

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

SUMMER 2024/25

A REGULAR LOOK ACROSS FOOD,  
BEVERAGE AND AGRIBUSINESS SUPPLY CHAINS

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# LIKES, SHARES, AND VIRAL TRENDS: HOW NEW SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS ARE SHAPING THE FBA WORLD



Welcome to the era of social media, where a single viral post can turn a humble dish into a global sensation overnight. After thousands of years of trying to get children to eat vegetables, suddenly one quirky TikTok video can transform something like cucumber into the next trendy superfood, which every kid wants to eat. Meanwhile, while whipped coffee (or “dalgona”) may have had humble beginnings in Macau in the 1990s, when it hit TikTok in early 2020, it suddenly became a global sensation – helped by the fact that it gave millions of people in Covid quarantine something to do.

Over just the past two decades, social media has completely transformed consumer behaviour across all sectors, particularly across the food, beverage and agribusiness (FBA) supply chain. Over that time, the use and impact of social media has evolved dramatically – from a simple way to share photos on MySpace and Flickr, into a fundamental driver of social behaviour, which impacts everything from product demand to agricultural practices.

Social media platforms like TikTok, Instagram and Pinterest don’t just set trends – they have redefined the ways in which consumers discover, engage with, and purchase products. This has also meant that around the globe, the pace at which food trends spread has accelerated enormously, forcing stakeholders right across the entire food supply chain to change the way they adapt to consumer preferences.

## THE EARLY DAYS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Launching in 2003, Myspace was arguably the first major social media platform, allowing FBA brands to directly promote their products in a more interactive way.

Over subsequent years, Myspace was overtaken by Facebook and Instagram as crucial marketing tools for FBA companies to both raise brand awareness and engage

customers. One early example was the online campaign by Kraft in 2009 to seek a name for its new cheesy spread version of Vegemite. The online poll was one of the first of its kind, and while the ultimate selection of the name iSnack 2.0 was arguably not a success (it was changed within months to Cheesybites), it did create huge online publicity around the product.

## THE SHIFT TO NEWER SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Since it was launched in 2016, TikTok has rapidly grown in popularity, especially among younger demographics. By some estimates, every month around 8.5 million Australians are active on TikTok, and over one billion globally. TikTok’s short form video content has become the new focus for viral food trends. For example, in 2021, the baked feta pasta trend led to feta cheese shortages in supermarkets in many countries.

One prominent recent example was the TikTok cucumber salad trend, which has seemingly remained strong across 2024, with prominent TikTok identities coming up with innovative new salads based around cucumbers. Despite some media reports of cucumber shortages in Australia, this was apparently not the case - though supermarkets did report being “thrilled” to see this social media trend encouraging more Australians to eat fruit and vegetables.

Other newer social media platforms have also been increasingly influential. For a while, Instagram felt like the platform that your new date used to take photos of his or her restaurant meal to send to their friends, while you waited patiently. In a way, FBA companies have utilised Instagram in a similar fashion, creating “Instagrammable” products, designed to look as good as they will presumably taste. Companies like Starbucks have relied heavily on Instagram marketing, using the platform to launch seasonal and limited-edition drinks, using visually striking

photos and fan-created images which followers will replicate. In Australia, Four Pillars Gin effectively uses Instagram to showcase their bottles in creative settings and provide recipes for cocktails made by top bartenders.

Snapchat, the quirky app that lets users send disappearing messages and share fun stories with snazzy filters, has become a playground for younger audiences, especially Gen Z and Generation Alpha. FBA brands are increasingly finding clever ways to engage this audience. For instance, burger chain Grill'd has leveraged Snapchat to promote limited-time burger offerings through eye-catching ads and interactive polls, effectively driving foot traffic to their restaurants.

These platforms are also being increasingly used upstream in the food supply chain, by agribusinesses and farmers, for themes around promoting sustainability, exchanging farming practices, and providing consumers with more transparency on the food supply chain. For example, many organic farms utilise Instagram and Facebook to attract environmentally conscious consumers and strengthen the brand of their products. The Australian "Grain Growers" group uses Facebook to share success stories about precision agriculture, as a way of seeking to improve efficiency and productivity across the agricultural supply chain.

Through posting videos on Instagram of cows grazing, "Dairy Farmers" of Australia is seeking to provide consumers with a greater awareness and comfort with their food source, and at the same time increase sales of their products.

In terms of larger agribusinesses harnessing social media, GrainCorp, a major grain handling company, uses LinkedIn to share advancements in grain storage, attracting partners interested in efficiency. Similarly, farm machinery firms like Case IH showcase their latest equipment on Instagram, appealing to farmers looking for productivity gains.

## THE PITFALLS AND PROMISES OF VIRAL TRENDS

New social media platforms may have their advantages for FBA companies, but they also come with some risks. One major concern is supply chain risk, where rapid shifts in consumer demand triggered by viral trends can lead to shortages. For instance, the whipped coffee craze during the COVID-19 lockdowns reportedly caused instant coffee shortages across Australia as supermarkets struggled to keep up with skyrocketing demand.

In contrast, the rise and fall of the energy drink Prime, launched by prominent YouTubers Logan Paul and KSI, and heavily promoted on platforms like TikTok and YouTube, highlights a risk that comes with short term viral-driven consumer demand. Initially, the neon-coloured bottles were a must-have, reselling for eye-watering prices, but when the hype fizzled, some retailers were left with stockpiles. This scenario underscores the importance of cautious inventory management for businesses reliant on short-lived social media hype, as the initial buzz may not necessarily sustain long-term sales.

