



From Clean To Clear Label:

How Storytelling Answers Consumer Demand For Transparency

Functional ingredients in support of clean label and wellness trends have continued to enjoy significant growth in the market. But a clean label can mean a variety of things. According to an Innova Market Insights' Health & Nutrition Survey, the top consumer perceptions for "clean eating" include foods/drinks that are: 1. free of additives and preservatives; 2. contain only natural ingredients; 3. organic; and are 4. sustainably sourced.

Clean label's definition has shifted and evolved over the years from natural, to short ingredient lists, to plant-based, and now to include ethical and environmental factors. According to an article from [preparedfoods.com](https://www.preparedfoods.com), claims related to human and animal welfare, increased focus on supply chain transparency, plant-powered nutrition, and sustainable sourcing are all encompassed in clean label's evolved definition, sometimes defined as clear label.

Survey

In our own [survey on LinkedIn](#), we asked our followers what clean or clear label means to them. While ethical/environmental took the third spot out of four at just 13%, we do see trends moving from "clean" to "clear" as predominantly focused on supply chain transparency and ethical sourcing.

What does clean or clear label mean to you? Let us know which of these factors you think is most important!

Natural, Organic, Non-GMO	60%
Short Ingredients List	20%
Plant-Based	7%
Ethical/Environmental	13%

The term "clear labeling" was coined by Innova Market Insights for its 2015 Top Trends listing. Now seven years later, the term has been widely adopted in the industry and by many consumers. We now understand clean label as relating more to health and ingredient factors, while clear label is more related to transparency and ethical factors.

Survey

In another [survey we conducted on LinkedIn](#), we asked our followers what clear label means to them.

What does the term "clear label" mean to you? Let us know which of these factors you think is most important!

human and animal welfare	18%
supply chain transparency	50%
plant-powered nutrition	7%
sustainable sourcing	25%

Newsletter

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Building Trust Through Transparency

Let's take a look at the evolution of Innova Market Insights' Top Trends during the past few years. These trends tell the story of an ever-growing consumer demand for supply chain transparency and sustainably sourced products.

Way back in 2008, Innova identified "Going Greener" as a top trend and predicted consumers' growing interest in sustainability and transparency. Each year, consumer interest continues to build on the original "Going Greener" trend. "The Sustain Domain" and "Storytelling: Winning with Words" were top trends in 2020. "Transparency Triumphs" led the list in 2021. Most recently, the top trend for 2022 is "[Shared Planet](#)".

Consumers are demanding eco-efficiency, particularly reducing food waste and plastic waste. 75% of global consumers expect companies to invest in sustainability, however, how sustainability is defined varies greatly. It has evolved from recyclable packaging to broader sustainability around the entire product life-cycle—from agricultural practices, to efficient factories, to food waste and packaging waste reduction. What's next for sustainability? New demands around climate neutral products and upcycled foods are on the horizon.

So how might manufacturers and suppliers convey trust and transparency to consumers? The storytelling trend highlights increased consumer interest in the stories behind foods and beverages.

Storytelling is one answer to consumer demand for clear labels. In fact, 60% of global consumers said stories influenced their purchasing decisions, and they want to know where ingredients come from. Their primary areas of interest included human and animal welfare, supply chain transparency, plant-powered nutrition, and sustainable sourcing.

Tech To Table

Consumers are turning to apps for guidance on personalized nutrition and sustainability. "Tech To Table", also a 2022 Innova Top Trend, encompasses how technology will play a role in improving transparency. "[50% of consumers](#) [say] that they are at least somewhat likely to check a QR code if it appears on pack, allowing suppliers to deliver farm-to-fork traceability in this way." Blockchain will advance this ambition further, allowing consumers to see the supply chain record. "[The technology has aided suppliers](#) in tracking expansive food chains, including individual animals in a livestock herd, rainforest-positive coffee, and sandwich ingredients."

Technology is just one avenue for telling product and ingredient stories to consumers hungry for transparency.



Sustainable Sourcing Stories: From Seed To Shelf

To answer consumer demand for greater transparency, we've started a series of sourcing stories that we'll be publishing on our new website. To kick off the series, we've started with a few of our most popular products. Our sourcing stories inform suppliers and end-consumers on where our products' stories—from seed to shelf.

Turmeric from India

Turmeric is an on-trend spice here in the U.S., but its use dates back nearly 4,000 years in Ayurvedic medicine. Celebrated for both its culinary and wellness benefits, turmeric is becoming known for its high curcumin properties—and is often classified by curcumin levels. Alleppey turmeric is the most prized with greater than 3% curcumin. Curcumin has been known historically for its anti-inflammatory and immune-supporting benefits*.

