



Dear Members of the Consumer Brands Association,

My clearest memories of home are the simple ones. They're a particular cereal box on the breakfast table, the soap my mother kept by the kitchen sink, or the brand of coffee that meant the day had officially begun. Small things. And yet, looking back, they are woven through everything: the ordinary mornings, the holidays, the tough moments and the good ones.

This is the quiet truth about the products our industry makes. They've been present in the American home across generations. During wartime and peace. Recessions and recoveries. From historic moments to unremarkable Tuesdays, the food, beverage, household and personal care brands Americans reach for have simply been there, dependable and familiar, woven into the fabric of daily life in this country.

As America marks its 250th birthday, I'm reflecting on this quiet, consistent presence. Not the scale of our industry, though it is vast, nor its economic weight, though that is real as well. What moves me is our constancy: reliably providing affordable, convenient products Americans trust. For so much of this nation's history, our industry has been a fixture in American homes – meeting the needs of people from every walk of American life.

Standing behind every product on the shelf are the people who made it possible: the farmer and the supplier, the scientist and the engineer, the worker on the line and the driver who gets products where they need to go, and the corner grocer and larger retailer. I have had the privilege of meeting these people all across the country, in family businesses now in their third and fourth generations, in companies that have served Americans for more than a century, in exciting start-ups developing what's next. What I see everywhere is remarkably consistent. People who show up, do the work and take real pride in what they produce.

That pride is what drives our industry's constant innovation. It's the new product for changing consumer preferences, the smarter package, the small improvement in convenience that makes daily life run a little smoother. Generation after generation, our industry has quietly reinvented itself to keep that promise of trust and reliability.

So, on this birthday, I am simply grateful. Grateful for an industry that has earned a place in American life by serving it faithfully, and for the people who carry that responsibility forward every day.

Here's to the next 250 years, and to continuing to show up for the families who count on us.

With pride and gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Melissa Hockstad". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'M'.

Melissa Hockstad  
President & CEO, Consumer Brands Association