Unlike the brief hype around Prime, celebrity-endorsed tequila brands have proven resilient, thanks to savvy social media use. A multitude of big names – including George

Clooney, LeBron James, Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, Kendall Jenner and Mark Wahlberg - have successfully leveraged their fame and these platforms to build long-term demand. Celebrity-endorsed tequilas thrive due to combining the famous names with quality and lifestyle appeal; consumers want to experience the luxury and authenticity these celebrities embody, often highlighted on visually rich platforms like Instagram and TikTok.

In pitching to new generations of consumers, companies must also be careful around compliance and reputational risk, around such areas as ensuring that claims that a product is "healthy", "organic", or "sustainable" are verifiable.

## SOCIAL MEDIA'S GLOBAL IMPACT

The impact of new social media platforms on FBA companies varies widely across global regions, shaped by local habits and the popularity of specific platforms. In China, for example, WeChat and Douyin dominate the social media landscape. Brands like Haidilao, a popular hot pot restaurant chain, utilise these platforms for live-streaming promotions that boost customer engagement and sales.

This model contrasts sharply with the situation in India, where TikTok's ban in 2020 has left a gap that regional platforms like Moj are slowly filling. Despite these challenges, Indian food brands like Haldiram's have turned to platforms like Instagram to promote traditional snacks, effectively reaching a younger audience eager to connect with their cultural roots.

The European Union (EU) presents a more complex landscape for FBA companies using social media due to stringent regulations on advertising and data privacy. For example, a beverage company aiming to launch a targeted campaign on Instagram must ensure that it complies with data privacy laws, which restrict the collection and use of personal data for ad personalisation without explicit user consent, limiting the extent to which it can personalise ads. Furthermore, cultural differences can affect platform usage; while Instagram thrives in many EU countries, others, like Germany, have seen a rise in alternative platforms like Telegram.

## THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN FBA

As platforms like TikTok, Instagram and Snapchat continue to evolve, their influence on the FBA supply chain is expected to grow even further, particularly through the increasing integration of e-commerce into social media platforms. Platforms like Instagram and TikTok are increasingly incorporating direct shopping features, allowing users to purchase food products directly from a post or video.

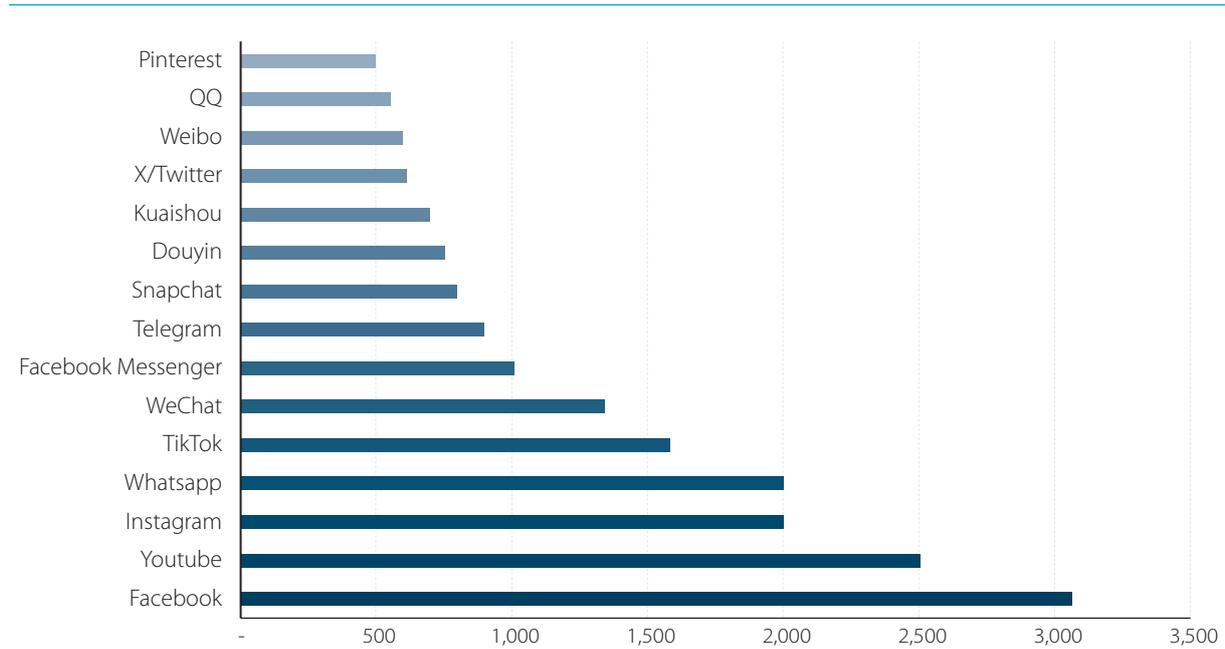
Artificial intelligence (AI) and predictive analytics will also play a crucial role in the future of the Australian food and beverage supply chain. These technologies will enable companies to accurately forecast demand, streamline their supply chains, and minimise inefficiencies. For instance, a popular café could use AI to analyse social media trends and predict an increase in demand for plant-based menu items, allowing them to adjust their inventory accordingly. Similarly, a local winery might leverage predictive analytics to anticipate customer preferences for specific wine varieties during certain seasons, optimising production schedules to meet consumer demand effectively.

