



2026 Trends to Watch

+ Introduction to SFA Membership

Presented by:
Samantha Cary
Director of Industry
Communications, SFA



Together, we shape the future of food.™



2026 Trendspotter Report

Top Trends on Display at the
Summer Fancy Food Show





The 2026 Summer Fancy Food Show was full of new ideas, flavors and formats.

Our panel of specialty food industry experts walked more than 345,000 square feet of Show floor to identify the top trends driving the industry forward.



2026 Trendspotter Highlights



Comfort classics go global

"Promiscuous Palate" expands to comfort food as the trend invites new consumers in through familiar formats.

"From butter chicken frozen pizza to Korean-inspired oatmeal, manufacturers are infusing American comfort food staples with global flavors," said Dahnya Rogers. "The trend not only offers manufacturers an opportunity to bring new energy into pantry staples, but also gives consumers approachable ways to try out new flavors through products they're already purchasing."

"A butter chicken pizza isn't just a novelty; it's a way to differentiate in a mature category. When shoppers are scrutinizing every purchase, products that offer a unique experience can command a premium and deliver incremental value for retailers," said Carol Ortenberg.



"Honest Processing" predicted increased transparency behind how foods are made. Now, that shift is expanding to ingredients.

"Brands today are less focused on touting what's not in products, and are spotlighting what is in them – calling attention to accessible ingredients like honey, dates, bone broth, and avocado oil instead of the functional benefits themselves," said John Lane. "This trend combats the 'function fatigue' we're seeing among consumers and lets brands stand out through simplicity."

"Indulgence is making a return. Dates are having a serious moment and were all over the Fancy Food Show," said Fred Hart. "As brands continue searching for natural sweeteners with benefits beyond cane sugar, dates are quickly becoming one of the industry's favorite ingredients."





Bite-sized, Big Flavor

As GLP-1's remake the food industry and consumers demand flavor and nutrition density , "Appetite Reset" appears in bite-sized appetizers and snacks.

"From frozen dumplings and balls of all flavors to mini cakes and poppable desserts, small bites have a big advantage in today's marketplace," said Becky Nelson Dahl.

"The opportunity with bite-sized products isn't simply smaller portions, it's more occasions. By delivering big flavor and quality in offerings that are easier to try, share, and enjoy, brands can unlock new ways for consumers to engage with specialty food," said Ortenberg. "The winners will deliver a premium experience while aligning with evolving consumer habits."



"Rooted Rituals" predicted the rise of recipes that feel anchored in something real, including ancient recipes crafted with intention.

"As consumers seek healthier and more authentic foods, founders are increasingly looking backward. Just as yerba mate and açai introduced new beverage traditions to America, founders are digging even deeper into their own cultures for inspiration," said Fred Hart.

"Brands like La Milpa tortillas are adapting centuries-old recipes for today's consumers, using nixtamal in their tortillas and chips to honor their legacy and create something delicious," said Hernández. "It's not only about the flavor, it's about the ritual and tradition."



"Shelf-Stable Chic" anticipated the rise of a curated pantry that reflects consumers' identities and evolving values.

"To give consumers a sense of connection with the ingredients and products they're consuming, brands are hacking heritage to give artisanal, hand-crafted cues wherever they can," said Hernández.

"We're seeing more restraint in packaging: hand-drawn packaging art and muted organic colors, thoughtfully designed to lean into the qualities of the ingredients inside. When done right, the trend helps consumers feel a closer connection to the food and the all-natural, artisanal qualities they care about," said Nelson Dahl.



Playful, Purposeful Packaging

NEW AND EMERGING TREND.

“Sometimes innovation isn’t the product – it’s the package,” said Hart. “Applesauce in yogurt-style tubes, honey in toothpaste bottles, chocolate in cigarette-style packs, and balsamic in squeeze bottles showed how rethinking the format can make familiar products feel entirely new.”

“Brands are bringing a sense of playfulness and purpose to packaging,” said Maggie McGlinchy. “Not only are they bucking long-standing trends, but they’re using thoughtful innovations like packaging kimchi in single-use sachets to unlock even more usage occasions.”





