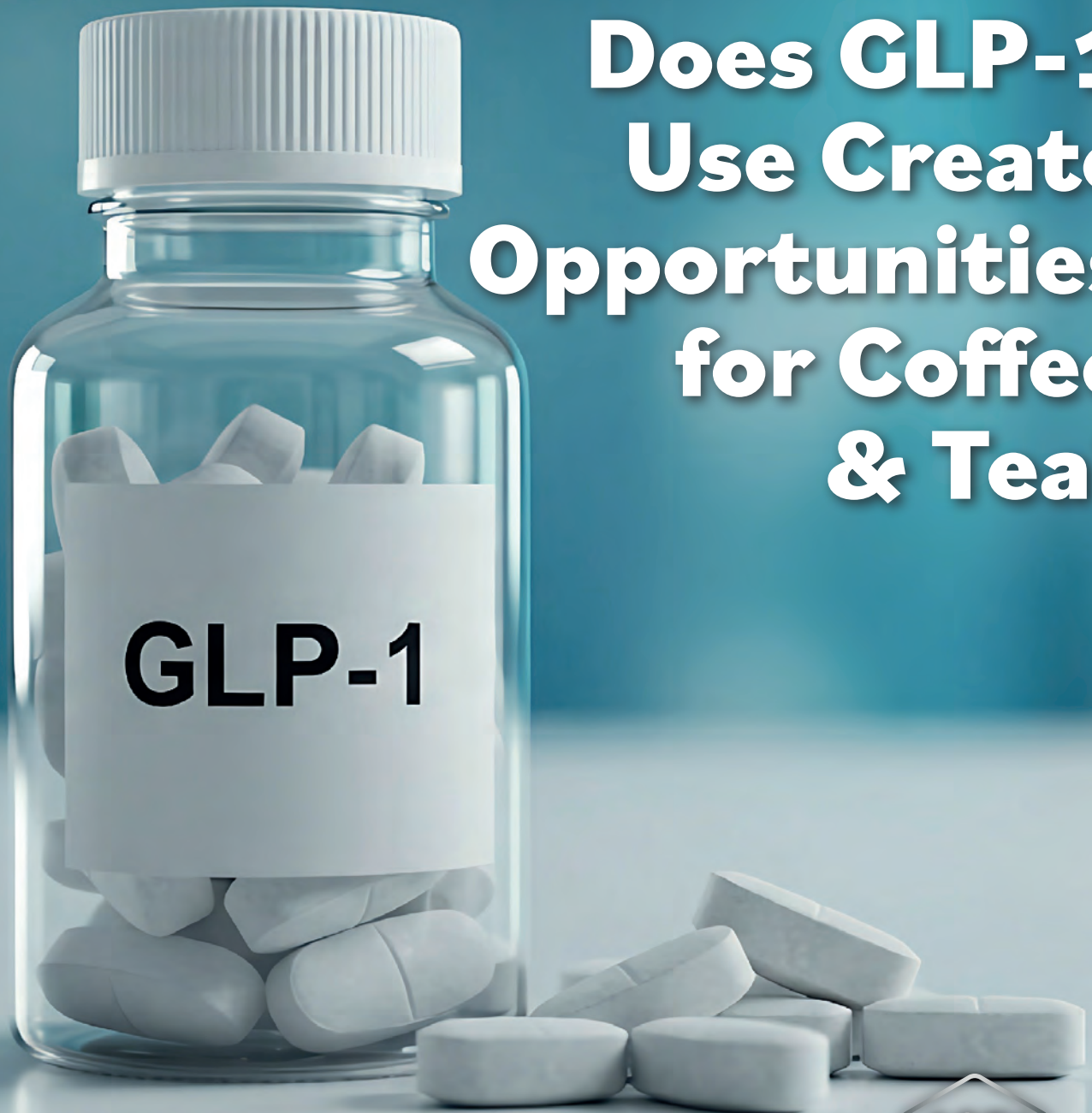


TEA & COFFEE

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Does GLP-1 Use Create Opportunities for Coffee & Tea?



**Examining the State of
the US Specialty Coffee
Industry**

**The Rise of Functional
Ingredients Benefits
Herbal & Botanical Teas**

**EPR: What Beverage
Companies Need
to Know**

**Origin
Highlight:
Ethiopia**

A stylized illustration of a coffee plant with green leaves and dark coffee beans, set against a light green background. The illustration is detailed, showing the veins of the leaves and the texture of the beans.

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Megan Conceição, insights analyst at
Finlays Solutions

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Gearing Up for an Eventful 2026

Happy New Year! I hope everyone's holidays were enjoyable. This year has started as hectic as 2025 ended, but "it's all good" since 2026 is gearing up to be a busy, eventful, and exciting year for *T&CJ*.

Immediately after this issue goes to press, Chris Meer and I head to the United Arab Emirates for World of Coffee Dubai, where *T&CJ* is exhibiting for the third year in a row. And so begins our presence at nearly one conference, convention, or trade show per month through June!

Of course, the one event we are most excited about and proud of, is our own Women in Tea & Coffee Conference, which we launched last year. This year's event takes place in London on 6 May. We are pleased to announce that Zahra Afshar, head of legal, human rights and sustainability at Ahmad Tea, will be our tea keynote speaker; and Kathrine Löfberg, chair of the board of Löfbergs Coffee, will be our coffee keynote speaker. Both women have diverse and fascinating backgrounds, which enable them to offer *WiTCC* attendees unique perspectives.

Please continually check our Women in Tea & Coffee Conference website – women.teaandcoffee.events – as we constantly update it with new speaker and content announcements. We hope you can join us for the sophomore *WiTCC*.

It is hard to believe, but *Tea & Coffee Trade Journal* is celebrating a milestone this year – our 125th anniversary! It feels like not too long ago I was working on the special issue for our 120th anniversary (which took place during the Covid-19 pandemic), much has changed since then — for the magazine, and globally. We will be celebrating our 125th anniversary with a commemorative issue in September. If anyone has old photos from industry events where *T&CJ* was present, pictures that were published in *T&CJ*, or old advertisements that ran, which they would like to share, I would appreciate it.

I would be remiss if I did not mention some of the articles we have in this issue as they touch upon highly topical subjects: the evolving US specialty coffee market, extended producer responsibility (EPR) policies, the EUDR delay, and GLP-1 medications. It seems that not a day goes by without 'GLP-1s' popping up in some medium. Our lead story tackles how coffee and tea can benefit from consumers' growing use of the weight-loss drugs.

Cheers to a happy, healthy, prosperous 2026, and as always, safe travels and be well!

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NEW & NOTABLE

TEA & COFFEE REPORTS BREWING WORLDWIDE

Image credit: AdobeStock

The European Council Officially Postpones EUDR Implementation

The European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) has officially been delayed for another year. The deforestation regulation's postponement comes after a year of political lobbying and quarrelling.

The European Parliament accepted targeted changes to the EUDR, which were already informally agreed with European Union (EU) member states on 4 December 2025.

The EUDR, adopted in 2023, seeks to fight climate change and biodiversity loss by ensuring products sold in the EU are not sourced from deforested land.

The European Council officially delayed the EUDR on 18 December with the new timeline set for 30 December 2026 for large companies and 30 June 2027 for micro and small operators. This delay is due to concerns about the readiness of IT systems and the administrative burden associated with the regulation. The revision aims to streamline the due diligence requirements and ensure that operators are adequately prepared for its application, while fully preserving the regulation's objectives of preventing deforestation and forest degradation linked to products placed on the EU market.

To further reduce administrative burden, certain printed products (such as books, newspapers, printed pictures) were removed from the scope of the regulation, reflecting the limited deforestation risk associated with these items.

The revision introduces the obligation for the European Commission to conduct a simplification review of the regulation and present a report by 30 April 2026. The report should evaluate the impact and administrative burden of the EUDR, particularly for smaller operators, and should, where appropriate, be accompanied by a legislative proposal.

After the vote, Parliament's rapporteur, Christine Schneider, (EPP, DE) said in a statement, "The heart of the EU deforestation regulation remains intact. We are protecting forests that face a real risk of deforestation, while avoiding unnecessary obligations in areas where no such risk exists. This agreement takes the concerns of farmers, foresters, and businesses seriously and ensures that the regulation can be implemented in a practical and workable way."

However, major concerns have been expressed by

environmental groups at the European Parliament's decision to delay the EUDR implementation. Commenting on the newest delay, Stientje van Veldhoven, vice president and director for World Resources Institute (WRI) Europe, in a statement, said, "We are losing 18 football fields of forest every single minute, with cascading harm to nature, the climate and the economy. It is deeply sad to see the EU water down and postpone its deforestation law – at the very moment forests and businesses need strong, predictable rules to stop deforestation."

There is also the impact on smallholder farmers to consider. "While the goals are commendable, the pace and scope of implementation, however, threaten to sideline producers and suppliers who lack the necessary capital, technical infrastructure, knowledge and related support to prove said compliance," wrote Jon Trask, CEO and founder of Dimitra, in a blog for *T&CTJ* in July 2025.

Next Steps

Following its formal adoption by the Council, the revised regulation will be published in the Official Journal of the European Union and enter into force three days after publication.

Background on the EUDR

The regulation on deforestation-free products entered into force in June 2023 with the aim of ensuring that certain commodities, such as cattle, cocoa, coffee, palm oil, rubber, soya and wood, and their derived products placed on or exported from the EU market have not caused deforestation or forest degradation.

Its main provisions were initially due to take effect on 30 December 2024. Following concerns raised by member states, third countries, traders, and operators about readiness, a one-year postponement was adopted in December 2024. Now, the current EUDR becomes applicable as of 30 December 2025.

The new amendment, proposed by the Commission in October 2025, responds to continuing implementation challenges, in particular the need to ensure the effective functioning of the EU information system and alleviate administrative burdens for smaller operators.

Vanessa L Facenda

PACK EXPO East 2026 Offers Attendees a Larger Show and New Pavilions

PACK EXPO East is the most comprehensive packaging and processing show on the East Coast. The 2026 event, organised by PMMI, The Association for Packaging and Processing, takes place the 17-19 February in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

PACK EXPO East (PEE) is a regional show that attracts attendees from along the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic corridors from states such as Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Maryland, and Ohio. Organisers note that the region is a ‘manufacturing powerhouse.’ Pennsylvania is a manufacturing hub and home to many well-known brands such as the Hershey Company, Tastykake, and Boeing Rotorcraft.

Philadelphia is a central, convenient location for attendees in this region and allows for a quick flight, train, or even car-ride to get to the show.

Attendees are key decision makers ranging from CEO’s and plant managers to engineers and production and operations managers. They represent more than 40 vertical markets, including food and beverage, life sciences, cosmetics and personal care. These decision makers are looking to get a jump-start on 2026 projects and take advantage of the show being in Q1 and using its prime location as an opportunity for their teams to attend together. The show has the essential features you would see at a PACK EXPO show – the machinery, educational sessions and networking – all accessible with registration. The show is large enough to provide all the solutions brands are looking for, but intimate enough for productive, face-to-face conversations.

At PACK EXPO East, attendees will find over 500 exhibitors displaying the latest packaging and processing machinery and equipment, materials, supplies and solutions for all industries.

All in an easy to navigate 125,000 net square feet of exhibits. It is a great place to network, compare equipment, and have in-depth conversations with suppliers who can solve any packaging and processing challenge.

For those heading to PACK EXPO East 2026, there are a few new aspects to check out. New for 2026 is the Containers and Materials Pavilion, designed for brand



Image credit: PMMI

owners, packaging designers, and manufacturers who want to see what is next in packaging materials. This section offers the latest innovations across paperboard, glass, metal, flexible packaging, and resealable formats with a big focus on solutions that help brands stand out, improve performance, and support sustainability. Per PMMI, “think recyclable, biodegradable, and e-commerce-ready materials all in one place.”

Another new addition this year is the Incubator Hub, presented by PMMI in partnership with Ben Franklin Technology Partners (BFTP). This is a dedicated area on the show floor where early-stage start-ups from Pennsylvania will be showcasing next-generation ideas in packaging, processing, automation, and advanced manufacturing. It is a great way to discover emerging technologies and connect with innovators whose ideas could eventually become the next industry standard. It also highlights Pennsylvania’s growing innovation ecosystem, and the role start-ups play in driving economic growth and manufacturing advancement.

