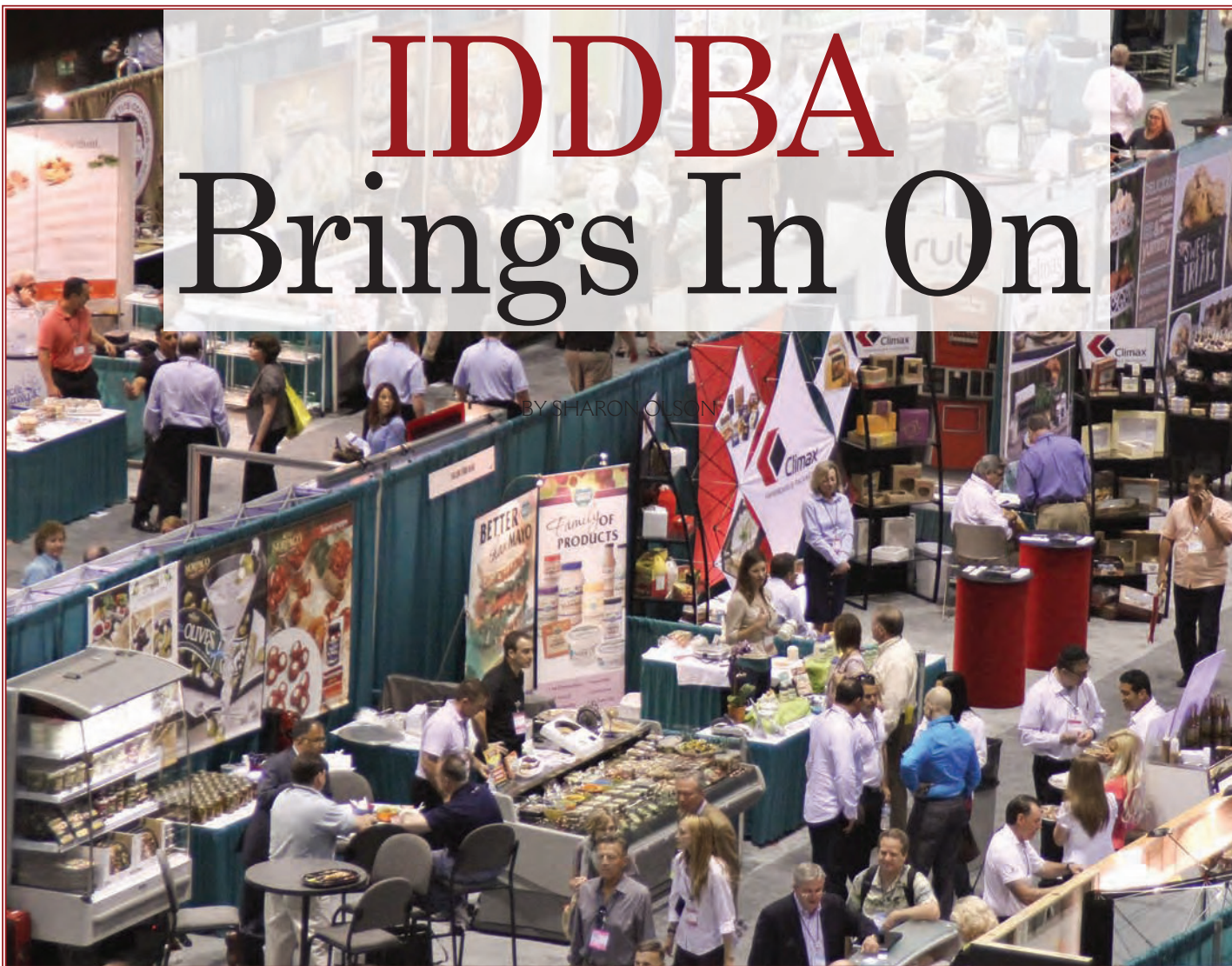


IDDBA Brings In On



BY SHARON OLSON

This annual conference brings together leaders in the dairy deli and bakery business. 2013 was a record setting year with attendance of 9,000 professionals and more than 1,700 exhibitors. Products, programs and conversations focused on the challenges and opportunities of consistently delivering healthy, interesting, fresh and delicious food to consumers.