Interested in more trend reports?

Join us at Winter FancyFaire* in San Francisco, January 17-19, 2027!

We'll be watching how these trends evolve and will announce SFA's 2027 Trend of the Year.

From a city-wide Campus Tasting Trail to live chef demonstrations and fun networking events, Winter FancyFaire* is sure to inspire new ways of thinking and start the year off right!



SFA Membership

Benefits Overview





Benefits of SFA Membership



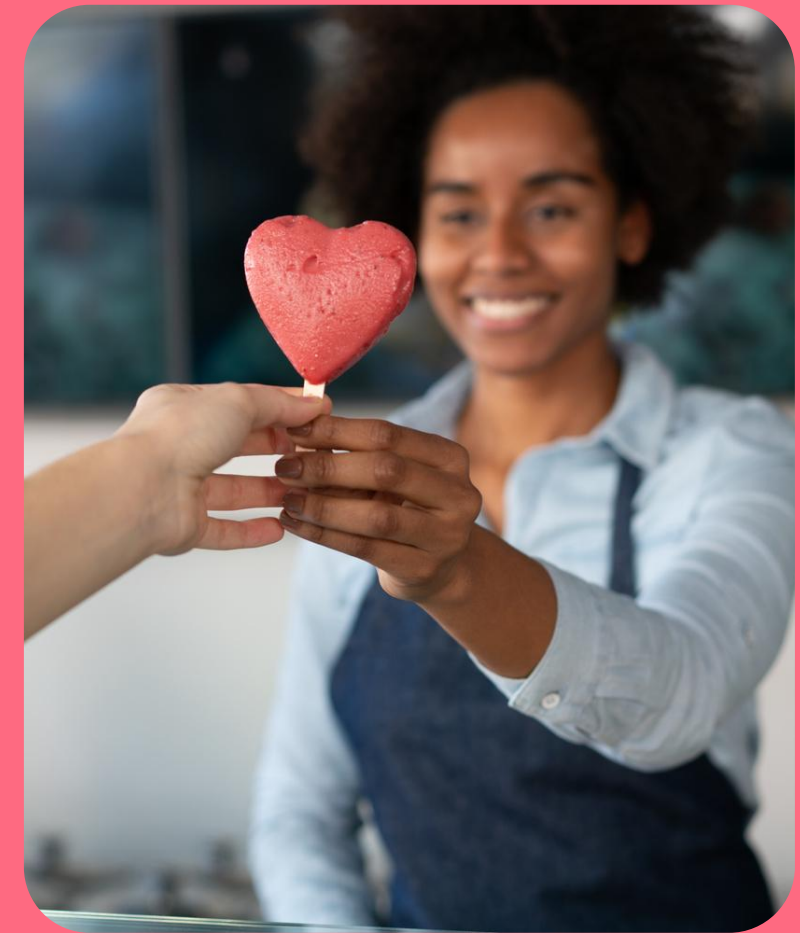
**Community &
Market Access**



**Education &
Insights**



**Visibility &
Promotion**



**Business-Building
Tools**



SFA Trade Shows

sfa summer
fancy food
show

sfa Winter
Fancy Faire*

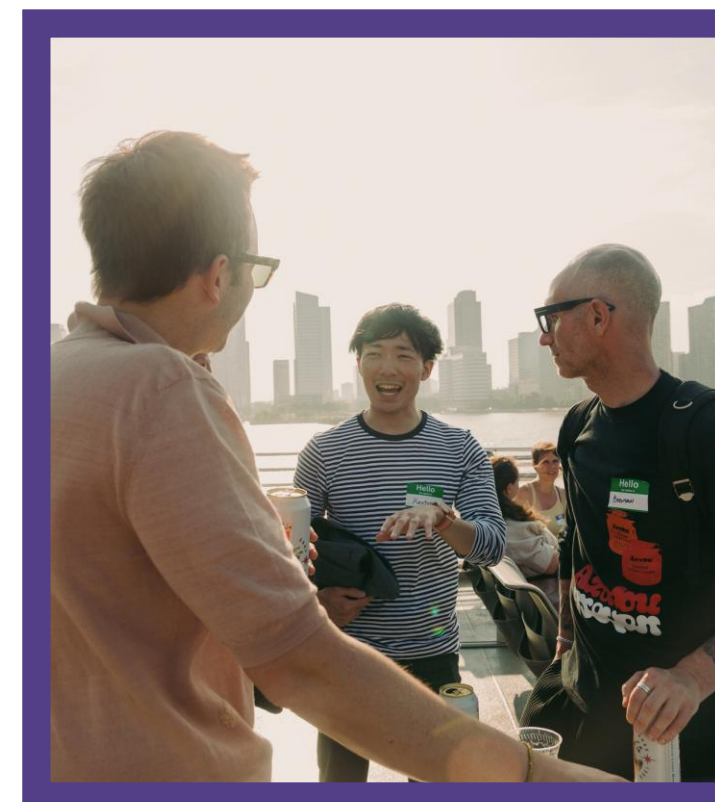


Only SFA members
may exhibit



Discounted
attendee badges
for SFA members

Networking
opportunities
including New
Member Party (NYC)



Networking & Mentorship



**Opportunities to forge
new connections across
the industry**



**“I like that the person
who was selected for me is
the right match. Not just
someone in the food field, but
someone that worked in the
same category as my product
and gone through the same
challenges.”**

**- Peter Chehadeh,
Mentee, Cohort 1**

**“Our whole industry wins
when suppliers succeed.
Working with up-and-
coming food makers through
this program was truly
invigorating. I feel more
optimistic than ever about the
future of specialty food.”**