PACK EXPO East is also continuing its commitment to supporting small and medium-sized businesses through SMB

FastTrack. This includes an SMB Friendly exhibitor designation, plus education designed for teams, covering topics like cost-effective packaging solutions, start-up supply chain strategies, and scalable technologies. To make it even easier for attendees to plan their time, attendees can quickly spot exhibitors displaying machinery by looking for the gear icon in the show directory.

In addition, the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce will be on-site this year, sharing resources and services that help businesses grow and succeed.

For coffee and tea brands, PACK EXPO East is an environment to solve packaging and production constraints faster, accelerate innovation and sustainability goals, and make better, lower-risk capital and supplier decisions, because it concentrates suppliers, expertise, and decision-makers into a short, highly efficient window. Exhibitors and Attendees benefit from multiple suppliers under the same roof to compare solutions and have productive conversations about how to solve packaging and processing challenges.

For more information or to register, visit packexpoeast.com.

Aubrye McDonagh Leigh

THE 2026 NCA CONVENTION RETURNS TO TAMPA WITH THE FORMAT IT INTRODUCED IN 2025

Keeping the format it launched in 2025, the National Coffee Association's 2026 Convention will be held in Tampa, Florida, on 12–14 March. Rather than simply holding the opening night reception on 12 March, sessions will begin on Thursday afternoon, including the Welcome Session and 2026 NCDT Sneak Preview. The event will conclude by 1:30pm on Saturday, in response to attendees who did not want to 'give up' an entire weekend with family.

The convention is expected to draw over 700 industry professionals from across the coffee value chain including roasters, manufacturers, retailers, importers, exporters, traders, growers and allied businesses.

"The NCA Convention connects people from all areas of the coffee sector for business networking, practical data and insights, and innovations shaping the future of the industry. NCA looks forward to bringing the coffee community together in Tampa this March," said NCA president and CEO William "Bill" Murray.

Known for attracting industry leaders and decision-makers from around the world, the NCA Convention is designed to enhance business networking with numerous networking receptions, off-site events, and mealtime gatherings.

The program includes educational sessions, hands-on workshops, and keynotes by Cheryl Hung of Dig Insights and Scott Clemons of Brown Brothers Harriman. Hung will give a sneak peak of the 2026 National Coffee Data Trends (NCDT), and Clemons will share his forecast of the US economy and markets in 2026. NCA president and CEO Bill Murray will deliver his annual State of the Association address.

The NCA's Coffee Gives Back events will benefit the Tampa community. Attendees can participate by volunteering at an offsite 'Day of Service' project or contributing to an on-site community support activity. New this year, the NCA will host a 5K walk/run on Saturday with a portion of the proceeds benefiting the 2026 NCA Origin Charity of the Year Award winner.

At the awards luncheon, the NCA will recognise the 2026 recipients of the NCA Distinguished Leadership Award, the NCA Volunteer of the Year Award, the new NCA Rising Star Award, and the NCA Origin Charity of the Year Award.

For more information and to register, visit ncausa.org/convention.

Aubrye McDonagh Leigh



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The World O-CHA (Tea) Festival 2025 Highlighted Matcha

The Autumn Fair of the World O-CHA (Tea) Festival in Shizuoka, Japan took place on 23 – 26 October 2025 at the Shizuoka Prefectural Convention Arts Center. 'Granship' was its main venue and was attended by 136,400 visitors from 25 countries.

The festival started in 2001 and consists of the Spring and Autumn Fairs. The Spring Fair in 2025 took place from 19 April to 21 May, during the main producing season for Japanese green tea. The Spring Fair focuses on green tea production and is held in several locations. Visitors can view tea fields full of newly flushed young leaves and experience tea plucking, tea making by hand and then can enjoy the sweet taste of freshly manufactured green tea.

The Autumn Fair covers more cultural, academic, promotional and marketing aspects. It consists of the World O-CHA Market, tea parties from around the world, tea ceremonies, conferences, seminars, symposiums, contests, etc. On 24 October, the World Green Tea Conference featured five presentations and a panel discussion exploring ways to expand the global green tea market and its branding strategy. The topic was selected based on the 20–30 percent yearly increase in Japanese green tea exports in recent years. Prominent speakers included Yoriyuki Nakamura, director of the Tea Science Center at University of Shizuoka in Japan; Ryo Iwamoto, CEO of TeaRoom Inc. and associate professor at the Urasenke School of Tea Ceremony in Japan; Katharine P Barnett, professor at the University of California, Davis in the USA, and founder and Director of the Global Tea Institute for the Study of Tea Culture and Science; Dr Sharon Hall, chief executive of the UK Tea and Infusions Association; and Wan Xiaochun, professor at Anhui Agricultural University and director of the State Key Laboratory of Tea Plant Germplasm Innovation and Resource Utilisation in China. Each speaker provided an overview of the brief history, current outlook and latest trends in the tea market in their respective country or institution.

As far as Japanese green tea exports are concerned, powdered green tea exports, including matcha, have been significantly increasing lately. Nakamura presented a graph showing the



growth in the quantity and price of Japanese tea exports, which reached 8,798 metric tonnes and JPY 36.4 billion (USD \$24.26 billion) in 2024. Matcha and powdered teas accounted for 75 percent of the total export value. This trend continued further in 2025, causing a surge in prices, particularly for high-end quality Uji matcha produced in Kyoto. This resulted in stock shortages and a serious imbalance between supply and demand.

Following the unprecedented strong requirement of matcha, ITO EN, a global green tea company and one of the exhibitors at the World O-CHA Market, formed a new matcha division in May 2025. The main purpose of the division is to secure tencha, the raw material for matcha, from the wholesale green tea auctions and their contracted farmers in order to fulfill sudden increases in domestic and international demand. Yasutaka Yokomichi, manager of the matcha division, managed to collect more tencha than in 2024, in spite of the price hike of 2 to 2.7 times in the wholesale tencha auction in Kyoto. Although some people are skeptical about this 'matcha bubble', which may not last long, Yokomichi is positive about it and hopes the increasing popularity of matcha worldwide will lead to the steady expansion of green tea market in the long term.

Yumi Nakatsugawa



11 Million Trees Initiative Facts

Country Context

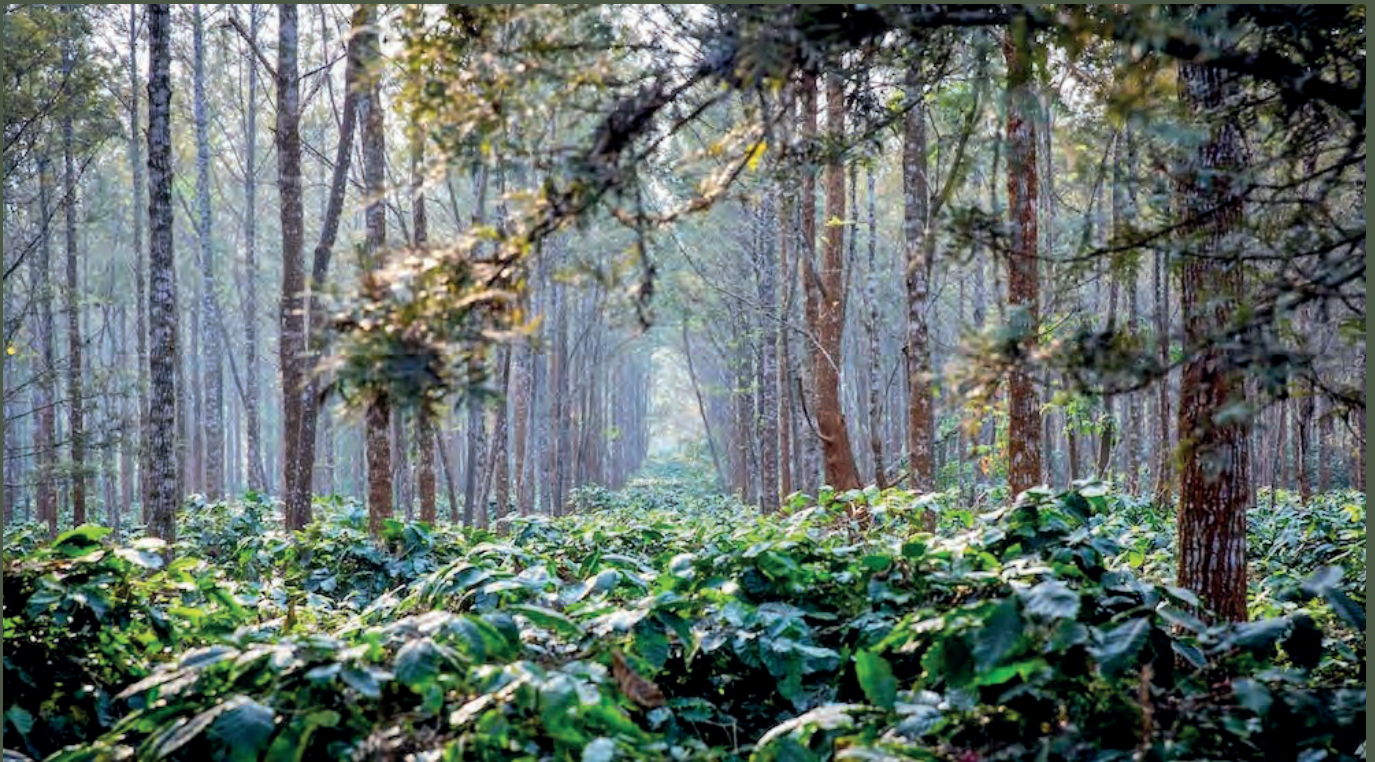
- Coffee is grown by 17.5 percent of households
- Poverty among coffee-growing families: ~50 percent
- Average annual coffee income: USD \$200-500
- Average yield: ~20 percent of global average
- Oil and gas once supplied ~95 percent of national revenue; exports are now near zero

Core Insight

- Research from Monash University + National Coffee Sector Development Plan: Doubling national coffee production reduces poverty among coffee households from ~50 percent to ~28 percent.

The '11 Million Trees' Proxy

- Represents the scale of regeneration needed to double production.
- Not literal counting; rather a way to visualise healthier, younger national coffee forests.



11 Million Trees: A Regenerative Coffee System for Timor-Leste

Raw Material Coffee is working to create a regenerative coffee system for Timor-Leste, powered by repurposed solar, recycled plastic, treated bamboo, and new climate-ready trees to help halve poverty in one of the world's youngest countries.

Raw Material Coffee, a UK-based social enterprise, is launching Phase Two of its 11 Million Trees programme via a Kickstarter campaign. The initiative aims to help double national coffee production in Timor-Leste and significantly reduce poverty among coffee-growing families.

The Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, which is located on the eastern half of the island of Timor, has a history of Portuguese colonisation and Indonesian occupation before gaining independence in 2002. It is one of the world's youngest and poorest nations. Coffee supports 37.5 percent of households, yet yields are roughly 20 percent of the global average. Research from Monash University and the National Coffee Sector Development Plan shows that doubling production would bring poverty among these households down from 50 percent to 28 percent.

Raw Material Coffee's campaign builds the enabling system: repurposed solar panels, plastic-to-machinery workshops, treated bamboo structures, new variety-testing forests, and large-scale seedling and soil programs. Supporters can plant trees, power villages, and receive coffee from the harvests they help create. The campaign has already nearly reached its

initial goal, has been selected for Kickstarter's own 'Projects We Love Collection' and has the official backing of Timor-Leste's President Jose Ramos Horta.

Phase Two Priorities

1. Repurposed solar to power remote mills
2. Plastic-to-machinery workshops
3. Treated bamboo replacing rusting steel
4. National variety-testing forest
5. Nursery and soil program for 10,000+ families

For information on how to support Raw Material Coffee's Timor-Leste campaign, visit rawmaterial.coffee.

Over the last decade, Raw Material Coffee has worked with more than 20,000 smallholder coffee producers across Colombia, Mexico, Rwanda, Burundi, and Timor-Leste to connect them to the specialty market and build the foundations for long-term income stability. They have delivered emergency response programmes in Timor-Leste and Rwanda after severe climate shocks, and in 2017 ran a successful Kickstarter that funded a high-quality community wet mill and rare variety trial forest in Quindío, Colombia.

