

**Focus On: Functional food & drink by Ash O'Mahony ([Ashleigh.omahony@wrbm.com](mailto:Ashleigh.omahony@wrbm.com))**

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**Online Listicle to go live on 3 May:** What are the main innovations & how are they shaping the market

## The Story

Feeling down? Have some chicken. It may sound odd (and hardly comforting), but the British institution of cheering yourself up with tea and a biscuit is apparently missing the mark. In fact, a raft of studies over the past few years have found various food groups can have a profound effect on mental health and mood. Tryptophan in meat, for example, is a precursor of serotonin, while refined sugars can impair brain function and worsen mood disorders like depression. The concept of diet affecting mood opens a lot of doors for functional food and drink brands. And people are noticing – for example, Mondelez has just bought a stake in 'good mood food' brand Uplift Foods. So what are the key areas for potential growth in mood foods? And what are the legislative hoops players in the sector would need to jump through?

### Themes to cover:

**Good Mood Foods:** Mondelez may be investing in it, but who else is looking to enter the 'good mood food' sector? How do mood-enhancing products fit into current health claim legislation, and how aware is the modern day consumer in the various links between diet and mood?

**Gut health:** Mood and the gut aren't just linked. More than 90% of our serotonin receptors are located in the gut, which makes gut health strongly correlated to how we feel, and visa versa. How can brands capitalise on this, and is anyone already making good mood promises on pack?

**Snacking:** How is the snacking sector faring in functional this year? What have been the key innovations, and how are shopping behaviours changing in functional on the go purchases?

**Botanicals:** You can't move for ginger and turmeric in functional food and drink these days, but are any botanicals jostling to be the next big thing in functional ingredients? Which brands are branching out in botanical use, and how are they faring?

**Own label:** Which functional sectors have received the most own label attention this year, and why?

**Functional drinks:** What are the emerging trends in functional beverages? What are the benefits of new entrants into the category, and who is buying them?

**Start-ups:** As one of the hottest FMCG categories, a start-up seems to be born every minute in the functional sector. Who are the newest kids on the block, and what are the emerging trends they're pushing forward?

**Innovations:** We identify four new products that ideally have not appeared in The Grocer before. including launch date, image and RSP.