## ADAPTING TO THE SOCIAL MEDIA SURGE

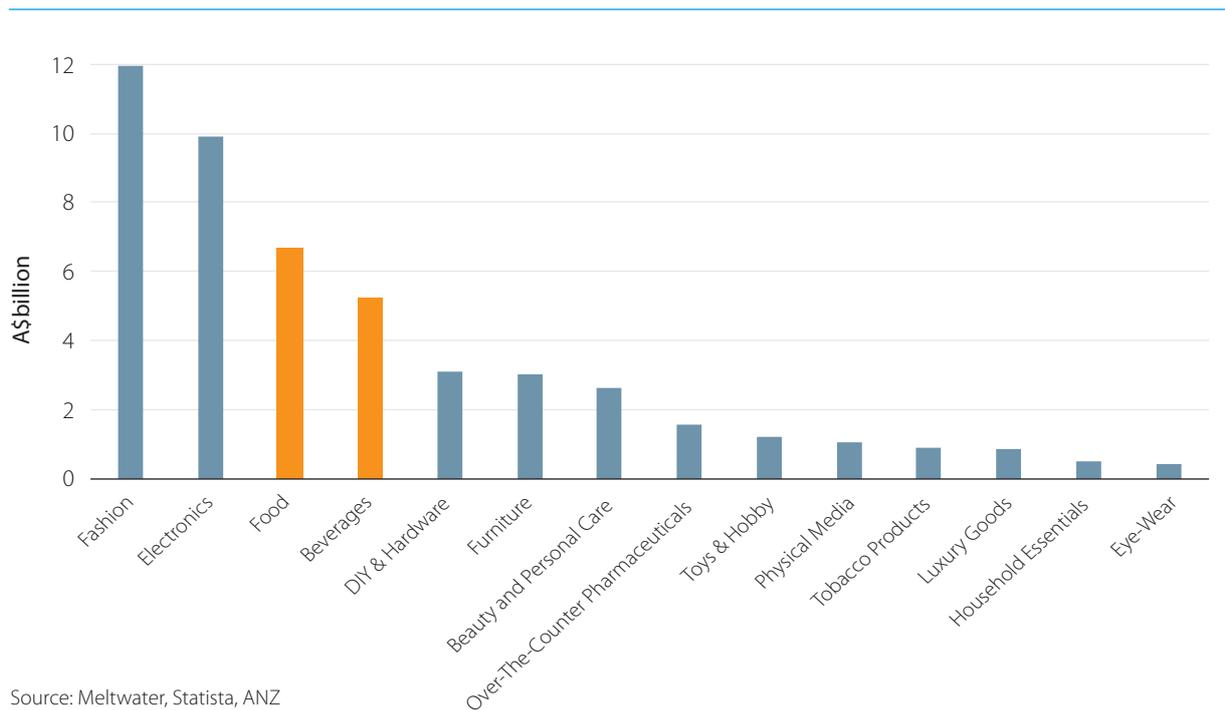
Social media has evolved from a mere marketing tool into a powerhouse reshaping the food, beverage, and agricultural supply chain. What began with Facebook and Instagram has transformed into a vibrant ecosystem, with TikTok leading the charge in sparking viral trends that can change consumer tastes in the blink of an eye. Companies that master these platforms can unlock tremendous opportunities to boost sales and enhance brand visibility, but they must also navigate the challenges of unpredictable demand.

In this whirlwind landscape, adaptability is key for businesses in the FBA supply chain. Embracing data analytics and staying nimble in response to consumer trends is vital for success in this fast-paced arena. As social media continues to redefine how consumers discover, buy, and engage with food products, those companies that can pivot quickly and thrive in the world of likes and shares will stay ahead this ever-changing marketplace.

## 2024 GLOBAL SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVE USER NUMBERS (IN MILLIONS)



## ESTIMATED AUSTRALIAN ONLINE CONSUMER SPENDING 2023



## SLIMMING DOWN THE SUPPLY CHAIN: THE OZEMPIC EFFECT



If the new wonder drug Ozempic was described as a “party drug” it would be quite a different kind of party – and one of which most parents would approve. The partygoers would be sipping their nutrient-packed smoothies and comparing their food-tracker apps. The buffet, no matter how enticing would be largely untouched, as guests debated the merits of broccoli and the joys of smaller portions, before they left early to ensure they got eight hours sleep.

By now, you’ve almost certainly heard about Ozempic. Originally developed for combatting diabetes, it is now widely regarded as a drug for inducing weight loss. In short, Ozempic works by mimicking the hormone GLP-1, which regulates appetite and blood sugar. GLP-1 activates receptors in the brain, reducing hunger and signalling a feeling of fullness, which leads to lower calorie intake and weight loss. This effect, combined with slower stomach emptying, helps users feel satisfied with smaller portions.

While the hype for Ozempic and similar weight-loss drugs has been strong, the actual usage is still relatively low in terms of percentage of population. It is estimated that over 40 million Americans have tried Ozempic or a similar weight-loss drug, with about half this number continuing to take them. A major factor cited for the drop-off of users has been the high price of the drugs.