Aubrye McDonagh Leigh

The Growing Use of GLP-1 Drugs Creates Opportunities for Coffee and Tea



The rise in GLP-1 use has disrupted the food and beverage space, resulting in lower appetites and more intentional food and beverage choices. For coffee and tea brands to retain GLP-1 users, they must offer products that meet these consumers' needs and ensure that consumers clearly understand the benefits of their products so they can become an integral part of the GLP-1 user lifestyle. **By Anne-Marie Hardie**

The growth in the GLP-1 drugs sector continues to make headlines across the food and beverage industries for the shift that it is having on consumer purchasing behaviour. The growing interest in this weight-loss medication is providing insights into the practices of weight conscious consumers, including the way that they shop, their perception of wellness, and the choices that they make for fuel and indulgence.

"GLP-1 drugs are disruptive forces in today's food landscape with over 45 percent of American adults having used, currently using, or experiencing interest in these drugs. The ripple effects of this extend far beyond weight loss," said Diana Courtepatte, director of marketing, TC Transcontinental Packaging. "They are fundamentally reshaping how Americans eat, how they shop, and how they are going to make decisions at the shelf."

New Formulations and Easier Access Lends to Wider Adoption

Elizabeth Crawford, senior editor at Food Navigator USA, reported in her recent podcast,

The GLP-1 Effect: How 2026 Will Look for Food and Beverage, that the methods for obtaining GLP-1 drugs for American consumers are expanding beyond medical prescriptions. New avenues for access, including aestheticians, Medi spas, and direct to consumer, are continuing to develop, which is making it easier for interested consumers to access the medication.

On 22 December 2025, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the Wegovy pill, produced by Novo Nordisk, for commercial sale. This will provide American consumers with an oral alternative to a GLP-1 medication, and a potentially more accessible alternative for potential users.

According to Mintel, the use of GLP-1 drugs continues to climb, rising from 12 percent adoption to 18 percent in just over a year in the United States alone. Stephanie Matucci, director of food and drink at Mintel, anticipates this growth will continue, especially as the medication's availability expands into additional channels. However, Matucci cautions brands not to narrow the focus on the needs of the GLP-1 user alone. Instead, brands should

The US FDA approved the first GLP-1 pill in December 2025. *Image credit: Albaloshi-stock. adobe.com*

look at the broader picture of what the uptick in the demand for this drug is communicating, specifically, the increased interest in weight loss and a healthier lifestyle.

In fact, 82 percent of Americans are still choosing to manage their weight loss through other methods. Wellness is becoming the primary focus for these consumers, and they are looking for beverages that can tap into this need state.

It is good news for tea and coffee, as consumers are actively seeking healthier hydration alternatives. “GLP-1 adoption is accelerating a shift to intentional, digitally guided wellness. Tea and coffee brands that lead with benefit-led communication, optimise formats, and own the digital shelf will thrive,” said Sherry Frey, vice president of Total Wellness, Nielsen IQ (NIQ).

Crawford’s interview with Sally Lyons Wyatt, Circana global executive vice president and chief advisor for consumer goods and foodservices, revealed that the increased interest in GLP-1s for their weight-loss side effect is providing an opportunity for consumer packaged goods (CPG) to centre on the attributes that these consumers value.

“I do not feel this is an ‘oh no moment’ — I think that this is an ‘and moment’, and an opportunity for CPG manufacturers to lean in. This is a great opportunity to assess portfolios and figure out what of my portfolio can benefit those who are taking the medications and let me communicate that,” said Lyons Wyatt.

Intentional Purchases

The GLP-1 wave has revealed a growing base of consumers who are more intentional about their

purchases, especially in foods and beverages. These individuals are still spending money; however, they are investing time in researching brands to discover which products best meet their needs and values.

Manufacturers can respond to this, shared Lyons Wyatt, by adapting their product solutions and advertising to better align with the needs of these health-conscious consumers. These consumers are looking for the value they can obtain from their products, whether it’s functional benefits, indulgence, an experiential experience, high protein, hydration, or simply joy. The key for manufacturers is to identify which value states they meet, then cultivate messaging that communicates them to consumers.

Tapping into Functional Attributes

The needs and values of the GLP-1 and weight-conscious consumer provide an opportunity for tea and coffee companies to communicate the functional and experiential benefits of these beverages. These individuals are actively seeking healthy alternatives for hydration, including products with low to no sugar and functional benefits. Essentially, they are looking to ingest products that will pair well with their new wellness lifestyle.

“From a wellness perspective, coffee drinkers are moving toward clean, calm energy with less sugar, lighter add-ins, and formats that avoid jitters,” said Frey. “While tea is benefiting >

Tea’s – especially herbals and botanicals – association with digestive and calming benefits will appeal to GLP-1 users. *Image credit: Traditional Medicinals*



High protein meets the GLP-1 users preference for functional ingredients. *Image credit: Bulletproof Coffee*



from its digestive and calming associations, especially herbal blends.”

These consumers are more intentional in their consumption practices and are looking for companies that understand this need, including providing product recommendations that align with their values. “GLP-1 users often need to manage stress and appetite changes, so they value portion control and intentional rituals,” said Frey. “Think single-serve sachets, RTD cans, and benefits that emphasise morning focus, post-meal digestion, and evening wind-down.”

The key is for tea and coffee companies to communicate to these consumers how their beverages fit into the lifestyle of the GLP-1 users. This could involve pairing beverages with proteins or fibre snacks, suggests Frey, or even, creating partnerships that provide bundles or cultivating online content that guides pairings.

Brands will Benefit by Responding to the Behaviour of the GLP-1 Consumer

NIQ Market Insights reports that nearly half (46 percent) of current GLP-1 users are millennials. These individuals are more likely to shop online, use mobile apps, and subscribe to autoship programs. There is also growth in GLP-1 use among Gen X and Gen Z, which will likely continue to expand as access to GLP-1

becomes more widespread. The key for brands is to understand the unique needs of each of these demographics and tailor their messaging and product delivery accordingly.

When it comes to tea and coffee brands, Frey shares that Gen X is seeking evidence-based claims and digestive comfort, making them an ideal match for low acid coffee and functional teas. While Gen Z are digital natives, they are actively seeking transparency in product labels and creator-led education. Companies can respond to this by offering trial kits, subscriptions, and investing in the creation of short form content.

The millennial demographic is also looking for convenient options that connect to their values. They are more likely to research and purchase products online, invest in subscription services, and seek simple, easy, accessible options. This is also the demographic that is looking for simplicity in orders, including auto shipment, subscribe and save programs, and bundles centred on need states. “Above all, win at the



Gen X is seeking evidence-based claims and digestive comfort such as low acid coffee. *Image credit: Volcanica Coffee Company*



As GLP-1 use among Gen Z grows, to succeed, brands must win at the 'digital shelf'.
Image credit: AdobeStock

digital shelf. Be findable (benefit keywords), believable (transparent claims), and frictionless (subscriptions, trial packs)," said Frey. "That's how tea and coffee brands will grow with the GLP-1 consumer." This includes having transparent labels, credible reviews and expert backed content to support the claims that brands are stating.

The Power of Packaging

Packaging is a critical tool for clearly communicating the benefits of products and how they align with consumers' needs. This includes having clear labels with clean, simple call-outs. "Shoppers are making decisions quickly, and the GLP-1 consumers are scanning products for call-outs that provide a functional benefit, whether it's protein, fibre, low sugar, nutrient dense or hydration," said Tim Kieny, vice president, sales and marketing (meat and dairy), TC Transcontinental.

These consumers are paying attention to all aspects of their products, including sourcing, nutritional benefits, and sustainability. This presents an opportunity for premiumisation, providing consumers with higher quality products that respond to their need states. "The CPGs are going to need to stand out on the shelf. The graphics, the messages, alluring packaging,"

said Kieny. "Here at TC, we are supporting brands across the board. The goal for us is to help brands stay agile, while keeping performability and sustainability front and centre."

The rise in GLP-1 use has disrupted the food and beverage space, leading to lower appetites and more intentional food and beverage choices. However, for tea and coffee companies, this presents an opportunity to connect with these wellness-focused consumers by communicating the benefits that their products offer.

The reality is that the brands that are going to be successful are the ones that invest the time to align with the needs of the consumer, including focusing on insight driven innovation, mindful nutrition, and functional and sustainable packaging. "GLP-1s are not just shifting consumers' diets, they are shaping the entire food ecosystem," said Courtepatte.

The key takeaway for companies is to ensure that consumers clearly understand the benefits of their products so they can become an integral part of their lifestyle. 🍵

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The Future of Specialty Coffee

The global specialty coffee industry has experienced impressive growth over the last few years and continues to evolve. This article offers a comprehensive analysis of the current state of specialty coffee in the United States, examines emerging trends shaping its future, identifies key challenges, and provides actionable recommendations for sustainable growth. **By Bill Kirchoff**

The specialty coffee industry in America stands at a pivotal moment, poised for continued growth but facing significant challenges that threaten its sustainability. As consumer preferences evolve and global market dynamics shift, the sector must navigate complex issues while maintaining its commitment to quality, ethics, and environmental stewardship.

The United States specialty coffee market has experienced remarkable growth in recent years, establishing itself as a major force in the global coffee industry. Valued at USD \$47.8 billion in 2024, the market is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 9.5 percent through 2030, reaching \$81.8 billion. This expansion reflects fundamental shifts in American coffee consumption patterns and preferences.

Consumer adoption of specialty coffee has reached unprecedented levels. According to the National Coffee Association of the USA's latest data, 52 percent of Americans consumed specialty coffee in the past week, with past-day consumption reaching 46 percent – an 18 percent increase since 2020. Perhaps most significantly, specialty coffee consumption has now surpassed traditional coffee consumption in the US, marking a historic shift in the market.

Demographic analysis reveals distinct

consumption patterns:

- The 18-24 age group (Gen Z) represents 32.7 percent of specialty coffee consumers, drawn to the aesthetic and social aspects of coffee culture.
- The 25-39 demographic (millennials) shows the highest engagement, with 66 percent having consumed specialty coffee in the past week.
- Consumers aged 40-59 maintain strong participation, with 51 percent drinking specialty coffee daily.

Geographically, the West Coast leads in specialty coffee adoption, accounting for 25.8 percent of the national market, with cities like Seattle, Washington; Portland, Oregon; and San Francisco, California serving as innovation hubs. However, the southeast is emerging as the fastest-growing region, with a projected CAGR of 10.3 percent through 2030.

Key Trends Shaping the Future of Specialty Coffee

1. Sustainability as Market Imperative –

Sustainability has transitioned from a niche concern to a central market driver in specialty coffee. Consumers increasingly demand transparency about coffee's journey from farm to cup, with 72 percent of millennials and Gen Z buyers prioritising ethically sourced products. This shift manifests in several ways:

- **Certification demand:** Fair Trade, Rainforest Alliance, and organic certifications have become key purchase decision factors for 68 percent of specialty coffee buyers.
- **Regenerative agriculture:** Forward-thinking brands are investing in farming practices that restore ecosystems, with initiatives like Julius Meinl's Generations Program partnering with NGOs to build climate-resilient farms.
- **Circular economy practices:** Compostable packaging, biodegradable pods, and waste reduction programs are becoming standard as 62 percent of consumers consider environmental impact when choosing coffee.

Gen Z consumers are three times more likely to choose RTD coffee over hot coffee.

Image credit: Death Wish Coffee Co



The specialty coffee industry faces mounting pressure to address its carbon footprint, as coffee production remains one of the highest greenhouse gas-emitting agricultural processes.

2. Health and Wellness Integration – The functional coffee movement is reshaping product development, with health-conscious options becoming a major growth area:

- **Plant-based alternatives:** Oat, almond, and coconut milk now account for 38 percent of coffee shop milk sales, driven by lactose intolerance concerns and environmental considerations.
- **Functional ingredients:** Coffees infused with adaptogens (like ashwagandha), collagen, MCT oil and superfoods are growing at 21 percent annually, targeting benefits from stress relief to gut health.
- **Caffeine modulation:** Demand for low-caffeine and decaf options is rising, with Decaf Typica winning the 2024 US Brewers Cup, signalling changing consumer perceptions.

