

A BRIGHT FUTURE for savoury snacks in 2025

As we step into 2025, the European savoury snacks sector finds itself at a pivotal juncture. The past year has been one of transformation and resilience, shaped by dynamic market trends, regulatory developments and the emergence of Generation Beta. These influences offer both challenges and remarkable opportunities for our industry to thrive.

GENERATIONAL SHIFT

The dawn of Generation Beta—babies born from 2025 onwards—marks a significant shift in consumer preferences. Climate consciousness, technological integration and global connectivity will define this generation's food culture. Millennials and Gen Z, their primary caretakers, have already embraced sustainability, wellness and inclusivity. These values will shape the snacks they select for their children. In response, our industry must lean further into innovation, adopting eco-friendly ingredients, minimising waste, using renewable energy and exploring technologies such as AI-driven product development, lab-grown ingredients and novel manufacturing techniques to deliver both quality and sustainability. Catering to increasingly diverse tastes with global flavours and storytelling behind products will also become essential.

The implications of this generational shift go beyond product development. This new cohort of consumers, raised in households emphasising mindful consumption and environmental responsibility, will expect brand



Sebastian Emig dusts off his crystal ball to consider what's in store for our industry in the coming months and years

transparency and accountability. Packaging must align with these values, focusing on recyclability, biodegradability and reduced material use. Additionally, the growing integration of technology into daily life means that digital engagement strategies, such as interactive apps, the gamification of nutritional education and AI-based meal suggestions, will play a vital role in capturing the interest of younger consumers and their families.

POLITICAL PRIORITIES

In Brussels, the new European Commission has signalled a recalibration of priorities. Climate protection and industrial competitiveness will remain central themes, accompanied by a vision for long-term agricultural and food system sustainability. However, the broader food and drink

sector—Europe's most significant in terms of turnover and employment—has been somewhat sidelined in policy discussions. This oversight presents a dual challenge and opportunity: we must emphasise the sector's strategic importance to the European economy and society while adapting to policy evolution. As environmental and trade policies evolve, our focus on sustainability and innovation can position savoury snacks as a key contributor to Europe's Green Deal goals.

We will amplify our advocacy efforts to ensure that the savoury snacks industry maintains the recognition it deserves. Highlighting the sector's economic contributions—its role in employment, export growth and rural development—has been and always will be a compelling narrative. At the same time, fostering dialogue with policymakers and stakeholders will enable the industry to align its initiatives with broader EU goals while showcasing the innovative strides made within the sector.

CREATING CONNECTIONS

The snacks industry continues to be shaped by consumer-driven trends. Demand for nutrient-rich, lower-fat/salt and plant-based options is surging. Snackers increasingly want portable, ready-to-eat products that don't compromise flavour or ingredient quality. The rise of e-commerce, direct-to-consumer platforms and AI-powered personalisation will define how we connect with consumers in the coming years.

An increased consumer appetite for ►

experiential engagement accompanies this technological evolution. Brands integrating immersive experiences into their offerings, such as virtual tastings or behind-the-scenes production tours via augmented reality, will differentiate themselves in a competitive market. Storytelling—conveying the journey from farm to table—is becoming more significant, creating emotional connections with consumers and reinforcing trust.

While the outlook is positive, challenges lie ahead. Geopolitical tensions and resource scarcity underscore the need for robust, diversified supply networks. Adapting to stricter sustainability and labelling standards will require agility and collaboration across the sector. Economic uncertainty, including inflation and cost-of-living concerns, could impact discretionary snack spending. These factors make resilience a cornerstone of future strategies. Companies must invest in risk management and supply chain innovation to mitigate potential disruptions and maintain consistent product availability.

Conversely, the opportunities are vast. Pioneering healthier, innovative products aligned with consumer values will be crucial. Partnering with farmers, tech companies and

policymakers to deliver sustainable solutions will strengthen the value chain. Highlighting the narratives of sustainability, tradition and craftsmanship behind our products can also deepen consumer connection and trust.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Moreover, the growing focus on health and wellness presents opportunities for diversification. Functional snacks—those that provide additional health benefits such as enhanced immunity or improved energy levels—are gaining traction. This trend opens avenues for collaboration with the healthcare and fitness sectors to co-create products that meet evolving consumer needs. Such partnerships can bolster brand credibility and widen market reach.

As we navigate this transformative period, the European Snacks Association will continue to champion the interests of the savoury snacks sector. We aim to position our industry as a beacon of resilience and growth in Europe’s food landscape by advocating for fair, science- and fact-based policies, fostering innovation and promoting sustainability. Let’s embrace the opportunities that 2025 presents, shaping a future where savoury snacks are

synonymous with quality, sustainability, and innovation. Together, we can ensure that the savoury snacks industry continues to delight consumers while contributing to a sustainable and prosperous Europe.

The road ahead will require collective effort, creative thinking, and unwavering commitment to progress. As we build on the solid foundation laid by past achievements, let us seize the moment to redefine the role of savoury snacks in European food culture. With bold vision and purposeful action, the industry is poised to thrive in 2025 and beyond. ■



Director General Sebastian Emig*
 *in his capacity as permanent representative of
 Prime Consulting BXLBCN SL



CRAFTING THE CRUNCH.

Teaming up with GEA means you benefit from our snack pellets expertise to improve your business. Design bespoke production processes, analyze raw materials, shape new formats and test your products, with us.

Ask the GEA expert:

