

Ahead of What's Next 

Progressive GROCER

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**AHOLD DELHAIZE
ON THE RISE**

What's behind the retail conglomerate's growing momentum

SUSTAINABILITY STARS

Spotlighting grocers' eco-friendliest moves

POULTRY FOR THE WIN

Chicken and turkey offer value for shoppers

The Future of Grocery

2022 GenNext Awards
honor those reimagining
the industry

2022 GenNext
Award winner:
Emily Massi
Giant Food

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EnsembleIQ





2022 EDITORS' PICKS

BEST NEW PRODUCT

BEST BETS

The annual program unearthed many products worthy of retailer and consumer attention.

By Progressive Grocer Staff

Every year, Progressive Grocer's editorial staffers convene to review the hundreds of products sent to us for consideration in our Editors' Picks program. Although our legendary marathon sampling sessions are now a thing of the past — thanks not only to a worldwide pandemic, but also to a geographically far-flung staff that would make scheduling such an in-person event a logistical headache — we still take our duties as product reviewers seriously. To that end, we carefully peruse the submissions and evaluate the described products according to innovation, functionality, value and packaging design. As happens every year, we encountered plenty of wonderful items released in the past 12 months, with the daunting task of choosing those products that we feel excel in these areas. The following 82 products, selected from more than 200 submissions, are those that checked all of the boxes for us.

As far as trends go, plant-based and other items positioned as better for you are still going strong, with a particular emphasis on healthy indulgence, since shoppers are increasingly unwilling to sacrifice taste for nutrition. Private label also made a respectable showing once more, with several products being the first own-brand entry in a particular segment, offering comparable quality to their name-brand counterparts, but at a value price. Additional attributes to arise often among the successful entries were clean-label, low-carb/keto, organic, natural and sustainable, this last descriptor a bid to appeal to consumers' growing desire to improve the state of the planet along with their bodily health.

While not every submission becomes an Editors' Pick, we are still grateful to all who sent in their products and enabled us to become better acquainted with the wide range of great items available at grocery — many of which we can't wait to seek out on store shelves. After all, we're not just editors, but also dedicated grocery shoppers, an all-consuming pastime — or is it a calling? — that we suspect is shared by many of our readers, too.



Kazoo Tortilla Chips

SRP: \$4.99

per 11-ounce bag

These aren't chips off the old block: Kazoo Snacks has come out with what it says are the first upcycled, water-saving tortilla chips on the market. Made with 40% upcycled corn germ, the product is also higher in enzymes, healthy fats, oils and nutrients, and contains 61% more vitamin K.

Kazoo reports that in their first year, the chips have

saved nearly 1 million gallons of water, a step in the brand's overall goal to save 1 billion gallons of water by 2025. The water claim is right on the package as a way to signal that the item is a sustainable choice. Available in Restaurant Style and Lime Zest varieties, the tortilla chips will soon be available in 100% sustainable packaging to close the loop even tighter. Kazoo is also planning to release more flavors, including Chili Lime, Nacho, Spicy Nacho and Ranch.

Keto Krisp Butter & Salt Bar with Collagen

SRP: \$35.99 per 12-pack

As keto eating lifestyles keep revving forward, this product fires on all product development cylinders. It's high in protein, indulgent in a sweet and salty way, and function-forward. Combining the flavor profiles of keto-friendly butter and savory Himalayan salt, the snack provides 10 grams of protein with 4 net carbs and 2 grams of sugar. Functional collagen is a bonus at a time when consumers are seeking enhanced nutrition from their convenient snacks. As part of the rollout, the brand gave away 20,000 bars via a Whole Foods Market sampling event, took part in a new product launch with distributors UNFI and KeHE, and promoted the introduction with in-store demos, special displays, and partnerships with influencers and recipe creators, among other activities.



Koe Tropical Organic Kombucha

SRP: \$2.49 per 12-ounce can

Considering that health-oriented consumers haven't soured on the kombucha trend, this functional beverage has really hit the mark. Taste is a differentiator, as the fruit-forward drink is palate-friendly and available in six flavors: Tropical (the latest flavor), Watermelon, Strawberry Lemonade, Raspberry Dragonfruit, Mango and Blueberry Ginger. Koe kombucha is organic, non-GMO and naturally sweetened with a touch of organic sugar, and it contains 200% or more of the recommended daily value of vitamin C. The vibrantly hued, recently redesigned packages are shelf-stable and recyclable, and sell at a price point that's 25% less than traditional kombucha per serving. Shoppers can find it at grocery, club and c-stores around the country, and it's already grown more than 16 times faster than the kombucha category, according to Koe.



La Terra Fina Tzatziki with Feta Dip and Spread

SRP: \$5.49 per 10-ounce tub

It's a dip. It's a spread. It's a hit. This product appeals to a broad range of consumers because of its versatility and clean-label profile. The keto-friendly, gluten-free item is made with dairy sourced from cows not treated with rBST and offers a smooth texture and balanced flavor from such ingredients as feta cheese, Greek yogurt, cucumbers and fresh herbs. It pairs well with vegetables, sandwiches and salads for everyday and entertaining occasions, an attribute that the brand has emphasized in its inspiring recipe videos. While shoppers have discovered the dip and spread at grocery banners such as Kroger, Harris Teeter, Price Chopper, Market Basket, WinCo and Hy-Vee, the product has also garnered attention as a winner of People magazine's food awards, chosen from among 1,300 entries.

LesserEvil Sun Peppers

\$3.99 per 4-ounce bag

It's literally a mashup between consumers' propensity for snacking and their desire to live a more sustainable lifestyle: a salty snack made from upcycled watermelon and pumpkin seeds. Indeed, LesserEvil's Sun Peppers meet a lot of preferences among today's shoppers: They're plant-based, USDA Certified Organic, grain- and gluten-free, kosher, vegan, non-GMO Project Verified, kosher, and available in two flavorful varieties: Vegan Sour Cream + Onion and Himalayan Pink Salt. At 130 calories per serving, the product is marketed as a snack that one can feel good about eating. Whole Foods Market is LesserEvil's biggest partner for distribution of these novel snacks, which are also available at many independent grocers. The line won "Best of Show" at KeHE Distributors' 2022 summer show. Look for a new Nacho variety soon.

