

# NATURAL PRODUCTS EXPO EAST



## WHAT'S NEW AT THIS YEAR'S NATURAL PRODUCTS EXPO EAST 2017

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# CONVENTIONAL WISDOM WATCH

“When society requires to be rebuilt, there is no use in attempting to rebuild it on the old plan. No great improvements in the lot of mankind are possible, until great change takes place in the fundamental constitution of their modes of thought.” - John Stuart Mill, English Philosopher and Economist



## FOOD MOVEMENTS

Here a movement, there a movement, everywhere a movement...

**CW:** If you can't beat 'em, join 'em.



## UPCYCLING



The art of turning waste into something delicious.

**CW:** It's only waste when we waste its potential.



## LIVING ON THE VEG

The rise of the flexitarian diet has resulted in ubiquitous vegetable-forward cooking across the country.

**CW:** Time to make friends with broccoli.



## FOODS THAT HEAL



Food can be a powerful healing tool.

**CW:** Grandma was right! An apple a day keeps the doctor away.



## ANIMAL CRUELTY

New poll shows 94% of Americans agree that animals raised for food deserve to live free from abuse and cruelty.

**CW:** Animal cruelty: bad for animals. Bad for business.





## FOOD MOVEMENTS

Food trends come and go, but movements have staying power. Some food trends, like cauliflower, have really taken off lately, while others (I'm looking at you, kale) have waned. If you find yourself asking, what's the next overpriced avocado toast, you're not alone. But maybe you should be asking, "Is it a trend, or is it a movement?"

A trend happens when a group of early adopters latch on to a novel food or behavior. By the time the new thing becomes mainstream, the early adopters are already on to the next new thing. It's fair to say that trends come and go, but movements stay until they're no longer needed, because they are no longer relevant or they've changed the world.

And, the world is changing before our very eyes. At Mattson, we focus on the underlying forces that drive mass movements — the social, economic, and political underpinnings that give rise to new forms of behavior. Millennial hipsters putting bacon on EVERYTHING was a trend, but the adoption of healthier, sustainable, good food is a movement.

Contemporary food movements, starting with Carlo Petrini's Italian Slow Food Movement (and its American counterpart, Slow Food USA), and the organic and local food movements, are familiar to most consumers. In the past few years an uprising of movements — Sustainable Food, Waste Reduction, Slow Food, Real Food, Ugly Food, DIY Chef, Plant-Based, Fair-Trade, Labor & Food-Justice — are all unleashing the passions of millions of Millennials who constitute by far the most aspirational generation in a long time. Millennials love brands that tackle the larger issues, and are more likely to buy from purpose-driven companies. Where there's will, passion and social media tools, there's impact.

The hottest food movements are merging to create a force that will expand America's consciousness about food in ways we can't predict. It used to be hard to imagine a world without the Golden Arches, the icon of American food, but considering the perfect storm of movements afoot, that world is totally conceivable.

Food activism in America has never been stronger. Consumers, fed up with factory-farmed and cheap fast food, are turning to food movements for advice on how to eat and live better. Today's success stories are the brands that can tap into the passion and vitality of this new era.

The following are some of my favorites reflecting some of these movements:



## DIEFFENBACH'S UGLIES CHIPS

[www.dieffenbachs.com](http://www.dieffenbachs.com) | [www.ugliessnacks.com](http://www.ugliessnacks.com)

What is ugly produce? Ugly produce is perfectly fresh, nutritious, and delicious produce that looks a little different from the “perfect” offerings you will find in most grocery stores and supermarkets. Worldwide, roughly 20-40% of all produce is wasted before it even reaches the store — mostly due to strict cosmetic standards set by large grocers with the power to dictate how fruits and vegetables should appear on the shelf. If produce fails to make the grade for size, shape, or color, it’s deemed “ugly” and hence unsellable. Many people are applauding the movement to rehabilitate “misshapen” fruit and vegetables and push supermarkets to stock them at markdowns for highlighting waste in the supply chain. Personally, I am concerned that selling these items at a discount stigmatizes them as inferior when they’re no less tasty than their perfectly formed brethren along the aisle. Do we really want to reinforce a food production system that extols beauty over flavor?

