food & beverage REPORTER

November/December 2025

Why are South African producers rethinking their approach to FROZEN DESSERTS?

FUNCTIONAL CSD'S ARE RESHAPING THE BEVERAGE AISLE

MASTER MEASUREMENT WITH VEGA

A major boost for plastic recycling in South Africa

From the editor

As another remarkable year draws to a close, South Africa's food and beverage sector stands as a powerful testament to resilience, innovation, and sustainable progress. Across the country, businesses are not only adapting to global shifts — they're setting new benchmarks for excellence, circularity, and quality.

In October, the nation's commitment to a greener, more circular economy was reaffirmed with the launch of **Extrupet's** second PET bottle-to-bottle recycling facility — and the first of its kind in the Western Cape. This state-of-the-art expansion at the company's Propet plant in Cape Town will add an impressive 15,000 tonnes of recycled PET (rPET) to the market annually. With this milestone, Extrupet moves closer to doubling its national food-grade rPET capacity to 60,000 tonnes, ensuring that more plastic waste is converted into safe, high-value packaging that re-enters the food system — rather than the environment. It's a major step forward for South Africa's position as a circular economy leader on the continent.

In the realm of food innovation and science, **Innovative Research Solutions (IRS)**, backed by Synercore, has opened a state-of-the-art analytical and research laboratory set to redefine local research and quality assurance. This facility is more than an investment in technology — it's an investment in South Africa's next generation of food scientists and innovators, empowering the industry to accelerate product development, strengthen safety standards, and pioneer new applications in the ever-evolving world of food and beverages.

The commitment to precision and hygiene is also embodied by **VEGA**, whose advanced instrumentation for level and pressure measurement ensures that food producers maintain uncompromising quality while optimising efficiency. From sensors built to the strictest international sanitary standards to designs that simplify cleaning and safeguard food integrity, VEGA's "hygienic by design" philosophy supports a sector where quality and reliability remain non-negotiable.

Meanwhile, South Africa's exporters are reaping the benefits of enhanced logistics with **Maersk's $100 million investment** in the Belcon Cold Store facility in Cape Town. This expansion strengthens the nation's cold chain infrastructure — a crucial advantage for agricultural and perishable goods exporters — and reinforces South Africa's standing as a trusted player in global trade.

On the consumer front, the market continues to shift in exciting directions. A new wave of **functional beverages** is transforming the carbonated soft drink category, driven by younger, health-conscious consumers. With international giants like PepsiCo entering the prebiotic soda space, it's clear that functional claims — from gut health to immunity and fibre enrichment — are no longer fringe features but mainstream expectations. South African producers are embracing this momentum, balancing innovation with authenticity and transparency to meet evolving tastes.

And while product trends evolve, the fundamental demand for quality, consistency, and creativity remains steadfast. As **Tetra Pak's Klaus Plenge** aptly notes, "South African consumers are adventurous with flavour, but increasingly discerning about quality." From plant-based frozen desserts to novel flavour fusions, local producers continue to raise the bar for craftsmanship and care.

The past year has been one of bold investment, scientific advancement, and consumer-driven transformation. As we look ahead to 2026, one thing is certain: South Africa's food and beverage industry isn't merely keeping pace with global change — it's helping to define it.

Here's to another year of progress, purpose, and possibility.

Simon

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SAAFFI
Endorsed by the SA Association of the Flavour &Fragrance Industry.

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Unpacking the environmental impact of everyday food

A new study has given new insights into people's understanding of the environmental impact of the food they eat and shown that they often misperceive it, supporting the need for environmental impact labelling.

Scientists from the University of Nottingham's School of Psychology conducted a food categorisation task in which 168 UK participants organised a diverse range of supermarket food products into environmental impact categories that they created and labelled themselves. The results showed there are a number of misconceptions around the environmental impact of food. The results have been published in the Journal of Cleaner Production.

Food systems are a major contributor to environmental impacts such as greenhouse gas emissions and biodiversity loss. To promote dietary shifts among the public it is crucial to understand how people perceive the environmental impact of food products.

The environmental impact of food is calculated through a life cycle assessment, which evaluates the entire "cradle-to-grave" process from raw material extraction to disposal. It involves collecting data on a product's inputs (like fertilizer, water, and energy) and outputs (like emissions and waste), then assessing impacts across multiple categories such as greenhouse gas emissions (often as CO_2 equivalents), land use, and water use.

Prior investigations into this topic have covered only a narrow range of product types. This study, which was funded by the UKRI's Smart Data Research UK, is the first to examine perceptions of a wide range of food products that might be purchased during a typical food shop.

The participants in this study were shown product-level scientific impact estimates and reported whether they were surprised by how high or low each impact was.

The researchers found that people conceptualise the environmental impact of food along two underlying dimensions: animal versus plant origin and level of processing, with meat/dairy and more highly processed products perceived as worse for the environment. People also often overestimate the environmental impact of highly processed foods and underestimate the impact of water-intensive products (e.g. nuts). People were also surprised by how much

higher the impact of beef is compared to other types of meat, such as chicken.

Daniel Fletcher, Postdoctoral researcher from the School of Psychology is lead author on the study, he said: "We designed an online task to engage people with the topic and provide an interactive and visual way of investigating their understanding of the environmental impact of food. We found participants would be willing to change their purchasing behaviour based on this task, reporting intentions to decrease (or increase) their future consumption of products for which they were surprised by how high (or low) the scientifically estimated environmental impact was. "Our findings also suggest people may struggle to compare the environmental impact of animal-based products and highly processed foods because they see their effects as too different to weigh against each other. Environmental impact labels that give foods a single overall grade (such as A–E) could help make these comparisons easier for consumers."

Professor Alexa Spence from the School of Psychology was co-author on the study and said: "The environmental impact data on food products is opening up new avenues for this research and this is the first study to look at this against a wide range of everyday products and examine what people's perceptions of these are. What was clear from the study is that there are a lot of misconceptions around this which really supports the need for environmental impact labelling which would help people to be more informed to make sustainable food choices."

Industry News

Sustainable chocolate presents a sweet opportunity to drive growth in SA

"South Africa has a golden opportunity to turn one of the world's favourite indulgences into a powerful engine for growth, thanks to rising global demand for sustainable and ethically sourced chocolate," says Cameron Herman, co-founder of The Clout Group. "With ongoing innovation in global logistics and supply chain management, there has never been a better opportunity for South Africans to cash in on the conscientious consumer trend in the sweetest way possible."

Herman's comments follow the release of international research endorsed by the World Economic Forum (WEF), which shows that consumers who choose greener products experience higher levels of wellbeing. This trend is particularly pronounced in specialty foods such as chocolate, where buyers are increasingly looking for products that deliver both taste and purpose.

"The WEF report is supported by the sales data recorded by our e-commerce platform. As a whole, our company was founded to make the world's best brands more accessible to South Africans," says Herman. "In this context we can see which trends are shaping consumer choices, and there is significant interest in products that are sustainably and ethically sourced."

Although South Africa does not produce cacao, the country is a continental leader in chocolate manufacturing and exports, responsible for over 11% of Africa's chocolate production and more than a third of its confectionery market value. By sourcing responsibly from major African cacao producers such as Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, South Africa has the potential to build a powerful value chain that keeps more benefits on the continent.

"Virtually every brand on the Clout Group platform has a sustainability, vegan, cruelty-free or eco-friendly unique selling point," says Herman. "Sustainability is now a driver of consumer preference and brand loyalty. When people feel better about what they buy, they are willing to pay more and come back for more. That's a major opportunity for South African manufacturers to pick up on - especially with regards to chocolate."

Competition in this market is already growing, with premium brands gaining traction in South Africa: "Local producers would have to act quickly to secure a foothold in the expanding ethical chocolate segment before international players dominate the space. A smart move would be to partner with the international heavyweights already committed to sourcing ethically and responsibly from our continent - in exchange for their commitment to investing in the local infrastructure or distribution required to expand the market in South Africa, where consumer demand continues to climb" adds Herman.

She concludes that: "Sustainable production in the chocolate segment presents a sweet opportunity for South Africa to lead in both profitability and responsibility

Blaauwklippen's Narina Cloete recognised as Woman Winemaker of the Year

Blaauwklippen's head winemaker, Narina Cloete, was crowned Woman Winemaker of the Year at the prestigious LUMO Awards." This honour places her at the forefront of a growing shift in South Africa's wine industry, where women are increasingly recognised as standard-bearers of excellence and innovation.

At the same ceremony, Blaauwklippen Estate – where Cloete has led the winemaking team since 2016 – received four major honours, earning Double Gold for its 2023 Chardonnay and 2022 Cabernet Sauvignon, and Gold for its 2022 Malbec and 2020 De Blaauwe Klip vintages.

"Wine tells a story of people and places, and few places have as rich a history as Stellenbosch as the home of some of the world's most celebrated wines. I'm incredibly proud to lead such a dedicated team at Blaauwklippen and to see our wines recognised alongside the many outstanding wines produced in Stellenbosch," she notes.

For me, this award is not only a personal honour but also serves as an important celebration of the many women who are working to bring fresh vision to South African wine."

2025 Absa Top 10 Olive Oil Awards winners announced

Widely regarded as the highlight of South Africa's olive oil industry calendar, the Absa Top 10 Olive Oil Awards acknowledges the most exceptional producers and products in the country. The awards follow the annual SA Olive Awards, where gold medal-winning EVOOs undergo a further round of meticulous blind tasting by an expert judging panel. From this elite group, the ten most outstanding EVOOs are chosen to receive the prestigious Absa Top 10 accolade.

2025 Absa Top 10 Olive Oil Award Winners
(in no particular order)

1. Mardouw Investments ZA (Pty) Ltd - Mardouw Premium Delicate - Delicate
2. De Rustica Estate - De Rustica Delicate - Delicate
3. Lions Creek Estate (Pty) Ltd - Picual Extra Virgin Olive Oil - Medium
4. Morgenster Estate - Morgenster Extra Virgin Olive Oil - Medium
5. Willow Creek Products (Pty) Ltd - Estate Blend - Medium
6. Tokara - Tokara Woolworth Estate EVOO - Medium
7. Babylonstoren - Babylonstoren Coratina - Medium
8. Oudewerfskloof Olive Farm – Picual - Medium
9. Andanté Olives Porterville - Andanté Intenso - Intense
10. Rio Largo Olive Estate - Rio Largo Premium - Intense

Yolisa Mlungwana, Regional Segment Head at Absa Private Banking, said: "After 12 years of partnership, our theme 'Your Story Matters' reflects the essence of the South African olive industry - one of resilience, craftsmanship, and pride. Each bottle of locally produced EVOO tells a story of passion, hard work, and connection to the land, setting a global benchmark for quality. Absa is proud to once again be part of these awards, which celebrate excellence while supporting producers in building lasting relationships with retailers, distributors, and buyers."

Says Wendy Petersen, CEO of SA Olive, "The Absa Top 10 Olive Oil Awards remain the pinnacle of recognition for our local olive producers. It is a moment to celebrate the extraordinary talent, skill, and commitment that define this industry. Our producers continue to deliver world-class EVOOs that rival the best globally, and their pursuit of excellence is truly inspiring. We are deeply grateful to Absa for their unwavering partnership, which has been instrumental in showcasing and growing this remarkable sector."

Guests at the ceremony enjoyed an unforgettable afternoon hosted by Chef Mynhardt Joubert, whose bespoke olive-inspired menu showcased the diversity, flavour, and versatility of South African olives and EVOOs. Each course paid tribute to the expertise of the producers with dishes such as black olive 'roosterkoek', roasted lamb with green olives, and olive oil ice-cream, each offering a sensory celebration.

The Absa Top 10 Olive Oil Awards continue to shine a spotlight on South Africa's thriving olive oil industry, and the 2025 winners exemplify the best of local production, innovation, and quality, reaffirming South Africa's place on the global EVOO map.

ISM 2026 sets new benchmarks with innovative "Functional Sweets" theme area

ISM 2026, scheduled in Cologne from 1 to 4 February, records strong response at an early stage: Four months before the opening of the fair, the booked space already exceeds the final result of ISM 2025. Companies from 71 countries and all Continents have already confirmed their participation – a clear signal of the dynamism and international significance of the world's leading trade fair for sweets and snacks.

In the scope of the new "ISM Functional Sweets" theme area, ISM 2026 is focusing on the theme functional sweets for the first time. In Lab5 by ISM in Hall 10.1 exhibitors will showcase products that combine health and well-being with enjoyment: from sweets containing vitamins and probiotic fruit gums, through to herbal products to reduce stress. A special event with information, product presentations and tastings will illustrate how modern sweets are conceived today – as small everyday assistants and part of a healthy lifestyle.

Boost your sales with Power Cup: exciting rewards for wholesalers, traders, merchandisers, and consumers!

Woodlands Dairy has launched a 12-week campaign to get its First Choice Power Cup into the hands of more South Africans. Running from September to mid-December, the initiative is set to boost sales, drive repeat orders, and grow consumer demand across wholesale and hybrid channels.

"First Choice is calling on wholesalers, traders, merchandisers, and consumers to get involved in the Power Cup sales initiative, designed to grow volume, repeat orders, and customer engagement across South Africa," says Marilee Jansen van Nieuwenhuizen, Brand Manager at Woodlands Dairy and First Choice.

The campaign brings rewards for every stakeholder in the route to market. Wholesalers can boost sales and track measurable growth, with every Power Cup sold bringing them closer to winning R50,000 in free First Choice stock. Traders stand to gain a massive business enabler - the more their customers buy, the greater their chances of securing valuable rewards.