3. Technology-Driven Experiences –

Technological innovation is transforming both production and consumption:

- **Smart brewing:** IoT-enabled coffee machines with app connectivity and voice control are revolutionising home brewing, offering precision previously only available in professional settings.
- **AI optimisation:** Artificial intelligence is being deployed for roast profiling, with systems like ProfilePrint analysing bean quality and predicting optimal roast curves.
- **Augmented reality:** Coffee shops are experimenting with AR to provide immersive origin stories and brewing tutorials, enhancing customer engagement.
- **Blockchain traceability:** Distributed ledger technology enables unprecedented supply chain transparency, allowing consumers to verify sustainability claims.

4. Evolving Consumption Patterns –

The specialty coffee market is experiencing fundamental shifts in how and where consumers engage with products:

- **Home-brewing renaissance:** 82 percent of American coffee drinkers consume coffee at home daily, with sales of specialty beans and equipment growing 23 percent since 2020.
- **Ready-to-drink (RTD) expansion:** Cold brew and nitro coffee formats are growing at 15 percent annually, particularly among Gen Z consumers who are three times more likely to choose RTD coffee over hot coffee.



- **Experience economy:** Coffee shops are evolving into ‘third places’ offering workshops, cupping sessions, and community events, with 58 percent of consumers valuing atmosphere as much as product quality.

Critical Challenges Facing the Specialty Coffee Industry

1. Climate Change Vulnerability – Coffee production is acutely vulnerable to climate change, with potentially devastating consequences:

- **Arabica at risk:** 60 percent of current coffee-growing land may become unsuitable by 2050 due to rising temperatures, threatening the dominant specialty coffee species.
- **Yield reductions:** Overall coffee crop yields could decline 10-20 percent by 2050 due to erratic rainfall and temperature fluctuations.
- **Disease pressure:** Coffee leaf rust and berry borer beetles are expanding their ranges, with climate change increasing infestation risks.

The industry is responding by exploring climate-resilient varieties, including rediscovered wild species and new Arabica hybrids, but adoption faces significant barriers.

2. Supply Chain Instability – Recent global disruptions have exposed fragility in coffee supply chains:

- **Price volatility:** Arabica futures reached record highs above \$4.40/lb in early 2025, while Robusta hit 45-year highs, squeezing roaster margins.
- **Logistical challenges:** Shipping container >

Specialty coffee drinkers in America are upgrading their home-brewing equipment to machines such as the Ninja Luxe Café Pro 4-in-1 Espresso, Coffee, Cold Brew, and Hot

Water.

Image credit: Shark/Ninja



NCA data reveals that 52 percent of Americans consumed specialty coffee in the past week.
Image credit: Raw Materials Coffee

shortages and geopolitical conflicts have disrupted traditional trade routes, with some roasters abandoning origins like Ethiopia due to export difficulties.

- **Labour shortages:** An ageing farmer population and lack of workers for coffee processing threaten production continuity.

3. Market Cannibalisation and Commodification – The specialty coffee industry faces internal tensions as it matures:

- **Product proliferation:** Constant innovation risks diluting core values, with capsules (growing at 7.9 percent) taking share from whole beans (growing at 5.5 percent).
- **Mainstream co-optation:** Large coffee chains now mimic specialty offerings, blurring differentiation and pressuring independent operators.
- **Experience vs convenience:** The rise of app-based ordering and RTD formats challenges traditional café models centered on craftsmanship.

4. Financial Pressures Across the Value Chain – Economic realities threaten the industry's sustainability:

- **Roaster margins:** Rising green coffee costs force difficult choices between raising prices (risking customer loss) or compromising quality.
- **Farmer viability:** Despite high C-market prices, many producers struggle with delayed payments, lack of access to credit, and inability to value their coffee appropriately.
- **Café economics:** Independent shops face rising costs (up 18 percent since 2020) while competing with chains and home-brewing alternatives.

Strategic Recommendations for Sustainable Growth

1. Strengthen Climate Resilience Across the Supply Chain

A. Farmer Support Programs:

- Expand partnerships like the Initiative for Coffee & Climate to implement adaptation strategies at scale.
- Develop climate risk insurance products tailored to smallholder needs.
- Invest in R&D for disease-resistant varieties while preserving cup quality.

B. Regenerative Agriculture Adoption:

- Provide training and incentives for soil health practices that increase carbon sequestration.
- Implement agroforestry systems that diversify income while mitigating climate impacts.
- Establish carbon credit programs that reward sustainable farming.

C. Water Resource Management:

- Promote water-efficient processing methods to reduce coffee's water footprint.
- Develop watershed protection initiatives in key growing regions.

2. Enhance Value Chain Equity and Transparency

A. Direct Trade Expansion

- Scale platforms like Algrano that connect roasters directly with producers, bypassing traditional intermediaries.
- Establish long-term contracts with price floors to stabilize farmer income.
- Implement shared value models where quality premiums are transparently calculated.

B. Financial Inclusion Initiatives

- Develop alternative financing mechanisms for producers facing the \$2.5 trillion trade finance gap.
- Create pre-harvest financing programs tied to sustainability metrics.
- Establish roaster-led guarantee systems to improve producer access to credit.

C. Traceability Systems

- Implement blockchain-enabled supply chains to verify sustainability claims.
- Expand the use of QR codes on packaging to share farm stories and impact data.
- Develop standardised metrics for measuring and reporting social and environmental impact.

3. Innovate Product and Experience Strategies

A. Differentiated Product Development

- Create hybrid offerings that balance convenience and quality, like premium RTD cold brew.
- Develop signature blends that tell compelling origin stories while managing cost pressures.
- Explore underutilised varieties and processing methods to diversify flavour profiles.

B. Next-Generation Café Experiences

- Design spaces that serve as community hubs with events, education, and co-working.
- Implement tech-enhanced ordering while preserving human connection.
- Develop barista training programs that elevate service as a key differentiator.

C. Home Market Expansion

- Curate subscription services with educational content and brewing guidance.
- Develop equipment leasing programs to make professional-grade tools accessible.
- Create digital platforms that connect home brewers with roasters for personalised recommendations.

4. Strengthen Consumer Education and Engagement

A. Origin Storytelling

- Utilise AR/VR to create immersive farm experiences in cafés.
- Develop producer spotlight programs that humanise the supply chain.
- Host regular cuppings and farmer meet-and-greets to build connection.

B. Sustainability Communication

- Implement clear labelling systems that quantify environmental impact.
- Create interactive tools that help consumers understand their coffee's journey.
- Develop certification programs that go beyond baseline standards.

C. Community Building

- Foster local coffee communities through events and competitions.
- Create ambassador programs that empower passionate customers.
- Develop youth education initiatives to cultivate next-generation enthusiasts.

5. Advocate for Supportive Policy Frameworks

A. Trade Policy Engagement

- Lobby for tariff structures that reward sustainable production.
- Advocate for simplified export procedures for smallholder cooperatives.
- Support origin-country policies that enable farmer prosperity.

B. Climate Policy Alignment

- Push for inclusion of coffee in climate



adaptation funding.

- Support legislation that incentivises regenerative practices.
- Advocate for research funding into climate-resilient varieties.

C. Labour Standards

- Promote living wage benchmarks across producing countries.
- Support gender equity programs in coffee communities.
- Advocate for improved working conditions throughout the value chain.

The Path Forward

The future of specialty coffee in America presents both extraordinary opportunities and significant challenges. As the market continues to grow, stakeholders across the value chain must collaborate to ensure this growth is sustainable – environmentally, socially, and economically. By implementing the strategies outlined above, the industry can:

1. Preserve quality and diversity in the face of climate change.
2. Create equitable value distribution that supports farmer livelihoods.
3. Innovate responsibly without compromising core values.
4. Educate and engage consumers to build lasting loyalty.
5. Advocate collectively for policies that enable systemic change.

The specialty coffee industry's ability to navigate this complex landscape will determine whether it can fulfill its potential as a model for sustainable business in the 21st century. With conscious effort and collaborative action, specialty coffee can continue its remarkable growth while staying true to the principles of quality, sustainability, and community that defined its origins. ☕

Bill Kirchoff is national sales manager at Distant Lands Coffee and serves as social media director for the Specialty Coffee Association.

Shipping container shortages and geopolitical conflicts have disrupted traditional trade routes.

Image credit: Port of Hamburg

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Single Serve Machines Strive to Retain Quality & Improve Sustainability

Advances in single serve machines along with improved sustainability create conditions for the continued growth of global single serve coffee sector. **By Eugene Gerden**

The demand for modern capsule coffee machines in the global market is steadily growing, motivating manufacturers to consider more product innovations to prepare better coffee at reasonable price. Presently, coffee capsule machines occupy a significant share among the various methods of coffee preparation, while their sales continue to grow in most markets.

In Western European markets, while only around 13 percent of coffee drinkers owned a capsule machine seven years ago, today that figure is over 30 percent. For example, in Germany, capsule coffee accounts for one in three consumed coffee drinks. This is equivalent to almost 3.4 billion capsules consumed annually in Germany. Similar situations are observed in other mature Western European markets, where the demand for modern coffee capsule machines remains strong.

The current high demand for coffee capsule machines leads to further rising competition in the market, where producers are focusing on the development of modern machines, which are equipped with advanced technologies that can better serve the needs of their customers.

Price remains one of the key factors for customers – primarily in Europe – when choosing a capsule coffee machines, which is also due to maintaining high level of inflation in most of EU countries.

According to an earlier report in the German *Roast Market Magazin*, despite the undeniable advantages of capsule coffee machines, there are criticisms, particularly regarding their cost and environmental impact. With prices per cup between €0.30 and €0.50 (USD \$0.35 and \$0.58) capsule preparation is more expensive compared to methods like fully automatic coffee machines. For frequent coffee drinkers, fully automatic machines are therefore more economical, while capsule machines can be a worthwhile investment for occasional users despite the higher initial cost.

Quality Trumps Sustainability

Most global manufacturers are aware of the current market trends, paying a particular focus to the production of cost-efficient machines and equipment with minimum environmental impacts, without compromising on the quality of a final product.



Lavazza Tabli is being positioned as a sustainable, capsule-free option.
Image credit: Lavazza

In recent years some important launches in this field have taken place. For example, Keurig Dr Pepper in 2024 presented its K-Rounds™ plastic-free pods, which work in the new Keurig Alta™ brewer as part of a reimagined Keurig system that allows consumers to make a variety of hot and cold barista-style beverages.

Keurig K-Rounds™ plastic-free pods launched in 2024.
Image credit: Keurig Dr Pepper

Cama Group, an Italy-based automated packaging machine manufacturer, launched a recycled aluminum coffee capsule line in October 2025. Sergio Cornago, regional manager at Cama said the project demonstrates that it is possible to combine technology, sustainability and design.

“By combining mechanical innovation, intelligent automation and eco-design, Cama is asserting its role as a key partner for brands wishing to innovate in line with ecological standards,” he said.

According to Dr Boris Haeefe, a well-known German coffee expert, a major problem associated with the use of some types of capsule machines and capsules is the large amount of generated waste. He also added, for example, in

Germany alone around 5,000 tons of capsule waste is generated annually in the country. Unlike filter paper, the plastic and aluminum capsules are not biodegradable, which sparks criticism from some customers in Germany and some other EU states. Still, despite this, sales of such capsules in the German market remain generally high.

It is the same in France, which is also experiencing a boom in capsule coffee. Per the French magazine *Restaurant-Lentreport*, data shows the ever-growing demand for capsule coffee in France, with 16 capsules sold every second, representing 500 million units annually. As in Germany, in recent years, the demand for modern capsule coffee machines with low environmental impact among customers has significantly increased.

However, there were numerous complaints of customers from Germany and other European states that the use of some biodegradable aluminum-free capsules led to serious technical problems during the preparation of their coffee. Some customers complained that the water doesn't flow properly through the capsule, negatively affecting the quality of the final product. In this regard, there is an acute need for new, environmentally friendly products, without added technical problems.

In terms of market structure, the well-known capsules and corresponding machines from >



SINGLE SERVE MACHINES

Nespresso® still hold the largest share, but competition is intensifying. Coffee capsules from supermarkets, and often those from traditional roasters as well, are not only more competitive in terms of price, but also offer greater availability and purchasing options than the market leader.