However, this could soon change. In late November 2024, the US government proposed legislating to expand public healthcare coverage for weight-loss drugs, including Ozempic and similar GLP-1 medications. If approved, this change could make these drugs affordable for millions more people by significantly reducing their cost, which currently exceeds US\$1,000 per month. The proposal redefines obesity as a chronic disease, making treatment a priority in public health policy. While the plan still requires public consultation and approval by the incoming administration, it has the potential to greatly increase access and usage of these drugs.

While the current focus is on the US, the potential for a major increase in the usage of weight-loss drugs globally is immense. According to the World Health Organisation, around 74 percent of Americans are overweight, with 42 percent being classified as obese. The figures for Australia are only slightly less, with 66 percent of adults deemed overweight, and 32 percent obese.

Given the likelihood that costs for the weight-loss drugs will gradually decline, and usage may increase in many countries, companies in the food, beverage and agribusiness (FBA) sectors are already evaluating the potential impacts of these drugs on them, as well as opportunities.

Examples of products which could be affected include high-sugar snacks, desserts, and ready-to-eat processed meals, which are popular for their high sugar and calorie content, and could experience reduced sales as consumers opt for healthier alternatives

It was a similar shift as a result of an historical trend towards low-carb diets which saw substantial declines in sugary drink sales and prompted Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, and Nestlé to launch sugar-free or reduced-sugar versions of their drinks and snacks. During this time, Coca-Cola’s Diet Coke sales surged, and snack brands expanded low-carb offerings.

With the growth of weight-loss drugs, a number of companies are already marketing new ranges of foods specifically designed to complement GLP-1 drugs. In the US, Nestlé has released a line of products called Vital Pursuit, featuring frozen, high-protein, portion-controlled meals targeting weight-loss drug users. These products focus on nutrient density and include items like cauliflower crust pizzas and high-fibre chicken fajita melts, deliberately designed to help control appetite and promote a feeling of fullness. In terms of marketing, Conagra is specifically highlighting its Healthy Choice meals as being portioned for lower-calorie diets, while Campbell’s soups and snacks emphasise easily digestible, nutrient-rich options to align with the dietary needs of weight-loss drug users.



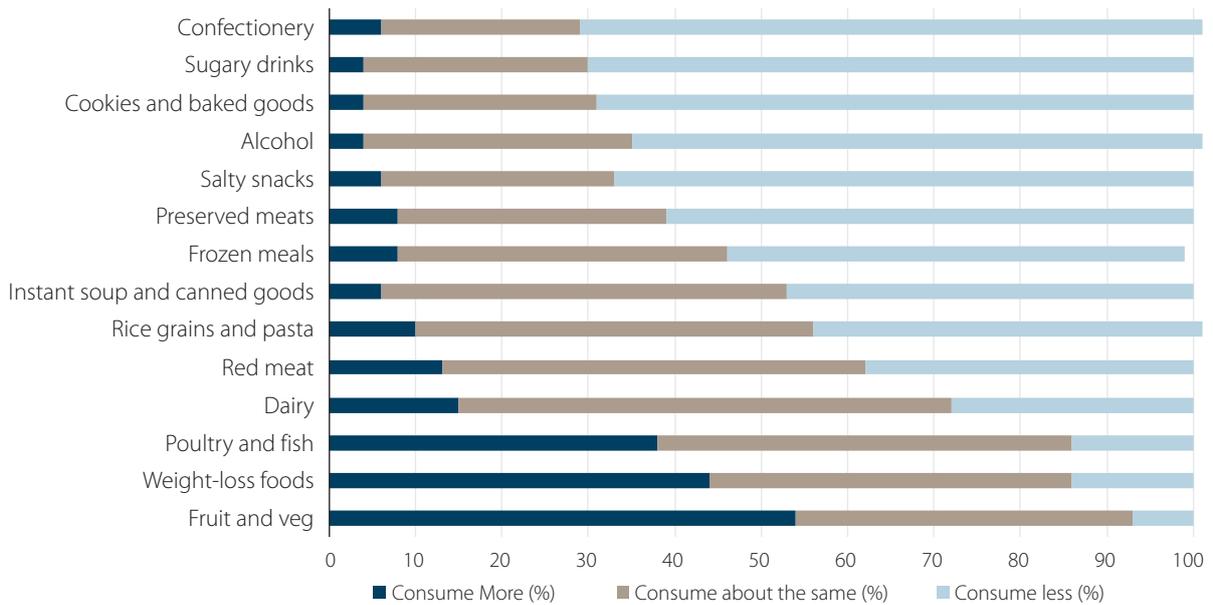
These trends may also give food companies a unique opportunity to reduce portion sizes as a subtle response to inflation, under the guise of catering to a lower-calorie market. “Shrinkflation”, or offering smaller portions without a noticeable price reduction, could allow companies to manage rising costs while promoting ‘healthy’ or ‘portion-controlled’ products tailored to Ozempic users.

Despite a major effect of the weight-loss drugs being to eliminate the feeling of cravings, which lead to snacks between meals, some manufacturers in the US of items such as biscuits and snacks have reported the impact on overall sales to be negligible.

Interestingly, according to a study published by analytics firm Grocery Doppio, individuals on Ozempic bought 47 percent fewer baked goods, 13 percent less processed foods and 28 percent fewer high-calorie beverages. The study further revealed that 97 percent of consumers on weight-loss medication lowered their grocery spending by an average of 11 percent.

