

NATURAL PRODUCTS EXPO WEST



NATURAL PRODUCTS EXPO WEST REVIEW 2018

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CONVENTIONAL WISDOM WATCH

“
Changing the way
we think, to create
the world we want.”

— Frances Moore Lappe



CONSCIOUS EATING

We're part of a food system and need to think about our eating and its implications.

CW: When we're mindful, a lot of bad stuff goes away



FARMACOLOGY



Bridging the traditional divide between agriculture and medicine.

CW: Food isn't like a medicine; It is medicine.



WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE!

Health conscious Millennials have nixed soft drinks and are always carrying water.

CW: You can lead a Millennial to tap water...



HIPPIE FOOD 2.0



Millennials have embraced the '60s Hippie ethos and are serving up the next generation of avocado toast and mashed yeast.

CW: Good food IS the growth sector.



ALT-PROTEIN

We appear to be at the forefront of an industry-wide arms race to reinvent the future of protein.

CW: The hidden cost of a burger has to be paid sooner or later.





CONSCIOUS EATING

“The wonderful thing about food is you get three votes a day. Everyone of them has the potential to change the world.” — Michael Pollan

Food choices serve as a mirror for our values. The act of eating and what we eat express what's important to us. Eating today is to drown in choices. Conventional or Regenerative? Certified organic or farmer-approved organic? Grass-fed or organic? Whole Foods or Farmer's Market? Farmed fish or wild? Free range or pastured? Animals or plants? We may view our actions as an extension of kindness towards other beings and the Earth, but it's really the obligatory baseline of equality, the threshold where we begin rather than end.

When Wendell Berry said, “eating is an agricultural act,” he means there's great power in everyday actions. By making conscious food choices on what you're going to eat and buy, you have a tremendous influence on everything from the environment, the lives of animals and your body and health. That's why the plant-based movement resonates with so many people and is bigger than any one generation. The millennials may have jump started the movement with delicious-looking images and videos of plant-based food on line, but now that more people are taking an interest in where their food comes from and how it's made, it's everyone's movement.

Whether you identify as vegan or vegan-ish, vegetarian or flexitarian, the bottom line is that day by day, more and more people across cultures and generations are demonstrating with their fork they care about their health, animals and the planet. When people are more conscious about their food choices, they change the food chain. It's empowering to realize that our food choices have and affect on the world, or at the very least, the farm.

Here are a few of my favorites:

MIYOKO'S EUROPEAN-STYLE CULTURED VEGAN BUTTER

<https://miyokoskitchen.com/>

Miyoko Schinner, the founder and Queen of vegan cheese, told me recently that their European-style cultured vegan “butter” is Miyoko’s best selling product. Not only does it melt, brown, bake and spread like butter — it tastes better than most butter. I’m not surprised. European butters taste better than most American butters because they culture the cream before churning, resulting in a richer taste. Before industrialization of the dairy industry, most butter in the U.S. was made with cultured cream. Miyoko, a chef and author of five books, has been creating vegan versions of staple ingredients such as yogurt, butter, sour cream and cheese for years. She shares her Glorious Butterless Butter recipe in her book, *The Homemade Vegan Pantry*. You can buy the book and make it, or simply pick up a package of Miyoko’s at your local store.

The “I Can’t Believe It’s Not Butter” for the conscious eater.



A company leading a regenerative agricultural movement aimed to improve soil and watershed health.

WAAH ORGANIC'S INDIAN READY-TO-EAT MEALS

<http://waahorganic.com>

What would be a good Indian expression of surprise? You guessed it — Waah! And, that's what I said when I tasted these organic Indian ready-to-eat meals. Waah means wow in India when used in a happy, pleasant context. Waah is Wow.

Waah Organic works with Suminter India Organics, the leading producer of organic ingredients in India. Suminter has committed to growing, harvesting and sourcing the purest organic ingredients with a community of hardworking farmers. In the 1960's and 1970's, farmers in India abandoned traditional farming methods as part of a national program called the "Green Revolution." Indian farmers started growing crops the American way — with chemicals, high-yield seeds and irrigation. The program backfired, leaving millions of farmers sick and in debt and a country with degraded soil and facing desertification. Waah Organic is one of a handful of Indian companies working to provide organic farming and necessary inputs for a successful conversion from conventional farms and eradicate the use of harmful pesticides and chemicals.