Deep in the mountains of Kerala, India is where we find the world's best Alleppey turmeric. And that's where you'll find one of our newest sourcing partners, Peermade Development Society (PDS).

[Learn more](#) about how PDS is engaged in the sustainable development of tribal, marginal, and small farmers, indigenous communities, women, and children in India. PDS works in communities to help with micro-lending, sustainability, biotech, and social projects that allow residents to diversify economically. This ensures that their land will remain fertile for years to come.

Elderberries from Bulgaria

Herbalists have long used elderberries for their reported range of health benefits. They contain natural substances called flavonoids that have been reported to help fight inflammation and boost the immune system*.

Elderberries do more than taste great and help us stay well. Sourced from our partner Biogramme in Bulgaria, wild-crafted and organically grown elderberries give meaningful work to farmers and collectors across the region. Working with a network of small collectors, wild-crafted elderberries are harvested, cleaned, color-sorted, and dried.

[Learn more](#) about our partner Biogramme, a leading Bulgarian producer of tea, herbs, and nutritional supplements in Bulgaria.



Cardamom from Guatemala

Culinarians and health professionals alike know that cardamom is one of the world's best kept secrets. Used for centuries in Ayurvedic medicine, the powerful essential oils found in the cardamom seed have been recommended to combat indigestion and to stimulate the mind*.

While their peers in the region primarily plant and harvest coffee beans, our partner and Guatemalan farmer co-op FEDECOVERA has found cardamom as a way to not only diversify crops but also to adjust to climate changes in their countryside. FEDECOVERA is a collection of 42 cooperative partners and more than 120 groups of small producers gathering more than 33,000 producing families.

[Learn more](#) about how leveraging resources and training farmers in the newest agricultural practices is just part of the work this cooperative does for its members.

Ceylon Cinnamon from Sri Lanka

Ceylon cinnamon's active ingredient, cinnamaldehyde, has been reported to lower inflammation. Daily intake of Ceylon Cinnamon has also been shown to lower cholesterol levels and improve the body's response to insulin*.

The rainforest and jungles in the center of the island country of Sri Lanka are where the spice industry thrives and where we source our Ceylon cinnamon from our partners Small Organic Farmers' Association (SOFA).

SOFA is leading the country in its organic farming methods and its focus on the sustainability and protection of the environment.

[Learn more](#) about how they are using fair trade principles and enhancing the living standard of the small farmers and the poor in their community.

Let's Get Started

Our team at Starwest is here to help you incorporate the clear label trend into your product development process and help you tell your product's story.

Contact us at info@starwest-botanicals.com to get started.

**This statement has not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease. For educational purposes only.*



CEO Corner

Dear Starwest Community,

Starwest Botanicals continues to undergo a remarkable evolution. Without forgetting what got us here and with an ever-present focus towards meeting and exceeding the needs of customers today, we have invested in our future and yours.

Our new website is just one of the many investments we've made within the last year. From things you don't see—like our technological upgrades and infrastructure improvements, to things you do see—like our refreshed logo and new mobile-friendly website, we are now poised to help you thrive and grow well into the future.

Unearthing the wonders of nature to inspire every body has taken us around the globe searching for the places and spaces that are not only growing the best botanicals, teas, and spices but also keeping sustainability and the effects those products have on the people and communities who create them top of mind.

What makes us most proud here at Starwest Botanicals is the responsibility we have to bring those products back home to you. Our new website will help be a conduit that joins us all together.

From their home to our home to your home, we will strive every day to live up to the ideals of bringing people together through botanicals to inspire every body.

Cole Daily, CEO
Starwest Botanicals



Follow Along!

Follow us on LinkedIn and Facebook to stay up-to-date on the latest industry news and trends in the botanicals and wellness space.

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starwest-botanicals](https://www.linkedin.com/company/starwest-botanicals)

[facebook.com/StarWestBotanicals](https://www.facebook.com/StarWestBotanicals)

Meet The Team

New Hires

Starwest is rapidly growing, and we are pleased to announce that we've had many recent new hires. Here's a highlight of just a few:



Noell Nolting, Receptionist

Noell Nolting is our new Receptionist. Noell has been working since she was 19- she describes herself as loyal with an indomitable will to overcome problems. Noell loves helping others- and asks for patience while she learns her way in the Starwest family!

Noell has two parrots, one is a Senegal parrot name Iggy, and the other was a sun conure named Kiwi who recently passed away. Noell also shares her home with a clowder of cats (Missy, Fluffy, Pumpkin, Sunny, Nefertiti, and Simba)- each one believes she lives in their house to do their bidding.

WHAT DOES NOELL LOVE ABOUT STARWEST?

What I love about Starwest is atmosphere—it is a great environment!"