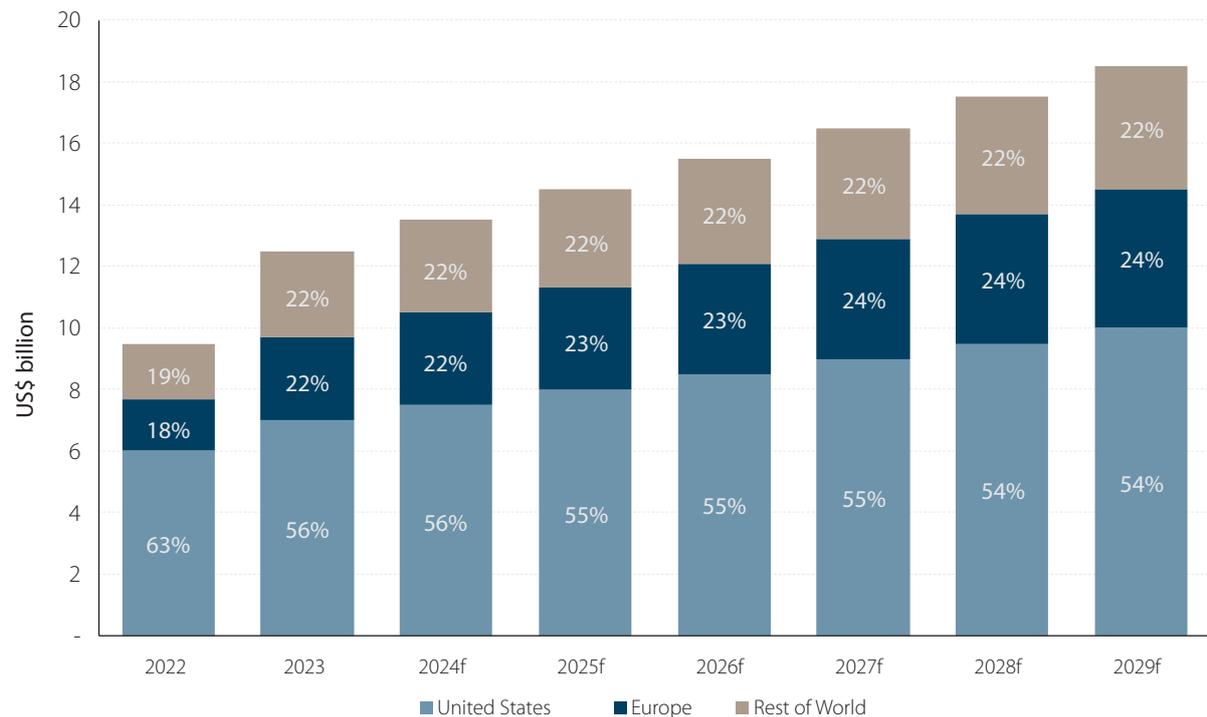
For retailers - particularly supermarkets - this potential scenario could require that they not only adapt to any reduction in the sales of particular items, but also capitalise on the evolving patterns in product purchases. US supermarket chains are closely watching changes in trends which may see further growth in sales of fresh fruit and vegetables, and a dip in snack and “craving” items, including sugary drinks and confectionery.

### CHANGES IN FOOD CONSUMPTION AMONG OZEMPIC USERS



Source: Morgan Stanley Research, ANZ  
 (Note: Figures are US based)

## OZEMPIC'S ANNUAL SALES AND FORECAST 2022 - 2029(F)



Source: GlobalData, Drugs Database, ANZ

**AT THE SAME TIME, SUPERMARKETS MAY ALSO LOOK TO EXPAND THEIR HEALTH FOOD SECTIONS, BOTH TO ACCOMMODATE THE WIDER RANGE OF NEW PRODUCTS BEING MARKETED BY MAJOR FOOD BRANDS, AS WELL AS TO ENTICE CONSUMERS, INCLUDING THOSE WHO AREN'T PRESCRIBED WEIGHT-LOSS DRUGS BUT WANT TO CUT BACK ON CALORIES AND SUGAR OR INCREASE THEIR PROTEIN CONSUMPTION.**

Upstream in the food supply chain, while there may be a reduction in certain geographies of the purchasing of processed foods, often high in products such as sugar and corn, these crops are unlikely to be affected, given their ongoing strong global demand. In contrast, there could likely be increasing interest in low-calorie, nutrient-dense produce, such as leafy greens and lean proteins. This could see increased demand for spinach and kale, cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli and cauliflower, and legumes for plant-based protein sources, as well as berries and avocados, both rich in nutrients yet relatively low in calories. In lean proteins, there could be a higher demand for poultry, fish, and eggs over red meats due to their perceived lower calorie density.

While Ozempic's current impact on the food chain may be a small ripple, it's one with the potential to swell. For FBA companies worldwide, it's not just about riding the wave but being ready to shift course, particularly given developments such as the ongoing US policy changes. Like their US counterparts, FBA players globally should stay open to adapting product lines and strategies, meeting new consumer habits head-on - because in this slimming market, companies need to shed old habits and stay fit for the future.

## **STRONGER TOGETHER: FORTIFYING THE FBA SUPPLY CHAIN**



The food, beverage, and agribusiness (FBA) supply chain is like a finely tuned Swiss watch - a complex system of interconnected parts working in harmony to deliver goods from farms to tables across Australia and export markets worldwide. As inflation drives up costs at every point - from fertilisers and fuel for farmers to energy expenses for dairy and meat processors, grain handlers, and retailers - this intricate system faces serious challenges. Tackling these costs is essential, but it's just one part of the equation. To keep shelves stocked, prices steady and export markets supplied, companies are also pushing to boost productivity across the chain.