Merchandisers and sales agents are tasked with making Power Cup unmissable through visibility, promotion, and shelf presence, with cash prizes of R10,000 each up for grabs. Meanwhile, consumers enjoy a delicious, nutritious, and long-lasting product perfect for school, work, or life on the go - with the added thrill of standing a chance to win instant prizes and unforgettable experiences. Jansen van Nieuwenhuizen notes that campaign performance will be tracked closely to ensure impact. "We're measuring everything from unique consumer entries and purchase averages to peak periods like payday weekends and uplift during wet demos.

For agents and sales teams, success is also tracked through entries, wholesalers meeting or exceeding targets, and creative use of in-store promotions and displays, supported by photo proof. This way, we can reward performance at every level, while building long-term demand."

Consumer demand is at the heart of the campaign. Traders will only stock what consumers ask for, so Power Cup is ensuring pull from children, young adults, mothers, and everyday buyers. "This isn't just about a short-term spike," says Jansen van Nieuwenhuizen.

"It's about creating a layered, full-market approach that engages every touchpoint including wholesalers and hybrid outlets, traders such as Spazas, street vendors and small retailers, merchandisers and sales agents, and end consumers, driving sustainable sales, brand visibility.

Kellanova partners with the National Department of Agriculture to commemorate World Food Day

On World Food Day, Kellanova (previously Kellogg's) partnered with the National Department of Agriculture and its charity partners to mark its commitment to advancing sustainable and equitable access to food and addressing the intersection of well-being, hunger, sustainability and equity, diversity and inclusion.
According to Statistics South Africa, over 21% of South African households grapple with food insecurity.
Kellanova is committed to creating better days and a place at the table for everyone. To amplify the impact of its efforts.
Kellanova has been deeply rooted in the Eastern Cape community for over a decade, ensuring that thousands of learners start their school day with a nutritious breakfast every school day since 2014. Through our established partnership with the National Department of Basic Education, Kellanova donates breakfast to 11,780 children who attend 15 schools in Gqeberha.
Hungry children cannot concentrate at school – with devastating consequences. At an individual level, these children will not be able to realise their full academic

potential, damaging their prospects of a bright future.
This World Food Day, we affirm our commitment to creating better days for communities in South Africa and positively impacting society by helping to end hunger and contribute to achieving food security, said Philip Nieman, General Manager at Kellanova South Africa.

Pantry innovation heats up as South Africans embrace bold, convenient cooking

South African consumers are reimagining their approach to home cooking, with flavour and convenience taking centre stage. WhyFive's BrandMapp data reveals that 68% of South Africans keep dry stock as a pantry staple, a clear indication of the growing preference for shelf-stable, flavour-packed solutions that offer value, versatility, and convenience in challenging economic times.

Responding to this evolving demand, DENNY®, one of South Africa's most trusted food brands, has introduced a new range of dry cook-in sauces, pasta sauces, and stock powders. Designed for today's busy households, the range combines robust flavour with practicality, offering long shelf life, simple preparation, and affordability without compromising on taste.

From creamy pasta sauces to hearty Trinchado, the dry formats are tailored to South African cooking habits, allowing home cooks to elevate vegetables, stretch proteins, and create comforting meals with minimal effort.

Each product is free from artificial colourants, packaged in recyclable materials, and requires only a few fresh ingredients and water to create satisfying, home-cooked dishes.

"We're seeing a clear shift in how South Africans approach everyday cooking," says Lisa Croecamp, Head of Marketing and Innovation, Wet Condiments – Ambient Products, Libstar.

"Consumers want to prepare wholesome, flavourful meals at home more often, but they also value convenience and affordability. This DENNY® range is designed to make that easier, delivering great flavour with minimal effort."

Bring the taste of summer home with Rhodes Quality's limited-edition 100% juices

Summer is the season of sunshine, gatherings and special moments, and Rhodes Quality is here to make it even more enjoyable with a new Limited-Edition Summer 100% Juice range. Made with 100% fruit juice and no added sugar or preservatives, this seasonal collection brings fresh flavour and variety to every occasion, available for a limited time only.

Packaged in convenient 1L cartons, the new Summer Juices are easy to keep in the fridge, carry along to gatherings, or add to festive spreads. Ideal for home consumption, entertaining, and gifting, the range offers both consumers and retailers a fresh reason to celebrate the season.

The long-life 100% fruit juice category in South Africa is valued at R2.82 billion*, with 1L packs contributing the largest share and fastest growth. Rhodes Quality's Limited-Edition Summer Juices are designed to extend this momentum, attracting shoppers looking for seasonal variety and distinctive flavour experiences.

- The range introduces three new blends:
  Apple, Pineapple & Mint – crisp and tropical, with a cooling twist perfect for hot summer days.
- Strawberry & Hibiscus – delicate and refreshing, suited to everything from family brunches to special occasions.
- Peach & Apricot – an iconic stone-fruit blend, versatile enough to enjoy chilled on its own or mixed into punches, mocktails or cocktails.

New flavour, 100% wiiings - Introducing Red Bull® Xero

South Africans are about to experience a new kind of lift as Red Bull® announces the arrival of Red Bull® Xero, landing locally in November 2025. With zero sugar, low kilojoules, and its own unique taste, Red Bull® Xero offers a refreshing way to enjoy wiiings – anytime, anywhere.

Red Bull® Xero expands the brand's local range by introducing a distinct, no-sugar flavour that's different from Red Bull® Sugarfree. The sleek matte light-blue cans open to a burst of pleasant sourness, with notes of tutti frutti, pineapple, and vanilla for a bold, balanced taste that's both sweet and tart.

And because it provides the same wiiings as Red Bull® Energy Drink with sweeteners and zero sugar, it's handy for that last-minute study session, a morning commute, a long day at work, an evening workout or that late night with friends.

Benefits of Red Bull Xero®:

- Stay alert: Red Bull® Xero contains caffeine that helps to improve concentration and increase alertness.
- Reduce fatigue: Red Bull® Xero contains B-group vitamins (niacin, pantothenic acid, B6, B12), which contribute to the reduction of tiredness and fatigue.
- Balance your body: Red Bull® Xero contains taurine, an amino acid that occurs naturally in the human body and is involved in a range of processes including regulation of water/ electrolyte balance at the cellular level.

TASTE THE DIFFERENCE. FEEL THE WIIINGS. ZERO THE SUGAR.

Red Bull® Xero will be available nationwide from November 2025 at major retailers, convenience stores, and gyms across South Africa.

Precision and performance shaping the future of ice cream production

Why SA producers should rethink their approach to frozen dessert equipment and efficiency

With spring in full bloom and summer in sight, South African ice cream and frozen dessert producers are experiencing their busiest and most competitive season of the year.

As demand rises, the challenge is no longer just about creating new flavours, it's about maintaining consistency at scale, catering to diverse tastes, and optimising production to stay profitable in a tightening economy and responding quickly to shifting consumer trends

"South African consumers are adventurous with flavour, but increasingly they are becoming much more discerning about quality," says Klaus Plenge, Managing Director for Southern Africa at global food processing and packaging leader Tetra Pak. "There's growing interest in how ice cream and frozen desserts are made, what they contain and not just what they taste like."

Best known locally for its liquid board packaging, Tetra Pak is also a global leader in frozen dessert production, offering end-to-end solutions from mix preparation to freezing, moulding, extrusion, soft serve production, and packaging. These capabilities support both dairy and plant-based manufacturers in delivering the quality, consistency, and innovation consumers demand.

Klaus Plenge

Plenge shares some key trends key to successful ice cream making and shaping the industry.

1. Consistency builds consumer trust

In a category where margins are tight and premium ingredients such as chocolate coatings and inclusions come at a cost, inconsistency can quickly erode

"Best known locally for its liquid board packaging, Tetra Pak is also a global leader in frozen dessert production, offering end-to-end solutions from mix preparation to freezing, moulding, extrusion, soft serve production, and packaging"

profitability. Variation in weight, texture, or aeration is one of the most persistent challenges for local producers and consumers notice. "Every stick, cone, tub or soft serve needs to deliver the same experience each time," says Plenge. Without precise control during freezing, even minor fluctuations in pressure can result in overfills, underweight products, or compromised quality, all of which undermine trust and eat into margins.

2. Ingredient innovation fuelling creativity

The appetite for more indulgent and adventurous ice creams is driving demand for equipment that can handle a broader range of inclusions from fragile flakes to large, sticky cookie pieces while ensuring even distribution. Advances in ingredient dosing and freezing systems are giving producers the freedom to experiment with premium formats and more complex recipes, without sacrificing consistency or efficiency.

3. Format flexibility as a growth driver

With consumers seeking novelty formats, dairy-free options, and multi-flavour combinations, flexibility has become a strategic advantage. Rotary and inline moulding systems, combined with cold filling techniques, enable intricate shapes and layered products while improving capacity and reducing ingredient use. Extrusion technology, such as tray tunnel systems for shaping, filling, decorating and hardening further broadens the creative possibilities.

4. New ingredients reshaping product development

One of the most dynamic shifts is the move beyond traditional dairy bases. Plant-based options such as oat, almond, and fava beans are finding their way into frozen desserts, with fava beans in particular standing out for their mild flavour and nutritional value. This innovation is spilling over into other categories, from flavoured milks to functional health products, as producers explore recipes that combine indulgence with nutrition and sustainability.

The next wave of growth in South Africa's frozen dessert market will come from those who balance creative ambition with operational precision. "The market rewards consistency, innovation, and speed to market," says Plenge. "The producers who can deliver on all three will define the future of the category."

PROTECTS WHAT'S GOOD
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What is driving growth in functional carbonated soft drinks?

If one were to associate descriptors with Carbonated Soft Drinks (CSD) words like “sugar”, “unhealthy” and “convenient” would most likely feature. Due to these concerns, many consumers have decreased their CSD consumption, noting weight management as the primary concern. However, with new launches focussing more on the health aspects with “better-for-you” formulations, a clear shift can be observed in the market.

This shift is mostly driven by younger consumers, specifically Gen-Z and Millennials, who demand these sort of products. Empowered by social media, these consumers not only buy products that meets their needs, but also influence the decisions of other consumers. As this generation’s consumption continuous to grow, brands must evolve rapidly in response to current trends, delivering functional CSD’s to maintain a competitive edge.

The functional CSD segment is no longer associated with only the niche and smaller brands. For example, Pepsico recently announced it will launch its first prebiotic soda under the Pepsi brand in 2026 following its acquisition of Poppi prebiotic CSD brand earlier this year for a staggering $1.95 billion. The entry of bigger brands into the “better-for-you” CSD market suggests that this category could potentially become mainstream rather than unique in the future.

According to Innova Market Insights’ (IMI) latest data, 32% of consumers show interest in functional CSD’s, with a third of consumers claiming they always look at the ingredients list out of interest. Since ingredient transparency is key for consumers, manufactures need to formulate with healthier ingredients or adding ingredients that contribute positively to health. Historically, CSD’s had limited or no health claims. However, from 2019 to 2023 a 60% increase in such claims have been recorded. Core dietary claims such as sugar reduction and vegan suitability, along with clean label attributes such as GMO-free, preservative-free, and natural, remain popular and resonate strongly with consumers.

More recently, active health claims are at the forefront of the latest launches. The top 5 emerging claims: probiotic, prebiotic, immune health, digestive health and high/source of fibre have gained traction over the past 5 years. These active health claims are generally targeted to support gut health.

One could argue that gut related claims in CSD’s are no longer niche, but mainstream, especially as the large global brands are launching into this space.

To remain competitive within the gut health trend, brands differentiate themselves by adding more beneficial ingredients to increase claims e.g. Mighty Pop being the first CSD with prebiotics, probiotics and postbiotics. Moreover, the inclusion of functional ingredients that contribute to active health claims are expanding beyond gut support. Ingredients such as guarana, ginseng, ashwagandha, and lion's mane mushroom are added to benefit the brain and mood.

Traditionally energy drinks have always been high in sugar with added caffeine. However, the demand for a healthier version resulted in "sugar-free" or "no added sugar" versions that still include caffeine. Interestingly, although the inclusion of caffeine remain a popular choice, recent data show a decline in caffeine-based launches as consumers begin to prefer "clean energy" options. As an alternative to caffeine, the energy boosting effect is achieved by incorporating ingredients such as botanical extracts, vitamins and minerals offering natural energy and focus without overstimulation, offering a new health dimension.

While sugar-free, reduced-or no added sugar beverages are not new concepts, they remain one of the simplest ways for brands to meet consumer demand for healthier choices, while reinforcing their health-focused positioning. Sugar related claims has been the biggest trend recorded in CSD launches, with a 14% increase between 2019 and 2023. Data from IMI show that 1 in 3 consumers prefer reduced sugar options when purchasing CSD's. However, although consumers have a desire for less sugar, they are not willing to compromise on taste. There needs to be a balance between "better-for-you" formulations and good taste. To cater for various consumer needs and preferences, good tasting functional CSD's should also coincide with flavour variety.

The era of basic flavour options in the CSD market has passed. Today, bold, intriguing, and unconventional flavours are driving innovation, which offers brands new opportunities to capture consumer interest and create excitement. Fruit flavours continued to dominate during the 2023 CSD launches, with fruit flavours such as lime, strawberry and pineapple also starting to emerge in the top 10. Mint has also been identified as an emerging flavour in this space, with launches including single flavouring or in combination e.g. strawberry mint.

Cross-category flavours bring a new element of excitement and curiosity. There is an emergence of savoury, spicy, bakery inspired, and indulgent flavours, ranging from pizza and spiced variants to blackberry jam and ice cream sundae. As consumers grow more adventurous, these unusual combinations can drive consumer engagement and attract new audiences.

Fantasy flavours is another category that can tickle curiosity as it adds an element of surprise and imagination. These flavours resonate with consumers on an emotional level by offering an escape from the daily routine, evoking childhood memories, and delivering a transformative sensory experience. In 2023, the top 5 fantasy flavours in CSD launches included: Pink, Mystery, Cosmic, Fantasy and Artic.