The makers of UGLIES explain that they follow USDA guidelines in the production of all of their kettle chips, but UGLIES are made from rejected potatoes with minor imperfections. This includes potatoes that are too large or too small; those with the “wrong” color or the “wrong” sugar content. Some of these potatoes are slightly blemished and, of course, some are just farmer surplus. Sooooo, they’re not really ugly...they’re just not perfect! Available in Original Sea Salt, Salt & Vinegar and Mesquite BBQ. An easy enough way to support reducing waste and fighting hunger.



## OCEAN'S HALO'S ORGANIC SEAWEED BROTHS

[www.oceanshalo.com](http://www.oceanshalo.com)

Here's a green superfood you're probably not eating unless you're a frequent visitor to sushi bars. Seaweed-based cuisine has a proud history in many Asian countries and Japan has made it into an art form. Incredibly rich in antioxidants, vitamins and minerals, seaweed packs a serious nutritional punch. But seaweed's best known benefit is that it is an extraordinary source of iodine, a nutrient missing in almost every food. Iodine is critically important to a healthy, functioning thyroid and in the case of extreme deficiencies leads to goiters. Since American manufacturers started adding iodine to salt in the 1920s, extreme iodine deficiencies have become rare. That's the good news. Here's the bad news - mild iodine deficiencies are on the rise as more Americans avoid eating dairy because of food sensitivities and avoid salt due to fears of high blood pressure. Plus, consider that it's the chefy thing to do to use kosher salt — that's what TV chefs and restaurants use — and kosher salt contains no iodine.

All seaweed is not created equal when it comes to iodine content. Nori, the seaweed used to wrap sushi, has a low concentration of iodine. One sushi roll contains roughly 92 mcg of iodine. The recommended daily intake for adults is 150 mcg. While sushi is tasty, it's not a very practical way to get our iodine. Kombu or kelp on the other hand has a very high concentration of iodine. New Frontier Foods, the makers of Ocean's Halo seaweed snacks, launched a new line of seaweed broths this year that feature kombu. They're a nutritional step up from regular chicken and vegetable broths in the category and contain a small amount of protein, high levels of iodine and Vitamin D. There are loads of gorgeous Asian noodles available in supermarkets but NO broth to go with them — until now. Ocean's Halo's broths make it easy to cook up a quick bowl of ramen, miso, Pho or Thai coconut soup. Not to mention they're great for drinking plain too.



## ALTER ECO COCONUT CLUSTERS

[www.alterecofoods.com](http://www.alterecofoods.com)

Alter Eco was founded on three values: reliably delicious, environmentally responsible and socially just. Alter Eco co-founders Tristan Lecomte in France, Mathieu Senard and Edouard Rollet in the United States, and Ilse Keijzer in Australia, were trained in business but remain activists at heart. Before starting Alter Eco over a decade ago, they had experienced first-hand both profit-driven multinationals and on-the-ground NGOs. Seeing the challenges faced by today's humanitarian aid organizations, they became pioneers in social entrepreneurialism, wielding their business acumen to fight for social and economic justice.

Their chocolate-centric, sustainability-directed food company recently entered the snacking category with the launch of Dark Chocolate Coconut Clusters. These decadent snacks are a combination of salty-sweet shavings of toasted coconut and Alter Eco's signature rich 70% Ecuadorian chocolate. Alter Eco is known for creative flavor combinations that also distinguish their new line of clusters. Available in three varieties: Original, Cherry + Almond Butter, and Seeds + Salt.



## UPCYCLING

Moving forward from recycling, upcycling takes an item that otherwise would be considered waste, and rather than breaking it down to extract the raw ingredients, keeps the item in its natural form or transforms it into something better. The term was coined during the last decade, and is now a top trend in interior design. *Project Runway* uses trash in their unconventional materials challenge, and there's no shortage of upcycled products and ideas on Pinterest and Etsy.

In short, upcycling is the process of turning old stuff into something amazing. From green companies to one's own kitchen, people are looking to save both money *and* the planet. Upcycling does both. Why buy it new if you don't have to? Think of food upcycling as the equivalent of getting a rescue dog.