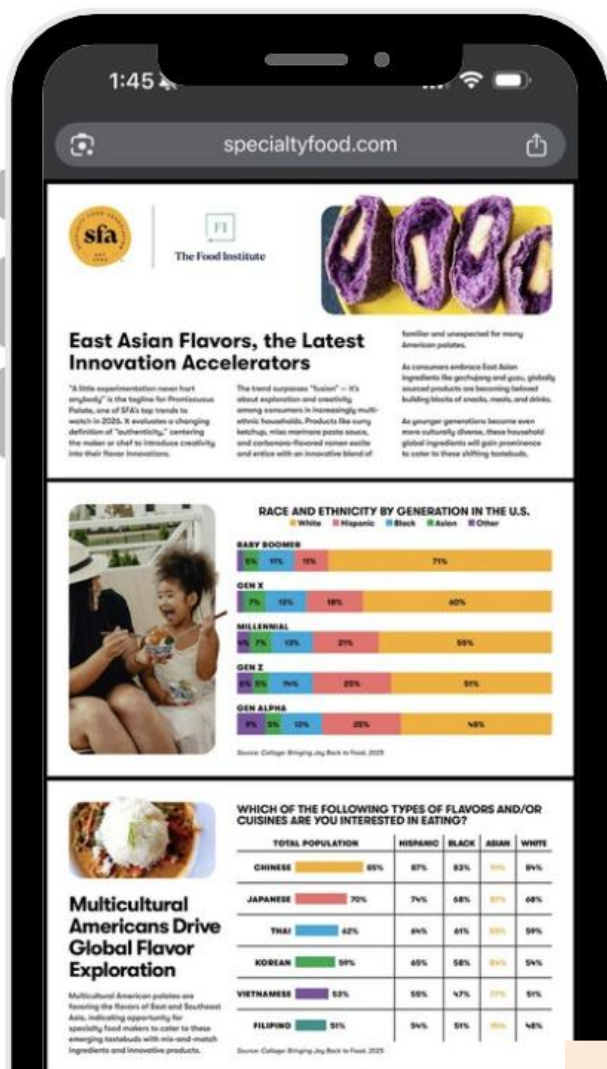
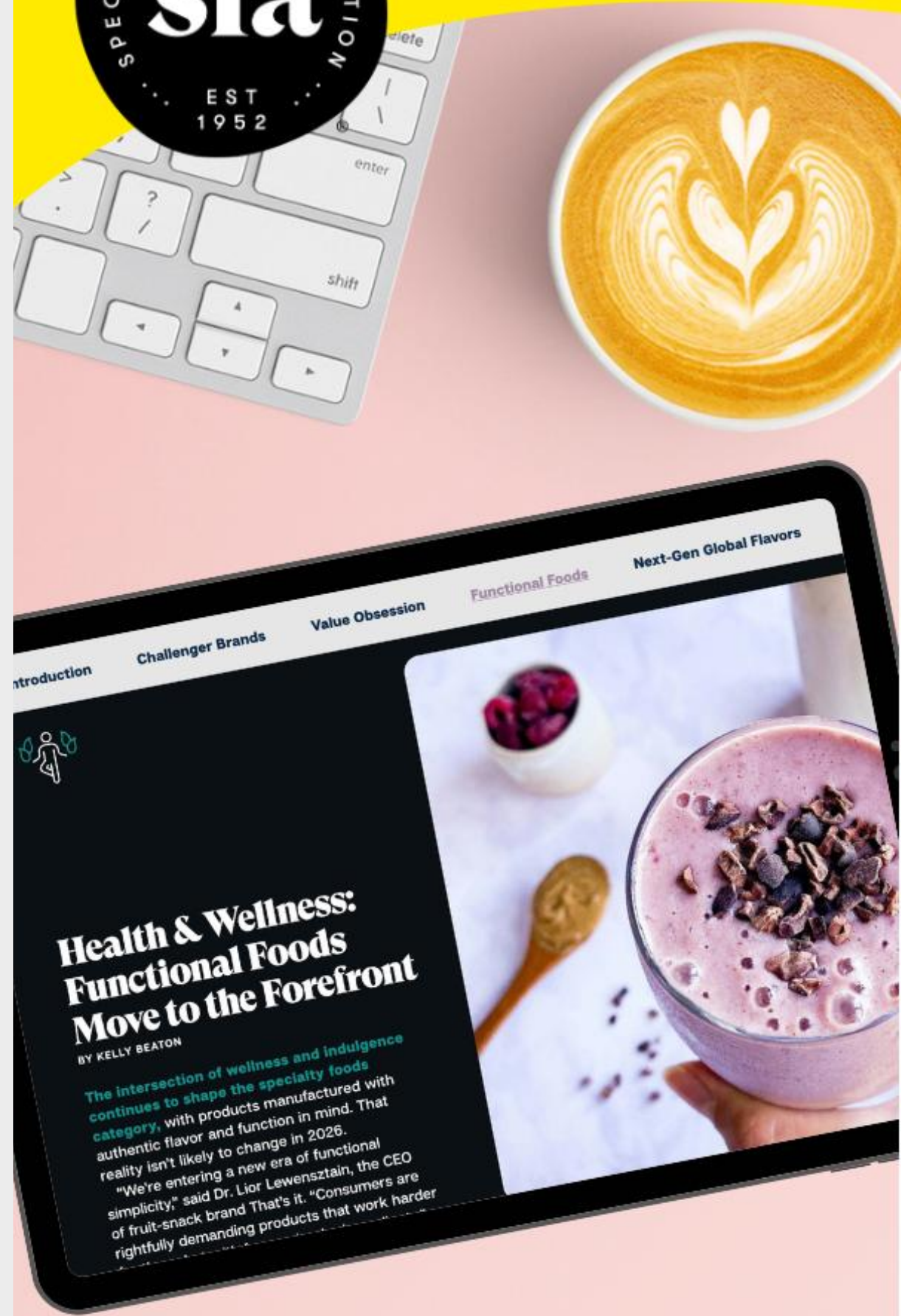
**—Elizabeth Hemphill-Burns,
Mentor, Cohort 1 and 2**





