2025 Natural, Organic, Plant-Based, Keto, & Gluten Free Food & Beverage Session

Education & EPPS Programs

ECRM's educational sessions provide EPPS attendees with the opportunity to learn from thought leaders and category experts on a variety of topics aimed at their professional development. These sessions include presentations, moderated panel discussions, special events, workshops, and roundtable discussions focused on category insights and trends, as well as hands-on workshops to help buyers and sellers enhance the effectiveness of their meetings during an EPPS.

Monday, October 6, 2025

Redefining Consumer Choices: The Impact of GLP-1 Medications on Food, Beverage, and Lifestyle



60 minutes

Monday, October 6th | 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM

As GLP-1 medications reshape consumer health and wellness behaviors, the ripple effects are being felt across the entire CPG landscape. Join NIQ's Sherry Frey, as she explores the latest insights into the evolving profile of GLP-1 shoppers. This session will unpack how these consumers are redefining food, beverage, and lifestyle choices, and what that means for brands looking to stay ahead. From shifting purchase patterns to emerging product preferences, Sherry will highlight key data-driven trends and uncover actionable opportunities for innovation, marketing, and product development. Whether you're in strategy, innovation, or brand management, this session will equip you with the knowledge to navigate and capitalize on this transformative moment in consumer behavior.

Sherry Frey, VP of Total Wellness
NielsenIQ

Roundtables

45 minutes

Monday, October 6th | 5:00 PM - 5:45 PM

This is a great networking event, giving participants the opportunity to discuss relevant industry topics in a round table format with fellow industry professionals sitting at the table.
Over the 45 minutes, participants can choose a table with an assigned topic to discuss. After 20 minutes, we will pause and ask everyone to switch to a second table topic.

Partnering for Growth: Collaborative strategies between buyers (universities and retailers) and suppliers in health-conscious categories **(Nancy Trent, Founder, Trent & Company)**

- Discuss how universities, retailers, and suppliers can partner to expand the reach of healthy food products
- Examples of co-branding, joint promotions, and other strategies that are win-win

The Rise of Health Conscious Eating: Staying ahead of consumer trends **(Brandy Stire, West Virginia University)**

- Discuss the emerging trends and consumer preferences of today and ways to adapt to meet future needs.
- Explore up-and-coming trends

Rise of the GLP-1 Shopper: How to support the needs of this growing group of consumers **(Sherry Frey, VP of Total Wellness, NielsenIQ)**

- Review the needs of the GLP-1 shopper and how it is shaping consumer preferences and behavior
- Best practices and trends on the shelf and marketing to these shoppers

Sustainability in the Food & Beverage Industry: Challenges & Opportunities (**Noah Hyams, Founder, VEGPRENEUR)**

- Explore how consumers are driving sustainability demands and what buyers are looking for.
- Current and coming best practices

Consumer Behavior: What is driving purchasing today (**Michael Politz, Founder, Food & Beverage Magazine)**

- Discuss key drivers behind purchasing decisions at the store and on campus.
- Discuss how to reach a diverse consumer base, Millennials, Gen Z, and older generations

Cocktail & Tasting Reception

60 minutes

Monday, October 6th | 5:45 PM - 6:45 PM

Join us for a lively cocktail reception where you'll have the chance to sample innovative offerings from our participating suppliers. Mingle, explore new flavors, and connect with industry peers in a relaxed, fun atmosphere. Don’t miss out on this exciting opportunity to sip, savor, and network!

Tuesday, October 7, 2025

Vitacost Meet & Greet

30 minutes

Tuesday, October 7th | 8:00 AM - 8:30 AM

Join us to grab a coffee and meet the Vitacost Team.

This is an informal opportunity to say hello and introduce yourself to Vitacost leadership.
*Suppliers only

Attendees:
Dallas Butler, Associate Digital Category Manager - Food & Beverage
Meredith Kellner, Associate Digital Category Manager - Food & Beverage
Tammy Rothman, Digital Category Manager - Food & Beverage

Roundtables

60 minutes

Tuesday, October 7th | 5:30 PM - 6:30 PM

This is a great networking event giving participants the opportunity to discuss relevant industry topics in a round table format with fellow industry professionals sitting at the table.
Over the 45 minutes, participants can choose a table with an assigned topic to discuss. After 20 minutes we will pause and ask everyone to switch to a second table topic.

1. Cost Control Strategies in a Volatile Market: Balancing Quality & Profitability

- Discuss rising costs of ingredients, labor, and overheads in current market
- What innovative ways have buyers and sellers done to help manage cost without sacrificing quality?

2. Optimizing the Frozen & Refrigerated Aisles: Best Practices for Merchandising

- Discuss effective strategies for merchandising frozen, refrigerated, and deli products to maximize sales.
- What role packaging, in-store displays, and cross-category promotions play in increasing consumer engagement

3. E-commerce & Delivery: Navigating the future of Frozen, Meat, Dairy, Deli, and Bakery Categories

- How is growth of online grocery shopping affecting frozen and refrigerated sales
- Discuss innovations in shipping and logistics of items for these categories