The food industry is also getting into upcycling in a big way. This spring, food waste prevention nonprofit, ReFed, released a report stating that 11 upcycling food companies existed in 2011. Today, there are 64 and counting.

Upcycling, also known as "creative reuse," is a big draw for the conscious consumer. The conscious consumer can be found among all age groups, but skews younger — 63% of conscious consumers are under the age of 40. Generation Z, also known as iGen (hint: their first tech gadget was the iPhone), is emerging as the next big social disrupter. This emerging generation IS the conscious consumer, bringing different expectations as citizens, employees and consumers.

To combat food and resource waste the concept of upcycling food has recently been gaining mainstream popularity. It's estimated that one-third of the world's food supply is either lost or wasted, with fruits and vegetables having the highest waste rate of any food produced. Aesthetic shortcomings alone cost farmers on average 20% of their crop yearly. But, what if the old adage that one man's trash is another man's treasure is true?

Here are some of my upcycled favorites:



## REPURPOSED POD CACAO JUICE

[www.repurposedpod.com](http://www.repurposedpod.com)

Who loves chocolate? Just about everybody. But what happens to that fruity white pulp in each pod that hugs the cacao beans after the farmers extract the beans to make chocolate? Some of it is used to ferment the beans during the chocolate-making process, but the rest is wasted. Given the size of the chocolate industry, that's a lot of wasted pulp.

Robert and Kayla Weidner, a young couple from Pennsylvania, farm 550 hectares (about 1,360 acres) of land dedicated to cacao in Ecuador. They employ 70 farmers who are constantly trained on good agricultural practices. Robert and Kayla wanted to further help their farmers, so they decided to pay them bonuses for collecting discarded cacao pulp. Their company, Repurposed Pod, presses the fresh pods to create an all-natural juice that's a great source of magnesium. I'm smitten with this juice. It's delicious, and tastes like nothing I've ever had before. The juice can be used in smoothies, cold brew, iced tea or craft cocktails. Or if you're so inclined, you can drink it straight.



## REGRAINED GRANOLA BARS

[www.regrained.com](http://www.regrained.com)

Who knew that brewing beer created so much waste. It makes one think twice before knocking down a couple of cold ones. Spent grains represent about 85% of the byproduct from beer production — the equivalent of a pound or more per six pack. Brewers have been giving their spent grains to farmers to use as animal feed since the Neolithic Period, but creative companies are discovering some newer applications for the remnants from beer production, such as turning them into baked goods.

Meet the brains behind ReGrained. Dan Kurzrock and Jordan Schwartz started turning spent beer grains into bread when they were students at UCLA. The profit was enough to finance their bread business, but they eventually switched from baking bread to making granola bars, a product that's much easier to scale. Dan and Jordan launched ReGrained in 2012 right after graduation. They moved to San Francisco, and all of the grains used in their bars come from craft breweries in the city, saving both the breweries and the environment from having to dispose of the spent grains in landfills. ReGrained is telling a compelling environmental story at a time when the food industry is faced with an Everest-sized mountain of food waste. With ReGrained, Millennial hipsters, already fiercely loyal to their craft beers, can have their beer and eat it too!



## BARNANA BITES

[www.barnana.com](http://www.barnana.com)

Early to the world of upcycling food, Barnana has been upcycling imperfect bananas — too ripe, not ripe enough, or simply the wrong size — since 2010. Barnana bites are partially dehydrated bananas based on a technique developed by João Suplicy, the father of Caue Suplicy, Barnana’s founder and CEO. Family lore has it that João, who was an architect, started to dehydrate fresh organic bananas with a broken skylight he brought home from a job site back in 1981. His biggest fan was his son Caue. When Caue moved to Southern California in 2001 to start a career as a professional triathlete, he brought his family recipe with him, and quickly found that his friends and fellow athletes loved his healthy snacks. Caue eventually partnered with two other guys, and since 2012 they’ve built an eight-digit business.