Six authentic Indian recipes have been created with hand-picked ingredients from their farms. By choosing Waah, you're choosing to support your body, the environment and help farmers across India. In Vegetable Biryani, Chana Masala, Vegetable Pulao, Dal Tadka, Rajma Masala and Dal Makhani varieties.



PEAK SHERPA'S ORGANIC TSAMPA

<https://www.peaksherpa.com>

Have you ever wondered how the Sherpa do it? I've climbed a small mountain in Nepal and I have to say, even that wasn't easy. The Sherpa are a tribe of ethnically Tibetan people who live in the highest region on earth, and rely on Tsampa for satiety and energy. Tsampa is an ancient grain that may just be the next great plant-based superfood.

Peak Sherpa was founded by three young Tibetans who learned their ancient cultural traditions from their parents and compassion from the words of the Dalai Lama. In traditional Tibetan style, they sprout and roast a premium strain of organic barley to prepare their delicious cereal. Tsampa is unique in that it can be eaten hot or cold — just add water or milk (and maybe a little honey too). Available in both multi-serve and personal portion cups in five varieties: Traditional, Apple Cinnamon Pecan, Cherry Almond Cranberry, Chocolate Almond and Toasted Coconut.

Peak Sherpa is a mission-driven Washington Social Purpose Corporation and a B-Corporation, committed to meeting rigorous standards of social and environmental accountability. Proceeds from every purchase provide economic support and assistance to the people of the Himalayas. Go Sherpa!

An ancient grain that may just be the next plant-based superfood.





FARMACOLOGY

“An herb is a friend of the physicians and a praise of the cooks.” — Charlemagne

The way we produce and consume food is the nexus of most of our world's health, environment, climate economics and even political crisis. Farming and medicine are intimately linked. When our environment is healthy, we get healthier. The “farm effect” tells us that kids raised on eco-farms have much lower rates of asthma and allergies. As we lose contact with diverse environments, we are getting more allergic. In *Farmacology*, Daphne Miller's fascinating book about the practices of holistic farming and what it can teach modern medicine, we are guided to understand how a healthy body is an extension of a healthy farm and vice versa. Miller is a practicing family physician who founded WholeFamily MD, San Francisco's first integrative care medical practice. Her quest to reclaim the heart of medicine and focus on patients, brought her beyond the simple concept of “food as medicine” to “food is medicine.”

As we continue to discover how the microbiome affects our health, we are increasingly focused on food's impact. Put a DNA probe in organic soil and it will show increased microbial activity and diversity versus conventional soil. Biodynamic soil will show even more. Soil teeming with a wide diversity of life is more likely to produce nutrient-dense food. The more ecological we farm, the more nutrients we harvest.

Culinary medicinals are a big part of the pharmacy kitchen. These foods with healing properties are being increasingly used to “healthify” products. Turmeric, packed with the anti-inflammatory properties of curcumin — is going majorly mainstream and fungi, purported to have healing properties, are quickly making their way into drinks and beauty products. The consistent climb in Google searches for mushroom varieties over the last three years suggests medicinal mushrooms may reflect a mounting culture shift, rather than a passing craze.

Why the growing interest in farmocology and the pharmacy kitchen in the past few years? It's the larger trend in wellness and the desire to be the absolute best version of ourself. From soil to shrooms, we want to eat and drink our way to better health.

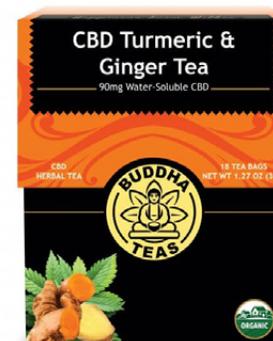
Here are a few of my favorites:

BUDDHA TEAS' CBD TEAS

<https://www.buddhateas.com>

Buddha Teas offer 100% unaltered, organic and wildcraft teas made from the freshest herbs, packaged in only bleach free tea bags. Their customers take comfort in knowing that they can enjoy a cup of tea that would incorporate only organically grown or wild harvested ingredients without any harmful additives or toxins. John Boyd, CEO and founder of Buddha Teas, explains his passion for utilizing herbs as healing agents also contributed to his goal to create a complete tea company. And he has. Buddha Teas pretty much covers the category from A to Z. Shop by type, benefit and even chakras. I'm partial to the Crown Chakra myself.

Now Buddha Teas have added CBD Teas to their ever expanding offerings. CBD products are popping up everywhere. Studies on CBD, a non-psychoactive cannabinoid compound from cannabis, are still in their infancy and many questions are still awaiting answers. However, it's clear that there's strong consumer support for CBD and we want it. Whether ingested or topically applied, the bioavailability of different forms of CBD is a hot topic. Buddha Teas uses nano-sized particles of water-soluble CBD, ensuring that the CBD they claim to include in their tea ends up in your tea. One thing we do know – Cannabinoids need fat to be absorbed in the small intestine, so you're going to want to enjoy your CBD tea with a meal or snack. Available in four varieties: Chamomile Blend, Matcha Green Tea, Turmeric & Ginger, and Peppermint.



A astronomical jump in the value of the cannabidiol market compared to last year is the result of a multitude of new CBD products.

These days turmeric is showing up in everything from juice shots to cocktails.



WUNDER WORKSHOP'S GOLDEN MYLK

<http://www.wunderworkshop.com/>

I work with many wellness startups and it's always fun to find someone who has the vision and drive to change career paths and follow their dream. Say hello to Zoe Lindt Van't Hof (LVH), co-founder and CEO of Wunder Workshop, a London based functional food brand making organic turmeric based products. Zoe started the company with her business partner Tom, whose background is in pharmacology and the field of traditional medicine. Together they set out on a mission to "make turmeric part of our daily diet." Zoe credits her upbringing and mother's knowledge of health and medicinal plants, as well as training from Ayurvedic doctors as the motivation to start an ethical and sustainable health brand.

These days turmeric is showing up in everything from juice shots to cocktails. It's the flavor of the month with even Starbucks jumping on the bandwagon with their golden latte. These concoctions may be delicious and ultra-photogenic but what many people don't realize is that it takes quite a bit of spice to get the anti-inflammatory benefits from curcumin, the active compound in turmeric. Turmeric 101 tells us that it takes 500-1000 mg of curcuminoids per day. Wunder Workshop's Original Golden Mylk contains 800 mg per serving plus the addition of black pepper and coconut milk to enhance bioavailability.

Wonder Workshop ethically sources high quality, organic turmeric powder from small, independent farms in the heart of Sri Lanka. These community run farms use a sustainable farming technique called Forest Harvesting that supports Sri Lanka's natural biodiversity, its farmers and local community. The company offers a range of turmeric products — Original Golden Mylk, Instantly Golden Turmeric Latte Blend, Golden Shrooms, and Turmeric CBD — but I like the Original Golden Mylk the best.

YOOT'S ORGANIC ROOT TEAS

www.yoottea.com

When I stumbled across this booth at Expo East last year, I couldn't help but recall that now famous line in *My Cousin Vinny*, "What's a Yutee?". So I asked them that question and I was told that "a Yoot" was a proactive health beverage inspired from the traditions of Ayurveda and Chinese Herbal Medicine. The San Francisco based company's name is fun to say, but these root-infused teas are suppose to deliver a boost for "happy tummies," "happy breathing" and "happy qi."

Nansee Kim-Parker, co-founder of Yoot, tapped into her heritage for every brew. Her parents prepared homemade teas for her chronic gastrointestinal problems when she was growing up. As an adult, Nansee used her parent's recipes and crafted some of her own to suit her own families needs. She did as many empowered people do when they have something extraordinary to share with the world — she quit her job and founded a beverage company. In 2015, she launched an IndieGoGo campaign and called upon the health conscious community to get behind the startup in order to get her line of teas to the finish line. It worked, they did. Yoot has recently gone through a packaging change but the brew is still the same. Available in Dandelion Root, Licorice Root and Prickly Ash.