Research Resources

Complimentary access to research and trends reports





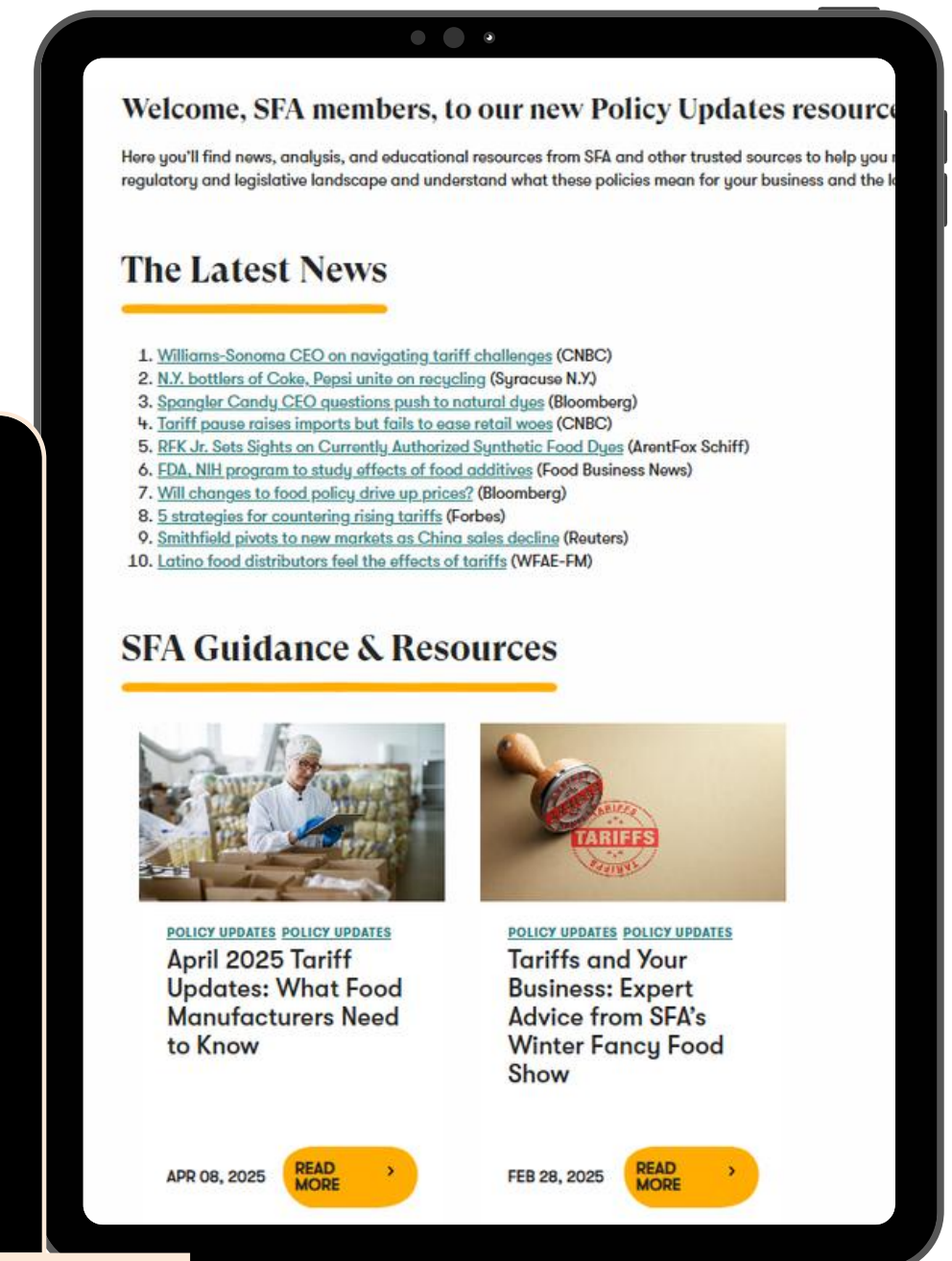
Legal & Legislative Resources

Stay ahead of tariffs, regulations, and other legislative changes with SFA support.