Last January, Barnana announced \$5.3 million in growth equity funding led by Trently Advisors with additional investments by Blueberry Ventures, Boulder Food Group, and Finn Capital Partners. Barnana’s Organic Chewy Banana Bites come in six addictive all organic flavors including Original, Chocolate (covered in 54% organic cocoa), Coconut, Coffee, Apple Cinnamon, and Peanut Butter. They are USDA Organic Certified, gluten free, non-GMO, vegan, and kosher.



## LIVING ON THE VEG

In a recent proprietary study conducted by Mattson with 1,100 mainstream consumers, about a third of the test population fall into the categories we combine and call “flexitarian.” That is, they are either actively trying to eat less meat, poultry, and dairy OR they eat a mostly vegetarian diet, only occasionally eating meat, poultry, and dairy. Even more interesting is that, when they were asked how often they expected to eat plant-based foods in the year ahead, almost HALF said they plan to eat MORE plant-based foods.

Shifting definitions. The term “flexitarian” is morphing into the practice of eating more plants and consciously making an effort to cut down on meat consumption. Today, a flexitarian might only eliminate meat on Mondays, or eat meat only on weekends or socially. (I personally love Mark Bittman’s VB6 approach that prescribes eating vegan-only until 6 pm, and then anything goes).

The undeniable benefit of being flexitarian is that we don’t have to be married to a vegetarian or vegan diet – rather, we can date, flexing in and out of plant-based foods when we choose. Going strictly vegetarian is waaay too hard for most omnivores. It’s easier to choose plant-based meals when food tastes good! Veggie-centric dishes are part of a major movement in restaurants, with creative chefs employing culinary techniques and bold flavors to make vegetables taste amazing. They’re also bringing vegetables center stage and moving meat to the sidelines, but that doesn’t mean that all these dishes are vegetarian.

AL’s Place in San Francisco was named best restaurant of the year in 2015 by Bon Appetit, and it’s still going strong. Chef-owner Al London recognized that even mentioning the word “vegan” next to a plate immediately put his vegetable-centric meals in jeopardy. “Vegan cooking speaks to me as a lifestyle or religious choice,” says London, whose customers can order meat as a side dish to the produce-forward entrees. “Working with vegetables is its own separate thing, but an exciting thing. No offense, but vegetables got a bad rap for so long due to this (vegan) ‘lifestyle’ cooking.” At these leading-edge, vegetable-forward restaurants there’s no “V” because there’s no apology or explanation. A great plate of veggies is a great plate of food.

In recent years, several emerging start-ups have reimaged plant proteins to transform our favorite foods into game-changers. Credible versions of burgers, milk, and cheese have helped us add plant-based foods to our diets, but also keep them. For years, consumers dabbled with plant-based eating, but recidivism to a carnivorous diet was high. A soy burger was no one’s go-to burger, unless they were all in.

These new meat and dairy substitutes are not perfect knock-offs of their popular counterparts, but this raises the question, “Must they be?” Approximately 30% of college students today are vegetarian. Do they really care if a plant-based burger tastes like a beef burger? Or, do they simply want a great experience? The number one attribute consumers use to describe a great burger experience is *juicy*. A plant-based burger that tastes great and *is juicy* may be just the experience that these consumers are looking for. One thing for sure is that plant-based analogs are consistently delivering a better experience.

Here are some of my vegetable-forward favorites:



## THE FROZEN GARDEN READY-TO-BLEND GREEN SMOOTHIES

[www.thefrozensgarden.com](http://www.thefrozensgarden.com)

Allyson Straka first began drinking green smoothies in 2006 after reading the book *Green for Life* by Victoria Boutenko. Boutenko's premise is that dark leafy greens are some of the most nutrient-dense foods commonly missing in modern diets. In 2013, Straka, a Holistic Health Educator, started Mindful Nourishment to spread the real food movement. At Mindful Nourishment, she taught her clients how to reduce their consumption of processed foods and instead get back in their kitchens and cook real, nutrient-dense foods from scratch. But she quickly discovered that the biggest roadblock many people faced was finding time to cook. Putting two and two together, Straka teamed up with one of her health coaches and a Mindful Nourishment member to create Frozen Garden, a line of superfood smoothies with dark, leafy greens as the base. The three founders are from three different generations and backgrounds, but they share the common purpose of making healthy eating super-easy. And, these frozen pouches of veggies are super-easy to use — simply open, blend and drink up all that good green stuff! Available in Green Protein, Rollin' Oats and Jungle Breeze varieties.