Amid the challenges of adulthood, many consumers are seeking comfort in familiar flavours, nostalgic treats, and foods that evoke cherished childhood memories. Consumers are also less sceptical to try "better-for-you" CSD's in a nostalgic flavour as it provides familiarity. With continuous focus on emotional wellness, consumers are also drawn to flavours that uplift or calm them. Botanical flavours like herbs, yuzu and florals e.g. rose, lavender and elderflower associates CSD's with nature and wellness. Globally, 57% of consumers say they believe foods with botanical flavours are often good for their health.

"Since ingredient transparency is key for consumers, manufactures need to formulate with healthier ingredients or adding ingredients that contribute positively to health"

So what is next in the functional CSD space? According to IMI, upcoming formulations will enhance hydration support (electrolyte infused), capitalising on the growing popularity of electrolyte powder mixes. Consumers can also expect more floral ingredients, which offer an aromatic flavour twist, along with a potential functional benefit. Continued growth of bold complex flavours, such as spiced flavours, caters for the adventurous consumer seeking a bold complex taste profile. To align with sustainability macro trends, the use of upcycled fruit as an ingredient showcases a brand's commitment to waste reduction, delivering a flavourful offering.

In South Africa, the functional CSD's market is still in its infancy, with mostly smaller brands leading the way. Although R146 labelling regulations could be a limiting factor in this space, local brands are finding creative ways to communicate their value propositions. It will be interesting to see how the trend evolves and how the needs of the consumer will be fulfilled. While reduced sugar CSD's are becoming the norm, the addition of functional ingredients and unique flavours supporting wellness are the areas with exciting potential.

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South Africa forges ahead with recycling, as global plastics treaty stalls

Chandru Wadhwani - Joint Managing Director - Extrupet with Dr Dion George - Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment

Despite the recent breakdown in UN-led talks on a global treaty to stem plastic pollution, South Africa is forging ahead with its efforts to continue building a circular economy for post-consumer PET beverage bottles.

On October 6, the country's plastics recycling infrastructure received a major boost with the official launch of Extrupet's second PET bottle-to-bottle recycling facility – and the first of its kind in the Western Cape.

This state-of-the-art facility, at the company's Propet plant in Cape Town, started commercial production in March this year, and is set to add 15 000 tonnes of recycled Food Grade PET (rPET) plastic to the market per year.

In 2009, Extrupet established its first bottle-to-bottle line at its Johannesburg plant, with the second and third following in 2014 and 2020 respectively.

Extrupet's joint managing director, Chandru Wadhwani, said the latest addition marked the first of a two-phase expansion that will double the recycler's food-grade rPET output capacity.

"This line represents phase one, which takes our total output from 30 000 to 45 000 tonnes this year. Next year, we are hoping to launch phase two with new machinery, which will see us producing 60 000 tonnes of Food Grade rPET countrywide that meets international food-grade standards."

Wadhwani explained that PET, or polyethylene terephthalate, commonly used to package soft drinks

Left to right: Chandru Wadhwani (Joint MD Extrupet), Karam Hirji (Group Director of Extrupet Group), Kgauta Mokoena (Chief Director of Chemicals & Waste Policy DFFE),Telly Chaulke (CEO Petco), Dr Dion George (Minister of DFFE), Ravi Chanrai (Group Director of Extrupet Group), Iqbal Hirji (Group Director of Extrupet Group), Vijay Naidu (Joint MD Extrupet), Mvuselelo Mathebula (Chief Director of Integrated Waste DFFE)

TIME TO ACT SUSTAINABLY

Enabling Bottle-to-Bottle Recycling in South Africa

With EcoStream and EcoFloat, CCL Label provides decoration solutions that make high-quality PET bottle-to-bottle recycling possible. As South Africa takes a major step forward with Extrupet's new recycling plant in Cape Town, we congratulate the team on this milestone for circular packaging. Together, we're closing the loop – label by label.

CCL Label South Africa
www.ccllabel.com, jhbccl@cclind.com
10 Oak Road, Lords View Industrial Park, Midrand, 1619, South Africa

CCL

and bottled water, was one of the few truly circular, commercially viable plastic recycling solutions – where bottles could be processed safely back into new food-grade products, keeping the material in circulation at its highest value for as long as possible.

"With our increased Food Grade rPET capacity, we will be able to process more plastic waste and strengthen South Africa's position as a circular economy leader in Africa and the world. So, we're pleased that our new plant can act as a beacon of hope in finding solutions to mitigate plastic pollution."

Wadhwani added that Extrupet had been working with the country's longest-standing producer responsibility organisation (PRO), Petco, for more than two decades to facilitate and balance the collection and recycling of PET, and stimulate market demand for the end-use products.

With roughly 70% of the PET beverage bottles that Petco members place on the market currently recycled, he said there was much to be positive about, despite the failure of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-5.2) session to develop a legally binding global instrument to deal with the growing volumes of plastic waste worldwide.

"For the past three years, the United Nations has been trying to get member countries to agree on the measures we need to put in place to mitigate plastic pollution. Because we still don't have clarity on the way forward, it has put the onus back on individual countries and companies to do what is required," said Wadhwani.

"We are proud that South Africa is one of the countries that has created extended producer responsibility [EPR] legislation to deal with this issue. This means that, by law, producers and brand owners must take responsibility for their packaging waste across its entire life cycle."

Petco CEO Telly Chauke explained that the organisation's primary function was to support the implementation of EPR legislation and to help its producer members meet their legislated targets for collection and recycling.

Left to right: Somi Krishna (General Manager Extrupet – B2B Cape Town), Manfred Heckl (CEO – Erema Group), Karam Hirji (Group Director of Extrupet Group), Pierre La Grange (Head Technician – Erema Africa)

"Key infrastructure investments like this one ensure the availability of food-grade rPET for local producers, who must also meet increasing targets for including recycled content in their packaging."

Chauke said the new Western Cape facility would have a positive impact for the province's agricultural producers, whose export punnets destined for the European market need to contain at least 25% certified rPET under new EU regulations.

She said it was encouraging to see the regional recycling value chains strengthened by investments such as these.

"The economics need to work for recycling to succeed. So having facilities in key regions like the Western Cape will have a big impact as it is costly to collect bottles locally and then transport them across the country for reprocessing."

Chauke added that it was not only up to business and government to act, but that consumers could play a role by buying products in recyclable packaging, wherever possible, and separating recyclables from their general household waste to create clean feedstock for these recycling plants.

www.extrupet.com
www.petco.co.za

Seen at Extrupet's second bottle-to-bottle recycling facility – a first for the Western Cape!

IRS launches laboratory to serve South Africa's food and beverage industry

The IRS team

Innovative Research Solutions (IRS), supported through investment by Synercore, recently launched its new state-of-the-art analytical and research laboratory designed to accelerate food innovation, strengthen quality assurance, and nurture the next generation of food scientists in South Africa.

The facility will enhance the development of market-ready solutions for the South African food and beverage industry, setting a new benchmark in local food research and analytical services.

Pioneering quality research and rapid analysis

The IRS laboratory is built around three key objectives:

- To develop novel methods for analysis and quality assurance of raw materials and finished products in the food and related industries. These methods are employed in root cause analysis.
- Providing rapid and accurate, science-backed analytical capacity to clients across all sample types.
- To perform medium- to long-term research into potential technologies and new applications applicable to the food industry.

The new IRS laboratory is unique

The new laboratory represents a significant investment in South Africa's scientific capacity. By creating advanced analytical capabilities in South Africa, IRS is uniquely able to provide the food and beverage industry with real-time access to local expertise and rapid turnaround times, which are critical factors in a market often dealing with time-sensitive situations.

Bridging the gap

IRS bridges the gap between fundamental science and market-ready food solutions. The laboratory is equipped with advanced technologies, including ultraperformance liquid chromatography, tandem mass spectrometry, multimode spectrophotometers, gas chromatography, real-time PCR and rapid automated systems for microbial analysis. These tools enable highly specialised analysis and identification of known and unknown analytes.

A platform for advanced science

The IRS team is made up of highly qualified biochemists, microbiologists, and biotechnologists, led by Professor Pieter Swart, Emeritus Professor of Biochemistry at Stellenbosch University. Professor Swart is a well-published author with over five decades of experience as a biochemist. He is supported by Dr. Timo Tait (Senior Scientist and Lab Operations Manager), who has more than a decade of experience in novel test method development and analysis of complex samples, Dr. Stefan Hayward (Principle Scientist), as well as Anneri Carinus (Senior Microbiologist).

"With roots in academia, IRS continues to play a vital role in training and mentorship. The laboratory works closely with Stellenbosch University's Centre for Food Safety and the Department of Food Science, supervising postgraduate students and enabling graduates to gain meaningful research experience"

Driving growth in local and global markets

With the launch of the new IRS facility, and through its strategic investment in IRS, Synercore views this not merely as an investment in a laboratory, but as a commitment to strengthening South Africa's broader food and beverage ecosystem. Real-time access to expert analysis, faster turnaround times, and customised solutions will empower the company to remain competitive in both local and global markets.

Professor Pieter Swart & Dr. Tertius Cilliers

In his opening address at the launch, Professor Swart remarked: "We don't live in a perfect world, and in striving for perfection we often exclude the possible, the practical and the profitable. At this international-class facility, our goal is to provide solutions that are all these things – possible, practical and profitable."

Dr. Tertius Cilliers, CEO of Synercore confirmed: "The services of IRS extend beyond only Synercore, with analytical capabilities available as contract services to industry partners, suppliers, and clients. By opening its expertise to the wider market and investment in IRS, Synercore seeks to strengthen the entire South African food value chain."

Nurturing the next generation of food scientists

With roots in academia, IRS continues to play a vital role in training and mentorship. The laboratory works closely with Stellenbosch University's Centre for Food Safety and the Department of Food Science, supervising postgraduate students and enabling graduates to gain meaningful research experience. By creating otherwise rare opportunities for young scientists to engage in real-world R&D, IRS supports the growth of South Africa's food science talent pool.

With the launch of the IRS laboratory, Synercore reaffirms its commitment to advancing food science, empowering local industry, and shaping a more resilient and innovative future for South Africa's food and beverage sector.

www.synercore.co.za

Dairy Standard Agency Laboratory achieves ISO/IEC 17025:2017 accreditation

> **"This accreditation validates the DSA Laboratory's technical competence, impartiality, and reliability in the field of compositional analysis of milk and dairy products"**

The Dairy Standard Agency (DSA) announces that the South African National Accreditation System (SANAS) has awarded its laboratory, DSA Lab Services, with a formal accreditation for the international standard for testing and calibration laboratories, ISO/IEC 17025:2017. This milestone achievement strengthens our collective commitment to scientific excellence, regulatory compliance, and food safety assurance within the South African Dairy Industry.

This accreditation validates the DSA Laboratory's technical competence, impartiality, and reliability in the field of compositional analysis of milk and dairy products. It affirms the DSA Laboratory as a trusted partner in safeguarding the quality and integrity of dairy products consumed daily by millions of South Africans.

What this means for the dairy industry

- **Enhanced credibility:** Independent assurance of laboratory competence, instilling confidence among regulators, producers, processors, retailers, and consumers.
- **Support to producers and processors:** Provision of accurate, independently verified test results to enhance compliance and quality assurance systems.
- **Regulatory compliance:** Accreditation supports adherence to South African legislation and aligns with global trade requirements, thereby promoting confidence in South African dairy exports.
- **Consumer protection:** Reliable, accredited testing safeguards public health, ensuring trust in the nutritional quality and safety of milk and dairy products.

Scope of Accreditation

The ISO/IEC 17025:2017 accreditation (No. T1129) covers:

- Protein, Fat, Lactose & Total Solids
- Freezing Point
- Somatic Cell Count

Achieving the ISO/IEC 17025:2017 accreditation is a testament to the dedication and professionalism of the team. It ensures that every test result meets the highest global standards, thereby strengthening consumer trust and industry compliance.

The Dairy Standard Agency acknowledges the support of its stakeholders and remains committed to advancing food safety, product quality, and sustainability across the dairy value chain.

www.dairystandard.co.za

Mastering measurement in Food & Beverage with VEGA

Hygiene should be flawless, attending to every detail. With state-of-the-art sensors, VEGA ensures safe processes that guarantee the highest quality in food preparation.

The variety of foods and beverages available to consumers today has expanded more than ever before. Reliable quality and impeccable hygiene are non-negotiable, and with VEGA instrumentation, food producers can ensure these standards while streamlining their processes

Food production is a highly sensitive industry, with corresponding complexities and costs in its processes. The stringent demands of this sector are matched by the challenges encountered in measurement technology. VEGA sensors for level and pressure are certified according to the latest standards for the food and pharmaceutical industries, meeting FDA, ISPE GAMP, ASME-BPE, EHEDG, and 3-A Sanitary regulations.

VEGA's equipment is crafted from corrosion-resistant materials that facilitate efficient cleaning, ensuring the thorough removal of microorganisms. The "hygienic by design" philosophy is evident in the sensor surfaces that contact products, which feature special roughness values of less than 0.8 µm and are even available in an electropolished finish. In many cases, seals have been eliminated for added safety. Moreover, VEGA measuring instruments are specifically designed to address the critical elements of CIP (Clean-In-Place) processes.

One connection – many possibilities

VEGA sensors can be quickly integrated into existing production facilities. The standardised fittings make this possible. The available hygienic adapters provide even more flexibility for the user and simplify processes at the same time. They are also diffusion-tight and extremely robust. The adapter system provides the right solution for every mounting situation.

Solutions for any challenge

VEGA offers a suitable sensor for every application, ensuring precise and reliable measurement across various processes.