Sustainability Remains a Factor

Most independent market analysts T&CTJ spoke with discussed the overall importance of advances in equipment and packaging technology for single serve coffee sector, with quality and sustainability remaining at the forefront. As packaging regulations in the EU, UK and North America are pushing the industry toward demonstrably recyclable designs, accelerating investment in more advanced processing and packaging solutions remains an important goal for equipment manufacturers.

Ismail Sutaria, packaging domain senior consultant with international research agency Future Market Insights, said that advances in equipment and packaging technology are reshaping single-serve coffee in two clear ways: improving quality consistency at scale and reducing the environmental burden of the format. “On quality, capsule production

has become far more process-controlled than a decade ago. Roasting is increasingly driven by precise profiling, sensors, and automation, enabling tighter control over development, colour, and batch-to-batch repeatability,” he said, adding, “grinding and dosing systems have also improved, with narrower particle-size distributions and more accurate filling and tamping before sealing. This matters because capsules allow little margin for error.”

Sutaria also explained that in terms of sustainability, the focus has shifted from material choice alone to system compatibility. “Manufacturers are increasingly designing capsules that align with existing recycling infrastructure, such as mono-material plastics or aluminum formats with established collection pathways, alongside ongoing lightweighting efforts.” In the UK, he said that dedicated take-back and recycling schemes are improving recovery rates. Compostable capsules are also evolving, but their impact remains dependent on access to industrial composting and effective collection.

Sutaria expects demand for these advances to grow in the coming years, as consumers will continue to seek café-quality experiences at home, while brands will be using quality and



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sustainability as levers for premiumisation.

Tristan Höver, global insight manager for hot drinks at Euromonitor International believes a lot of the progress in single-serve coffee quality is coming from making the whole process more precise and repeatable. “Better control in roasting, more consistent grinding, and improved protection from oxygen all help preserve freshness and flavour, so consumers can get a reliably good cup without having to master barista skills but get café-quality in their home,” he said.

Höver shared that on the machine side, convenience and personalisation are clearly accelerating adoption. “Neo SmartBrew personalisation (including a paper-based, home-compostable pod concept), Melitta’s app-led customisation, and Keurig’s pod recognition via BrewID are good examples of how technology is translating into ‘the right cup, every time’ for different preferences.” He said that compared to more manual brewing methods (like pour-over), automated and connected machines result in more consistent quality by controlling dose, temperature and extraction. Several newer systems are also designed to reduce packaging waste or make formats easier to recycle or compost.

However, a further progress in sustainability might be complicated by the current economic circumstances. According to analysts, in periods of high prices, many shoppers trade down and de-prioritise ethical attributes. Also, several surveys show that sustainability claims slipping as a primary purchase driver under economic pressure/high prices.

“So, selling the consumer only sustainability is tricky, usually it needs to be connected to some other improvement in quality/flavour/user experience,” said Höver. “That said, there is a smaller, very committed consumer group that still does actively seek lower-waste options and brands are increasingly designing for them

with more credible materials and end-of-life routes. Also, because sustainability still leaves room for innovation by simply reducing waste or improving the experience.”

Still, Höver expects sales for these advances to keep growing because new releases in the coffee machine space in mid-price to premium range have sustainable ideas included anyway.

Analysts note that as the café experience at-home trend is currently dominating, the next wave of innovation will be about delivering clear, tangible improvements in taste and ease-of-use while making sustainability simpler and more provable, not just a claim. That’s also why we’re seeing new format innovation like Lavazza’s Tablí being positioned as a more sustainable, capsule-free option – the ‘sustainable story’ is easy to understand for the consumer. On the other hand, simple launches of recycled capsules/pods with zero improvement in flavour or experience that only cost the consumer more will struggle to succeed.

Analysts believe coffee machines will soon be launched in the market that are equipped with new technologies for quality assurance, including both sensory and chemical analyses.

There is also a trend toward multi-functional and customisable drinks, while future developments will also likely focus on creating more energy-efficient machines that meet global environmental standards while maintaining the rich flavour profiles. A particular attention will be paid to the development of those coffee machines where capsules are optimised for faster extraction times without diluting flavour. ☺

Nestlé Dolce Gusto Neo now offers a paper-based, home-compostable pod.
Image credit: Nestlé

Eugene Gerden is an international freelance writer who specialises in covering the global coffee, tea and agricultural industries. He works for several industry titles and may be reached at gerden.eug@gmail.com.

Herbal and Botanical Teas Ride the Wave of the Booming Functional Beverage Market

The herbal and botanical tea segment has solidified its status as an independent category.

*Image credit:
Smith Teamakers*

Herbal and botanical teas are no longer considered niche products as consumers now recognise that they have their own traditions, functions, and benefits, which are helping them benefit from the still-surging functional beverage market. **By Vladislav Vorotnikov**

Functional botanicals remain in high demand in the tea market, though growth remains uneven across the segment, as consumers are becoming not only wellness-minded but also more discerning and educated.

A global surge in popularity in functional beverages following the Covid-19 pandemic, a rough time that made people more conscious about their health, against many forecasts, is not showing any signs of winding down.

For instance, the herbal product market, including the herbal tea category, continues growing in the US, according to the American Herbal Products Association. As in previous years, growth is driven by younger generations.

“This growth is fuelled in part by growing consumer demand for holistic wellness solutions and the earlier adoption of wellness products – such as dietary supplements and herbal products – by millennials and Gen Z, who are integrating botanicals into areas like sports nutrition and sleep,” commented Melissa Do, director of communications, American Herbal Products Association (AHPA).

It is widely known that the younger generation is more health-conscious — a fact usually attributed to massive digital access to wellness info, social media trends, and a focus on mental well-being.

Some studies have shown that nearly 80 percent of millennials consider health benefits when selecting foods and beverages. However, observers indicate that demand is not only growing but also becoming more sophisticated.

Consumers are becoming more aware of the potential benefits of various herbs and are choosing herbal teas more wisely. “Consumers today are far more knowledgeable about herbs and actively integrating them into their daily wellness routines,” said Kristina Tucker, minister of enlightenment for The Republic of Tea, a US-based premium tea company. Functional botanicals that may support sleep, stress adaptation, digestion, and immunity are especially popular, she added.

Clear and Simple Benefits

The modern consumer is more educated, actively researching ingredients and asking for specific botanicals and clear, simple benefits, shared Tristan Höver, global insights manager for hot drinks at data analytics company Euromonitor International. “In today’s high-price environment, consumers are more

selective. They are willing to pay for herbal teas they genuinely believe in and where the ingredients and perceived impact on them and their families feel credible,” he explained.

Market players believe that over the last several years, herbal tea consolidated its position as an independent segment.

“One of the biggest shifts I have seen is that herbal and botanical teas are no longer treated as a niche or a substitute for ‘real’ *Camellia sinensis* tea – consumers now recognise that botanicals have their own traditions, functions, and reasons for being in the cup,” said Maria Uspenski, founder of The Tea Spot, a whole leaf tea and teaware company. She added that over the past few years, “the category has moved away from novelty-driven blends toward more disciplined, function-led formulations built around identifiable botanicals that people recognize and trust.”

A Role of Innovation

Changing customers’ attitudes is the key driver of innovation in the herbal tea industry.

According to Höver, a more intentional use >

Consumers are more aware of the benefits of herbal teas and are choosing them more wisely.
Image credit: Chapel Fine Tea



HERBAL & BOTANICAL TEAS

of botanicals is linked to emerging research on stress, sleep, gut health, and immunity, with tighter, benefit-led blends rather than vague wellness proposals.

On the manufacturers' side, there is a clear shift towards new formats and brewing technologies, including infusion systems and capsules that allow herbal drinks to be prepared quickly on traditional coffee machines.

"These systems mainly expand occasions rather than creating demand on their own," Höver said.

However, new infusion segments sometimes have certain downsides.

"I am not a fan of tea being brewed in machines designed for coffee. They are never optimised to extract optimal flavours, and that is without even getting into the cross-contamination with coffee," said Shabnam Weber, president of Tea and Herbal Association of Canada and the Tea Association of the USA.

In Europe, the use of coffee machines to brew herbal teas is likely to face regulatory obstacles.

"Any development of products for such machines will need to consider the requirements of the EU's Packaging and Packaging Waste regulation, which requires single serve products to be industrially compostable," Dr Sharon Hall, chief executive of the UK Tea & Infusions Association, explained.

Classic Never Gets Old

In terms of demand, Weber said the market is primarily comprised of classic solutions like chamomile, peppermint, and ginger with lemon. However, functional segments remain the key driving force. In particular, consumers are increasingly interested in adaptogens.



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Today's consumers are more health conscious, discerning, and knowledgeable.

Image credit: The Herbal Tea Co

It is challenging to pinpoint best-performing herbal teas on the global market, as there are significant cultural and regional differences, noted Höver. However, there are three segments with the greatest potential for market players.

The first group is herbal teas focused on calm, relaxation, and sleep, including chamomile and lemon balm, anchored in evening routines. The second group is herbs focused on digestive and gut health – peppermint, ginger – benefiting from the broader gut-health conversation. The last emerging group comprises adaptogens and mood, and is favoured especially by younger, wellness-focused consumers. In particular, it involves ashwagandha and functional mushrooms, Höver said.

Hibiscus, milk thistle, dandelion, ginger, and chamomile continue to be strong performers thanks to their broad functional appeal, Republic of Tea's Tucker said. "Consumers are drawn to herbs that support digestion, liver health, relaxation, and overall wellness, and these botanicals have long-standing recognition and trust."

In the UK, the top-performing benefit blends for most brands continue to be sleep and traditional herbals flavours – peppermint, lemon, ginger, and chamomile still dominate the category – with new flavours being more unique to brands and combinations chosen because of their benefits, noted Hall.

Sustainability Remains Key

Another significant shift on the herbal tea market is a move toward simpler, more transparent ingredient decks, a move

away from artificial flavours, excessive sweeteners, and vague 'proprietary blends', The Tea Spot's Uspenski said. "Consumers are reading labels more carefully and expect clarity about what's in their cup and where it comes from."

Hall explained that sustainability is a priority for European tea buyers, with over 60 percent preferring fair-sourced brands. The growing presence of the e-commerce segment is only fuelling interest in sustainable options. "E-commerce and specialty retail are changing how tea is bought. E-commerce platforms now offer direct access to organic fair trade and specialty teas, often with detailed product stories," she added.

Beyond product selection, ethical considerations are now key business differentiators, making sustainability, traceability, and clean-

label transparency crucial to consumer choice, according to the AHPA's Do. She added that "this heightened emphasis on ethical sourcing and quality can be seen in expanded industry efforts in organic and regenerative agriculture for both cultivated and wild-crafted botanical materials. Consumers, especially younger generations, are inspired by the origin stories and care taken in sourcing herbal products."

Although sustainability is important, it is not the primary factor in most consumers' product choices. "Sustainability remains important for reputation and long-term supply, but the winning propositions will be those that deliver credible benefits for the consumer first," Höver added.

Existing Trends Will Continue

Observers believe that the trends dominating the herbal tea market over the last several years are here to stay. "Ongoing trends include plant-based diets, where tea and herbals naturally fit with a flexitarian or eco-friendly diet," Hall said.

Younger consumers want functionality, such as the gut health benefits of kombucha or probiotic tea. They are looking for beverages that can enhance their mood, so adaptogen blends, and things that help them focus and give them energy, like matcha.

Conversely, customers also want teas that help them sleep, such as chamomile, lavender, or CBD infusions.

Blending tea with ingredients to support these needs will create market opportunities, Hall added.

"Industry needs to take opportunities to work with restaurants and bars to develop tea and herbal options on their menus. Think also sparkling iced teas, RTD in sleek cans, tea-based mocktails, nitro cold brew, or premium brewed tea on tap in pubs and bars. The next wave will be more adult-oriented, alcohol-free tea serves," Hall shared.

According to Höver, market growth in the next years will focus on clear platforms such as sleep and calm, focus and energy, and gut comfort using recognisable botanicals. "In times of rising interest for GLP-1 drugs, tea may become more relevant. Use of such drugs could put volume pressure on indulgent drinks, but it reinforces demand for low- or no-calorie beverages that support hydration, digestion, and overall wellbeing," Höver said. ☺

Vladislav Vorotnikov is a Batumi, Georgia-based multimedia B2B freelance journalist writing about the tea and coffee industries since 2012.

