



# GHRA In Action

OUR MEMBERS ARE OUR MISSION!

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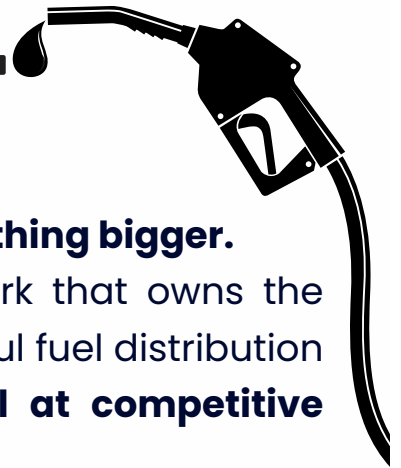
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# Five Key Trends Impacting the Future of Snacking

**Spicy and pickled-flavor snacks signal consumer demand for adventurous taste experiences.**

By Danielle Romano

CHICAGO — Snacking is no longer a side habit, but it's become the main event in American eating patterns. Consumers' evolving behavior is evidenced by the U.S. snack market reaching \$148.6 billion in annual sales for the 52 weeks ended March 23, according to Circana.

In its augural "Future of Snacking 2025" report, Conagra Brands Inc. leveraged demand science and insights expertise in partnership with Circana LLC to identify five key trends that are shaping snacking behaviors and influencing how consumers navigate an increasingly diverse snack landscape.

According to Bob Nolan, senior vice president of demand science at Conagra Brands, when looking at the U.S. market, snacking momentum is fueled by two primary growth drivers.

First, protein-forward snacks are experiencing rapid growth, driven by increasing consumer interest in satiety, energy and wellness. This segment includes protein bars, meat sticks, jerky, trail mixes and seeds. These snacking options align with the growing demand for better-for-you snacking options that also provide functional benefits, he pointed out during an exclusive media preview of the "Future of Snacking" call on Aug. 26.

Second, lunchbox staples — affordable, convenient snacks with broad appeal — continue to thrive. Items like peanut butter or cheese sandwich crackers, potato chips, pretzels and snack bars have become mainstays in lunchboxes, backpacks and beyond, thanks to their reliability and ease of use in daily routines.

"We've seen a transformation in consumer snacking habits in recent years. Snacking has evolved from a simple between-meal habit into a lifestyle, and winning in this space means delivering the right food at the right time," Nolan said.

"Today's consumers want bold flavors, better-for-you options and choices that bring both taste and purpose. Our 'Future of Snacking' report shows emerging trends and how Conagra is helping shape that future."



While focused on the U.S. market, the report also covers relevant global snacking trends and behaviors.

The 2025 emerging trends, according to Conagra, are:

## 1. Flavor Explosion

Classic favorites like sea salt, barbecue and nacho cheese remain top sellers, but bold newcomers — sriracha, garlic parmesan and hot honey — are driving rapid growth. Social media-fueled trends, like pickle-flavored-everything, are influencing both retail and foodservice menus, signaling consumer demand for adventurous taste experiences.

## 2. Snacking Without Borders

Globally inspired snacks are booming, with retail sales hitting \$5.7 billion and 22% volume growth over the past three years. Younger consumers are driving interest in flavors like gochujang, sweet chili and mango habanero, reflecting a shift toward multicultural taste exploration.

## 3. Better-for-You Snacking

Protein-forward, portion-controlled and nutrient-dense snacks are on the rise — especially among Generation Z and millennials. Subcategories like meat sticks, nuts, seeds and probiotic-enhanced snacks are outpacing total category growth as "grass-fed" and "gut health" claims are resonating with wellness-focused shoppers.

## 4. Cobranded Bites

Strategic partnerships with restaurant, retail and entertainment brands are fueling growth, with cobranded snacks generating nearly \$2.1 billion in combined annual sales. Flavorful collaborations with fan-favorite sauces, candy brands and more are bringing instant recognition and craveable appeal to the snack aisle.

## 5. Snacks on the Go

Convenience in snacking isn't just about grab-and-go packaging anymore, it's about being everywhere consumers are. In fact, convenience is driving consumption, with away-from-home snack occasions projected to grow 39% by 2027. From bulk-buys online to snack-sized treats at store checkouts, snacks are winning by showing up in more places, more often, in the right format for every occasion, Conagra revealed. ■





# Stocking the Shelves: *It's the Little Things*

To build the best experience possible for your customers, you want to make sure everything in your store is as good as it can be. You have great employees, a great store layout, and an amazing selection of products – but are those same products being displayed as well as they should be? Stocking your shelves well can be deceptively difficult, and very easy to overlook if you're not checking them often. Many employees think that it's “just” stocking shelves, so how hard can it be? Unfortunately, that leads them to miss a lot of the nuances involved in the process.

