

PRESS RELEASE

12 September 2016: Food & beverage industry poised for 'innovation heyday'

Qualitative research undertaken by Science Group companies Leatherhead Food Research and Oakland Innovation indicates that the food and beverage industry may be heading for an 'age of innovation'.

In-depth interviews with leading global brands revealed a trend for more creative, open-minded and collaborative activity to overcome sector challenges. Interviewees talked extensively about a rise in democratic approaches to innovation as well as out-of-sector inspiration and consumer-centricity. There was widespread acknowledgement that brands need to foster big ideas, not just incremental product development. Leatherhead's MD Chris Wells will be presenting a first view of the findings at the NLS Food Evolution Summit in California on 13 and 14 September.

"Leading food and beverage brands are taking a long hard look at their approach to innovation," Chris Wells explains. "Product development alone is not enough in today's always-on world where consumers have greater choice and power than ever before. Clever, customer-focused start-ups can quickly disrupt and colonise market segments that have been unchanged for decades.

"In this dynamic new environment, doing things as they have always been done is inherently risky. Getting the right balance of investment between incremental innovation and longer term, open innovation is vital to ensure food and beverage companies remain relevant with consumers. I am looking forward to sharing our findings with the audience later this week."

The research involved 27 in-depth interviews with senior innovation and new product development professionals from food and beverage companies in Europe and North America. More detailed findings will be released at Leatherhead's members' conference, [New Insights for Global Growth](#), on 4 October.

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Notes to editors:

About Leatherhead Food Research

Founded in 1919, Leatherhead Food Research has been a trusted partner to the food industry for nearly a century, offering an unparalleled breadth and depth of experience to help food and beverage companies, large and small, innovate and succeed. Covering the full product lifecycle, services range from offerings such as consumer insight, sensory testing and ground-breaking ingredient and product innovation to expert advisory work around food safety and global industry regulations. Leatherhead also operates an internationally recognised membership programme which represents a who's who of the food and drinks industry. Alongside Member support and project work, Leatherhead's industry professionals deliver cutting-edge research in areas that stimulate long term commercial benefit and growth for the food and drink industry.

Leatherhead Food Research is the trading name of Leatherhead Research Limited, a Science Group (AIM:SAG) company. Science Group provides independent advisory and leading-edge product development services focused on the Group's in-depth science and technology capability. It has six offices globally, two dedicated, UK-based R&D innovation centres and more than 350 employees. Other Science Group companies include Oakland Innovation, Sagentia and OTM Consulting.

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