## YUMAMI GO-DIP

[www.yumamifood.com](http://www.yumamifood.com)

Yumami was born on a sunny Wednesday morning at Expo East last year. Yumami as a brand stands for highlighting umami-rich, savory flavor as a means to get people to eat better. Yumami brings loads of umami to their snacks, with real ingredients like nori seaweed, miso, beans, and gluten-free tamari. Their bean-based dips and popped nori chips, originally sold as separates, are now paired together in individual grab-n-go snacks that come in flavors inspired by the founder's Asian roots — Red Bean/Ginger & Ponzu Sauce, Edamame/Green Pea & Wasabi, Lentil/Roasted Onion & Shiitake Mushroom and Black Bean/Yuzu Citrus & Chili. All four dips are good sources of protein and fiber, stemming from the inclusion of beans or pulses. Their unique popped rice chip features superfoods chia, flax, and quinoa, with umami-rich nori seaweed and minimal salt. Love it!



## BANZA CHICKPEA PASTA

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[www.eatbanza.com](http://www.eatbanza.com)

Pasta is big business, and it continues to be a favorite food worldwide. However, due to the increased interest in low carb, paleo and gluten-free diets, traditional pasta has been seriously challenged by the rise of alternative pastas. Many consumers find themselves swapping out their big bowl of wheat pasta for a substitute that has a similar taste but without the carbo load. Bean pastas appear to be the favorite among the bunch, and have gained a real foothold on the category.

Banza was launched by the Rudolph brothers after an inauspicious start on the reality show, “Restaurant Startup.” I met Brian Rudolph in 2015 at Expo East when the company first launched, where he shared his story of making chickpea foods for himself while working for a tech startup, to meet his need for high-protein and gluten-free food. After sharing his cooking escapades with friends, he discovered that everyone liked the idea of a healthier pasta. Brian decided to risk it, and along with his brother, Scott, cobbled together enough money to fill the company’s first major grocery order. Two years later Banza is in more than 3,300 stores nationally, offering 11 shapes of pasta and a line of Mac and Cheese. The chickpea that made hummus big business has now given the pasta category some new life.



## FOODS THAT HEAL

Medical historians generally look to Hippocrates as the father of modern medicine. In the treatments he prescribed, Hippocrates was sensible and pragmatic in his approach, favoring moderation over radical or extreme measures. Hippocrates was also a great believer in dietary measures in the treatment of disease. Who hasn't seen or heard Hippocrates' famous quote about letting food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food? These words elegantly express the importance of our daily food choices.

*TIME Magazine* went bold in 2005 with a cover story about inflammation titled, *The Silent Killer*. The article was about the surprising link between inflammation and heart disease, cancer, Alzheimer's and other diseases. It was a good attempt to inform consumers of the dangers of our Western diet, however, inflammation didn't get on consumer's radar until relatively recently. The problem has been that the majority of studies linking diet to disease are either too small or not as rigorous as a gold standard study. Now it appears that is changing. A small number of clinical studies have shown that omega-3 fatty acids and herbs like turmeric work the same way in the body as ibuprofen to reduce inflammation and pain. The journal *Oncogene* recently published the results of a study that evaluated several anti-inflammatory compounds. The researchers found that aspirin and ibuprofen were least potent while curcumin, tumeric's primary anti-inflammatory compound, is among the most potent anti-inflammatory and antiproliferative agents in the world. Is it any wonder with cred like this that turmeric has skyrocketed to stardom? We thought it was only good to season curries and stews, but now it's hit paydirt, as shown by its migration to grain bowls, cold-pressed juices and lattes. And, because of its beautiful golden color, it does wonders for Instagram shots.