By [ReadyConvenience.com](https://www.readyconvenience.com)

## ***Why Is Stocking So Important?***

On the most basic level, stocking the shelves is how you can make your product available for customers to buy. However, it has some less obvious benefits as well:

- **Inventory Control:** If your employees stock the shelves in your store often, then your inventory in the back is more stable. You won't have big drops from someone needing to restock an entire shelf all at once, since they'll just be “topping off” the shelves. This can help you keep a better eye on the inventory and better know when you need to order more product just from taking a glance in the back.
- **Expiration Dates:** Your employees should be trained to check the expiration dates on your products while

stocking the shelves. This can give you a better idea of how fast you're selling product, and your employees can take expired products off the shelves while they're stocking, preventing an unlucky customer from buying an expired item. Your store can greatly benefit from employees showing this level of care while doing something as routine as stocking shelves.

- **Improving Customer Experience:** Your customers are in your store for a reason: they want to buy something you have, or hope you have. Having full shelves not only makes it easier for them to buy what they want, but they'll notice that you're well-stocked. This can inspire confidence that you'll have what they need next time as well, and they'll be much more likely to return. ■

# RVP Fuel Changes 2025: Impact on Gulf & Atlanta Retailers

RVP changes are coming in 2025 – here's what gas station operators need to do now.

By MostEdge.com

The fuel industry is shifting, and if you're in the c-store business, you need to be ready. Fall 2025 marks a major change in Reid Vapor Pressure (RVP) regulations, impacting gasoline transported from the Gulf Coast to the U.S. Atlanta Coast – including Atlanta and other key markets.

If you're not prepared, you could face supply chain disruptions, higher fuel costs, and compliance headaches. But here's the good news: those who stay ahead of the curve will gain a competitive advantage.

This isn't just about keeping up. It's about leading the way.

## Why RVP Matters (and Why You Should Care)

Reid Vapor Pressure (RVP) measures how quickly gasoline evaporates, which impacts air pollution. The EPA has been tightening restrictions for years, and in 2025, new regulations will make it even tougher to sell high-RVP gasoline in certain markets.

Translation?

- Your fuel supply could change.
- Prices could shift.
- Compliance will be critical.

And if you're not tracking how much fuel is in your tanks and whether it meets the new RVP standards, you're rolling the dice on your business.

## What This Means for C-Store Retailers

Let's break it down. How will this impact your day-to-day operations?



### 1. Fuel Supply Adjustments (aka: Don't Get Caught Off Guard)

- Refineries and pipelines will shift production to meet to new lower-RVP requirements.
- Colonial and Plantation pipelines may restrict or reschedule fuel shipments, which could mean delays or temporary shortages.
- If you don't plan ahead, you could end up with non-compliant fuel that you can't sell.

### 2. Price Volatility (Because Change Always Costs Money)

- Producing lower-RVP gasoline costs refiners \$0.03-\$0.10 more per gallon, and those costs will likely trickle down to retailers.
- Expect fuel prices to rise by \$0.05-\$0.15 per gallon, depending on your location.
- If supply tightens, some markets could see even higher spikes.

### 3. Compliance Challenges (and Avoiding Expensive Mistakes)

- If you mix high-RVP and low-RVP fuel in your tanks, you could end up with inventory you can't legally sell.
- Not meeting RVP compliance deadlines could result in fines and penalties.
- Managing fuel inventory manually? That's a risk you don't need to take.

## What You Should Do Right Now

- ✓ **Talk to your suppliers.** Ask them how they're handling the RVP transition and whether price adjustments or supply shifts are expected.
- ✓ **Audit your inventory.** Make sure your fuel rotation strategy ensures a smooth transition before the new RVP rules kick in.
- ✓ **Train your team.** Make sure your staff understands what's changing, why it matters, and how to handle customer questions about price fluctuations or fuel differences.
- ✓ **Use the right tech.** If you're still tracking fuel manually, you're at a disadvantage. mercury|One automates the process, giving you full control over your fuel operations with zero guesswork.

If you want to stay ahead, protect your profits, and keep your gas station operating smoothly in 2025, now's the time to act. ■



# The Benefits of Having Food Service in Your Convenience Store

In today's competitive retail environment, convenience stores are more than just quick stops for fuel, snacks, and drinks. Many successful operators are finding that adding food service—whether it's grab-and-go meals, fresh sandwiches, or a branded quick-service restaurant—can dramatically increase both sales and customer loyalty. Here are some of the key benefits of offering food service in your store:

## **1. Drive Higher Sales and Profits**

Food service items typically carry higher margins than packaged snacks or beverages. By offering hot meals, fresh coffee, or prepared foods, stores can significantly boost average ticket size and overall profitability. Customers who come in for a meal are also more likely to purchase additional items, like drinks or desserts.