Spurred by the Covid pandemic, herbal teas with specific functionality remain in high demand. Image credit: Republic of Tea



EPR and the New Reality for Beverage Packaging

As Extended Producer Responsibility policies continue to be implemented around the world, it is impacting all packaging, including coffee and tea. EPR's impact extends well beyond materials so companies must be aware of all its aspects to be in full compliance. **By Rebecca Marquez**

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is rapidly reshaping the conversation around global beverage packaging. Once viewed primarily as a regulatory or compliance issue, EPR has evolved into a strategic force that is influencing material choices, equipment investments, and collaboration across the packaging value chain. For beverage brands and their packaging partners, the implications are profound and unavoidable.

At its core, EPR shifts financial and operational responsibility for packaging waste from municipalities to the producers (manufacturers in the coffee and tea industries). For beverage companies, which rely heavily on high-volume, single-use packaging formats such as polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles, aluminum cans, glass bottles, and multipacks, this shift brings packaging decisions under sharper scrutiny. Materials that are difficult to recycle, expensive to recover, or incompatible with existing infrastructure increasingly carry higher costs and reputational risk.

According to *The New Material World: Packaging's Path Toward Sustainability* report produced by PMMI, The Association for Packaging and Processing Technologies, regulation now ranks among the top three factors influencing five-year packaging outlooks for both consumer packaged goods (CPG) companies and original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), alongside cost and consumer preference. This alignment is significant. It underscores that EPR is no longer a distant policy issue — it is actively shaping near-term investment and design decisions across the industry.

Why Beverage Packaging Is in the Spotlight

Beverage packaging sits at the intersection of EPR pressures for several reasons. First, beverage containers represent a highly visible and highly regulated waste stream. Second, many states with EPR laws or proposed legislation — such as California — are also home to large

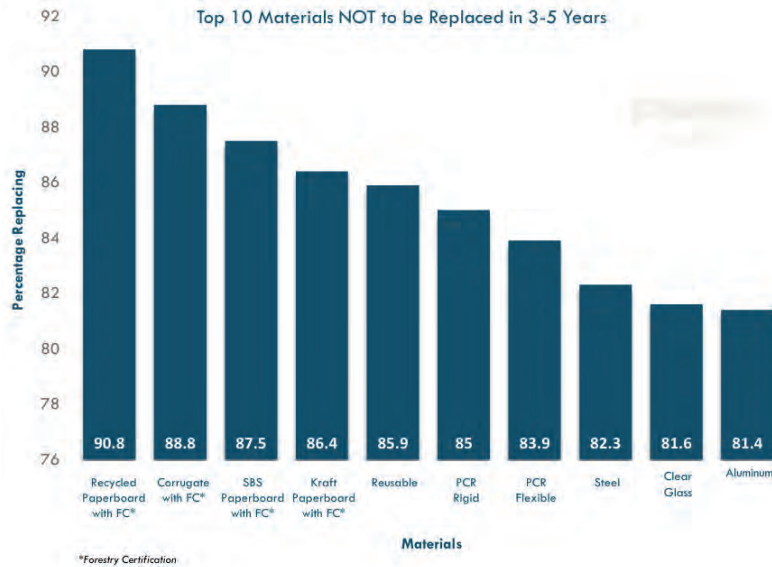
beverage markets. Finally, beverage packaging has long been a proving ground for recycling systems, particularly deposit return schemes for aluminum and PET.

The report's materials data reinforces this reality. PET bottles and metal beverage cans are expected to continue showing strong growth through 2028, reflecting their durability, recyclability, and established recovery pathways. Notably, aluminum and recycled-content plastics rank among the materials least likely to be replaced over the next three to five years, suggesting that EPR is reinforcing, rather than undermining, investment in materials with proven circularity.

However, EPR also exposes persistent trade-offs. Beverage producers are acutely aware that packaging decisions affect shelf life, product protection, and brand identity. Survey results indicate that cost remains the primary barrier to adopting more sustainable packaging, closely followed by concerns about product quality and protection. For beverages, where carbonation, light sensitivity, and contamination risks are critical, even small changes in material performance can have outsized consequences.

Stretching beyond materials and compliance, EPR's implications are profound and unavoidable.
Image credit: AdobeStock





PMMI Materials Dashboard Image credit: PMMI

Equipment, Infrastructure, and the EPR Domino Effect

One of the most consequential insights from the report is that EPR’s impact extends well beyond materials. As beverage brands move toward recyclable and recycled-content packaging to reduce EPR fees and compliance risk, they are placing new demands on packaging machinery. OEMs report that packaging performance and equipment performance are the top trade-offs they see when customers transition to sustainable materials.

This dynamic is especially relevant for beverage lines, which often operate at high speeds with tight tolerances. Variability in recycled-content materials, such as inconsistencies in thickness, rigidity, or sealing behaviour, can disrupt efficiency and lead to increased downtime. While 64 percent of OEMs

report that they are already manufacturing machinery redesigned or modified to handle more sustainable materials, many end users remain constrained by legacy equipment.

EPR effectively accelerates this tension. It creates financial incentives to change packaging faster than infrastructure may be able to support, pushing companies toward incremental adaptation rather than wholesale transformation. As the report notes, until materials and machinery are better aligned, many beverage producers will continue to balance sustainability goals against operational risk.

From Compliance to Competitive Strategy and Collaboration

Despite these challenges, EPR is also catalysing new opportunities, particularly around collaboration. Both CPG firms and OEMs identify reducing packaging, increasing recyclability, and minimising waste as their top sustainability strategies. This alignment matters. EPR rewards packaging systems that are simpler, lighter, and more compatible with recycling infrastructure, all of which benefit from early and sustained collaboration between brand owners, material suppliers, and equipment manufacturers.

For beverage companies, this means treating EPR not merely as a cost centre but as a design constraint that can drive innovation. Lightweighting, mono-material structures, higher recycled content, and packaging formats optimised for recovery are no longer optional experiments; they are becoming baseline expectations.

Looking Ahead

As EPR legislation expands and matures, sustainability strategies will remain front and centre for the beverage packaging community.

The findings in *The New Material World* report make one thing clear: sustainability is no longer a parallel initiative — it is embedded in the future of packaging strategy. For beverage brands navigating EPR, success will depend on aligning materials, machinery, and partners around solutions that strike a balance between cost, performance, and circularity.



Rebecca Marquez is the director of custom research at PMMI, The Association for Packaging and Processing Technologies, based in Herndon, Virginia. PMMI’s portfolio of trade shows includes PACK EXPO International, which takes place in Chicago, Illinois (18-21 October) and the upcoming PACK EXPO East, which takes place in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 17-19 February. For more information, visit packexpoeast.com.

Ethiopia Adopts a Comprehensive Coffee Tree Rejuvenation Strategy

An increased focus on smallholder coffee producers by the Ethiopian government and a comprehensive coffee tree rejuvenation program – rather than an expansion strategy – is strengthening Ethiopia’s coffee industry and driving new production trends. **By Shem Oirere**

Ethiopia’s coffee production and export volumes have remained on the growth path in recent years as the country makes headway in its coffee sector reforms, driven by a successful farm rejuvenation programme and government-driven economic progress.

The country, which is Africa’s biggest coffee producer, with 760,000 hectares under the crop, is in the middle of the implementation of an ambitious 15-year coffee industry growth plan that places the rejuvenation of millions of ageing coffee trees at the centre of the sector transformation plan.

The growth plan, or the Comprehensive Ethiopian Coffee Strategy (2019-2033) sets out lofty targets. They include increasing overall coffee output to 1.26 million metric tonnes, growing export earnings to USD \$4.6 billion and farmer incomes of up to USD \$3.5 billion, a feat to be achieved through improving the quality and quantity of yields per hectare, among other policy reforms.

And for Ethiopia, one of the world’s leading Arabica coffee producers, achieving the ambitious production and export goals, would require both government and private sector industry players to address one of the main hurdles in the country’s coffee sector, which is the aging coffee trees, across coffee growing regions of Oromia, Sidama, South-West Ethiopia, South Ethiopia and Central Ethiopia.

According to TechnoServe, a global non-profit organisation focused on poverty alleviation through supporting competitive business ventures including agriculture, Ethiopia’s coffee yields are relatively low despite the landlocked country being the world’s third largest exporter by volume.

“Ethiopian coffee growers harvest 40 percent less per hectare than their counterparts in Uganda and just one-third of what farmers in Colombia produce (and) one reason for low productivity is the ageing stock of coffee trees in the country, as the plants tend to produce less

Despite being the world’s third largest exporter by volume, Ethiopia’s yields are relatively low.
Image credit: AdobeStock



coffee over time,” TechnoServe reports.

More than two million smallholder coffee growers in Ethiopia grapple with the challenge of declining yields per hectare with dwindling earnings. This has forced many of them to resort to clearance of forests to expand their land under coffee cultivation in the belief they will earn more. This has led to the problem of deforestation in many coffee growing areas in Ethiopia with concerns the trend is contributing to more carbon emissions from the country’s coffee production.

However, since 2022, production has been on the surge. During this period TecnoServe, in partnership with some coffee companies with an interest in sourcing Ethiopian coffee and the Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority (ECTA), a government coffee and tea industry regulator, launched a coffee tree rejuvenation programme.

Production has increased from 9.13 million bags (60kg) in 2023/2024 year to 10.63 million bags, with projections the output would rise to 11.560 million bags in the 2025/2026 marketing year, according to a June 2025 report on Ethiopia coffee industry by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Moreover, the national average yields are expected to rise from 0.75 metric tonnes to around 0.90 metric tonnes per hectare according to the USDA report.

“One of the most influential drivers of increased coffee production in Ethiopia is the national campaign to rejuvenate ageing coffee trees, implemented over the past four years,”

the USDA noted. The USDA report indicates there an increasing number of Ethiopian coffee farmers who are embracing stumping, the cutting back of ageing trees to stimulate new, vigorous growth. The Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority (ECTA) says the acceptance of the sustainable practice “is now delivering tangible improvements in both yield and coffee quality, with studies showing stumped coffee trees can produce two to three times higher yields within three years.”

ECTA estimates more than 450,000 hectares of land “have been rejuvenated and replanted with improved, higher-yielding coffee varieties” in the last three years. “These rejuvenated coffee trees and improved varieties began bearing fruit in marketing year 2024/25, contributing to enhanced yields and bean quality,” it added.

The rejuvenation of Ethiopia’s ageing coffee trees has come along with increasing farmer utilisation of “improved seedlings, better agronomic practices, and benefiting from institutional and technical support provided by ECTA, national research institutions, and development partners.”

Coincidentally, strong global prices and successful policy reforms in the coffee sector have triggered a spike in Ethiopia’s coffee export volumes to 7.8 million bags, as more producers and exporters enjoy an expanded direct access to international markets supported by the easing of foreign exchange constraints. At least 60 percent of the Ethiopian coffee is exported while 40 percent is consumed locally, making it one of the leading coffee consuming countries in Africa, driven partly by local culture.

Rejuvenation Rather Than Expansion

At the launch of the 15 year Comprehensive Ethiopian Coffee Strategy, the country’s coffee production was estimated at more than 440,000 metric tonnes, with 95 percent of the produce coming from smallholder producers who grow >

Right: Improved yields are expected as better farming practices are implemented along with the tree rejuvenation campaign.
Image credit: Nestlé





their coffee in varied environments, including forest, semi-forest, garden, and plantation. Productivity was estimated at 690kgs per hectare, which was below the global average of 800kgs per hectare.

Stakeholders in Ethiopia's coffee sector such as TecnoServe and Dutch multinational coffee and tea company, JDE Peet's, launched initiatives to promote the crop's sustainability and improve the sector's competitiveness. This was done through a fresh push to increase yields per hectare and hence mobilise more national coffee output, without necessarily expanding acreage under the crop.

Of course acreage under coffee in Ethiopia has expanded from 730,000 hectares in 2023/2024 and is currently estimated at 760,000 hectares.

Instead of encouraging expansion of this acreage, TecnoServe and JDE Peet's, in partnership with USDA, Kew, ECTA and Jimma Agricultural Research Center, a governmental research institution, launched the REgrow Yirga project in January 2022, focusing on the rejuvenation of coffee trees in smallholder farms.