Consumers are rediscovering the therapeutic virtues of ancient medicine.



WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE!

As Americans shift from soda to water, in part for health, bottled water is almost completely a new drink category.

Americans love their bottled water. According to Beverage Marketing Corporation, Americans consumed 39.3 gallons per capita last year and we are the biggest consumer market for bottled water worldwide. Contrast that to 1986 when the average American didn't drink even a single half liter bottle of water per week.

As Americans shift from soda to water, in part for health, bottled water is almost completely a new drink category. Health may have been an impetus for growing sales, but fears of safety are driving it. Today, Americans often drink bottle water for what they hope is not in it and their fears are not unfounded. According to the Natural Resources Defense Council, 77 million Americans are served by water systems that violate testing requirements or rules about contamination in drinking water. In agriculture-heavy regions, pesticides, fertilizers and nitrates from animal waste leach into the ground. Compliance isn't monitored carefully and most waste water treatment systems aren't designed to remove hormones, antidepressants and other drugs. Ouch!

The Romans were the first to see water as more than a basic need. Today, many Americans view water as a public right, in part due to the scandal in Flint, Michigan. Scarcity, privatization and plastic pollution are formidable social and political issues. Bottom line, humans need water to survive. The age-old conflict of water rights doesn't appear to be getting resolved anytime soon, especially since bottled water has become the fastest growing beverage market in the world. It's becoming increasingly clear that there are no limits on what water can be or what consumers are willing to buy. Witness the growing numbers of choices of premium waters, functional waters, flavored waters and even raw or "live" water, which is simply unprocessed, unfiltered ground water. The raw water trend embraces a larger movement towards all things "natural" and away from processed foods. The motive that drives someone to pay a hefty price for possibly polluted spring water is the same one that drives someone to buy organic produce — a belief that natural is good and chemical is bad.

As they make their transition from sodas to sparkling water and other better-for-you drinks, droves of health conscious Millennials are responsible for the steady rise of veterans like Lacroix and newcomers like Spindrift. Both brands are heavily featured on Instagram and don't just have customers, but fans. This fizzy trend doesn't stop with water. There's a resurgence of all sparkling beverages like kombucha, cold brew and wine. I was told when I first entered the food business, "Don't underestimate the power of a little carbonation." Believe it.

Here are a few of my favorites:

AQUA CARPATICA'S NATURAL SPRING WATER

<https://aquacarpatica.com>

As I worked my way through the congested aisles at Expo, I walked into the middle of the AQUA Carpatica booth, or four booths as is this case. Instantly something felt different. Peace, serenity and a beautiful landscape and video of the Carpathian Mountains of Romania transplanted me to an unworldly place. Unspoiled by civilization, untouched by industry, the natural springs where AQUA Carpatica gets its spring water are deep in a forest of fir, pine and spruce trees. I wanted some of THIS water. AQUA Carpatica's water comes from the last wild forest in Europe and benefits from millions of years of volcanic activity that has filtered out impurities. It's nitrate free, low sodium, alkaline and tastes crisp and pure.

AQUA Carpatica is part of a booming premium bottled water market, making up roughly 6% of total global bottled water volume, according to food and beverage consultant Zenith International. Today, we talk about water like we talk about wine. We even have water sommeliers at restaurants to help pair premium waters with food. Premium waters typically separate themselves from the average bottle waters that are man-made and purified or enhanced, and sell for a much higher price point. Distinctive packaging goes a long way in elevating a bottle of water to premium status in the eyes of the consumer.

Consumers are willing to pay a hefty price for premium bottled water due to increasing awareness of the health benefits and the decreasing quality of tap water.



Low conflict drinking water that is sourced from deep ocean water, a renewable resource.