For level measurement, the VEGAPULS 42 is ideal for applications with fast level changes. It integrates seamlessly into process data systems using IO-Link and operates maintenance-free with advanced 80-GHz radar technology. Its illuminated ring enhances readability, even from a distance, making it user-friendly in diverse industrial environments. Meanwhile, the VEGAPULS 6X delivers exceptional accuracy and strong focusing, ensuring reliable measurements even in challenging conditions. Internals such as agitators do not affect its performance, and it excels in detecting media with poor reflective properties, such as oily products.

For limit-level measurement, the VEGASWING 61 is a versatile choice for all liquid applications. Its reliable detection capability and long service life make it particularly suitable for overflow and dry-run protection in storage tanks containing cleaning agents. The VEGAPOINT sensor offers additional convenience with an optional universal hygienic adapter that simplifies installation and reduces spare parts inventory. Its illuminated ring ensures clear readability, even from a distance, making it a practical solution for process monitoring.

Pressure measurement is essential in many applications, and the VEGABAR 28 provides reliable monitoring of gases, vapours, and liquids at temperatures up to 130°C. Equipped with the innovative CERTEC® ceramic measuring cell, it ensures durability and precision. Like the VEGAPOINT, it features an optional universal fitting for hygienic adapters, streamlining installation and reducing inventory needs.

VEGA also offers digital solutions to simplify monitoring and operation. Not every measuring point is easily accessible, so VEGA sensors with Bluetooth connectivity allow users to manage them remotely via a smartphone or tablet. The VEGA Tools app enables quick and easy commissioning, configuration, and monitoring, making process control more efficient than ever.

VEGA offers a wide array of sensors designed for level, limit level, and pressure measurement, ensuring accurate and dependable monitoring across a variety of applications. Featuring cutting-edge innovations such as Bluetooth connectivity for remote operation, maintenance-free radar technology, and versatile hygienic fittings, VEGA sensors make installation straightforward, boost efficiency, and enhance process control. Whether you're dealing with rapid level fluctuations, implementing overflow protection, or achieving high precision in pressure monitoring, VEGA delivers durable solutions precisely tailored to meet the demands of the industry.

www.vega.com/en-za

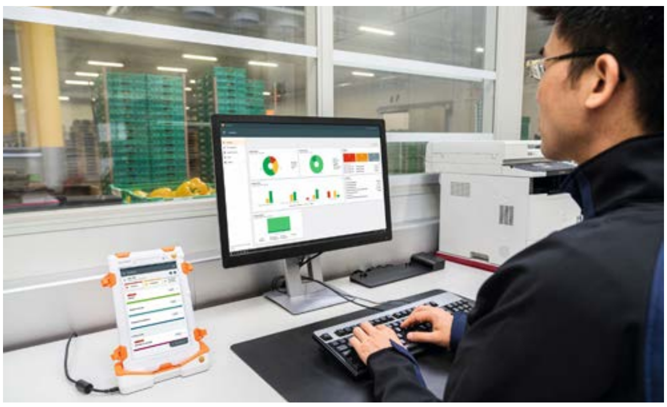
Testo food safety whitepaper provides guidance on cold chain monitoring

Testo Saveris, provider of innovative measurement technology solutions, has launched a white paper for the food safety industry, to help companies understand the latest trends and practical advice for accurate monitoring of the food cold chain.

The whitepaper – "**Stay cool – how your cold chain can withstand any inspection**" – discusses the importance of maintaining food safety within the cold chain, highlighting risks, technological solutions, and practical applications. It also demonstrates Testo Saveris' expertise and knowledge across the food safety supply chain.

"Food safety is a must, not only for regulatory compliance but to protect a brand's profits and perception. Any break in the cold chain can lead to food spoilage and safety scandals, resulting in lost sales and damaged reputations," explained Christian Podeswa, Subject Matter Expert, Food Retail at Testo Saveris.

Success depends on goods maintaining their prescribed temperature until the point of purchase – but the complexity of a global food cold chain means there are multiple points of transfer where risks can be high, often across countries or continents. This is compounded where there is pressure on manual testing, which is labour-intensive, stressful and prone to human error.



The Testo Saveris white paper outlines how such risks can be mitigated through a focus on digitalised monitoring, to create repeatable, precise processes across the cold chain. Technical solutions and digital data recording eliminate sources of error and relieve the burden on employees.

At the same time, comprehensive data records (aligned to regulations including HACCP) are created that can be viewed, transferred and used. Adherence to regulations is the driving force behind innovation in measurement technology, pushing solutions to greater heights.

"We have a full suite of modular monitoring and measurement hardware and software, from entry-level solutions for small warehouses, to cloud-based, integrated digital systems," explains Christian Podeswa. "We know that a reliable cold chain is essential for competitiveness in the food industry, and we urge anybody interested to download the whitepaper from the Testo website."

www.testo.com/en-ZA

Harvested at dawn, bottled by sundown: How Rugani's Greenway Inside™ process redefines "Fresh" Juice

As more South Africans turn to juicing for health and vitality, Rugani Juice is challenging the assumption that "home-made" always means healthier.

While home juicing has its place, Rugani's locally developed Greenway Inside™ process – a first-world extraction method – demonstrates that real nutritional value depends on how fast and how carefully nature's nutrients are captured.

"From a nutritional standpoint, freshness matters," says Claire Julsing-Strydom, BSc Dietetics (Hons), MSc Dietetics (UFS). "Some nutrients – particularly vitamin C and certain antioxidants – start to oxidise once produce is juiced. Juicing fruit and vegetables soon after harvest helps preserve more of these sensitive nutrients."

Unlike raw home juicing, Rugani's process applies gentle extraction and controlled temperature to unlock nutrients that are often trapped in raw produce – making natural compounds like beta-carotene more bioavailable to the body.

Because Rugani Juice operates as both the farmer and the producer of most of its ingredients, the time from harvest to bottle is typically under 24 hours. While Rugani grows and produces the majority of its raw ingredients on its own farms, select crops such as ginger and turmeric are sourced from trusted local growers to maintain year-round freshness. This same-day juicing approach ensures that every bottle retains its natural density, colour and freshness – a result of Rugani's controlled, same-day production process.

Nature's Numbers: Proven Nutrient Advantage

Made only from fresh vegetables and fruit produced on Rugani's own farms, Rugani's Carrot Juice is naturally rich in beta-carotene, while its Pineapple Juice contains up to three times more vitamin C than other pineapple juices on the market.

"Our philosophy isn't about adding more – it's about protecting what nature already provides," explains Romano Rugani, Head of Production at Rugani Juice. "It's about not losing what nature already gave us."

Truth-Telling in a Category of Claims

In a category often criticised for unverified health claims, Rugani is taking a data-driven approach - proving its process through measurable results rather than marketing language.

Every bottle carries the Greenway Inside™ mark – signalling full traceability from farm to bottle. "We're not here to sell ideals; we're here to show facts," says Romano. "When you taste our juice, you're tasting a process that's transparent from the ground up. That's what truth looks like in liquid form."

KEY FACTS

- Greenway Inside™: proprietary farm-to-bottle extraction within 24 hours of harvest
- Never made from concentrate, preservatives or added water
- Pineapple Juice: up to 3× higher vitamin C than competing products
- Carrot Juice: naturally high in beta-carotene

www.rugani.co.za

Coca-Cola relies on Sidel for its first-ever aseptic PET line

Sibeg Srl partners with Sidel to install a complete aseptic line featuring the Aseptic Combi Predis and EvoFilm Stretch; empowering innovation and meeting sustainability goals.

"We felt safe relying, especially from a technical point of view, on a partner who is widely renowned for mastering the PET aseptic packaging production. Moreover, the collaboration with Tetra Pak for the processing part enabled us to cover the entire production process, from beverage preparation to the packaging line with a single contact point, bringing a strong increase in efficiency during execution," adds Gianluca Tornatore, Operations Director at Sibeg.

Transformative complete aseptic line

Sidel has delivered a complete aseptic PET line featuring the Aseptic Combi Predis, which seamlessly integrates preform sterilisation, blow moulding, filling, and capping into a single process. This ensures product integrity and extended shelf life for sensitive beverages.

The system is renowned for its dry preform decontamination using a hydrogen peroxide mist, which drastically reduces water and chemical usage, supporting Sibeg's sustainability goals while aligning with evolving consumer preferences. It ensures complete product safety without the use of preservatives and successfully passed on the first attempt the aseptic validation protocol, complying with the Coca-Cola company standards.

Designed for ease of use, the Aseptic Combi Predis allows operators to manage the sterilisation process economically, minimising downtime and reducing the need for extensive training. The system also offers exceptional flexibility, allowing Sibeg to switch between ten different formats from energy drinks to teas, while maintaining the highest levels of food safety and productivity.

EvoFilm Stretch – breakthrough stretch wrapping technology

Sidel also installed its EvoFilm Stretch packer, a breakthrough in stretch wrapping technology that boosts environmental performance and operational efficacy. Unlike traditional shrink-wrapping, it works at ambient temperature, eliminating the need for energy-heavy shrink tunnels. This cuts plastic use by up to 60% and reduces energy consumption by as much as 90%, helping Sibeg to save costs while reaching sustainability goals.

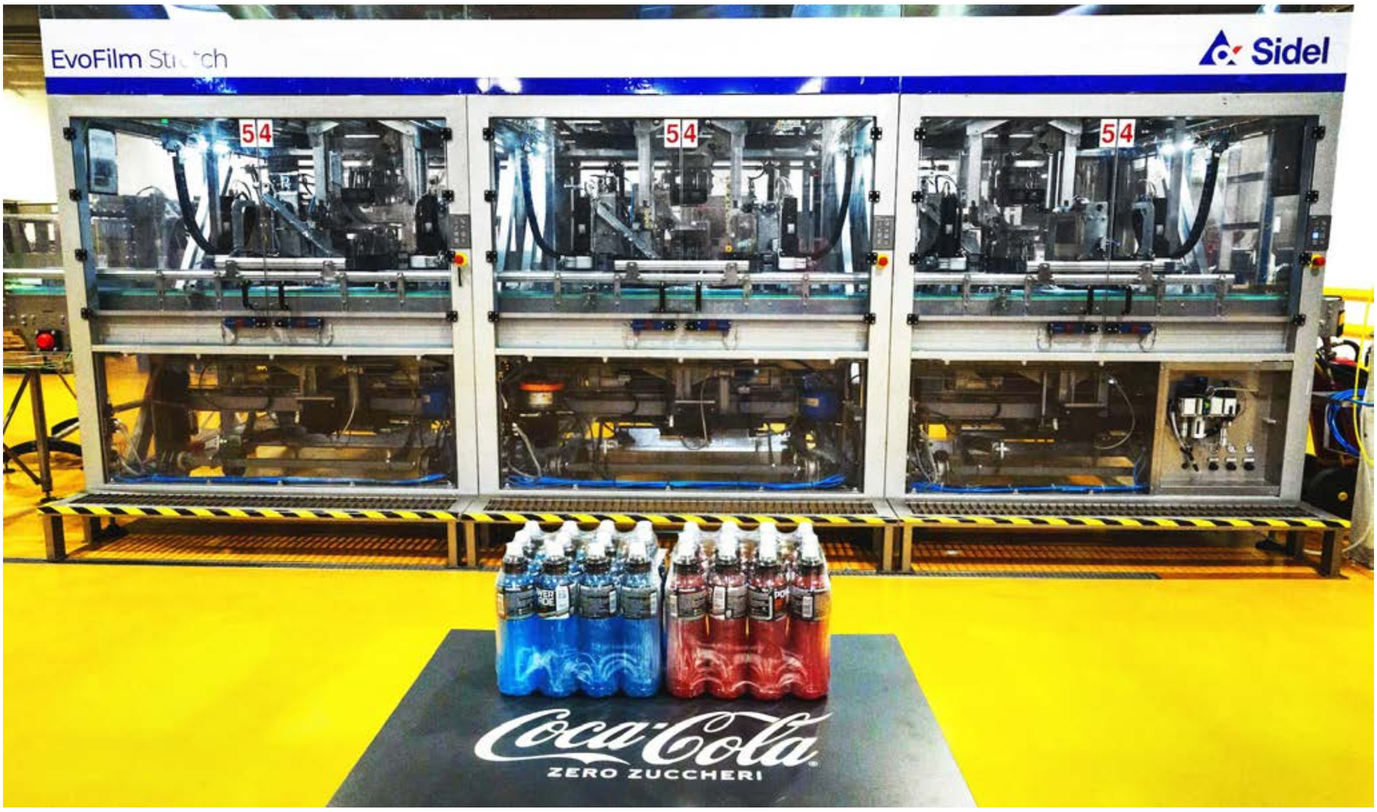
"Using high pre-stretch LLDPE with a thickness of 10 to 23 microns, EvoFilm Stretch allows automatic sealing and flexible wrapping options. It lowers plastic use from 26 gram to 6 grams per pack and energy use is only 10 kWh, leading to a 90% savings compared to traditional shrink-wrapping solutions," says Gianluca Tornatore, Operations Director at Sibeg. "Without shrink tunnels or conveyors, it also minimises machine footprint, making packaging lines more compact and cost-effective."

Intelligent software – Evo-ON Flex

Sibeg also opted for Sidel's Evo-ON Flex app – an intelligent software that streamlines the bottle change-over process by guiding operators step-by-step through each required action. It provides a comprehensive, real-time overview of all scheduled changeovers for the entire work shift, boosting operator adeptness, and eliminating potential downtime.

"The Sidel team were deeply committed to meeting our needs and timelines at every stage, from line design to ramp-up, while navigating the challenges of meeting Coca-Cola's stringent safety standards. Their dedication ensured a smooth process without compromising on quality or compliance," commented Gianluca Tornatore, Operations Director at Sibeg.