## **2. Differentiate From the Competition**

With so many options for fuel and packaged goods, food service helps set your store apart. A signature food program—like fresh tacos, fried chicken, or specialty sandwiches—creates a reason for customers to choose your location over competitors. Unique menu items or a recognized brand can become a destination in themselves.

## **3. Increase Customer Loyalty and Repeat Visits**

Food brings people back more often. While someone might only stop for fuel once a week, they may come in daily for a breakfast taco, coffee, or lunch option. A consistent, quality food program builds customer habits that translate into repeat business.

## **4. Expand Daypart Opportunities**

Fuel and packaged goods often rely heavily on peak traffic periods, but food service can extend your sales throughout

the day. Breakfast sandwiches in the morning, hot lunches at noon, and quick dinners in the evening keep customers flowing in during hours that might otherwise be slow.

## **5. Enhance Your Brand Image**

Offering fresh, high-quality food elevates your store's reputation. Customers begin to view your location not just as a convenience store, but as a trusted stop for meals. This improved perception often spills over into other areas, boosting sales across categories.

## **6. Capture Changing Consumer Demand**

Today's consumers are busier than ever and increasingly seek quick, affordable, and tasty meal solutions. By providing ready-to-eat food, convenience stores can meet this growing demand without customers needing to make an extra stop at a fast-food chain.

## **7. Attract New Customer Segments**

Food service broadens your appeal. Families, office workers, and younger consumers looking for convenient meal options are more likely to visit your store if you offer satisfying food choices. It's an effective way to bring in new traffic beyond your regular fuel customers.

## **Final Thought**

Food service is no longer just an optional add-on for convenience stores—it's becoming a key driver of growth and differentiation. By offering fresh, well-executed food programs, operators can boost profits, attract new customers, and keep people coming back again and again. In a crowded market, food may be the secret ingredient to long-term success. ■



# OPTIONAL IN-STORE PROMOTIONS

## Promotional Dates

10/1 to 10/31

## Package Size

16oz Cans

## Regular Cost

\$20.00

## Promotional Discount

\$1.50

## Net Case Cost

\$18.50

## Suggested Retail/Margin

2/\$5.00

Blended Margin 46%

## Regular Retail/Margin

\$3.29/53%

## Promo Retail/Margin

\$2.50/38%

## THE ULTIMATE FLAVOR TRIP



# 2 <sup>\$</sup>5 FOR

**Includes all PRIME Energy 16oz singles**

OR ONE AT REGULAR RETAIL • WHILE SUPPLIES LAST • OFFER VALID 9-1-25 TO 10-31-25

COOLER DOOR STATIC CLING

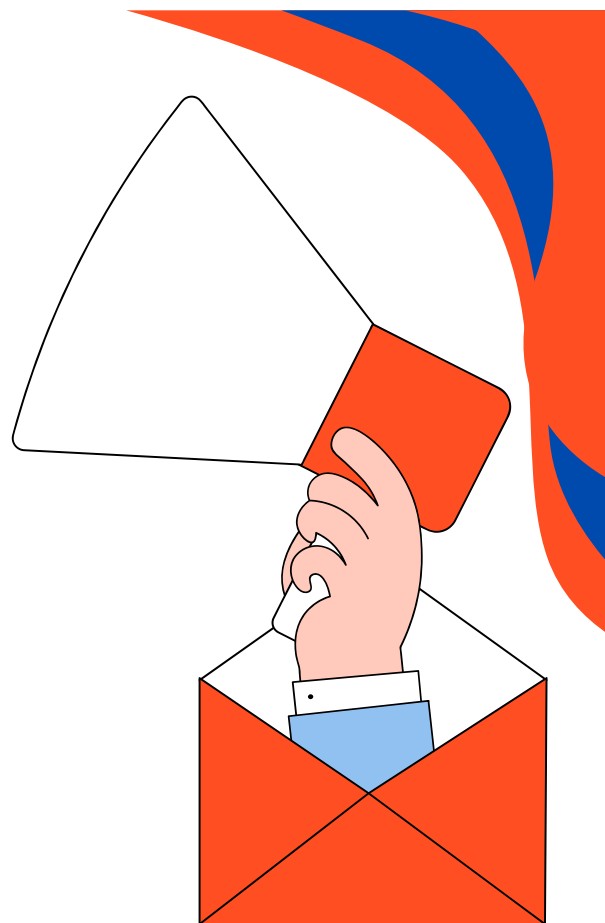
Promotions featured under *Instore In Action* in the magazine are optional for members. Only participating stores in the promotional deal will qualify for reduced Cost of Goods Sold.

# WE ARE HIRING!

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Position Needed

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"An organization's greatest asset is not its strategy—it's the strength of its people working in unity."





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