Jenessa Jukes, Ecommerce Marketing Manager

Jenessa Jukes is our new Ecommerce Marketing Manager. Jenessa is a California native, born and raised in the Sacramento area. With a degree from the University of San Francisco in Organizations, Leadership and Management, she is passionate about creating cohesive teams and processes to deliver impactful results. What she loves the most about ecommerce marketing is the blend of art and science—pairing exceptional creativity with data-driven decisions to drive revenue.

WHAT DOES JENESSA LOVE ABOUT STARWEST?

"What I love about Starwest is that I get to learn something new every day—from how to grow your own sprouts to the differences between caffeine content in teas. I am excited to dig deeper into understanding the Starwest customer journey and how they use botanicals for wellness. The team here has a wealth of knowledge and experience to share, and I can't wait

to transform that into an educational experience for Starwest customers."



Ben Addington, Key Account Manager

Ben Addington is our new Key Account Manager for the Bulk Ingredients Division. By education Ben is a food scientist and has worked in the food and beverages industry for nearly 10 years. Ben started as an account manager in natural foods for 6 years, and then spent 3 years as a technical account manager selling water-soluble cannabinoid ingredients to the food and beverage industry.

WHAT DOES BEN LOVE ABOUT STARWEST?

"So far, the people at Starwest are great! Also, I think breadth of products available from Starwest is fantastic with so many possibilities for working with CPG companies to create new and innovative products."

Promotions

We would like to congratulate and highlight our Starwest employees that have recently received promotions:



Jonathan Bacon, Mill Supervisor

Jonathan joined our team at Starwest in 2017 as a mill/inventory clerk, and over the course of 5 years has worked his way up to Mill Supervisor. In his new role he will oversee the day-to-day activities within the Inventory department. In his free time, Jon enjoys going to concerts, hiking, and kayaking.

WHAT DOES JONATHAN LOVE ABOUT STARWEST?

"I love the work that I do, the people I work with, and the amazing products we offer."

Milestones

We are pleased to recognize employees who are celebrating milestones with us:



Amy Palumbo, Human Resources Supervisor

Amy started her journey with Starwest in 1998 as a Wholesale Sales Associate. She has served our customers for more than 20 years in many different roles such as Retail Sales Associate, Wholesale Invoicing Clerk, Customer Service Representative, Accounts Payable Clerk, and Human Resources Assistant. One of the things Amy loves about HR is that it's constantly growing and changing—from compliance with new laws and legislation, to technology and employee expectations.

WHAT DOES AMY LOVE ABOUT STARWEST?

"Our Starwest family! I am working in an industry that is challenging, demanding, and rewarding every day. I have the great fortune to be employed by a company whose management have high expectations, not only of their employees, but of themselves. I work with a terrific staff who pull together to exceed those expectations daily. I am surrounded by a team who genuinely care about those they work with and it's refreshing to see!"

Industrial Outlook:

Health And Wellness Drives Functional Food And Beverage Trends

The demand for food that delivers health benefits continues to trend among U.S. consumers. According to CPG data company SPINS, 66% of Americans now choose products based on personal health needs. The definition of eating healthy has also experienced a bit of a shift over time, from the desire to reduce or eliminate perceived unhealthy components to more of a focus on food that contains desirable components that are “good for you”. It is worth noting that consumers are also concerned with choosing foods that are good for the health of the environment.

Beverages continue to experience a significant amount of innovation from a functional standpoint. Sales growth for the global functional beverage market is expected to exceed 10% annually through 2026, reaching nearly \$200B, according to Beverage Industry.

SPINS points out that functional beverages labeled as organic, non-gmo, and no sugar are finding favor with consumers. Some of the top functional ingredients they noted include mushrooms, beetroot and lavender. Beverage categories with significant growth include plant-based, RTD teas, and coffee (both refrigerated and shelf stable), enhanced waters and wellness sodas.

In a clear indication of the overall potential of functional beverages, Research and Market forecasted global functional tea market growth at a CAGR of 6.7% from 2021-2025,

adding more than \$3B in incremental sales during the forecast period.

Going beyond fruits, vegetables, yogurt, bread, and other food items offering health benefits, the snacking category—both in the savory and sweet subcategories—is seeing significant growth due to a focus on the addition of functional ingredients.

According to SPINS, shoppers seeking nutritional value in chips and snacks are looking for higher protein count. Products with 10 or more grams per serving are experiencing the highest percentage sales increases. Other wellness benefit ingredients driving snack growth include collagen, ancient grains, adaptogens, prebiotics, superfoods, supergreens, and super mushrooms.

Finally, functional cooking, according to the Institute of Food Technologists and FMI, the food industry association, is on the rise. With nearly half of U.S. consumers cooking more meals at home than they did a year ago, ingredients and recipes that make healthy food preparation easier are in demand.