KONA DEEP'S DRINKING WATER

<http://konadeep.com/>

Americans seem to be carrying water everywhere they go these days. Hydration is an easy cause to get behind. Water does a plethora of good for our bodies and without it we can suffer and even die. Environmentalists warn us that we are tapping out our supply and depleting ecosystems faster than they can replenish. By 2025, scientists predict that one in five humans will live in areas suffering from water scarcity. With rain and snow becoming more unpredictable, the pressure is on to find new sources of drinking water.

Kona Deep is a low conflict drinking water that is sourced from deep ocean water, a renewable resource. It has a great back story: extraordinary purity, quality, and a mineral content more than twice that of most land based waters. With Kona Deep, consumers don't have to choose between purity and performance or have second thoughts about where it comes from.

ISOCEAN SEAWATER HYDRATION BOOSTERS

<https://isocean.com/>

There's no denying it, we are connected to the periodic table. We humans are constructed and surrounded by these elements which include essential minerals that we must consume every day for optimum health. Although trace minerals are no longer as plentiful in the foods we eat (think soil depletion), they exist plentifully in their proper proportions in the mineral-rich waters of the earth's oceans and seas. Americans have been vitamin centric for decades and are now starting to realize that minerals are just as essential. According to Trace Minerals Research, a premier supplier of trace minerals for 35 years, it is estimated that 90% of Americans suffer from mineral imbalance and deficiency.

Now there's a sea change that could possibly help. Mediterranean Seawater, the parent company of Isocean, has used their patented process to create hydration boosters that deliver 17 trace elements direct from the sea to match your body's critical mineral composition. Simply add to any beverage for a boost of hydration. For more information about their unique process, visit Mediterranean Seawater's [Deeper Dive](#).



*A boost of deep sea water may
be just what our bodies need.*



HIPPIE FOOD 2.0

Hippie Food has its origins in the healthy lifestyle movement that started long before the 1960's. One could argue that the natural food movement started as early as the 1880's when the Reverend Sylvester Graham (not the inventor of the graham cracker as widely purported), a Seventh-day Adventist and leader in the temperance movement, preached vegetarianism and emphasized eating whole grain bread. Adelle Davis, who eventually became the health food guru for the hippie generation, first evangelized about the power of vitamins and minerals in our diets back in 1924. Davis, along with other food celebrities like Dr. Paul C. Bragg (of Bragg's fame), demonized over-processed food and advocated for "health foods" — fresh raw milk, eggs laid by hens raised on the ground and eating fresh food, fruits and vegetables grown in rich soils and breads made from fresh whole grain.

If you look at the back-to-the-land movement of the time, the hippie generation had a real attraction to their grandparents, because they believed they had lived a simpler, more basic life. The macrobiotic diet, popularized by George Oshawa in the 1930's, was probably the single-most influencer that shaped the counterculture diet of the 60's. Started as a tiny movement in Japan, Oshawa traveled to America and advocated for a vegetarian diet that melded Japanese peasant food and East Asian spirituality. The result of all this advice was a culinary mish mash of iconic dishes — simple stir-fries, brown rice & tofu, bean loaves, sunflower seeds, whole grains, and yes, avocado toast. Pulling from non Western cuisines, ingredients like ginger, tamari and tahini were incorporated into the diet and were only available in co-ops and small health food stores.

Jonathan Kauffman, staff writer for the San Francisco Chronicle and author of the recently published book, *Hippie Food: How Back-to-the-Landers, Longhairs and Revolutionaries Changed the Way We Eat*, tells us that at one time there were over 500 co-ops across the country and now only a handful are left. What was once a non-profit movement built on volunteer labor, is now a \$43 billion industry with beautifully packaged whole foods in mainstream grocery.

What drove the reinvention of this new cuisine back then, is driving a similar reinvention today — a fear of disease and death, of pollution, of chemicals that have turned the family farm into a factory farm, of thousand of possible additives and the many processes that intervene between farm and supermarket. Add to this a strong dose of old hippie ethos, a rejection of conventionality and promotion of harmony with nature, sharing of resources, vegetarianism and artistic expression and voila! The legacy of Hippie Cooking is the freedom to experiment and the idea of how to cook everyday, healthy food. Millennials have grabbed on to this way of cooking but with more products, flavors, and grains to work with. The 1960's era counterculture molded our views on everything. I suspect the 2018's era counterculture will too.

