

FoodPro Insights 2026



Every three years, the Hawkins Watts Australian & New Zealand teams come together in Melbourne to bring our ingredients to life at Foodpro. If you weren't able to make it to this year, we've pulled together our three top insights from Foodpro 2026.

Flavour tourism delivering authentic global cuisines and flavours brought in crowds.

Consumers are increasingly seeking authentic, culturally inspired food experiences, and this trend was evident throughout Foodpro. Global flavours were featured across multiple categories, such as ube and matcha with manufacturers looking beyond traditional flavour profiles to create products that deliver a sense of discovery and connection to different cuisines. Our authentic Mexican concepts showcased this trending cuisine brought to life with a range of our ingredients. Foodpro goers eagerly lined up to try our authentic flavour and format creations.

Functional foods and beverages have now become core product platforms.

Functionality was a key theme across the exhibition, with health and nutrition benefits extending into a wide range of categories. From fortified soft serve and high-protein dessert toppings to collagen-infused beverages and herbal formulations, exhibitors showcased a range of innovative functional formats. There was strong interest in health and nutrition solutions from attendees, reflecting strong consumer demand for products that combine taste, nutrition, and functionality.

- 34% of New Zealand consumers are interested in trying flavours inspired by the food or drink in other countries (Mintel Consumer Data, 2026)
- 36% of New Zealanders actively look for new foods and flavours to try all or most of the time (Mintel, 2025)
- 58.3% of Australians are interested in incorporating more natural functional ingredients into their diet (Mintel Consumer Data, 2025)
- 33% of New Zealand consumers say high protein content is a top factor when shopping for food (Mintel, 2026)
- Collagen is appearing in mainstream drink innovation (Mintel ANZ, 2026)

On the Menu



Pineapple & Habanero sparkling soda
A low-sugar sparkling soda with a tropical habanero kick, added fibre and collagen.



Ube fortified soft serve
topped with high-protein yam puffs for added crunch.



Mexican Beef Tortillas
slow-cooked shredded beef tortillas, featuring smoky chipotle, cumin, paprika, garlic and onion flavours.



Creamy Queso & Mole dip with crispy corn chips. A rich, cheesy dip with authentic Mexican flavour, umami depth and a touch of heat, paired with crunchy tortilla chips and mole sauce.

On the Shelf



Mushu carbonated skincare drink with Vegan Collagen. Available in Raspberry Fizz and Pineapple Fizz.
(Mintel, Consumer Data)



Pic's Spicy Peanut Butter demonstrates the growing trend of combining familiar ingredients with bold new flavour profiles.
(Pics Peanut Butter)



Van Leeuwen's Mango Sticky Rice French Ice Cream demonstrates how international cuisines are inspiring new flavour innovation in mainstream categories.
(Mintel Consumer Data)



Ready meals featuring global flavours and tailored nutrition solutions for consumers using GLP-1 medications.
(Mintel Consumer Data)

“The strongest trends observed this year were the continued growth of ready meals, increased demand for functional benefits, adventurous flavour exploration, and a heightened focus on health and nutrition.”

-Lauren Robinson, Hawkins Watts Foodpro interview

Chilli is as hot as ever

Chilli was one of the standout flavour trends at Foodpro, featuring across multiple categories. Beyond heat, manufacturers showcased a variety of chilli profiles, from smoky and mild to bold and fiery, reflecting consumer demand for more adventurous flavour experiences is only getting stronger.

Get in touch

Foodpro Melbourne reinforced the importance of balancing authentic flavour experiences with meaningful health and wellness benefits. As these trends continue to evolve, manufacturers that successfully combine bold flavours, functionality, and consumer relevance will be well positioned for growth.

Contact us to learn more about the concepts we showcased at Foodpro and the ingredients helping drive innovation across a range of applications.

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HW Hawkins Watts Offerings

- ✓ Natural flavours, including Mexican Spice Blend, Ancho Chilli, Jalapeno Chilli, Habanero Chilli and more.
- ✓ Specialty extracts including yeast extracts and dairy extracts.
- ✓ Texture solutions.
- ✓ Natural colours.
- ✓ Natural sweeteners and sweetening systems.
- ✓ Cocoa powder, paste and liquor.

Please contact Hawkins Watts for more information Australia

+61 3 9561 3710 sales@hawkinswatts.com.au

New Zealand

+64 9 622 2720 sales@hawkinswatts.com