Consumers are increasingly looking to food to help them feel better. Specifically, consumers are incorporating superfoods into their diets, whether or not they understand that the benefit is anti-inflammatory. There are a number of superfoods that have been trending over the past two years like tumeric, ginger, coconut oil, green tea, and avocado. Pro-inflammatory foods are the cornerstone of the Western diet, so it's no wonder that by adding even a small amount of these anti-inflammatory foods to our diet, we feel better. We are getting more sophisticated in understanding how these superfoods work. Chronic inflammation impacts many health problems: arthritis, IBS asthma, allergies, heart disease, cancer, Alzheimer's, even diabetes. Inflammation, and the conditions that it causes, can become better or worse depending on what we eat.

The popular Paleo and Whole30 diets are a form of AI diet, as is the widely praised Mediterranean diet. Experts say you don't have to follow any particular AI diet perfectly to make a big impact. What's important is to eat an overall "super" diet rather than to focus on individual foods.

These are some of my favorites:



## VEDIC BRANDS LILY PUFFS

[www.vedicbrands.com](http://www.vedicbrands.com)

Lotus, the magical flower that grows in murky waters across India, Vietnam and other Southeast Asian countries, is nothing short of spectacular. It is the national flower of India, also known as water lily. The lotus flower produces seeds that can be eaten cooked or raw. Growers harvest the seeds in August and September, and then dry them in the sun. Lotus seeds, valued for nutritional and healing properties, have been used in ancient Indian and Chinese medicine for thousands of years. Like lotus petals, lotus seeds are purported to impact lung health, kidney functioning, digestion and help with insomnia.

In India, lotus seeds go by the name of Makhane, and are eaten as a snack or used in kheer, a rice pudding. Vishaal Bhuyan, founder of Lily Puffs, had the idea of bringing this centuries-old snack to the U.S. His company harvests lotus seeds in remote parts of India and brings them to New England, where they are roasted in coconut oil and seasoned. The result is a supersnack loaded with dense nutrition. One ounce of these puffs contain 6g of protein and the snacks are naturally high in B vitamins and magnesium, nutrients that most American consumers need. Available in Vegan Cheddar flavor.



## TIN STAR FOODS GHEE

[www.tinstarfoods.com](http://www.tinstarfoods.com)

Healthy fat is the cornerstone of an anti-inflammatory diet. Ghee, or clarified butter, has been used for thousands of years in places like India: definitely not a fad. The first known use of butter was back in 2,000 BC. It became very popular in the cooler northern parts of India, but didn't survive well in the southern warmer regions. It's believed that the southerners are responsible for clarifying butter, in order to keep it from spoiling. Ghee quickly was integrated into the diet, into ceremonial practice, and into Ayurvedic healing practices, which used ghee to promote both mental and physical purification through its purported ability to cleanse and to support wellness. Ghee is used both inside and out, and is used topically to treat burns and rashes as well as to moisturize the skin and scalp.

Tin Star Food Ghee specializes in 100% grass-fed ghee and brown butter ghee. Their butter is sourced directly from farms in Ireland and New Zealand. If you've ever used butter from these countries, you know that it's crazy delicious. Whole30 approved.



## ORGANIC AMAZON ACAI-TO-GO

[www.organicamazon.com](http://www.organicamazon.com)

In the late 90s, Ryan Black, the founder of Sambazon, set out to change the world by bringing a tiny berry from the Amazon rainforest to the U.S. And in a way, he did. American consumers now regularly eat acai, and tens of thousands of small Brazilian family farmers are making a living wage. Life is better.

Fruit is a healing food. It's full of anti-inflammatory antioxidants and nutrients we need to function well. Although Americans are consuming more fruit than they were in 1970, most Americans still fall way short of getting enough. Products like Acai-To-Go may just be a solution to help Americans increase the amount and diversity of fruit in their diets.

Acai-To-Go was started by two Brazilian families living in the U.S. with a common love of acai and other healthy foods. Together, they set out to develop something new. Their frozen novelties are positioned as an "acai bowl in a tube." We know that convenience trumps health and remains the driving force behind consumer purchasing decisions. What's easier than a delicious push-up novelty?