Whether formulating food and beverage products featuring functional ingredients for the retail grocery shelf or providing wellness ingredients for home meal preparation, the future industry growth potential for functional botanicals and other wellness ingredients will remain robust for the foreseeable future.

Wholesale Corner

Our exciting brand refresh, which was first shared with you earlier this year upon the release of our 2022 wholesale catalog, will bring with it benefits that go beyond the clean, crisp look it delivers to our website and printed materials. Very soon, our product packaging will also be transformed, which will be inviting to the consumer and enhance your ability to promote and merchandise Starwest products to your customers.

Our focus is to provide you with on-trend and innovative products and tools to help you grow your business. With that in mind, we are investing significant resources in the development of impactful new items that will be launched in the near future. To provide you with a “peek under the tent”, we plan to introduce a line of our best-selling herbs, spices, and functional botanicals with the new branding in pack sizes that we believe will not only deliver incremental sales for you, but also help grow existing sales of bulk products that many of our wholesale customers are purchasing today. Variations of this new product line will include seasonal offerings and will include merchandising aids.

Beyond this, we also plan to launch a variety of items that will feature medicinal mushrooms. Functional beverages are also in the works.

We are eager to share these great new items with you in the near future, so stay tuned!

Bulk Ingredient Buzz

It is amazing to see what continues to occur on the innovation front in the world of food and beverages. "Conscious consumption" is driving new product development in the way of healthier food items. The consumer now often views food as a form of medicine, and the rapid growth of new product launches that provide functional benefits does not appear to be slowing down any time soon.

In July, members of our team had the opportunity to attend the Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) expo at McCormick Place in Chicago (Ben Addington, Frank Lindsey, and Cole Charboneau pictured below). A showcase for the latest developments in the science and technology of food, it is at this event that one can gain a better appreciation for the collaboration taking place in the initial stages of ideation between the flavor and ingredient supplier and the food manufacturer.

In addition to the new and exciting flavor offerings promoted, many exhibitors featured wellness ingredients. Their culinary and R&D teams created food and beverage samples made with added proteins/collagens, adaptogens, probiotics, nootropics, sugar alternatives, immunity support herbs, and superfoods, including super mushrooms. Often, two or more of these wellness ingredients were combined in the food and beverage samples offered to attendees. Botanicals as a product innovation growth engine played a prominent role at the show.

Other popular wellness themes at the expo were plant-based, keto, and the rapidly growing concept of upcycled foods, which is very appealing from a sustainability standpoint.



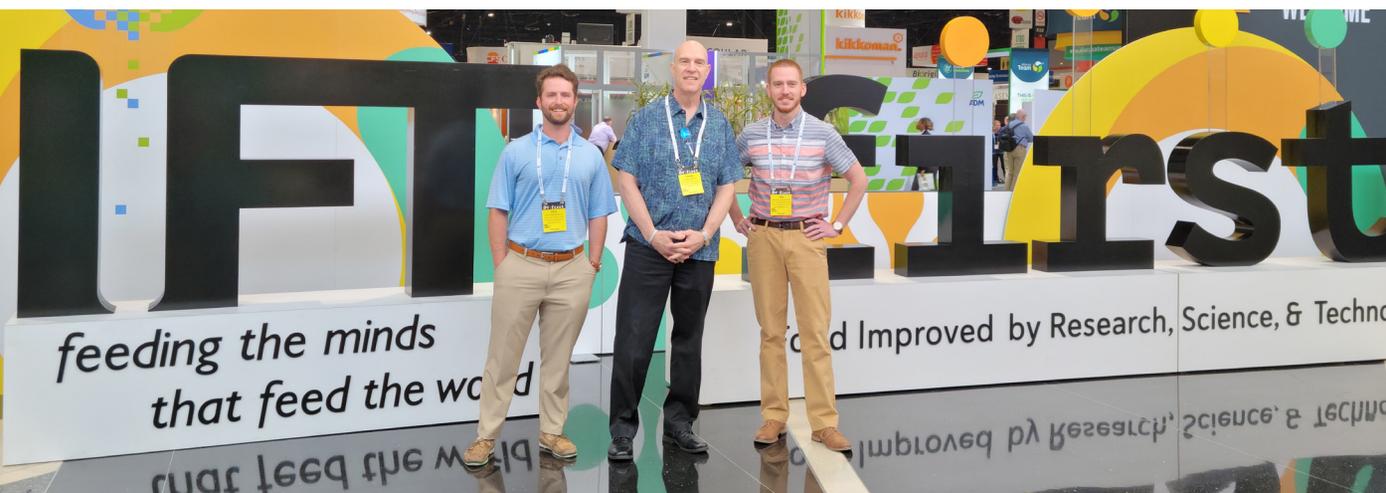
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