Deliciousness as a Lifestyle Choice

Food has to be delicious to appeal to consumers—from the value conscious to the gourmet. In an opening presentation, the CNN List of the Top 50 most delicious foods woke up the audience because it included some of the most notorious processed foods of minimal nutritional value. IDDBA chairperson Voni Woods, senior director of deli at Giant Eagle inspired attendees with her personal commitment to helping consumers of all income levels understand that there are no evil ingredients. Balance and mindfulness of portion sizes can

inspire all consumers to make deliciousness their lifestyle choice.

The Transformed Consumer

Economic conditions have created a new scrutiny of value by consumers across every socio-economic level. Technology has made everything “smart,” empowering consumers with information to fuel their decision making. Consumers are smart and connected, valuing the opinions of their peers more than manufacturer messaging.

Trust is a significant factor in brand choices. Millennial consumers in particular are evaluating companies not only on their products and their brands, but on their corporate conscience.

Evolving Store Formats

Consumer confidence in on-line shopping for food is growing and retailers are watching, exploring and creating more on-line shopping experiences. A key initiative for many retailers is ramping up their web presence to include key words that consumers

will use to search for food rather than using words that are used by industry insiders to describe how food is sold.

Understanding Artisan

Descriptive words without a standard of identity proliferate to the point that they become meaningless. When it comes to cheese, “artisan” really does mean something and there is the growing understanding that artisan cheeses are those made mostly by hand, in small batches and in keeping with cheese-making traditions.

Those classified as “farmstead” are made on a farm with milk from its own animals.

Healthier Sides and Salads

The trend towards more healthful preparations of sides and salads shows no sign of slowing down. In a recent Culinary Visions Panel Survey of deli consumers, salad concept recipes that were fresh and healthful scored as high as traditional and more indulgent recipes with consumers. Consumers are also expressing interested in grain-based sal-

ads and those with ethnic flavors.

Side dishes are important because they help complete meals for busy consumers. A new line of southern style side dishes called "Fixin's" is meant to turn rotisserie chicken easily into a complete and satisfying meal.

Food and Flavor Trends

Bacon and Nutella—The of-the-moment flavors that will make almost anything more appealing to consumers.

Global Sandwiches—Globally inspired

ingredients, breads, wraps and condiments are adding new appeal to this already popular category.

Baby Bites—Making a big impression are tiny bites that are easy and elegant tastes from sweet to savory highlighted in the picks and bites ideas from Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board.

Re-inventing the Crunch—Wafer thin crackers and chips made with lentils, pasta and grits were sampled in a variety of flavors or for dipping. Lentil chips boasted gluten

free goodness in a shelf stable package with hummus for healthful snacking on the go. Brownie brittle and dark chocolate pretzel thins seen at several shows are coming on as the new dessert chip.

Savory Cones—Ice creams cones took a savory turn filled with falafel, mini meatballs and other savory fillings.

Clean Cuisine—Fresh and simple ingredients appeal to consumers looking for real food, pure and simple.

Layered and Luscious—Dessert indulgence features smaller portions delicately layered with taste, texture and eye-appeal.

Happy Tasting—New eco-tasters promise to make it easier for consumers to get a full size taste of deli products. A durable flat scoop is folded into a tasting scoop that is easy for the taster, hassle free for deli employees and promises to be cost-effective and compostable.

Taste Talk Tweet

Tweeters promoted a new pretzel bread bite product concept that was marketed as the new tortilla chip and used as a base for nachos; Mediterranean snacks being marketed as tapas-to-go; and a new-to-market Peruvian pepper that could replace Pappadew. Chicken burgers and meatballs were touted as better for you protein solutions for delis. Mobile-inclined attendees also noted new microwavable packaging that allows retail meal solutions to be sold as fully plated entrées.

Implications for Food Marketers

Expanded Flavor Portfolios—Categories like chips and hummus were seen with huge arrays of alternative flavors including original recipes, those with a fresh hit of lemon or boldly flavored heat and sweet.

Consumer Trust—Today's consumer is active and in charge when it comes to the foods they like and the places they like to eat thanks to social media interaction with their friends and trusted sources. Savvy marketers have learned how to stimulate or join the conversation, not just react to fallout.

Understand the why of the consumers' relationship with food. Demographics are only the beginning of understanding how to please today's consumer; understanding their perspectives and why they make the choices they do is key to success.

Mindfulness and Balance—Consumers evaluate healthfulness of many criteria including ingredients, emotion and social concern. Traditional free-from claims are moving to more contemporary claims that sell fresh and homemade with clean ingredient statements. Ethical food is becoming a cue for healthy.

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