The project requires an estimated USD \$472 per hectare to implement, including \$343 to cover the income the smallholder farmers will forego during the farm rejuvenation transition period and \$129 for farmer education on critical practices such as renovation and rehabilitation. It is expected to boost chances of realising the objectives outlined in the Comprehensive Ethiopian Coffee Strategy.

Transformation Plans

Ethiopia, which is banking on its coffee sector growth plan to transform itself into the world's second-largest coffee producer and exporter, currently trails Uganda and Colombia in total yields per hectare due to the ageing stock of its coffee trees. Ethiopian coffee growers are said to harvest 40 percent less per hectare when compared to their counterparts in Uganda and just one-third of what farmers in Colombia harvest.

In fact, the Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA), a state-owned entity that regulates, promotes, and develops the landlocked country's coffee industry, says in the last three years to 2025, an estimated 13.8

million unproductive trees were stumped by 36,800 farmers in key coffee growing regions.

At least 50 percent of the coffee trees in Uganda, are more than eight years old according to the UCDA "which is a significant hindrance to yield improvement."

Sucafina, one of the coffee companies involved in coffee tree rejuvenation in East Africa, including Uganda and Rwanda, said "ageing coffee trees are a key factor in low yields, hence low returns from coffee, across East Africa." In a recent statement, Sucafina added, "although most rejuvenation methods take three years to see full results, these initial trials indicate yield increases ranging from 100 percent to 200 percent."

According to the USDA, Ethiopia's annual coffee output for 2025/26 is likely to grow by nine percent to 11.6 million 60kg bags, nearly 694,000 metric tonnes compared to last year. "This growth is driven by a combination of favourable weather conditions, limited incidence of coffee plant diseases, better price returns, and a range of national initiatives and policy reforms that have enhanced productivity and expanded cultivation," the USDA reported.

The USDA said key national programs such as coffee stumping have had positive impact on coffee production coupled with other initiatives such as "expanding access to improved seedlings, better agronomic practices, and enabling policy environments, which have supported both yield improvements and expansion of area harvested."

The increasing focus on smallholder coffee producers by the Ethiopian government, and the growing interest in the country's Arabica coffee by international coffee traders, are expected to keep agronomical practices such as coffee tree rejuvenation as a key driver of industry's future performance. ☺

JDE Peet's and TecnoServe launched the REgrow Yirga project in January 2022. Image credit: JDE Peet's

Shem Oirere is a freelance business journalist based in Nairobi, Kenya. He has spent more than 25 years covering various sectors of Africa's economy. He holds a BA in International Relations and Diplomacy from the University of South Africa and earned a higher degree in journalism from the London School of Journalism and is also a member of the Association of Business Executives (ABE).

JANUARY 2026

Winter FancyFaire

11 - 13

San Diego, California

Web: specialtyfood.com/fancy-food-shows/winter-fancyfaire

Sigep World 2026

16 - 20

Rimini, Italy

Web: sigep.it/en

World of Coffee Dubai

18 - 20

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Web: dubai.worldofcoffee.org

11th Annual GTI Colloquium

29

Davis, California

Web: globaltea.ucdavis.edu/events

FEBRUARY 2026

22nd African Fine Coffees Conference & Exhibition

2 - 6

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Web: afca.coffee/conference

Coffee Science and Education Summit 2026

5 - 6

ZHAW Wädenswil, Switzerland

Web: zhaw.ch/icbt/csces

CoffeeFest Madrid

14 - 17

Madrid, Spain

Web: ifema.es/coffee-fest

PACK EXPO East

17 - 19

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Web: packexpoeast.com

MARCH 2026

Natural Products Expo West

3 - 6

Anaheim, California

Web: expowest.com

Coffee Fest New York

8 - 10

New York, New York

Web: coffeefest.com

Single-Serve Capsules

10 - 11

Tampa, Florida

Web: ami-events.com/event

Sustainability in Packaging US

10 - 12

Chicago, Illinois

Web: sustainability-in-packaging.com

Thaifex HOREC Asia

11 - 13

Bangkok, Thailand

Web: thaifex-horec.asia

National Coffee Association (NCA) Convention

12 - 14

Tampa, Florida

Web: ncausa.org

Cafexpo Honduras 2026

21 - 22

San Pedro Sula, Honduras

Web: cafexpo.org

World Tea Expo

23 - 25

Las Vegas, Nevada

Web: worldteaexpo.com

UK Coffee Leader Summit

26

London, England

Web: ukcoffeeleadersummit.com

Roaster Producer Forum 2026

26 - 27

San Salvador, El Salvador

Web: producerroasterforum.com

Melbourne International Coffee Expo (MICE)

26 - 28

Melbourne, Australia

Web: internationalcoffeeexpo.com

MAY

Women in Tea & Coffee, A Tea & Coffee Trade Journal Conference

6

London, England

Web: women.teaandcoffee.events

Get the latest updates and upload your event at teaandcoffee.net/events



Fighting for Fairer Tea at Downing Street

Clipper Teas joined the Fairtrade Foundation, and a coalition of supporters, at Downing Street to hand in the Brew It Fair petition on World Human Rights Day (10 December 25).

Lobbying for a change in the system, Clipper is supporting the campaign to make tea fairer for the farmers who grow it. This includes a petition by the Fairtrade Foundation that has been signed by over 21,000 people and supported by over 80 members of parliament. The petition appeals to the government to introduce Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence (HREDD) legislation, which tackles issues in tea supply chains and lobbies for a level playing field in the industry.

Clipper and Fairtrade representatives stood alongside celebrity activists brandishing placards. Together, they drew attention to the urgent need to protect the livelihoods of tea farmers, who are increasingly burdened by rising costs, climate pressures, and volatile market prices. Key messages from the petition include:

1. Introduce HREDD legislation to hold companies accountable for human rights and environmental impacts in tea supply chains.
2. Protect farmers & workers by tackling poverty wages, unsafe conditions, & exploitation, especially in Kenya where most UK tea is sourced.
3. Collaborate for change across government, business, and worker groups to secure living incomes, climate resilience, and fair competition.

Bryan Martins, CEO at Ecotone UK which owns Clipper Teas, stood with Andy Hickman, head of human rights at Sainsbury's, Martin Rhodes MP, chair of the Fairtrade All Party Parliamentary Group, and Marie Rumsby from the Fairtrade Foundation to submit the petition.

"It was a highlight of my career to date to be part of the Brew It Fair petition. To be at Downing Street, to deliver such a powerful message and to show up for the producers that need our support was inspiring. The volume of tea we consume in Britain is huge, yet only 10 percent is Fairtrade certified. There is also very little awareness of the lives of the people behind the nation's beloved brew," said Martins, adding, "the government, and the tea industry as a whole, need to do better to support people on the ground. They need fair pay, access to medical care and education, and generally better standards of living."

Fairtrade also presented an Open Letter from over 250 tea farmers and workers in Kenya — an area where almost half of the UK's tea comes from yet only 1 in 5 tea growers earn enough to support basic family needs. The letter calls on UK businesses and policymakers to protect the human rights of tea workers, end the poverty wages and help them mitigate the effects of climate change.

Marie Rumsby, director of communications and advocacy at Fairtrade Foundation, added, "My hope is for fair tea - where all growers earn a decent income, work in safe conditions, can support their families, and send their children to school - but we are far from that reality."

JING ACHIEVES ECOVADIS PLATINUM FOR THEIR SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

JING announced that it was awarded EcoVadis Platinum for its sustainable practices. JING is now in the top one percent of companies rated by EcoVadis globally and the first tea company to be announced as Platinum rated.

Melanie Tricklebank, CEO of JING commented, "Everyone at JING is passionate about the people and places that produce each remarkable tea. We're on a mission to inspire more people to enjoy memorable tea experiences, and that means more than just great tasting drinks; it's the reassurance of knowing where each tea is from and knowing that sustainable choices are an essential part of who we are and what we do."

She added, "We are, therefore, thrilled that we have been awarded the highest possible distinction by EcoVadis. EcoVadis is one of the world's largest and most trusted providers of business sustainability ratings, having assessed and benchmarked the sustainability performance of more than 150,000 companies globally. The platinum award is a true validation of our commitment to environmental and social sustainability and reinforces our reputation as a transparent, responsible, and ethical partner to our valued customers and consumers."

Tricklebank concluded by saying that the achievement "is a powerful motivator for us to continue our mission, and we will be raising a glass of our delicious sparkling tea to celebrate."

EcoVadis is the world's leading sustainability ratings provider, offering independent and transparent evaluations of companies' sustainability practices to accelerate their sustainability journey. Their ratings cover key themes such as environment, labour rights, human rights, ethics, and sustainable procurement. By working with EcoVadis, businesses are able to monitor and improve their sustainability performance journey.

Image credit: JING Tea



Nespresso Opens Flagship Boutique in New York City

Nespresso USA opened its New York City Flagship store, a uniquely crafted space in the heart of the city's iconic Flatiron district. Inspired by consumer exploration of beverage flavours, styles, and rituals, the boutique is a destination for modern coffee culture.

The Nespresso New York City Flagship, which opened 18 December 25 at 85 Fifth Avenue in the Flatiron district in Manhattan, is the culmination of the brand's reimagined retail strategy as the eighth and largest global model of its kind. The first floor of the 13,900 sq ft space echoes Nespresso's refreshed boutique design, while the lower level features two custom-curated spaces that enable visitors to experience Nespresso in an all-new way.

On the lower level, the Hidden Cup Coffee Bar will offer an element of surprise: an intimate setting where taste makers reimagine coffee through exclusive recipes revealed throughout the year. Visitors can stop by the Hidden Cup Coffee Bar to be served drinks inspired by coffee trends like functionally enhanced coffees and zero-proof blends, as well as their favourite Nespresso classics. Experiential offerings include Nespresso's new proprietary multi-sensory signature mocktail experience, which was specifically designed to infuse coffee aromas and bring a multi-sensory coffee mixology experience to life.

The second space downstairs, the Nespresso Lounge, will welcome guests to stay, find community through shared moments, and test their barista skills with self-service coffee machines. Nespresso Professional machines will also

be available for use along with details of where they can be found in restaurants and hotels across the city, encouraging further exploration of Nespresso across New York.

"Our Nespresso New York City Flagship is more than a boutique," said Jason Webber, vice president of sales, Nespresso USA. "As the pinnacle of our retail strategy, it's the first in North America to bring our vision to life, blending the elements of discovery and experience with a local NYC touch."

The ground floor will be the hub for visitors to walk in and first experience the brand, featuring a Taste and Discover area for visitors to do self-guided tastings, a Coffee Theatre for employee-led masterclasses, and a Nespresso coffee bar on standby to answer any questions.



Image credit: Nespresso

THE COFFEE OPENS ITS FIRST LOCATION IN THE US

The Coffee officially made its US debut, with a flagship United States café opening in the heart of Wynwood, Miami. Founded in Curitiba, Brazil, The Coffee has built an international following for its Japanese-inspired minimalist aesthetic, technology-driven service model, and commitment to high-quality specialty coffee. The Miami location marks the beginning of The Coffee's American expansion.

The US represents a market with strong potential for The Coffee's expansion. "The United States is likely to become the company's largest market. We are talking about the world's largest economy and a country where the franchise model is highly consolidated, with the main industry chains having been founded there. In addition, there is significant room to explore the specialty coffee market, which continues to grow consistently," said Carlos Fertoni, CEO of The Coffee. "Our international expansion reflects the purpose we established in 2018, when The Coffee was born: to become a global brand, bringing our

quality, products, and experience to consumers across different cultures," added Fertoni.

At the heart of The Coffee is its meticulously crafted coffee programme, designed to showcase the richness of the beans with Japanese-inspired attention to detail. Among its most popular pours: a bright, bold, and clean black double-shot espresso, perfect for purists seeking coffee in its purest form, highlighting the full character of the beans.

Naturally, refreshing iced options are available including an iced matcha latte, made with ceremonial-grade matcha and an iced vanilla latte, among many more. Those looking for a caffeine fix should look no further than the sora latte, a butterfly tea blend with coconut and vanilla; the effervescent black ginger, which combines espresso, tonic, and ginger for a sparkling, slightly spicy twist; the refreshing lemon honey coffee, an iced specialty coffee with honey and lemon; and the indulgent mad mocha, a rich coffee-chocolate creation.