Find out more about complete aseptic solutions and how you can access this kind of support for your business on **www.sidel.com/en**



New Cassava Hammer Mill Systems launched

Roff Industries, one of Africa's leading manufacturers of compact and commercial milling equipment, has announced the launch of its new Cassava Hammer Mill System — a turnkey, 500–750 kg/hour milling solution that empowers entrepreneurs and millers to process dried cassava roots into fine flour efficiently, affordably and reliably.

Cassava, one of Africa's most widely grown staple crops, is increasingly recognised for its potential to strengthen food security, create local value chains and reduce dependence on imported grains. Until now, however, large-scale processing of cassava has remained a challenge due to high equipment costs and technical complexity.

"With this new system, we're giving African entrepreneurs a simple, robust, and profitable way to process cassava locally," says Charl Marais, Managing Director at Roff Industries. "It's built with the same reliability and efficiency that have made our maize mills successful across the continent — but adapted to cassava's unique processing needs."

Opportunities for entrepreneurs and millers

The Cassava Hammer Mill System creates new opportunities in local agro-processing by enabling small businesses, co-operatives and community groups to add value to cassava — one of Africa's most affordable and resilient crops.

In addition, existing maize millers can diversify their operations by producing cassava flour or

"Cassava is one of Africa's most widely grown staple crops, and increasingly recognised for its potential to strengthen food security, create local value chains and reduce dependence on imported grains"

blending it with maize meal to improve margins and lower input costs.

"Blending just 10–20% cassava flour with maize meal can significantly reduce production costs without compromising quality," says Marais. "For millers, it's a simple way to add resilience to their business and meet evolving market demand."

Empowering Africa's agro-processing growth

With more than 34 years of experience in designing and manufacturing milling equipment, Roff is committed to empowering African entrepreneurs with technology that is practical, profitable, and built for local conditions.

"Our mission has always been to support Africa's journey from raw production to value-added manufacturing," Marais adds. "This cassava system is another step towards that goal — creating local jobs, supporting farmers, and strengthening food security."

Designed and manufactured in South Africa, and supported from Roff's headquarters in Kroonstad and its new branch in Kitwe, Zambia, the system brings commercial-level processing within reach of small-scale millers and agro-processors.

Compact, complete, and built for Africa

The Roff Cassava Hammer Mill System has a capacity of 500–750 kg/h, ideal for food processing or blending with maize meal. The turnkey system includes:

- LBX 122 Lump Breaker – pre-crushing dried cassava roots for steady material flow.
- SHM 845 Hammer Mill – fine milling of cassava into flour.
- Pneumatic conveying and cyclone collection system – clean, dust-free flour recovery.
- Control panel – complete process control in a compact 9m x 4m footprint.

www.roff.co.za

Westfalia Fruit and AgroSustain advance sustainable innovation in avocado supply chain

Westfalia Fruit, a global leader in the avocado industry with a legacy spanning over 75 years, is proud to announce its collaboration with AgroSustain, a pioneering agri-tech company focused on sustainable crop protection. The partnership marks a significant step forward in maintaining quality, reducing food loss and chemical residues across the fresh produce supply chain.

Discussions between Westfalia Fruit and AgroSustain began in 2022, where both companies explored the potential of AgroSustain's edible coating, Afondo, to extend the shelf-life of avocados. Over the last three years, initial trials have been conducted in Colombia, Chile, and Peru, with treated fruit shipped to Westfalia's operations in Germany and France.

Current trials focus on avocados and limes, with Afondo demonstrating a reduction in post-harvest fungicide use by at least 50% and a significant decrease in supply chain waste. The coating is compatible with existing machinery, and if planned in advance should result in minimal disruption on packing lines.

Following several years of successful trials, Westfalia has now began commercial trials with selected customers, with the opportunity to expand into additional markets. Customers have shown strong interest in solutions that do not affect flavour and significantly reduce food loss and chemical residues. Westfalia is committed to ensuring alignment and meet customer expectations through extensive and thorough testing.

"Westfalia is proud to be at the forefront of innovation in the avocado sector," says Andrew Mitchell, Head of Innovation at Westfalia Fruit. "Our collaboration with AgroSustain reflects our shared commitment to sustainability and delivering high-quality produce to our customers. One of the benefits of the Afondo coating is its flexibility, we are able to incorporate into our existing operations as an option for customers who are impressed by its results. In a dynamic market we believe Afondo delivers better value and results than other coatings available on the market and will shortly be extending trials to other European markets."

AgroSustain is equally enthusiastic about the partnership. "Working with Westfalia has been a collaborative and inspiring journey," said Olga Dubey, CEO AgroSustain. "Together, we are optimizing supply chain integration and preparing to launch a bio-coating for organic crops in the near future."

Afondo's proven efficacy across a wide range of crops—including passion fruit, mangoes, citrus, nectarines, and cherries—opens new opportunities for both local and international growers and distributors to extend shelf-life while reducing reliance on chemical treatments.

www.westfaliafruit.com

Rainbow Chicken's Added Value Division turns 20!

Rainbow Chicken Ltd marked the 20th anniversary of its Added Value Business in late October. This division has transformed the way South Africans experience poultry since its inception in 2005.

Established at a pivotal moment in Rainbow's history, the Added Value Business was the brainchild of a small team of determined visionaries. Their goal was to reimagine chicken beyond the traditional fresh format, inspired by global food trends and consumer demand for greater convenience. This team embarked on an ambitious plan: to build a state-of-the-art processing plant and bring a world of flavours and ready-to-cook innovations to South African households.

The initial investment of R156 million was bold for its time, but it proved to be a wise decision. Within its first decade, the business had introduced over 66 new products and expanded into new markets. From marinated portions and crumbed fillets to family-friendly frozen favourites, the Added Value Business played a critical role in broadening Rainbow's portfolio and strengthening its brand presence.

Over the years, Rainbow has continued to invest in innovation and product renovation. The division's capability now spans across five major product categories including, freezer-to-fryer crumbed products, polonies, viennas, sausages, and fully cooked products. – ensuring relevance across both retail, wholesale and food service markets.

"Looking back over the past 20 years, what stands out is the spirit of insurgency, innovation and resilience that has defined our journey," says Steve Hughes, Managing Director: Added Value at Rainbow Chicken. "Our business was built on the belief that chicken could be more than a mealtime staple – it could be versatile, convenient, and tailored to changing consumer lifestyles. Two decades later, that belief still drives us as we continue to innovate and deliver value to South African families."


Steve Hughes

The road was not without challenges. The industry faced challenging periods, including dumped imports that undermined local producers and the 2018 listeriosis outbreak, which reshaped the entire food industry's approach to safety and regulation. Through it all, Rainbow's Added Value Business stood firm, prioritising food safety, quality, and consumer trustas non-negotiable cornerstones.

Most recently, Rainbow has brought two major innovations to market under its Farmer Brown brand: the Naked Range and the Nourish Range. The Naked Range offers individually quick-frozen (IQF) chicken portions trimmed for appeal, ethically sourced, and packaged in recyclable resealable pouches – solving the consumer frustration of stock shortages in fresh chicken while ensuring convenience and consistent quality. The Nourish Range, endorsed by the Heart & Stroke Foundation of South Africa, takes health to heart by delivering low-sodium, 100% full-muscle chicken strips and steaklets made with real ingredients in variants like Wholegrain, Lightly Dusted, and Sourdough – helping South Africans make heart-smart choices without compromising on flavour.

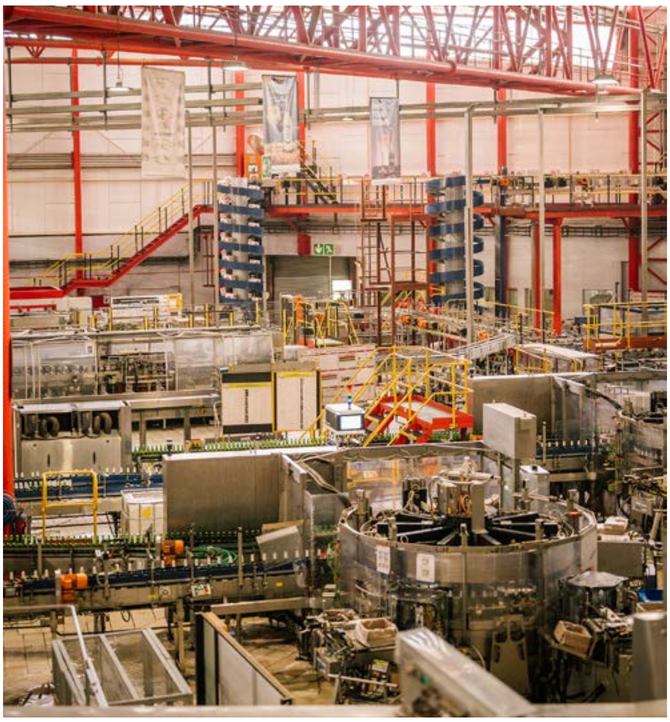
Today, as part of Rainbow's broader mission to "Nourish the Nation," the Added Value Business continues to deliver products that meet evolving consumer needs. From healthier cooking methods to globally inspired flavours, its range remains a testament to Rainbow's commitment to innovation, quality, and sustainability.

"As we celebrate this milestone, we honour the people whose vision and determination brought the Added Value Business to life," Hughes concludes. "And we look forward with optimism because our next chapter will be defined by the same values that have guided us from day one: innovation, resilience, and purpose."

www.rainbowchicken.co.za

SAB reinforces its commitment to responsible consumption by showcasing its non-alcoholic portfolio

South African Breweries (SAB) hosted the Cheers to Responsibility event at their Chamdor Brewery in Krugersdorp in late October. The event brought together government representatives, media and industry stakeholders to highlight the company's ongoing investment in responsible consumption and quality product innovation.



Since 2022, SAB has invested more than R19.5 billion across its breweries to expand its portfolio and accelerate innovation. This continued investment has ensured that South Africans enjoy a wider variety of locally brewed alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages. These innovations position SAB as a pioneer in brewing technology and leader in promoting responsible drinking.

Guests at the Cheers to Responsibility event experienced a behind-the-scenes look at the advanced brewing technologies that enable SAB to craft high-quality non-alcoholic beverages, from de-alcoholisation processes to flavour techniques.

SAB was the first to innovate in the non-alcohol beer category with the launch of Castle Free in 2017 in South Africa, followed by Corona Cero in 2024, and now Brutal Fruit Spritzer non-alcoholic, a refreshing, alcohol free take on one of South Africa's most loved brands. The introduction of Brutal Fruit 0.0 reflects growing consumer demand for products that support balanced, mindful lifestyles without compromising on flavour or enjoyment. Through these innovations, SAB continues to lead efforts toward building a responsible drinking culture in South Africa, aligned with national priorities to reduce harmful drinking.

We are proud to introduce Brutal Fruit 0.0, another milestone in our journey to expand consumer choice and promote moderation," said Zoleka Lisa, Vice President of Corporate Affairs at SAB. "This launch reflects our commitment to innovation that meets consumers' evolving lifestyles — offering stylish, high-quality options that make moderation both accessible and aspirational. Responsibility remains central to who we are as a business, and innovation like this helps us create a culture of balanced choices across South Africa

Brutal Fruit 0.0 represents more than just product innovation — it's about reimagining enjoyment for today's consumer," said Leanne Martin, Vice President of Innovation & Beyond Beer at SAB. "We listened to what consumers were asking for: a delicious, stylish, and inclusive alternative that allows everyone to be part of the moment. This launch is proof that innovation and responsibility can go hand in hand

Through the company's commitment to innovation, responsibility, and empowerment, SAB continues to build a value chain that benefits consumers, retailers, and communities alike. The company's non-alcoholic portfolio is a testament to its long-term vision: providing South Africans with the freedom to choose, while ensuring those choices contribute to a safer and more responsible society.

For over 130-years, SAB has played a defining role in shaping South Africa's beer industry. Its commitment to responsibility reflects an evolution in both purpose and practice; a recognition that sustainability and growth must go hand in hand. As the event concluded, guests joined SAB leadership for a symbolic toast, reaffirming the company's commitment to a future with more responsibility, innovation and cheers.

www.sab.co.za

South Africa's Exporters benefit from expanded cold chain infrastructure

Maersk, a global leader in integrated logistics, has officially inaugurated the Belcon Cold Store facility in Cape Town, marking a significant milestone in the company's over $100 million (ZAR 1.72 billion) investment in South Africa's cold chain infrastructure. This strategic investment underscores Maersk's long-term commitment to South Africa's economy and its dedication to delivering value to the nation's businesses and people

The inauguration of Belcon Cold Store represents Maersk's continued focus on strengthening South Africa's critical cold chain logistics network, which is essential for the country's perishable exports sector. South Africa's cold-chain exports, dominated by fresh fruit, particularly citrus and table grapes, account for a substantial portion of the nation's agricultural exports.

"Maersk has been invested and present in South Africa for over three decades, and our ambition has never been stronger," said Lubabalo Mtya, Managing Director of Maersk Southern Africa & Islands. "We are committed to building and delivering logistics solutions that create tangible value for our customers and their businesses, while contributing to South Africa's economic prosperity and the livelihoods of its people."

Addressing a critical industry challenge

The South African grape industry has faced significant challenges, with delays and broken cold chains in logistics costing up to 1.5 billion Rand annually. The country's cold-chain logistics market has experienced inconsistent performance, leading to substantial losses for exporters of temperature-sensitive produce.

"There was a clear need to strengthen South Africa's cold chain infrastructure to minimise these losses and support the competitiveness of local exporters," added Mtya. "The Belcon Cold Store directly addresses this critical gap in the market."