- Weekly News Briefs
- Preferred Pricing for Legal Services
- Expert-Led Info Sessions



ArentFox
Schiff





Educational Resources

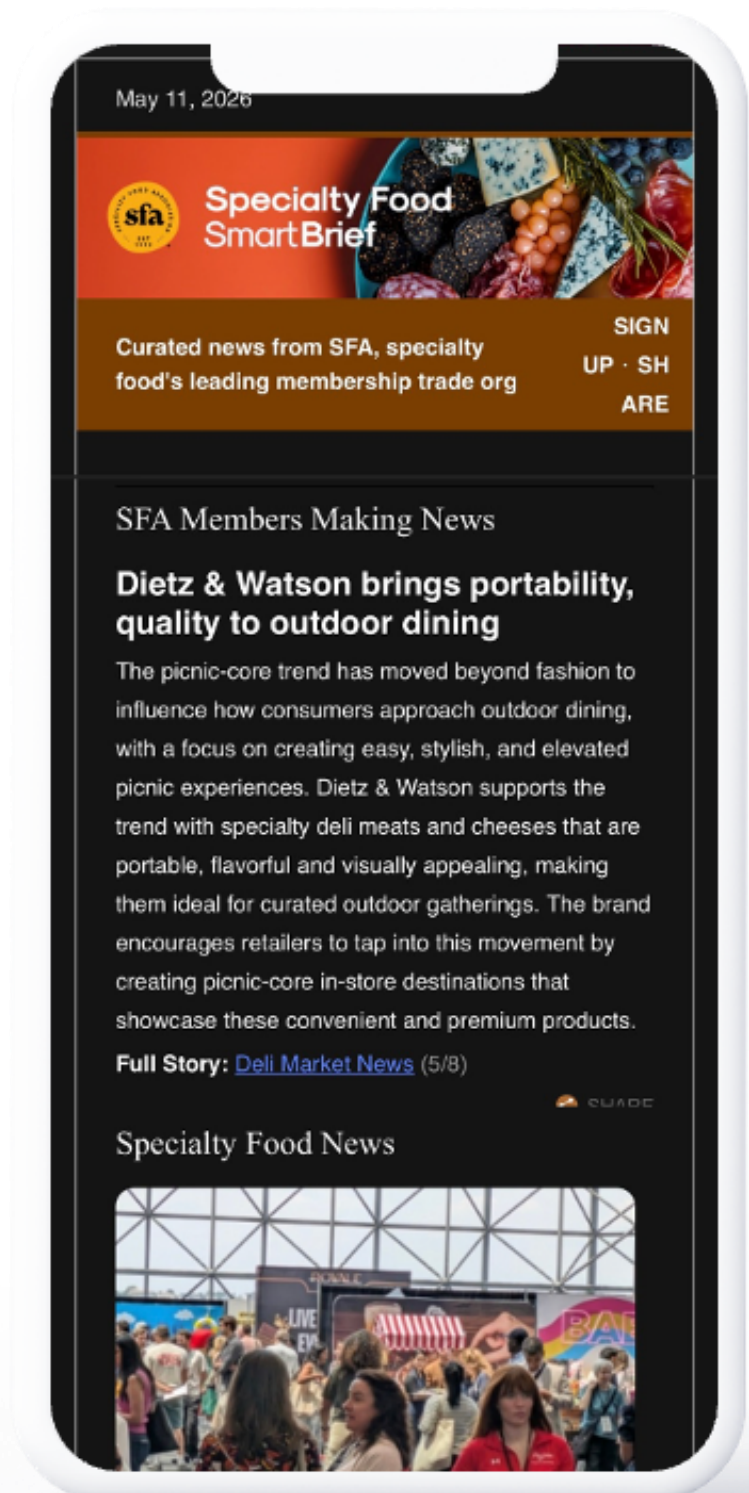
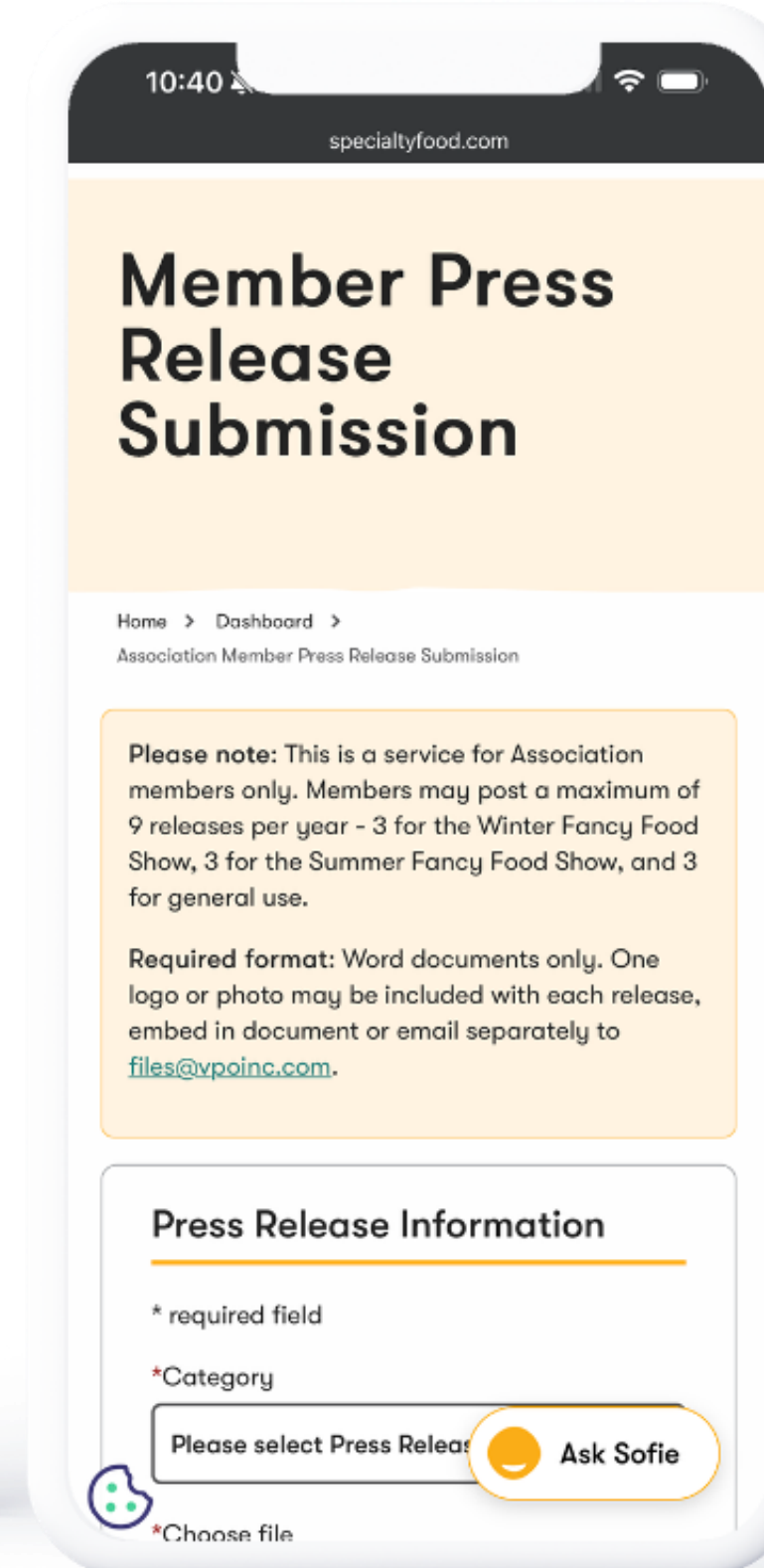
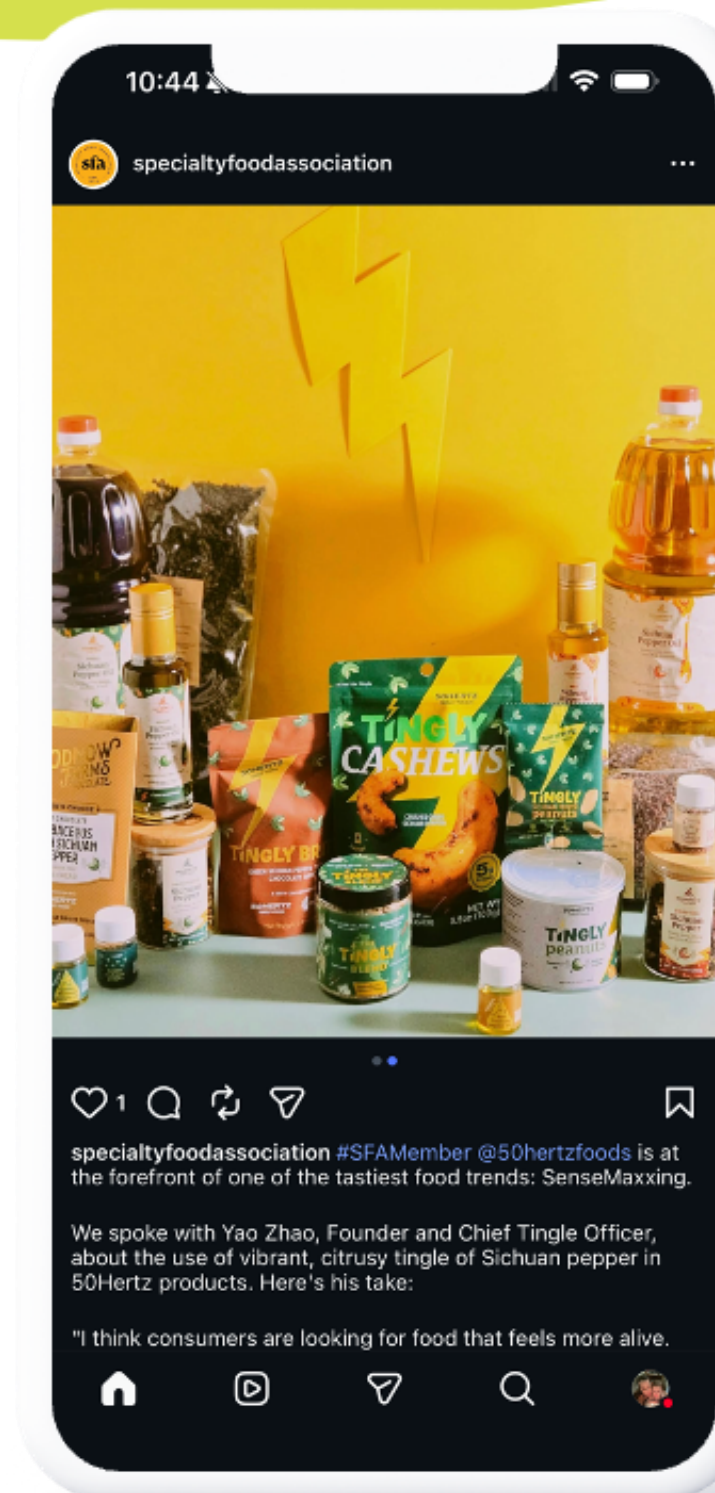
Tailored webinars and courses
to grow your business





Marketing & PR Support

- Spotlights on SFA Social Media Platforms
- Press Release Distribution
- News Highlights in Specialty Food SmartBrief Email Newsletter





Free Product Photography

Monthly photoshoots provide 100 members with professional white-background product photos





Awards Programs

Earn recognition within and beyond the industry





Offers and Discounts from SFA Premier Providers

**SFA works with
service providers to
develop special offers
to help members grow
their businesses**





Additional Special Offers & Discounts



Discounted membership

Exclusive SFA Member Collections



**Free deductions audit
3 free months for new users**

Current users get 10% annual discount



Q&A

**If you're interested in
Membership or have any
questions about SFA, please
reach out!**

scary@specialtyfood.com
[membership@specialtyfood.](mailto:membership@specialtyfood.com)
[com](mailto:membership@specialtyfood.com)

Thank you!

