastry
- Little Latke Potato Crisps
- Folkland Organic Farm Fries & Tots
- Lasso Gelatin Cup (10g protein, 5g prebiotic fiber)
- Wonder Monday High-Protein Cheesecake
- B.T.R Nation Superfood Crispy Treats
- Tootsy Cassava Waffles
- Lil Bucks Sprouted Crispy Treats



# Ingestible Beauty Goes Mainstream

Ingestible beauty goes functional. Collagen, hyaluronic acid, and beauty-boosting ingredients are being formulated into everyday food and drink.

Examples:

- Greater Than – Hydration for Her
- Glow Beauty Fuel Collagen Protein Bar
- JUGO Beauty + Superfoods (hyaluronic acid, collagen peptides)
- Healthee Collagen Protein Latte



# Blue Tide Superfood: The Erewhon Effect

The cultural influence of Erewhon's viral blue spirulina smoothie continues to ripple through the industry. Sea moss and blue spirulina are now appearing in formats far beyond the smoothie bar.

Examples:

- Oomee Marine Plant Beverage (with seabiotics)
- Kuli Sea Moss & Blue Spirulina Gummies

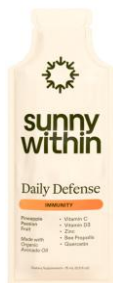


# On the Horizon: Postbiotic and Longevity

Two emerging benefit areas are worth watching closely.

**Postbiotics**—the metabolic byproducts of probiotics—are beginning to appear on labels, with brands like Cheerpop touting a prebiotic, probiotic, and postbiotic soda. As gut health education evolves, postbiotics may become the next major functional claim.

**Longevity** is also gaining traction as a positioning strategy, with brands like Sunny Within explicitly targeting consumers interested in extending health span. As the wellness conversation shifts from weight loss to long-term vitality, longevity-focused formulations could define the next era of functional food.



LEO & DRAGON

**Thank  
You!**