Image credit: The Coffee

"We're excited to bring The Coffee to the US and choosing Wynwood was a natural decision because its strong Latino culture and creative energy mirror the spirit of our brand," said Guillaume Soyer, master franchisee for the Florida Market. "Many Miami locals and visitors have already experienced The Coffee abroad, especially in Latin America, and we are proud to create a home for it here in South Florida."

The Coffee will be located at 136 NW 27th Street in Wynwood.

THAC's Shabnam Weber Tapped to Head the Tea Association of the USA

The Tea Association of the USA appointed Shabnam Weber as its new president, effective 2 January 2026. She succeeds Peter F Goggi, who retired on 31 December.

Weber brings more than 25 years of distinguished leadership experience in the global tea industry, with a proven record of advancing industry standards, strengthening governance, and elevating the profile of tea worldwide. She is widely recognised for her contributions to tea education, sustainability, and inclusive growth across the tea value chain.

Weber has served as president of the Tea and Herbal Association of Canada since 2018, and she has led the national association through a period of significant transformation. Her accomplishments include rebuilding organisational structure and branding, strengthening fiscal governance, expanding membership value, and forging influential partnerships with international trade bodies. Under her leadership, the THAC has emerged as a global voice on sustainability, policy, and data-driven advocacy.

At the international level, Weber represents Canada at the United Nations FAO Intergovernmental Group on Tea, where she serves as vice-chair, co-chair of the Advocacy Pillar, chair and co-chair of the Working Group on Tea & Health, and vice-chair of the Working Group on Smallholders.

In addition to her association leadership, Weber is the co-founder of the International Alliance for Women in Tea, established in 2024 to support equity, leadership development, and collaboration across the global tea sector. She is also the creator of Canada's Tea Sommelier® certification program and previously served as president of the Academy of Tea, an international education platform.

Earlier in her career, Weber founded and led The Tea Emporium Inc, a specialty tea retailer in Toronto.

Weber holds a post-graduate diploma in social science from the Open University (UK) and a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Political Science from the University of Toronto. She is a frequent speaker at global industry events and has been recognised by *CEO Magazine* as one of the Top 50 Women Over 50.

"The board is confident that [Shabnam's] strategic leadership, global perspective, and deep commitment to the advancement of tea will greatly benefit the Tea Association of the USA and its members," said John Smith, Jr, chairman of the board. "Her appointment marks an exciting new chapter for the Association as we continue to support and represent the US tea industry."



Image: Shabnam Weber

Stuart Heflin Joins Peet's Coffee as its New President

Peet's Coffee appointed Stuart Heflin president, effective 17 November 2025. He succeeds Eric Lauterbach, who departs after a 15-year tenure marked by strong growth, cultural stewardship, and leadership through major company transitions.

As president of Peet's Coffee, Inc, Heflin oversees all domestic and international businesses across the Peet's portfolio, including Stumptown Coffee, Intelligentsia Coffee, and Peet's China. With more than 20 years of experience leading and scaling global consumer brands, he is recognised for driving growth through innovation, disciplined strategy, and a people-first approach.

Heflin joins Peet's from The Simply Good Foods Company, where he most recently served as SVP & general manager and led Quest Nutrition through a period of record expansion into new categories and channels. Previously, he held senior roles at Glanbia Performance Nutrition and Procter & Gamble, where he helped build and strengthen globally recognised consumer brands. Heflin holds a BS in mechanical engineering and an MBA in marketing from Ohio State University.

Eric Lauterbach departs after a significant period of impact, during which Peet's grew beyond USD \$1 billion in revenue, strengthened its culture, and introduced a variety of products and formats. Throughout his tenure, Lauterbach played a central role in shaping the modern Peet's organisation and expanding its reach while preserving its commitment to craft coffee and people-driven culture.

With Heflin's appointment, Peet's enters a new phase focused on portfolio growth, brand building, and continued leadership in the craft coffee category across its consumer packaged goods sector, café network, and international operations. His favourite Peet's drink is a large Americano, extra shot of espresso, black.



Image: Stuart Heflin

Henrique Braun Succeeds James Quincey as Coca-Cola's CEO

The Coca-Cola Company has promoted EVP and COO Henrique Braun, 57, to CEO, effective 31 March 2026. Braun succeeds James Quincey, who will transition to executive chairman.

Quincey, 60, will step down as CEO after a successful nine-year tenure. He has led the transformation of the business as a total beverage company, driven by a focus on staying closely connected to consumers. Under his leadership, the company has added more than 10 additional billion-dollar brands. Quincey has reshaped the company's strategy and operating model to create a more agile, networked company, including a focus on digital transformation and modernised marketing. He also led the company through the Covid pandemic.

As CEO, Braun will focus on opportunities to build on this strong foundation. His priorities include seeking the best growth opportunities worldwide; driving the company to get even closer to consumer needs; and leveraging technology as an enabler of business performance and growth.

Braun has been EVP and COO since 1 January 2025, overseeing all the company's operating units worldwide. From 2023 to 2024, Braun was SVP and president, International Development, overseeing seven of the company's nine operating units. Previously, he served as president of the Latin America operating unit from 2020 to 2022 and as president of the Brazil business unit from 2016 to 2020. From 2013 to 2016, Braun was president of the Greater China & South Korea division.

Braun joined Coca-Cola in 1996 at its headquarters in Atlanta holding positions in supply chain, new business development, marketing, innovation, general management and bottling operations.

He holds a bachelor's degree in agricultural engineering from the University Federal of Rio de Janeiro, a Master of Science degree from Michigan State University and an MBA from Georgia State University. Braun is an American citizen who was born in California and raised in Brazil.

The board of directors also plans to nominate Braun to be a director at the company's 2026 Annual Meeting.

Coca-Cola's tea brands include Georgia, Fuze Tea, Gold Peak and Ayataka. The company also owns Costa Coffee, which it is trying to sell.



Image: Henrique Braun

Hain Celestial Appoints Alison E Lewis President and CEO

The Hain Celestial Group, Inc., which markets Celestial Seasonings teas, officially named Alison E Lewis president and CEO, effective immediately. Lewis had been serving as Hain Celestial's interim president and CEO since May 2025. Lewis will also continue in her role as a member of the board of directors.

Dawn Zier, chair of the board, said, "The board has had the opportunity over the past few months to observe Alison in action. We are pleased with the bold moves she has already taken to reduce costs, the turnaround agenda she has put in place designed to drive margins and growth, and her focus on progressing the strategic review with Goldman Sachs. With Alison's deep CPG expertise and track record of strong performance, we believe she is best equipped to create shareholder value and lead Hain as our next CEO."

Lewis said, "I am honoured to lead Hain Celestial and look forward to delivering our strategy to reposition the company for a stronger future. Over the last several months, the company has been intensely focused on our initiatives to stabilise sales, improve profitability, optimise cash, and de-leverage our balance sheet. I am proud of the work we are doing and confident in our ability to drive future value for all stakeholders."

Lewis has been a member of the Hain Celestial board of directors since September 2024, and interim president and CEO since May 2025.



Image: Alison E Lewis

Coffee Enterprises Promotes Vincent Caloiero to Vice President

Coffee Enterprises has promoted its laboratory manager, Vincent Caloiero, to vice president of Coffee Enterprises. He is a 14-year employee with exceptional sensory abilities and laboratory management experience.

Caloiero is a Coffee Quality Institute Q Grader, Specialty Coffee Association Q Grader, and a Specialty Tea Institute Tea Taster. As vice president he will be responsible for Coffee Enterprises' testing and consulting daily operations.

Caloiero succeeds Spencer Turer who accepted a new position and returned to his home state of New Jersey.



Image: Vincent Caloiero

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Four Tea & Coffee Trends to Watch in 2026

From functional fortification to fruit-forward flavour, tea and coffee are entering a period of rapid reinvention. Anchored in ritual and routine, these beverages are being reimaged to meet evolving needs for health, indulgence and convenience amongst others. Drawing on Finlays' latest *Global Beverage Trends Report*, let's look at some key 2026 trends impacting tea and coffee across both retail and foodservice.

Health is Wealth

Health and wellness is an established but constantly evolving consumer trend. Fuelled by social media and the growing link between health and status, wellbeing is now a lifestyle, with consumers seeking beverages that help to optimise all aspects of their lives, from sustained energy and gut health, to sleep, focus, and satiety.

Tea and coffee are particularly well placed to benefit from this shift. Already perceived as comforting, energising and inherently 'better-for-you', they provide a credible base for functional enhancement.

The focus on functionality is set to accelerate with the continued rise of GLP-1 therapies such as Ozempic and Mounjaro. As appetite management and nutrient efficiency become priorities, expect to see more tea and coffee formats fortified with protein and designed to deliver 'more in less'.

LTOs are Hot to Go

Offering affordable indulgence and the allure of something new, Limited Time Offerings (LTOs) have proved incredibly popular with both customers and operators. We see this trend endure in 2026. Fruit flavours will be back in the spotlight, this time brighter, bolder and more globally inspired.

As with many trends, the resurgence is being fuelled by social media, where a 'camera eats first' mentality is driving demand for beverages that are as visually compelling as they are refreshing. This is particularly the case for younger Gen Z and Gen Alpha consumers, who see drinks as a form of self-expression to be documented, shared and celebrated online, pushing brands to innovate with colour, texture and presentation.

In tea and coffee, fruit is no longer playing a supporting role. Tropical profiles are leading the charge, with classics like mango and pineapple giving way to more adventurous notes such as guava, dragon fruit and lychee. Meanwhile, texture innovations like foams, gels and customisable add-ons invite playful experimentation.

As Gen Alpha's spending power grows, the appetite for visually intriguing, fruit-forward beverages is only expected to intensify.

Economic pressure continues to shape consumer behaviour, but rather than trading

down entirely, many are becoming more selective; seeking beverages that deliver clear value beyond price alone.

In this context, 'premium' is being redefined. Quality ingredients, craftsmanship and innovation still matter, but convenience has emerged as a decisive factor. Whether through RTD formats, streamlined ordering or seamless digital integration, a frictionless experience can justify a higher price point.

For tea and coffee operators, this presents a significant opportunity. Beverages that function as 'little treats' remain resilient even as discretionary spending tightens. Clear storytelling around provenance, process and quality can help reinforce the value proposition, positioning indulgence as a smart, rewarding choice rather than an unnecessary splurge. Looking ahead, the premium consumers place on immediacy and ease is expected to grow.

Sipping Sustainably

As climate change becomes more tangible through extreme weather and supply chain disruptions, sustainability is no longer abstract. Consumers are increasingly drawn to tea and coffee brands that demonstrate genuine environmental and ethical responsibility, supported by traceable ingredients and transparent supply chains.

Concerns around microplastics, waste, and the health impacts of climate change are sharpening scrutiny. There is also growing recognition that progress rests largely with governments and corporations, not individuals alone. This places greater responsibility on brands to lead with action, not just words.

Clear labelling of sustainability credentials, transparency around sourcing, and a focus on the human impact of social initiatives can all help build trust. For tea and coffee, categories connected to agriculture and global supply networks, authentic commitment to sustainability is becoming a baseline expectation rather than a point of differentiation.

Together, these four forces signal a new chapter for tea and coffee. Functional benefits, vibrant flavour, seamless convenience and credible sustainability are no longer separate considerations, they are increasingly interconnected expectations. Brands that can successfully integrate all four will be best positioned to stay relevant as the category continues to evolve in 2026 and beyond. ☕



Megan Conceição is an insights analyst at US-based Finlays Solutions, a global leader in beverage innovation, specialising in high-quality tea, coffee, botanical and fruit-based solutions.

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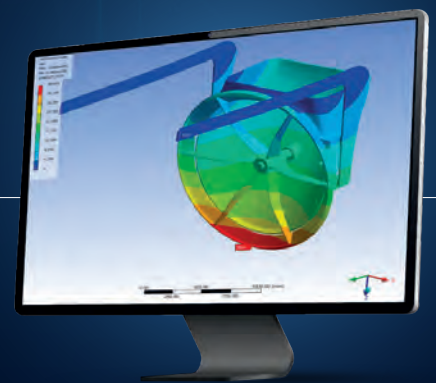
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