

The Next Big Challenge for Food Brands Isn't Innovation. It's Reformulation.

Has the confluence of the Make America Healthy Again Movement (MAHA) and the rise of GLP-1 drug use sparked the biggest reformulation of CPG products in the history of the United States? It's debatable, which in and of itself is astonishing given how much reformulation costs, and how focused large CPG companies are on cost optimization.

Yet despite this environment, the food industry has entered a rare convergence point where consumer behavior and regulatory pressures are aligned. And, both are demanding clean labels, removal of synthetic ingredients, smaller portions and more functional nutrition.

We've had other mass reformulations in the past, but those were driven by regulations or consumer behavior, not both. For example:



TRANS FAT BAN

In 2006, trans fat labeling went into effect, compelling many CPG companies to reformulate to remove this harmful ingredient. By 2015, the FDA banned partially hydrogenated oils altogether, removing a once common ingredient from the supply chain.



FAT FREE EVERYTHING

In the early 1990s, a fat panic swept America, causing food brands to reformulate products to eliminate fat or greatly reduce it. Consumers propelled Olestra potato chips and SnackWell's to the stratosphere based on the belief that fat was bad, even if it was being replaced by more sugar and refined carbs.





Will MAHA and GLP-1 drugs surpass the reformulations spurred by partially hydrogenated oils and the fat panic? The jury is still out. But, here's what we do know:

- **MAHA-style** pressure is redefining what's acceptable on an ingredient deck
- **GLP-1 drugs** are cutting calories from the American diet and reshaping demand

Bluegrass Ingredients helps food brands navigate reformulations spurred by MAHA and GLP-1 drugs. This blog post is the first step, detailing what product developers should think about as they approach new product development or reformulation in 2026 and beyond.

GLP-1S: THE APPETITE DISRUPTOR

The rise of GLP-1 drugs (Ozempic, Wegovy, Zepbound and others) has changed the dynamic of the American diet. These drugs work by slowing gastric emptying, improving insulin response and suppressing appetite. In practice, that means millions of people who once consumed 2,000+ calories a day could now be eating 1,800 or less. Think about the impact that would have on the bottom line of CPG companies?

One interesting aspect of these drugs is that they are not just cutting overall calories, but changing what consumers crave. GLP-1 users are gravitating toward protein, fiber and nutrient-dense foods that deliver satiety in smaller portions.

If you're a product developer, here's what to watch for:

- Some GLP-1 users report a shift from a sweet tooth to **savory cravings**. Focus new product development on umami and satiety.
- We'll join the chorus of voices noting the importance of **protein in formulations**. Protein makes people feel fuller, and it's one of the most important macronutrients for GLP-1 users that are consuming less calories.
- But, don't forget about the **fiber**. This is expected to be the second most important nutrient as more people adapt GLP-1 drugs.

Here's how Bluegrass Ingredients can help: Our complete line of **cheese powders** and **concentrates** can provide the backbone of a savory profile, plus help you attain protein goals. Our **Agile Kitchen** assists food brands in perfecting the application design to meet both sensory and nutritional requirements.



MAHA: THE POLICY PRESSURE COOKER

The Make America Health Again movement is reshaping labeling, ingredients and food marketing, creating real risks for some ultra-processed formulations and real opportunity for clean-label products. The increased scrutiny on ingredients already has caused global food brands to publicly commit to removing certain synthetic dyes and ingredients from their products prior to the January 15, 2027 deadline.

SINCE APRIL 2025, BLUEGRASS INGREDIENTS HAS CONVERTED 20% OF OUR ARTIFICIALLY COLORED FORMULATIONS IN OUR DAIRY PORTFOLIO TO NATURAL ALTERNATIVES.

This gives us a head start in partnering with customers to provide turnkey natural color ingredient solutions as well as transitioning specific formulations and applications to eliminate artificial dyes.

If you're a product developer, here's what to watch for in MAHA-inspired reformulations:

- Agencies are working toward an official definition of **ultra-processed foods**, which will impact almost every category of the food industry.
- FDA is eyeing a final **front-of-packaging labeling** rule around 2026. Current proposed rules mandate that the saturated fat, sodium and added sugar levels be clearly noted on front-of-packaging graphics.
- There has been a push for **voluntary reformulation** of foods and beverages marketed to kids to provide healthier options at supermarkets and restaurants.



HERE'S HOW BLUEGRASS INGREDIENTS CAN HELP:

The MAHA movement has shifted people's perception of the food system, and many consumers are looking for organic ingredients in products not necessarily billed as organic. We've seen it firsthand, and have helped companies navigate clean label reformulations using our **organic powders and pastes**.



As 2026 approaches, reformulation is becoming one of the defining capabilities of successful food companies. The convergence of GLP-1 adoption and MAHA-inspired regulation is accelerating faster than most expected, blurring the line between "better-for-you" and "industry standard."

At Bluegrass Ingredients, we see this shift as an opportunity to rethink the building blocks of food, from flavor to functionality, and help our partners lead the next era of clean, functional-forward and purpose-driven innovation. **Contact us to get started on your reformulation.**