Not only is Acai-To-Go a refreshing snack for morning or afternoon, but the flavors are fun and sophisticated. Available in Original (Rio), Banana (Bali), and Blueberry (Malibu).



## BASIL SEED WORKS ZEN BASIL

[www.basilseedworks.com](http://www.basilseedworks.com)

Seeds are nutritional powerhouses. There's a good explanation for this. Seeds are the plant's way of ensuring survival of its species. Every flower or fruit a plant produces is packed with seeds that contain a variety of essential nutrients to sustain the young sprout until its roots are capable of extracting nutrients from the soil.

Basil is one of the world's most famous herbs. But when consumers think of basil, it's the leaves that get all the love. Basil Seed Works is on a mission to change that. The seeds of this plant have a rich concentration of powerful compounds and active ingredients. The basil seed is considered a superfood much like its South American cousin, chia seed, and is commonly found in Asian drinks and desserts. There are a few nutritional differences between the two, but their textures are similar when soaked in water.

Basil Seed Works wants consumers to add basil seeds to the long list of popular edible seeds: chia, hemp, flax, pumpkin, mustard, sesame, poppy, etc. Their new line of seedy juice drinks, crafted from hydrated organic basil seeds and organic fruit juices, delivers whole food functional refreshment. Basil Seed Works also has a high purpose to hydrate the world, and they've committed to help fund the safe water projects of [vitawater.org](http://vitawater.org). With every bottle of Zen Basil purchased, Basil Seed Works will donate 31 liters of safe water. In their words, "having access to water is the most basic human right. Let's be kind to one another. Good for you & good for humanity!"



## ANIMAL CRUELTY

Jonathan Safran Foer's 2009 book, *Eating Animals*, explores the many fictions we use to justify our eating habits. Foer argues that those who eat meat are complicit in horrendous crimes committed against animals. He presents in detail the horrors of industrial food production, which he says should end and predicts *will* end. The book closes with an increasingly bitter attack against meat eating; but Foer seems uncertain whether to oppose all meat eating or just the eating of meat produced in inhumane conditions.

Foer was a keynote speaker at Natural Products Expo East this year. In an interview with New Hopes' Carla Mast, Foer spoke about his years of oscillating between omnivore and vegetarian. Today he is firmly vegetarian, and so is his family. Many people who have read *Eating Animals* admit to struggling to justify their omnivore diet. Others have said that Foer's book was the catalyst that pushed them into becoming vegetarian or vegan. I had the unfortunate timing of reading the book close to the Thanksgiving holiday. I confess, I stopped reading it for selfish reasons and picked it back up several months later. I am now a card-carrying flexitarian.

Last month at the Telluride Film Festival, *Eating Animals*, a feature-length documentary adaptation of Foer's book, made its world premiere to a standing ovation. The film starts out with a simple look at where our meat comes from, quickly takes us down the rabbit hole of today's factory farming, and becomes an exploration of the ultimate stakes of eating animals.

At the heart of this issue is animal welfare. A new poll from the ASPCA shows 94% of Americans agree that animals raised for food deserve to live free from abuse and cruelty. In 2010, California voters overwhelmingly passed Proposition 2 mandating that chicken cages nearly double in size. According to the summary prepared by the California State Attorney General, the proposition "Requires that calves raised for veal, egg-laying hens and pregnant pigs be confined only in ways that allow these animals to lie down, stand up, fully extend their limbs and turn around freely." The law has resulted in much higher egg prices — but California consumers appear willing to pay a bit more to feel better about their decision to eat eggs.

Indeed, Americans are eating fewer animals. The reasons for this decline are complex, but what's particularly interesting is that almost none of the decline in meat consumption comes from a major increase in vegetarianism. The rate of vegetarianism in our country has remained steady for years at around 6 to 8 percent. What's really fueling this trend is the reduction in meat consumption by people who aren't vegetarians but are cutting back on eating animals. In other words, the market for vegetarian meats is being largely driven by non-vegetarians.