World-class facilities supporting an unbroken cold chain

With the inauguration of Belcon, Maersk now operates three world-class cold storage facilities in South Africa — Belcon, Cato, and PreCool. Together, these facilities form a comprehensive network designed to support the demanding cold chain logistics requirements of exporters, featuring:

- 32,000 pallet positions
- Strategic proximity to the ports of Cape Town and Durban
- Rail sidings and highway connections for seamless multimodal transport
- On-site container depot for efficient cargo handling
- Renewable energy systems to decarbonise supply chains

The three facilities have already ramped up operations during the second half of 2025 and have

delivered positive impacts to customers during the critical citrus season, ensuring product quality and reducing waste in the supply chain.

Integrated solutions beyond ocean shipping

As an integrated logistics provider, Maersk delivers comprehensive solutions that extend far beyond ocean transportation. Customers shipping perishables through Maersk's South African network now have access to end-to-end services, including consolidation, temperature-controlled storage, customs brokerage, terminal handling, and both ocean and landside transportation at origin and destination.

"We are listening to our customers and implementing solutions that go beyond business as usual," explained Mtya. "This integrated approach means we're not only delivering on ocean shipping but providing our customers with complete logistics solutions that address their most pressing challenges."

Commitment to South Africa's future

Maersk's investment in South Africa's cold chain network reflects the company's confidence in the country's economic potential and its commitment to supporting local industries in competing globally. By ensuring reliable, temperature-controlled logistics infrastructure, Maersk is helping South African exporters maintain product quality, reduce losses, and access international markets more effectively.

The Belcon Cold Store inauguration reinforces Maersk's position as a strategic partner to South Africa's agricultural sector and demonstrates the company's dedication to delivering solutions that create meaningful impact for the nation's economy and its people.

www.maersk.com

Two-a-Day modernises operations with Schneider Electric's RM AirSeT, advancing sustainability in South Africa's fruit industry

Henk Ryke & Raymond Bosch

Schneider Electric, experts in the digital transformation of energy management and automation, together with trusted partner, Technoserve Medium Voltage, has implemented its advanced RM AirSeT SF_6-free medium voltage (MV) switchgear at Two-a-Day (TAD), situated in Grabouw in the Overberg district, Western Cape. The installation forms part of TAD's broader modernisation and decarbonisation drive.

TAD is today one of Africa's largest fruit-growing, packing, and marketing companies and produces over 185,000 tonnes of apples and pears annually from more than 50 farms, covering 3,300 hectares.

Given TAD's reliance on a stable and efficient energy supply - particularly for cold storage, processing, and export activities – modernising its power infrastructure has been critical to ensuring uninterrupted operations and achieving future sustainability targets.

"TAD is today one of Africa's largest fruit-growing, packing, and marketing companies and produces over 185,000 tonnes of apples and pears annually from more than 50 farms, covering 3,300 hectares"

RM6 to RM AirSeT - the logical progression

To meet the above requirements and modernise its infrastructure, TAD took the decision to partner with Technoserve Medium Voltage and Schneider Electric; a


Andrés Diaz


Henk Ryke

move which represented a natural evolution from its current infrastructure.

For decades, TAD has relied on Schneider Electric's RM6 ring main unit (RMU) technology as the backbone of its electrical network. Robust and reliable, RM6 supported business continuity across the group's operations. However, the time had come to transition to the next generation of MV switchgear, the RM AirSet.

"The transition to RM AirSeT was a natural evolution, combining reliability with a safe, modern, and environmentally responsible solution. Working closely with Schneider Electric, we proposed the RM AirSeT, which not only offers the newest advancement in switchgear technology but also take TAD one step closer to its decarbonisation goals," says Evans Coetzee, General Manager at Technoserve MV.

"RM AirSeT represents the future of sustainable power distribution," adds Andrés Diaz, Vice President, Power Systems, English-speaking Africa at Schneider Electric. "By eliminating SF_6 gas and using pure air instead, it combines environmental responsibility with high performance. This enables grid decarbonisation while future-proofing operations against regulatory shifts."

"We believe that the newly installed RM Airset will be a great advantage to TAD's existing ring main, providing flexibility whenever we encounter any problems. As we modernise our infrastructure, the RM Airset fits in perfectly to be future-ready for the growth in the fruit industry," says Henk Ryke, Engineering Manager at Two-a-Day.

The RM AirSeT offers the following important benefits to TAD:

- **Zero SF_6 emissions** – uses pure air insulation with no global warming potential and no toxic by-products.
- **Enhanced mechanical endurance** – rated for up to 10,000 switching cycles, significantly exceeding RM6, making it ideal for frequent operations.
- **Digital integration** – natively compatible with Schneider's Easergy T300 RTU, enabling advanced smart grid monitoring, diagnostics, and control.
- **Safety and reliability** – features a sealed-for-life stainless steel tank with IP67 dust-tight and water-resistant protection and is available in Schneider Type Tested enclosures with internal arc classification for enhanced operator safety.

A step toward sustainable growth

For Schneider Electric and Technoserve, the deployment of RM AirSeT at TAD is more than just an equipment upgrade—it is a strategic move toward modernisation, resilience, and decarbonisation. "Customers like Two-a-Day are leading by example. With the transition from RM6 to RM AirSeT, they are safeguarding business continuity, enabling smarter energy management, and reducing their carbon footprint. It's proof that sustainability and performance can go hand in hand," says Diaz.

Evans Coetzee

www.se.com/za/en/

Fisheries targeting tuna most at risk from climate change, new research suggests

Modelling shows fisheries targeting highly migratory species are most at risk from climate change, with governments urged to work collaboratively to address risks

Analysis of more than 500 sustainably certified fisheries around the world suggests those targeting migratory species including tunas, bonitos and billfishes are most at risk from the impacts of shifting fish stocks and the reduction in the number of fish in the ecosystem, due to climate change.

The research paper *'Climate change risks to future sustainable fishing using global seafood ecolabel data'* was led by the **Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)** and is being published in the journal Cell Reports Sustainability. It analysed the risks from the impacts of climate change to fisheries around the world that use a range of different fishing gear types and that target 19 different categories of seafood, from krill to lobsters, and from whitefish to tuna.

The analysis found that fisheries targeting highly migratory species, like tuna, were most at risk. Next most vulnerable to climate change associated risks to management, were fisheries targeting small pelagic species like mackerel, herring, capelin, blue whiting, followed by those targeting whitefish like cod, haddock, hake, plaice, sole and monkfish.

As ocean temperatures change, migratory species change their routes in favour of cooler waters. For example, Atlantic bluefin tuna have returned to waters around the UK having disappeared decades ago. In the Pacific, there are growing signs tuna are moving away from the west of the region to the east. As tuna appear in new jurisdictions, or in the high seas, they move into areas of the ocean governed by different countries and subject to different regulations. This is likely to increase disagreements between governments over how much of each stock they are allowed to catch, potentially leading to overfishing.

In contrast fisheries targeting invertebrates such as bivalves, crabs and prawns, were least likely to suffer climate change induced impacts like international management disagreements because these species are sedentary or live on the bottom of the ocean and do not migrate. The researchers noted however that these species may suffer from climate driven impacts not included in the scope of the study, such as ocean acidification and marine heatwaves.

This latest research has been supported by the Tuna Project of the Common Oceans Program which is led by the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and by the Ocean Stewardship Fund. It suggests that to mitigate these risks, greater international cooperation is needed, for example by implementing adaptive allocations, where countries' shares of fish stocks are adjusted in response to shifting fish populations. Governments also need to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions if they want to continue to sustainably harvest some species and ensure stocks for future generations.

"The analysis only looked at data from MSC certified fisheries but the researchers suggest fisheries unable to meet MSC certification are likely to be more vulnerable to the effects of climate change"

The analysis only looked at data from MSC certified fisheries but the researchers suggest fisheries unable to meet MSC certification are likely to be more vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Certified fisheries have robust management plans in place and have met requirements on sustainability and responsible management to gain certification, making them potentially more resilient to climate impacts.

Lauren Koerner, lead author of the report and a Data Science Manager for the MSC noted, "The effects of climate change are causing all types of species to alter their behaviour. Fish are moving to new and different locations and as a result existing agreements between countries quickly become obsolete because the fish stocks have moved.

"We have seen fisheries adapting their approach to remain sustainable, but it is becoming more and more challenging to do so without the support of fisheries management organisations which are responsive to the challenges of climate change."

Ahead of the COP30 UN climate negotiations in November, the MSC is calling on governments to collaborate on fish stock management, ensuring they work across borders to protect species from decline. Koerner said,"Climate change shows no signs of slowing and global demand for seafood continues to rise. Governments and fisheries management organisations need to adapt their practices to keep pace and ensure our oceans remain healthy."

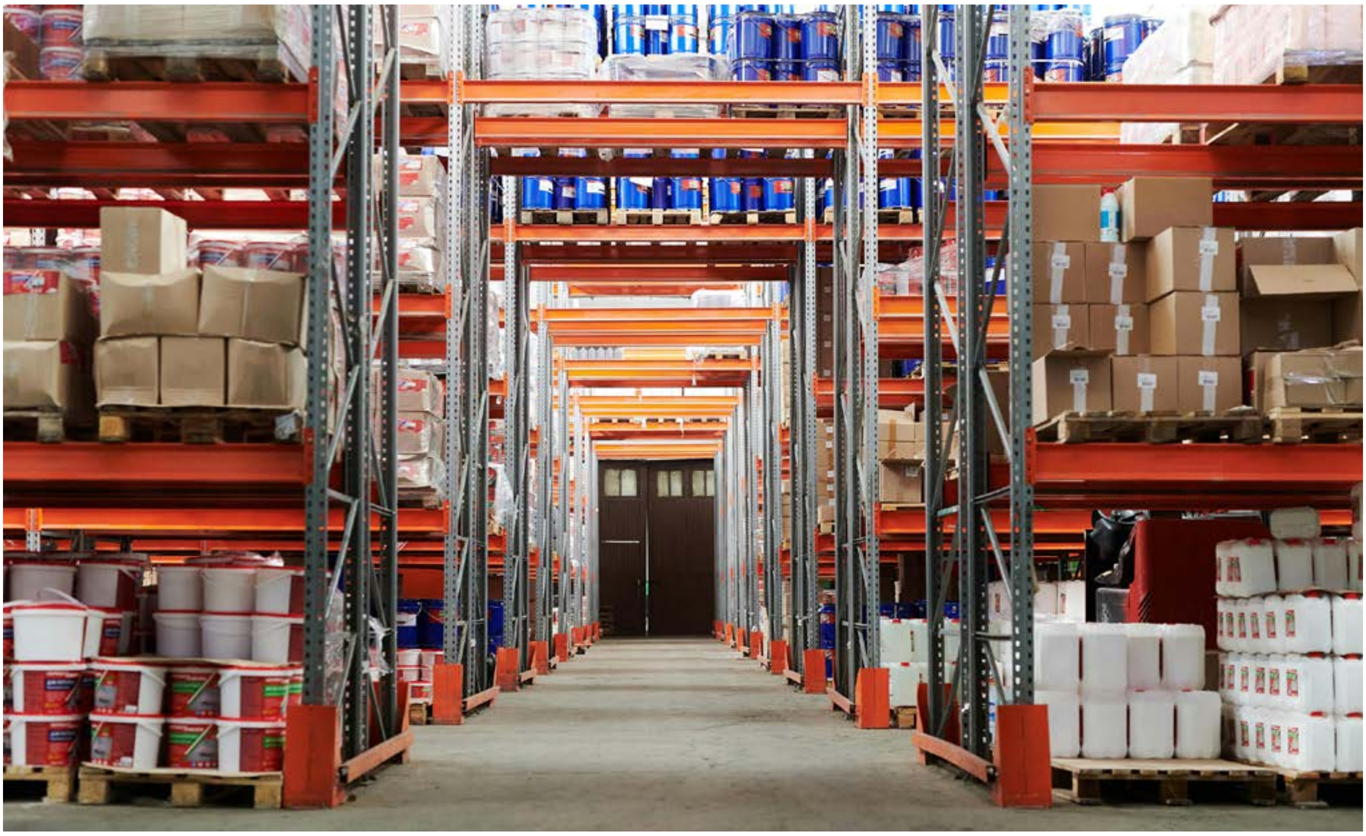
Joe Zelasney, Common Oceans Tuna Project Manager said, "With climate change there will be winners and losers in tuna fisheries but for some developing small island states, the impact on their economies could be devastating.

"It is important for governments and the five tuna regional fisheries management organisations that manage tuna fisheries on the high seas to work closely together to stay ahead of the changes to protect livelihoods and regional food security."

For more information visit **Common Oceans Program**

Reference
Global demand for seafood is set to double by 2050, source **https://bluefood.earth/news/**

Manufacturing's next edge. How to manage productive tensions without picking sides



South African manufacturers are navigating smarter plants, tighter margins and more volatile supply chains. The instinct is often to choose between efficiency and innovation, automation and jobs, standardisation and flexibility.

Polarity Thinking, a framework introduced by Barry Johnson, offers a different view. Many of these are not problems to solve but interdependent pairs to balance over time. Managing both poles well reduces trade-offs and strengthens competitiveness.

How to apply Polarity Thinking in manufacturing:

1. **Efficiency and innovation:** Lean disciplines and experimentation are not opposites. Use stable, visual workflows and clear KPIs to surface waste, then channel the time saved into rapid trials on new tooling, materials or process tweaks. Improvement loops feed invention; invention feeds the next round of improvement.
2. **Uniform processes and tailored products:** Adopt mass-customisation principles: keep a standardised core (platforms, shared components) with modular "edges" (swappable options, late-stage differentiation). This preserves throughput while meeting customer-specific specs without bespoke rebuilds.