Export-oriented segments, like Australian beef and wine producers, can adjust pricing based on global demand, providing some relief from domestic pressures. However, those focused on local markets, such as dairy suppliers and food retailers, face the full force of rising costs and price-sensitive consumers. And when things go wrong in the FBA supply chain - when drought impacts grain supplies or logistics issues delay meat shipments overseas - the consequences can be far-reaching: empty shelves, rising prices, and lost market share to competitors both domestically and abroad.

In this high-stakes environment, companies need to focus on critical strategies to build resilient, efficient supply chains capable of withstanding economic pressures, sustaining local and global demand, and consistently delivering for the households, businesses, and international buyers that rely on them.

### **1. RECOGNISING SUPPLIER IMPORTANCE**

A critical aspect of building resilient supply chains is understanding and supporting the stability of supplier relationships. Companies need to recognise who their

key suppliers are and stay informed about these suppliers' financial and operational health. By fostering close communication and assisting suppliers through challenges, companies can help secure a steady flow of essential inputs.

For example, Australian wine producers monitor the resilience of their grape suppliers, particularly in drought-prone areas, allowing them to manage risks and maintain a consistent grape supply.

### **2. INVESTING IN TECHNOLOGY AND RESEARCH**

Investment in new technologies and research is vital for improving productivity throughout the supply chain. Many processors and distributors benefit from advanced tools and equipment that streamline operations, helping to lower costs and boost efficiency.

In the Australian grain industry, automated grain sorting technologies have been introduced in processing facilities, which speeds up the sorting process, reduces labour costs, and improves quality control - ultimately making the entire supply chain more cost-effective and sustainable.

### **3. BUILDING FLEXIBLE CONTRACTS**

In a volatile market, leaving some margin in contracts can foster loyalty and lead to improved productivity and quality. Some suppliers may prefer fixed pricing arrangements that mitigate risk and provide stability, particularly during unpredictable seasons.

Australian cotton ginners have increasingly entered flexible contracts with growers to account for variable weather conditions, ensuring that both parties can manage risks associated with fluctuating yields and market prices.

#### 4. LEVERAGING FINANCIAL PARTNERSHIPS

Banks can play a crucial role in facilitating cash flow through supply chains. Companies are increasingly exploring how to leverage their financial standing to lower funding costs and improve cash management, particularly in the current interest rate environment.

For example, some meat processing companies use supply chain finance options to pay their suppliers, such as farmers who provide cattle, more quickly. This means the farmers get their money sooner, helping them cover costs and keep their businesses steady.

#### 5. SECURING LONG-TERM SUPPLY AGREEMENTS

Stabilising performance can be achieved by locking in long-term contracts for essential inputs. By securing essential supplies for multiple seasons, companies can enhance their financial predictability and access additional funding.

In Australia, dairy companies like Bega have secured multi-year supply agreements with milk producers, helping to stabilise milk prices and ensure consistent supply despite seasonal fluctuations and global price pressures.

#### 6. BALANCING EXPANSION AND EFFICIENCY

When companies invest in expanding their facilities to increase production capacity and reduce costs per unit, they must also ensure that all parts of their supply chain can support this growth. This means making sure suppliers, logistics, storage and distribution can handle the higher volumes efficiently.

For example, while many of Australia's almond producers have increased their processing capacity to meet export demand, they have also carefully coordinated with transport and storage partners to manage the larger output without incurring extra costs or delays that could strain cash flow.

#### 7. ADDRESSING SUSTAINABILITY AND SCOPE 3 EMISSIONS

Tracking emissions across the supply chain is increasingly essential, with companies facing growing pressure to understand their full environmental impact. Nearly all the top tier players have tracked their Scope 1 (emissions from a company's own operations, such as fuel used on-site) and Scope 2 (such as indirect emissions from energy purchased, like electricity) emissions.

However, Scope 3 emissions - those generated throughout the entire supply chain, from raw materials to product disposal - are far more challenging to measure and manage. This complexity is especially evident in sectors like Australian beef production, where emissions data needs to be gathered from thousands of individual farms, processing facilities and other intermediaries. Woolworths, for example, is collaborating with beef producers to assess and reduce emissions across this extended chain, aiming to bring each link closer to their broader sustainability goals.

#### 8. ENSURING PRODUCT TRACEABILITY

Consumer demand for transparency and safety is driving the need for robust traceability systems that track products from origin to final distribution. This requirement is also strengthened by regulatory standards around food safety and biosecurity.

In the Australian meat industry, processors like JBS use blockchain technology to monitor cattle from farm to shelf, ensuring each product meets safety standards and providing consumers and regulators with assurance of its quality and authenticity.

#### 9. STRENGTHENING ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACROSS THE CHAIN

A successful supply chain relies on accountability and open communication. Miscommunication or unresolved issues can hinder operations, jeopardise relationships and reduce operational efficiency. Close relationships with all suppliers, especially for critical commodities, are essential. Leading companies maintain regular dialogue with their suppliers and partners through initiatives like site visits, dedicated communication roles, and forums for open discussion.