Here are a few of my favorites:

TRIBE'S CHOCOLATE HUMMUS

<http://www.tribehummus.com>

A staple of the counterculture in the 1960s and 1970s, hummus was long relegated to health food stores and “ethnic” aisles of the supermarket. Today, hummus is fast on its way to becoming a billion dollar business. What do you get when you take something new to the American consumer and add things they like? Evidently, a really big business! Americans want to try new things. They want exotic. More recently, Americans seem to have decided that this ancient Middle Eastern dip is not so exotic. Now the world’s most versatile dip comes in dozens of flavors, from jalapeño to chocolate.

Since launching in 1993, Tribe has become one of the heavy hitters of hummus. Wanting to further differentiate themselves in a growing category, Tribe relaunched its entire hummus line last year with both a brand and product refresh. Tribe is now one of the only national brands that does not contain preservatives. Tribe markets 20 flavors of hummus to include a new chocolate hummus. I wasn’t sure what to expect from Tribe’s version of this bizarre mixing of chickpeas with chocolate but the smooth, chocolaty taste won me over immediately. With far less sugar than Nutella and more protein, this may become your family’s new favorite snack.

A humble blend of chickpeas and tahini is poised to be America’s favorite dip.



Photo courtesy of mayihavethatrecipe.com. Tribe Chocolate Hummus to be released.

Underdog jackfruit may have hit the jackpot when it became a bowl meal.

THE JACKFRUIT COMPANY'S JACKFRUIT BOWLS

<http://thejackfruitcompany.com/>



The food that fueled the hippie movement, macrobiotics, was similar to the grain bowls offered today. Back then, basically Japanese peasant food was being reinterpreted through the lens of twenty somethings that didn't know how to cook. Culinary experimentation was widespread and flavor wasn't always the first consideration. Well, times have changed and flavor is the first consideration. We want healthy stuff but we want it to taste great. Those days seem so far away but bowls are still around. Let's face it — everything tastes better in a bowl. From acai bowls to poke bowls to even Buddha bowls, bowl mania really broke out in 2016 and has become a stable and continuing trend in 2018.



Jackfruit — which is known for its “meaty” texture — is often used to replace shredded beef or pork and can be used in any number of applications. The Jackfruit Company, who first made headlines in 2011 and surprised us all with their “I can't believe it's not BBQ pork!” jackfruit product, recently launched a new line of frozen bowl meals that have the hippie ethos but with modern day appeal. True to the company's mission of transforming healthy eating, farmers' livelihoods, and humanity's eco-footprint for the better, these bowls are worth a try. Available in Enchilada, Teriyaki, Curry and Pasta varieties.

DANG FOOD'S STICKY-RICE CHIPS

<https://dangfoods.com/>

George Oshawa left Japan for America in 1960. He advocated a balance of dietary yin and yang and plenty of brown rice. A cornerstone of the counterculture diet, brown rice was a hot commodity, no matter how it was served. Rice is still a cornerstone of a healthy diet and a favorite among snack lovers. There's some-thing compelling about that crispy crunch of a good rice snack.

Dang Foods, (yes, of Coconut and Onion Chips) has done it again and invented a new kind of chip. This time with sticky rice. I don't know if you've ever made sticky rice, but you'll want to look for a good tutorial if you haven't. It's really hard to get right, but delicious when you do. Dang steams organic Thai sticky rice, soaks it in watermelon juice and crisps it up, just like the toasty "bottom-of-the-pan" rice that people fight over. In five flavors: Original Recipe, Coconut Crunch, Sriracha Spice, Aged Cheddar and Savory Seaweed varieties. As they say, "Dang, that's good!"



*Rice is still a cornerstone of a healthy diet
and a favorite among snack lovers.*

A new contender lines up right behind gochujang for “the next possible sriracha” heavyweight title.



KUMANA'S AVOCADO SAUCE

<http://www.kumanafoods.com>

Fifty years ago Americans had little knowledge of traditional ethnic foods. Hippie food broadened the horizons for many young people and continues to be a lasting legacy with so many of these foods still around. Today, there's never been a greater willingness to experiment in the kitchen and many cooks rely on the availability of a wider variety of ethnic ingredients and products.

Avocados were a big part of the hippie diet. Today, Americans can't get enough of that green stuff, mainly in the form of guacamole. Venezuelans have shown us that there's another way to do guacamole and their version is called Guasacaca. Guasacaca is the equivalent of a national sauce and used on practically everything — grilled meats, a dip for chips, squeezed on potatoes, tacos and tequeño, Venezuelan fried cheese sticks. Kumana Foods has done us a big favor and bottled this delicious sauce. Their Avocado Sauce has a rich creaminess with a smooth avocado flavor, punched up by the tang of vinegar and lime. Cilantro and parsley give it its herbal character, while green pepper adds a cooling contrast to the spicy jalapeño. Trust me, you're gonna want to try this. In Be Original, Be Sweet (with mango) and Be Hot (with habanero chile) varieties.



Alt-Protein

Americans consume 220 pounds of meat per capita — two-thirds being chicken and beef. We've got protein love real bad and I don't think we can shake it. Alternative proteins are responding and hitting the market in two ways, both of which are trying to give people the same product that doesn't hurt animals.

First, there are "plant-based" proteins derived from plant and vegetable sources that convincingly mimic the taste and texture of real meat. The best example may be the Impossible Burger, a meatless bleeding burger that approximates the texture of medium-rare ground beef. The product has been a roaring success in the food tech startup world and is served at some of America's most famous restaurants. As of this month, it's being served at White Castle. Beyond Meat, Impossible's primary competitor, is selling its Beyond Burger in retail stores nationally, also to rave reviews. It appears that there was a race to Expo to see who could get the best alt-sausage to market. Hands down, Beyond Meat served up the best tasting brats and Italian sausage. My heritage is German and I was born in Wisconsin. I've been around the bratwurst block and these are some pretty good brats.

Companies like Impossible Burger and Beyond Meat hope their alt-meats will see the same success in the meat case that plant-based milks have already seen in the dairy case. Consumers now not only accept plant-based milk as "milk," but in many cases prefer it. This consumer behavior shift is nothing less than a tsunami.

According to PBS, Americans eat on average three burgers a week, that's about 50 billion burgers a year. These alt-burgers didn't exist three years ago. Are they indistinguishable from meat? No, but they're getting closer. I bet you're thinking what I'm thinking! What?!

Second, there's clean meat. Currently, there are five or six companies working on this radical alternative. JUST, formerly Hampton Creek, recently released a one minute promotional video showing employees chowing down on chicken nuggets made from chicken muscle cultivated in a plant-based nutrient broth, while Ian the bird pecked around the picnic table unaware that he was the host chicken. JUST not only plans to debut their lab grown chicken meat later this year, but are planning to launch their JUST Scramble, a plant derived egg substitute, too. In limited distribution in a few restaurants now, JUST is banking on their eggless egg to make them a household name.

I can't help wonder if Silicon Valley wants to give us eggs without chickens and meat without animals, are we ready for this? And, because animals are part of an ecological system, are we addressing a problem and creating a whole set of others?

Here are a few of my favorites:

BEYOND MEAT'S BEYOND VEGAN SAUSAGE

<http://beyondmeat.com>

Beyond Meat is making new waves, this time with vegan sausage that looks, sizzles and satisfies like pork. Why is this news? Plant-based sausages have been around for a long time — think Field Roast and MorningStar. The answer — these sausages replicate the experience of real meat sausage better than any of its predecessors or current competitors. They look like real sausage, they cook like real sausage and they eat like a real sausage. Fry up one of these sausages and in the first bite, you'll get it. The shape is familiar and the texture has globules of fat and variation in texture that closely replicates meat muscle.