"In complex plants, many "choices" are recurring tensions. The advantage goes to teams that balance both sides deliberately, using data and short learning cycles, rather than swinging between extremes"

3. **Automation and human expertise:** Robotics and AI handle repetitive, hazardous or ultra-precise steps; people focus on diagnosis, exception handling and continuous improvement. Design workflows so data from machines informs human decisions, and operator feedback refines automation.

4. **Stability and agility:** Maintain a reliable base (SPCs, preventive maintenance, supplier SLAs) alongside a "rapid response" capability—small cross-functional teams with authority to adjust schedules, qualify alternates, or re-route materials when conditions change.

5. **Profitability and sustainability:** Treat energy efficiency, waste reduction and water stewardship as operating levers, not side projects. Many measures (heat recovery, smarter batching, closed-loop rinses) lower unit costs and exposure to compliance risks while supporting customer requirements.

Putting it to work:

- Map the pair: Name the upside and downside of each pole (e.g., efficiency's upside is lower cost; its downside is rigidity if over-pursued).
- Set early warnings: Decide which indicators show you're over-leaning to one side (e.g., innovation backlog, scrap spikes, changeover delays).
- Design simple routines: Quarterly polarity reviews in ops meetings; short experiments with defined guardrails; feedback from line leaders captured and acted on.

The bottom line

In complex plants, many "choices" are recurring tensions. The advantage goes to teams that balance both sides deliberately, using data and short learning cycles, rather than swinging between extremes.

Author
Sid Peimer, Programme Manager: Postgraduate Diploma in Creative Leadership, Red & Yellow Creative School of Business

The R24 million cabbage: Why Shoprite is keeping SA's superfood affordable

Cabbage has been many things – a wartime lifesaver, a symbol of resilience, even a French term of endearment. For millions of South Africans, though, it is a daily staple that's filling, packed with nutrition, and affordable, and the Shoprite Group is working hard to keep it that way.

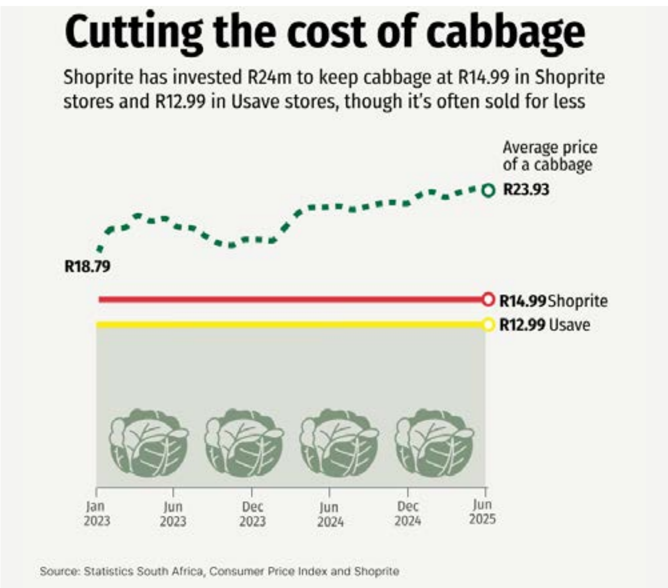
Because the Group understands the importance of cabbage in South Africans' diets, it has, for the past two-and-a-half years, been quietly investing millions to keep it affordable. Between June 2024 and July 2025, the Group spent R24 million to subsidise the price of cabbage for its customers.

A South African staple worth protecting

Cabbage isn't just another vegetable. In many ways, it stands as an original "superfood", just without the modern-day marketing hype.

During the Second World War, cabbage was promoted as a "Victory Garden" crop because it was hardy, easy to grow, and versatile enough to stretch family meals when meat was scarce. Today, it remains just as important in communities under economic pressure.

Cabbage is a low-calorie food rich in vitamins C and K, fibre, antioxidants, and minerals. It's one of the most nutrient-dense foods available, but also one of the cheapest. Unlike some regional fruits and vegetables, it also grows easily across South Africa, from Limpopo to the Western Cape. Because of this, it has long been a cornerstone of informal markets and household food gardens.



Why Shoprite stepped in

In 2024, South Africa produced more than 160,000 tons of cabbage for the formal market – and far more if informal and smallholder production is included. Yet despite its abundance, it isn't immune to rising costs. Fuel, fertiliser, water shortages, and transport challenges have driven prices up, making it harder to afford by the families who rely on it most.

By absorbing costs and capping prices at a maximum of R12.99 in Usave and R14.99 in Shoprite supermarkets – even though actual prices in stores may vary by region and are often lower – the Group has taken another deliberate step to support household food security. When the cost price rose to as much as R25 during the year, the capped prices remained firmly in place.

"Cabbage is an integral part of many South African diets. It is resilient, nutritious, tasty, and familiar. By keeping it affordable, we are investing in food security, dignity, and health for millions," says Quintin Paladin, General Manager: Freshmark & Fresh Foods.

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Kotlin chooses Amcor's Sava Flip Top closure

Amcor has announced that Polish ketchup brand Kotlin has selected its Sava Flip Top closure for its latest packaging update. Produced by Maspex, one of Central and Eastern Europe's largest food and beverage manufacturers, Kotlin required a packaging solution that aligned with its reputation for quality and innovation in tomato-based products.

The Sava Flip Top closure was chosen for its lightweight design, recyclability and ease of use. The polypropylene (PP) cap incorporates a TPE valve, which enables precise, non-drip dispensing while being more widely recyclable than traditional silicone alternatives. These features contribute to sustainable food packaging solutions and align with industry efforts to reduce material usage and improve recyclability across global and South African food and beverage markets.

Part of Amcor's B Circular Range, the 55 mm Sava Flip Top cap supports brand owners in meeting circular economy goals. Available in multiple colours and configurations, it offers flexibility for different product lines and efficient compatibility with existing filling operations.

Amcor has invested in a new production line at its Wola Rębkowska, Poland facility to ensure reliable, localised supply for Maspex. The partnership underscores growing demand for sustainable, user-friendly packaging innovations in the food and beverage industry.

www.amcor.com

Making food and beverage factories AI-ready

Tetra Pak has launched its next-generation Automation and Digitalisation portfolio, Tetra Pak® Factory OS™, designed to help South African food and beverage manufacturers accelerate their digital transformation and prepare for AI-driven production.

Unveiled at Gulfood Manufacturing in Dubai, Tetra Pak® Factory OS™ is a modular, open and scalable smart factory solution that connects equipment, systems and data across the production line. The platform provides real-time, contextualised insights that enable smarter, faster decision-making, supporting manufacturers to improve efficiency, sustainability, and product consistency while reducing costs and utility consumption.

A recent study shows that highly automated beverage factories achieve up to 20% higher equipment effectiveness and 45% less product waste than less automated operations. However, many producers still face challenges integrating automation due to limited digital expertise and fragmented systems. Tetra Pak® Factory OS™ bridges this gap, combining advanced analytics with Tetra Pak's extensive food and beverage knowledge to deliver tangible value and measurable performance improvements.

Developed with Accenture, and supported by Siemens, Rockwell Automation and Inductive Automation, Tetra Pak® Factory OS™ sets the foundation for AI-ready factories of the future.

www.tetrapak.com/futurefactory

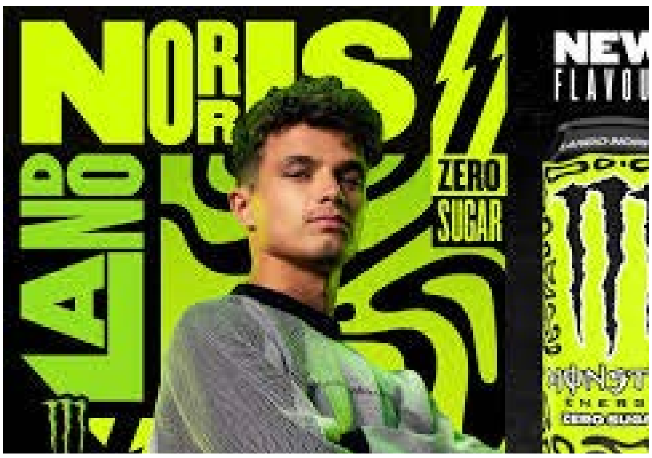
Packaging News

HEINEKEN Brazil brings Mamba Water to COP30

HEINEKEN Brazil will supply its sustainable canned water brand, Mamba Water, to delegates at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30) in Belém. In partnership with the Federal Government of Brazil, the company will donate 1.5 million aluminium cans of Mamba Water for use in the Blue Zone, the conference's central hub for global climate negotiations.

This marks the first time that water packaged in aluminium cans will be served at a COP Blue Zone. The initiative supports circular economy goals through a coordinated recycling effort led by HEINEKEN Spin, the company's impact business ecosystem. Working with Ball Corporation, Novelis, Volkswagen Truck & Bus, Reaqt Water Technologies, and the City of Belém, HEINEKEN will ensure that all used cans are collected, recycled, and reintroduced into the value chain. Aligned with HEINEKEN's Brew a Better World strategy, Mamba Water's presence at COP30 underscores the company's commitment to sustainable packaging, water stewardship, and renewable energy initiatives. In Belém and the wider State of Pará, HEINEKEN Brazil continues to invest in water access, reforestation, green energy, and cultural projects, reinforcing its long-term vision for environmental responsibility and community impact across the food and beverage sector.

www.heineken.com



Monster and Lando Norris take energy to the next level

Monster Energy has unveiled its biggest energy drink launch yet with Monster Energy Lando Norris Zero Sugar, now available across 20 global markets, including South Africa. This innovation strengthens Monster's energy drink portfolio and highlights the growing demand for zero-sugar functional beverages in the South African food and beverage sector.

Developed in partnership with Formula 1 driver Lando Norris, the new variant combines Melon Yuzu flavour with a zero-sugar formula, addressing consumer demand for low-calorie energy drinks that deliver both performance and taste. For South African retailers and distributors, the launch represents a strategic opportunity to meet increasing market demand for health-conscious beverage options and expand category appeal.

Monster Energy continues to drive growth in the energy drinks market through innovation and collaboration, creating impactful brand experiences across retail channels. The Lando Norris Zero Sugar launch is supported by dynamic in-store displays and local activations, designed to boost visibility and consumer engagement.

As Monster Energy Limited expands its 24/7 beverage portfolio, the brand reinforces its position as a leading energy drink partner for retailers and consumers alike.

www.monsterenergy.com

Roadmap to packaging

The updated edition of Connected Packaging: The Game-Changing Marketing Tool is a comprehensive 316-page guide that explores how connected packaging is reshaping global brand engagement. Targeted at marketers, packaging professionals, and brand strategists, the expanded 2025 edition provides critical insights into new US regulations, data privacy requirements, and the role of emerging AI and gaming technologies in driving consumer interaction.

For the South African industry, where traceability, compliance, and digital engagement are increasingly strategic priorities, this book offers a timely roadmap. As connected packaging technologies gain traction globally, the lessons in this updated edition hold particular relevance for regional manufacturers, exporters, and FMCG brands seeking to future-proof operations and align with international standards.

Connected packaging and the barcode transition

The updated edition adds three new chapters and extensively revises all market data based on the 2025 Global Connected Packaging Survey. One of the most significant updates is Chapter 2: The Barcode Revolution – GS1 and The Retail Transformation, which analyses Tesco's April 2025 pilot replacing traditional barcodes with GS1-powered QR codes. This milestone marks a pivotal moment in retail digitisation, confirming that the transition from linear barcodes to digital product identifiers is accelerating.

With GS1 setting a 2027 global deadline for full migration to QR codes, and 48 countries already piloting the shift, food and beverage manufacturers face a growing imperative to act. For South African producers exporting to markets in Europe or the United States, early adoption will not only ensure compliance but also enhance traceability and consumer trust.

AI and gaming elevate consumer engagement

A new Chapter 10: The Next Generation – AI, Gaming and the Future of Connected Packaging highlights case studies demonstrating how digital innovation is transforming brand-consumer relationships. Examples include Sunny Oil's AI-powered recipe recommendations and Danone Alpro's interactive gaming experience, which achieved 14% scan rates, far exceeding traditional digital advertising benchmarks of 0.1%.

These results signal a new era for consumer engagement, where packaging acts as both a product interface and a dynamic content channel. For South African brands, this presents opportunities to deliver personalised, multilingual experiences that align with local consumer preferences while maintaining global competitiveness.

Regulatory shifts redefine market readiness

In Chapter 11: America's Connected Packaging Transformation, an in-depth analysis of US regulatory frameworks reshaping product labelling and data transparency is provided. The book examines key initiatives such as the Drug Supply Chain Security Act (DSCSA), Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) programmes, and the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), all of which demand end-to-end product traceability and robust data integration.

For South African exporters to the US market, understanding these regulatory requirements will be essential to maintaining compliance and access. The author also expands the book's data privacy coverage, detailing compliance obligations under both the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) and GDPR, helping global brands navigate increasingly complex multi-jurisdictional data environments.

Market data and strategic implications

The 2025 edition incorporates updated findings from the Global Connected Packaging Survey, revealing that 88.8% of industry professionals now view connected packaging as a growing priority, up from 80.4% in 2024. The share of respondents dismissing it as a passing trend dropped to 13.4%, while gamification adoption rose to 59%, reflecting a 15% year-on-year increase.

Stanley's expanded analysis also presents new frameworks for implementation, ROI measurement, and technology selection, offering clear comparisons between QR codes, NFC, RFID, augmented reality, artificial intelligence, and blockchain. Real-world data from brand campaigns reinforce the commercial value of connected packaging, demonstrating scan rates exceeding 14% and measurable engagement outcomes across multiple channels.