Companies like Australian grain exporters work closely with port operators to avoid costly delays, while companies like Nestlé hold regular forums with farmers and processors to discuss market trends, building transparency, trust, and collaborative problem-solving.

#### 10. PROTECTING BRAND INTEGRITY AND PREVENTING COUNTERFEITING

Ensuring brand integrity is essential, particularly in international markets where counterfeiting can damage a company's reputation and consumer trust. For premium brands, maintaining authenticity is key to preserving value and market position.

Treasury Wine Estates (TWE) has addressed this by implementing anti-counterfeiting measures in China to protect its high-end wines. TWE uses unique identifiers, QR codes, and blockchain technology on its wine labels, enabling consumers and distributors to verify authenticity. This strategy safeguards TWE's brand and reinforces its reputation for quality.

#### CONCLUSION

Resilient FBA supply chains aren't just about keeping milk in fridges or bread on shelves - they're the unseen force behind everything from your morning coffee to Australia's wine on tables halfway around the world. With rising costs impacting every step in the chain, from the mango farmer battling rising fertiliser prices to the dairy processor optimising energy use, these businesses are finding innovative ways to adapt.

From blockchain beef tracking to keep steaks fresh from farm to fork, to almond producers scaling up for export demand without missing a beat, companies across the FBA sector are embracing new strategies to boost efficiency, manage risks, and keep shelves stocked. By focusing on transparency, technology, and sustainability across the supply chain, the FBA sector isn't just weathering the storm - it's redefining resilience for the future.

## THE FESTIVE FEAST: HOW THE FBA SECTOR DELIVERS CHRISTMAS CHEER



It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas. Across most parts of the world, the Christmas decorations have gone up across city streets (where they seemed to appear the moment the Halloween ones came down), Jingle Bells is starting to be heard in shops and businesses are scouting around for anywhere still available to hold their Christmas parties.

As Christmas gets closer, the world's food, beverage, and agribusiness (FBA) sector is already bustling like Santa's workshop. The festive season is a major occasion for these businesses - it's a peak period where consumers fill their carts (and stomachs) with everything from prawns to pudding. For FBA companies, Christmas is not just the season to be jolly - it's the season to maximise sales, manage inventories and keep up with consumers' holiday appetites.

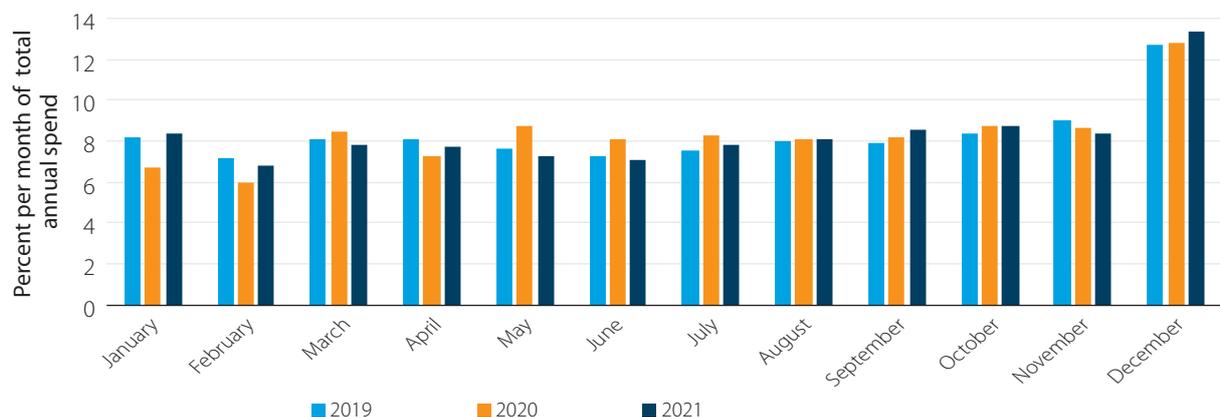
### THE FESTIVE SEASON SURGE: CHRISTMAS CRUNCH TIME FOR FBA

Christmas and New Year's celebrations mark the peak shopping period in the FBA world. In Australia, sales

surge on seafood - particularly prawns, which see a 30 percent spike every December as Aussies prepare for a hot Christmas Day. Traditional Christmas meats like turkey and ham also see an upswing - around 75 percent of turkey consumption in Australia occurs around Christmas, with the average Australian only eating it once a year. Ham is also a huge seller at Christmas - in 2022 Woolworths alone forecast sales of around 1.8 million kilograms of half-leg hams at Christmas, or enough to stretch from Sydney to the Blue Mountains.