Beyond Meat just raised \$55 million in its latest round of funding. Ethan Brown, Beyond Meat's CEO, told me when they were first creating their burger, that he won't be satisfied until their products are indistinguishable from meat. The current version of the Beyond Burger is already better than the one they launched. If the sausage is any indication of how far they've come, I say, look out meat industry. The Beyond Sausage is available in Whole Foods stores nationally in Brat Original, Hot Italian and Sweet Italian varieties.

Long gone are the days of rubbery and starchy meat alternatives.





Seafood wades into plant-based alternative animal protein space.

THE GOOD CATCH FISH-FREE SEAFOOD

<http://goodcatchfoods.com/>

Chad and Derek Sarno, brothers and world renowned chefs, are the co-founders and culinary genius behind this plant-based seafood company. They refer to themselves as culinary rebels with a cause. That cause — seafood without sacrifice. Good Catch ticks off a list of environmental and health problems surrounding fish on their website and claim that global fisheries are expected to collapse by 2048. That’s just a hop, skip and 30 years away. Yikes!

A proprietary 6-bean blend of pea, soy, chickpea, lentil, fava and navy, plus a dash of algae oil form the foundation for this new fish-free seafood line of tuna and burgers and crab-free cakes. The taste, texture and experience is very much like real seafood and begs the question — How did they do it?

All Good Catch products are 100% plant-based and certified vegan. No dairy, gluten, GMO’s or typical worries about shellfish allergens, mercury or microfibers. And, a new one for me, AKA approved. AKA refers to Ashley Koff, an internationally-renowned registered dietitian and regular on Dr. Oz. It seems the bar keeps getting raised.

DAIYA FROZEN PLANT-BASED BURRITOS

<https://daiyafoods.com/>

When the markets collapsed in 2008, Chris Kerr, investor manager for New Crop Capital, was busy convincing investors and food specialists that there was an enormous market for plant-based products. The problem was, these were early days for plant-based foods and there was no money. One of the first companies Chris worked with at New Crop was Daiya. Daiya had just come out of the founders oven and Chris tells the story of when he was cooking up grilled “cheese” sandwiches for a fancy law firm in Vancouver, he recognized that this was the best vegan grilled-cheese sandwich he had ever had. He was driven to get it to market so he took the “cheese” to Chad Sarno (yes, of Good Catch) and asked him to try it. Chad used the age-old test of, “if my 4 year old daughter will eat this, then I will take it to Whole Foods. “ She ate it, she loved it, Chad took it to Whole Foods, and the rest is history.

I credit Daiya for breaking the mold in consumer behavior towards plant-based foods. Daiya showed there was a latent demand for these products. Today, there’s a pent up demand. Vegans are maniacal about their food and will pay a lot for something that makes them happy. Because of this they are great ambassadors for foods they like. Vegan bloggers may have spread the early word about Daiya, but it was mainstream mothers with children allergic to dairy that drove the business. Nine years after launching, Daiya sold for \$325 million.

This year Daiya added frozen burritos to their every growing product portfolio and used Beyond Meat’s Meatless Crumbles to harmonize with their dairy-free cheese. It’s easy to get someone to go vegan for a Monday, maybe a week, maybe a month, but try doing it for three, four, 15 years. These burritos help. Available in Tuscan, Tex-Mex, Santiago and Santa Fe varieties.

Daiya broke the mold in consumer behavior towards plant-based foods.





Barbara Brueckner Shpizner is a professional food developer at Mattson — the country’s most experienced, independent developer of new food and beverage products for the retail foods industry, as well as food service and restaurant chains. Barbara’s career in the food industry spans 38 years, with the last 18 years focused in the natural and functional food channels. Barbara’s expertise at Mattson includes innovating and developing products for some of the nation’s largest companies along with many mid-size companies, startups and international food companies. After more than three decades, her vast knowledge of the food industry has given her a better understanding for how the food we eat contributes to our basic quality of life — from our health to our happiness.

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Mattson is North America’s premier food and beverage design and development firm. We help companies fully realize their innovation potential with consumer-driven whitespace identification, new concept development and optimization, prototype development, branding and package design, scale-up, and commercialization. We take clients from strategy to market readiness. We work for startups, mid-size companies, and billion dollar+ multinationals, across all channels, technologies, and need states.



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