Implications for South African food and beverage producers

As the industry continues to modernise, the insights from Connected Packaging: The Game-Changing Marketing Tool are directly applicable. Connected packaging technologies can enhance product traceability, consumer trust, and regulatory alignment, while also enabling sustainability reporting and digital marketing integration.

For businesses operating in an increasingly digital export environment, the ability to leverage QR-based packaging, AI-driven personalisation, and transparent data practices will be key to remaining competitive. This updated edition positions connected packaging not as a trend, but as a structural transformation redefining how global and regional brands communicate, comply, and compete in 2025 and beyond.

New banana box solution

Mondi, has developed a new banana box solution that is both lighter and more sustainable, designed through a collaborative process involving Ecuadorian banana exporter Incarpalm and trading partner Europcell. The innovation addresses key sustainability and supply chain challenges within the fresh produce sector, offering South African exporters valuable insights into material efficiency and environmental performance.

Rethinking the banana box

The initiative began when Mondi's containerboard technical team identified an opportunity to optimise the traditional banana box used for international exports. Their challenge: to make the box lighter and more resource-efficient while maintaining strength and humidity resistance during long-distance transport.

Working closely with Europcell and Incarpalm, Mondi undertook a full structural redesign of the box, exploring a range of paper compositions to achieve the right balance between performance and sustainability. The outcome combines ProVantage SmartKraft Brown, recognised for its robustness and protective qualities, with ProVantage Frescoflute, a semi-chemical fluting that provides high stiffness even in lightweight packaging.

The result is a box that uses approximately 40% recycled fibre and is up to 10% lighter than the standard design. These improvements reduce the material footprint and lower carbon emissions during transport, contributing to circularity and cost efficiency in the fresh produce supply chain.

Tested under real-world conditions

To ensure the new box could withstand the demanding conditions of banana exports, Mondi and its partners conducted a full-scale trial in Ecuador in mid-2024. Bananas were packed in the new boxes and shipped across the Atlantic to Europe on a 33-day journey, monitored by sensors tracking humidity and temperature throughout the voyage.

Even under extreme humidity levels reaching 100%, the boxes retained their structural integrity, protecting the fruit from damage and maintaining quality on arrival. The successful trial demonstrated that the lighter design does not compromise on strength, validating the packaging's suitability for long-haul transport in tropical climates.

Marek Motylewski, Technical Service Expert for containerboard products at Mondi, said the development represents the value of open collaboration: "Seeing the new box perform under such tough conditions was incredibly rewarding. It started as a simple question during a customer visit and evolved into a solution that delivers measurable benefits for the entire supply chain."

Jorge Romero, Operations Manager at Incarpalm, added: "The reliability of the box is everything. This collaboration shows that innovation and practicality must go hand in hand."

A response to changing market and regulatory conditions

The improved banana box aligns with growing demand for sustainable packaging in the global fresh produce sector, where both exporters and importers are seeking to reduce plastic use and optimise logistics. With upcoming EU regulations set to ban plastic wrap inside banana boxes from 2026, the need for fibre-based alternatives has become more urgent.

For South African fruit exporters, these developments highlight the importance of supply chain collaboration and material innovation in meeting international sustainability requirements. Lighter packaging not only reduces carbon emissions but also contributes to lower freight costs and improved environmental performance across export operations.

Towards more sustainable supply chains

Gijs Huisman, Sales Director at Mondi Containerboard, emphasised that the success of the project lies in co-creation: "This project shows what's possible when we combine technical expertise with open collaboration. It's an example of co-creation that delivers tangible results in strength, sustainability and supply chain efficiency."

Mondi's latest innovation demonstrates how packaging manufacturers, suppliers and exporters can work together to create fit-for-purpose solutions that balance environmental performance with operational needs.

For the South African industry, particularly for exporters of bananas, avocados, citrus and other fresh produce, this development underscores the growing strategic importance of lightweight, fibre-based, and recyclable packaging solutions in achieving sustainability targets and ensuring compliance with international standards.

As the global fruit trade continues to prioritise lower emissions and material circularity, Mondi's new banana box represents a practical advancement in sustainable packaging for fresh produce exports, setting a new benchmark for efficiency and collaboration in the value chain.

www.mondigroup.com

Innovations shaping South Africa's food packaging sector

Modified atmosphere packaging (MAP) is fast becoming a strategic investment area for South Africa's food and beverage packaging industry. As local producers balance rising logistics costs, consumer pressure for fresh and minimally processed food, and the need to cut post-harvest losses, MAP is emerging as a proven value-adding technology across protein, produce and convenience categories.

Market overview and investment outlook

The South African MAP market has seen steady growth over the past five years, supported by the expansion of retail-ready meat, poultry and fresh produce segments. The domestic industry also benefits from alignment with export protocols that increasingly require scientifically validated shelf-life extension methods.

According to local packaging industry estimates, more than 60% of fresh meat products in major retail chains are now packed under modified atmospheres. MAP adoption in fresh produce and ready-to-eat meals is also expanding, driven by the rise of centralised packing facilities and chilled distribution networks. Food packers are investing in automated MAP lines to ensure consistent gas composition, traceability and reduced operator intervention.

How MAP supports the food value chain

At its core, MAP replaces the air inside a food pack with a controlled mixture of gases—typically carbon dioxide (CO_2), nitrogen (N_2) and oxygen (O_2),to slow

microbial growth and oxidative spoilage. For South African producers, the benefits extend beyond shelf-life management:

- Reduced food waste: by lowering the rate of spoilage across long domestic and export supply chains, MAP contributes directly to food security goals and sustainability metrics.
- Product quality retention: consistent gas ratios help maintain colour and texture in red meat, seafood and fresh-cut produce, reducing retailer returns.
- Regulatory assurance: validated MAP processes support Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) compliance and product traceability, particularly for export certification.

Packaging materials and gas considerations

Material selection remains critical for effective MAP performance. South African converters are increasingly offering high-barrier multilayer films and co-extruded trays with precise oxygen transmission rates (OTR). PET/PE, EVOH and bio-based PLA laminates are being tailored for MAP compatibility, allowing local food manufacturers to shift away from imported films.

Gas suppliers such as Afrox and Air Products South Africa now offer food-grade gas blends designed for specific categories—for example, 70% O_2 / 30% CO_2 for red meat to preserve colour, or 5% O_2 / 95% N_2 for bakery items to prevent mould. Continuous gas purity monitoring and validation are becoming standard practice for B2B buyers requiring consistent MAP performance at scale.

Machinery and automation trends

Equipment manufacturers are focusing on integrated MAP systems that combine sealing, gas flushing and leak detection within automated form-fill-seal or tray-sealing machines. For packaging lines in South Africa, these systems are increasingly supplied with digital controls, data logging, and inline gas analysers.

Manufacturers are also integrating MAP technology into hybrid formats such as vacuum skin packaging (VSP), which combines tight product presentation with extended shelf life. Compact MAP units are being adopted by small and medium food processors, while large-scale facilities are investing in high-throughput lines that meet global audit standards such as BRCGS and ISO 22000.

Compliance and sustainability

MAP packaging must comply with South Africa's Foodstuffs, Cosmetics and Disinfectants Act (Act 54 of 1972) and related labelling standards under the South African National Standards (SANS 289). B2B packaging suppliers should ensure that packs indicate storage conditions and date marking consistent with MAP use.

Sustainability considerations are also reshaping procurement. Lightweight films, recyclable PET trays, and bio-based laminates are being tested for compatibility with MAP gases. Converters are focusing on circular packaging models to align with the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) regulations introduced under the National Environmental Management Act.

Future opportunities for B2B stakeholders

The next phase of MAP development in South Africa will focus on data-driven optimisation and export competitiveness. As more fresh produce and protein products target regional and global markets, demand for MAP systems that deliver validated shelf-life data will grow.

Collaboration between packaging converters, gas suppliers, and automation specialists will be central to achieving standardisation and cost efficiencies. Local R&D into active packaging, incorporating antimicrobial films and intelligent sensors is also opening new possibilities for smart shelf-life management.

By investing in advanced films, precise gas controls and compliant labelling, the sector can strengthen its competitiveness both locally and abroad.

Advancing efficiency and sustainability

Technical innovation in secondary and tertiary packaging systems is becoming a decisive factor in operational competitiveness. Multi-packing and bundling technologies, once viewed primarily as logistical conveniences, now play a central role in driving process efficiency, material optimisation, and compliance with sustainability standards across the B2B food packaging sector.

Production environment

In technical terms, multi-packing involves the collation of individual primary packages (for example, bottles, cans, or pouches) into a uniform secondary pack that can be handled, stored, and transported as a single unit. Bundling extends this concept by securing multiple SKUs or complementary products with films, straps, or corrugated carriers for distribution.

These processes sit between primary and tertiary packaging and are typically integrated downstream of the filling or sealing line. In automated plants, collation is achieved using conveyor-based systems and servo-driven grouping modules, followed by wrapping, heat-shrinking, or carton erecting. The configuration chosen depends on product geometry, throughput rate, and the mechanical properties of the selected packaging substrate.

Integration with automated packaging systems

The packaging machinery market has seen growing uptake of modular multi-packing lines designed for high-volume production environments. Servo-controlled bundlers and robotic collators enable rapid format changeovers, essential for facilities managing multiple SKUs or promotional pack variants.

Advanced systems now employ programmable logic controllers (PLCs) and human-machine interfaces (HMIs) for precise control of film feed, tension, and sealing temperature. This enhances consistency, minimises film wastage, and reduces downtime caused by manual adjustments. Integration with upstream fillers and downstream palletisers via industrial communication protocols, such as EtherCAT or PROFINET, supports end-to-end line synchronisation and real-time performance monitoring.

For manufacturers this level of automation translates to measurable improvements in overall equipment effectiveness (OEE), reduced labour intensity, and lower total cost of ownership over the equipment lifecycle.

Material engineering and sustainability considerations

Material innovation is influencing the technical design of multi-packing and bundling systems. Conventional low-density polyethylene (LDPE) shrink films are being replaced or downgauged with high-strength polyolefin blends that maintain mechanical integrity while reducing thickness. Biodegradable and compostable films are emerging alternatives, though their heat-shrink characteristics and barrier properties require recalibration of machine parameters.

For paper-based bundling, automated case and wrap-around carton systems are being adapted to accommodate coated or fibre-based substrates. The challenge lies in achieving the same tensile strength and sealing performance as polymer films without compromising line speed.

Compliance with South Africa's Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) regulations is accelerating adoption of recyclable mono-material films and returnable packaging designs. Many equipment manufacturers are now offering retrofitting services to upgrade older bundlers for compatibility with new sustainable materials, thereby extending equipment lifespan and aligning operations with environmental reporting obligations.

Process optimisation and data analytics

Modern multi-packing lines are increasingly equipped with smart sensors and machine vision systems for pack integrity inspection, weight verification, and barcode validation. Data collected from these systems feeds into plant-level manufacturing execution systems (MES), enabling predictive maintenance and traceability.

By analysing production data, such as film consumption, seal temperature stability, or reject rates, operators can fine-tune parameters to achieve material savings and reduce downtime. In South Africa's competitive food manufacturing sector, such data-driven process optimisation supports lean production principles and improves profitability.

Market dynamics and future direction

Adoption of multi-packing and bundling machinery is driven by rising demand from organised retail, export logistics, and contract packaging operations. The trend towards larger retail chains and warehouse clubs has increased the need for shelf-ready secondary packaging formats that facilitate fast replenishment and reduced in-store handling.

However, the capital expenditure associated with advanced automated lines remains a barrier for smaller producers. To address this, equipment suppliers are offering modular, scalable systems that allow phased investment and integration with existing manual or semi-automated operations.

Looking forward, innovations such as energy-efficient heat tunnels, digital twin simulation, and AI-assisted quality control are expected to further enhance the efficiency and sustainability of multi-packing and bundling solutions in the region. As the South African food and beverage packaging industry aligns with global sustainability benchmarks, these technologies will become standard in modern production environments.

120 000 South Africans remove litter from the environment

More than 120 000 South Africans from all nine provinces took part in Clean-Up and Recycle SA Week 2025, a national environmental campaign coordinated by Plastics SA. Held from 15–20 September, the initiative mobilised communities, schools, businesses, and local authorities to clean beaches, rivers, parks, and public spaces, reducing plastic pollution and promoting responsible waste management.

The Clean-Up and Recycle SA Week initiative forms part of South Africa's ongoing efforts to promote the circular economy and improve plastic waste recycling. This year's campaign distributed over 400 000 yellow clean-up bags through 75 coordinators nationwide. "The campaign is not just about removing litter, it's about education and empowerment," said Douw Steyn, Sustainability Director at Plastics SA. "Each bag filled represents a community taking responsibility for its environment."

Nationwide action for a cleaner environment

Large-scale clean-ups took place across South Africa. In KwaZulu-Natal, volunteers collaborated with the Clean Surf Project, eThekwini Municipality and the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment to clean the Amanzimtoti, Isipingo, and Dakota beaches. In the Western Cape, more than 300 Polyoak Packaging employees joined Plastics SA, PETCO, Polyco, and CleanC for a major clean-up at Strandfontein Beach, where recyclable materials were later sorted for recovery.

In Villiersdorp, the Theewaterskloof Municipality partnered with Polyco and Plastics SA to collect and sort plastic and glass waste, which was then channelled to a local buy-back centre. Across the country, youth participation was a highlight, with learners and students leading community clean-ups and gaining first-hand environmental awareness.

Partnership drives sustainability

Industry partners including Sasol, Safripol, Tuffy, and several Producer Responsibility Organisations (PROs) played a critical role in providing resources and logistical support. Despite funding and transport challenges, their collaboration ensured that rural and urban areas alike could participate in the national campaign.

www.cleanupandrecycle.co.za
www.plasticssa.co.za

What's happening?

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