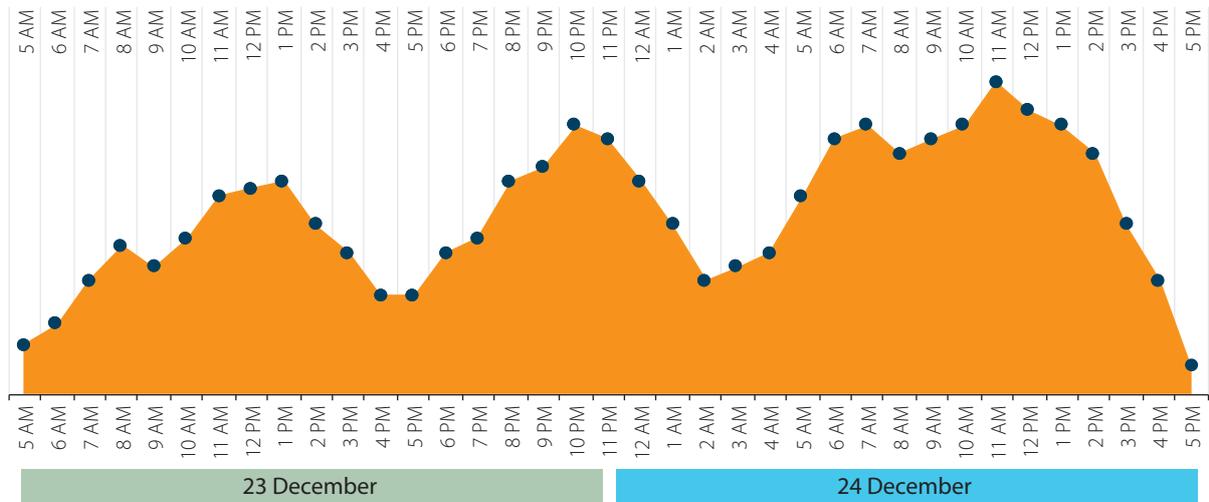
Unsurprisingly, Christmas is a major sales time for liquor retailers in Australia and globally. On average, alcohol sales in December are roughly 60 percent higher than the typical month. The combination of the warm weather and the party season also sees a particular surge in sales of Australian sparkling wine. A reasonable proportion of alcohol sales in December aren't for consumption, but as gifts for Christmas Day. One survey found that after gift cards and gadgets, beverages are the most popular gift for men, and in the top five for women.

### AUSTRALIAN ALCOHOL RETAIL TURNOVER - PERCENT OF ANNUAL TOTAL BY MONTH



Source: FARE, ABS, ANZ

## SYDNEY SEAFOOD MARKET 36 HOUR CHRISTMAS MARATHON 23 AND 24 DECEMBER HOURLY VISITOR TREND



Source: Sydney Seafood Market, ANZ

In Europe, the holiday season brings an uptick in sales of champagne, especially in France, although inflationary impacts there have seen champagne consumption fall as consumers move to cheaper Prosecco, Cava and Crémant. In the UK, mulled wine, a spiced and heated red wine, is a holiday favourite. While gin also remains a popular purchase for Christmas in the UK and the US, it has begun to see lower Christmas sales in these markets since the peak of the gin hype in the late 2010s. In terms of Christmas foods, Italy's panettone, a traditional sweet bread, also sees massive demand, with over 70 percent of Italians purchasing it at this time of year.

In Asia, holiday traditions are more varied across countries, but unique local delicacies feature prominently. In the Philippines, Noche Buena is a traditional Christmas Eve feast featuring local favourites like lechon (roast pig), queso de bola (cheese balls), and a variety of sweets and pastries. In contrast, in Japan, fried chicken - especially KFC - has become a staple of the Christmas season, with millions ordering their "Christmas Chicken" weeks in advance.

### THE PERFECT TIMING: WHEN TO HIT THE MARKETS

For the Christmas shopper looking to snap up the freshest produce, especially for non-cured meats and salads, the ideal time is typically the week before the big day. This is when FBA companies ramp up deliveries to meet last-minute demand. However, for items like seafood, Christmas Eve is often the prime time. While the trade-off is that prawn prices may spike by 10-20 percent as 24 December approaches, many people are happy to do this to guarantee the freshest product.

### STRATEGIC STOCKING: FBA'S PREPARATIONS FOR HOLIDAY DEMAND

Behind every Christmas ham and pudding lies a carefully planned effort months in the making. FBA companies start gearing up for Christmas as early as July, increasingly using data analytics to predict demand. It's not just about producing enough products to meet demand but also

about storing perishable goods strategically, to ensure that the prawns stay chilled and champagne remains bubbly for Christmas Day.

Logistics are also vitally important to meet the demands of the period. Companies expand their warehousing and often need extra fleet vehicles to handle deliveries during peak times. Without these careful plans, supply shortages could leave supermarkets with empty shelves and sparse Christmas tables.

Overall, Christmas season sales make up a major part of annual revenue for some FBA businesses, especially in the beverage, retail and speciality Christmas product sector, and for some of them, it can make or break their annual targets.

### THE POST-NEW YEAR SLOWDOWN: NAVIGATING THE JANUARY LULL

Once Christmas has passed and the New Year fireworks have faded, the FBA industry faces the post-holiday slowdown. With offices shut, and many Australians heading for their regular caravan park spot by the coast, sales drop sharply, and companies are left with the task of managing any leftover stock. Retailers typically slash prices to clear excess inventory - with an increasing number starting their traditional Boxing Day sales even before Christmas. With FBA companies needing to carefully plan seasonal transitions to avoid food waste, retailers might mark down their unsold hams, turkeys and other Christmas foods from Boxing Day onwards, allowing shoppers to stock up cheaply to feed their January guests.

### CONCLUSION: PREPARING FOR FUTURE FESTIVE FEASTS

From pavlova in Perth to sparkling wine in Sydney to panettone in Parma, Christmas feasts will be a highlight of the year to many families around the world. Perhaps a very well-deserved glass of that wine will be enjoyed by so many people right across food and beverage supply chain, breathing a sigh of relief that after months of work and planning, every treat has finally made it to the table - without a single elf-sized hitch!

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