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### Focus on the Future 2010

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SCOTTSDALE, Ariz.—Professionals from the supply, manufacturing and retail channels met at the Hyatt Regency Resort & Spa at Gainey Ranch in Scottsdale, AZ, from Feb. 16 to 19 at Virgo Publishing's Focus on the Future Trends & Strategy Forum for networking, educational sessions and industry discussion.

"Focus on the Future once again delivered great educational content and fantastic networking opportunities," said Peggy Jackson, vice president, health & nutrition division, Virgo Publishing. "I've received many compliments from both first time attendees and veterans of the event. The format and venue were excellent, and the sunshine in the middle of February was outstanding."

#### Education

The two-day education program, co-sponsored by Lesaffre Human Care and Proprietary Nutritionals, addressed sustainability, consumer trends, marketing strategies and much more.

Following are some highlights:

Jay Golden, Ph.D., assistant professor, school of sustainability, Arizona State University, and co-director of the Sustainability Consortium, opened the conference with a discussion on the need for a regulated sustainable product system—one that is transparent and grounded in science—as many "green" claims go unchecked. With population growth leading to increased consumption and "expansive" use of natural resources, Golden says companies need to "address environmental, social and economic imperatives. Sustainability is moving forward, and you need to be ready for it."

Melissa Abbott, trends and culinary insights manager, The Hartman Group, Inc., offered insight into which foods and beverages consumers are choosing, and why. Today, she said, consumers are looking for naturally functional foods that help with emotional and mental needs, and they're looking for trendy ingredients, such as green tea, coconut water, omega-3s and grass-fed dairy. Consumers are basing their selections on three healthy food cues: how was it grown, where was it grown, and when was it grown. "They're looking for local, fresh, real, premium foods," she said.

Consumers are no longer relying on doctors and other health professional to provide them with all of their health education, noted Lori Colman, chief executive officer, Colman Brohan Davis Inc. She noted consumers want efficacious products that protect them from harm and diseases, and they want companies to earn their trust. With regards to food, men are looking for omega-3s, protein and heart-health products, and are less brand loyal, while younger women are more interested in fair trade, organic and weight loss. Older women have a high interest in private label, digestive aids and sleep products, and are actively seeking information from the Internet, magazines and television. She said ingredient suppliers should be following the same blogs and Web sites as consumers to stay on top of trends. She noted popular sites include Health Castle, Consumer Reports, Fooducate, Good Guide and Ethicurean.

Lynn Dornblaser, director, CPG trend insight, Mintel International Group, looked at four trends/claims—probiotics, digestive health, energy and joint health—and their roles in the food/beverage and supplement markets. Ingredients for digestive health, she said, have fared well in both sectors, with 19% of consumers taking supplements for digestive health, and 63% turning to functional foods. Energy-boosting products also straddle both markets, but with different claims—including mental alertness, vitality and weight loss—and different ingredients. "Caffeine and taurine are losing importance," she noted, "while B6, B12 and niacin are gaining importance."

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