Michael Specter's article, *Test-Tube Burgers*, published in 2011 in *The New Yorker Magazine*, first whet our imagination for what seemed back then the far-out idea of growing meat in a petri dish. Then, in 2013, a publicity stunt with a lab-grown burger created by a Dutch researcher, demonstrated that cultured meat was a reality. That demonstration was made by Mosa Meats, a pioneer in lab-grown meat. Today, the company believes that they are one to two years away from putting a lab-grown bleeding burger on your plate.



It's hard to know whether consumers are ready to embrace lab-grown meat or whether it would be a turn off. It may be a big draw for younger consumers who love novelty. Aside from the psychological barriers of eating lab-grown meat, what about the nutrition, or how our bodies will metabolize it? Our bodies are smart machines. Just saying...

Here are a few of my plant-based favorites:



## ALPHA FOODS PLANT-BASED BURRITOS

[www.alphaplantbased.com](http://www.alphaplantbased.com)

There are a number of quick-service restaurant chains — Freshii, Sweetgreens, Taylor Gourmet and Luke’s Lobster — that are founded and run by Millennials. These chains are shaking up the industry by appealing to Millennials in ways that more established brands don’t, or maybe can’t. Younger consumers today have greater exposure to a variety of cuisines, and demand bold flavors and exciting dishes. Millennials love Mexican food, particularly burritos. It’s been reported that Millennials eat at least 2-3 burritos a week, so creating a plant-based frozen burrito line makes perfect sense to me. Founded by two Millennials, this is fast food for Millennials by Millennials. I tried all four of their burritos, and they all exceeded my expectations for taste. Their beef and sausage-style crumbles are made from a combination of soy protein, wheat gluten and wheat starch, which makes a superior analog. The company sells other meat analogs, but I’m betting it’s their burritos that will make you want to join the movement.



## NO EVIL FOODS PLANT MEAT

[www.noevilfoods.com](http://www.noevilfoods.com)

What are plant-based butchers? First, they are part of a movement that’s bubbling up. Second, they make delicious meat from plants. Two years ago, there were two vegan butchers, now there are more than eight. No Evil Foods, based in Asheville, North Carolina, is a vegan butcher that has been selling its small-batch meats in the South and Midwest since 2014. Their debut at Natural Products Expo East was a show-stopper. Their colorful packaging was hip and fun, and they make plant-based meats that actually taste like the real thing. Sadrah Schadel and Mike Woliansky are the force behind No Evil. They loudly proclaim ‘DO NO EVIL’ as their battle cry in the food revolution. Every bite supports their cause to use food as a FORCE FOR GOOD — small batch, sustainable, simple and kind. The passion of a home cook meets the spirit of revolution. No Evil makes a convincing argument as to why simply eating less animal protein and replacing it with plants can make a real difference in the environment and in your health. “See no, speak no, hear no, EAT NO EVIL.”



## MIYOKO'S CREAMERY VEGAN PUB CHEESE

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[www.miyokoskitchen.com](http://www.miyokoskitchen.com)

How many times have you heard, “I’d go vegan, but I can’t give up cheese.” Miyoko’s products were created by Miyoko Schinner, who embarked on a mission to recreate the range of flavors and textures she had once enjoyed from dairy cheeses before becoming vegan. Miyoko became a vegetarian at the age of twelve. Like most frustrated parents when their kids turn vegan or vegetarian, Miyoko’s mother decided to stop cooking for her. Miyoko had to fend for herself. She wrote her first cookbook 25 years ago, *The Now and Zen Epicure*, to dispel the myth that vegan food could not be gourmet. In 1991, she launched a vegan bakery, then a vegan restaurant, in San Francisco, and eventually sold her business to raise her family. Several years of experimentation culminated in the publication of her book, *Artisan Vegan Cheese*, which eventually led her to launch the current company, Miyoko’s Kitchen. Her artisan cultured vegan cheeses are simply amazing. Her newest products, Vegan Pub Cheeses, are knock-outs. No taste trade-off here for cheese lovers. Available in Cheers to Cheddah, Biergarten Garlic Chive and Spicy Revolution varieties. YUMMMM.



**SUSTAINABLE.  
INNOVATIVE.  
WHOLESOME.  
RESPONSIBLE.**



**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 15 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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