



# THE GREAT PROGRESSION

2020



2030

2040

2050

A PERSPECTIVE ON THE  
FUTURE OF THE GROCERY RETAIL CHANNEL

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PART 2

*EVOLUTION OF THE FROZEN AND REFRIGERATED  
CATEGORIES*



# Topics of Discussion

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- ✔ **A Perspective on the Frozen and Refrigerated Industries**
- ✔ **Consumer Profiles for Frozen and Refrigerated Foods**
- ✔ **The Impact of Trends in Frozen and Refrigerated Shopping**
- ✔ **Five most important, forward-looking insights on the future of frozen foods**
- ✔ **Exploration of Insightful Takeaways and Future Actions**

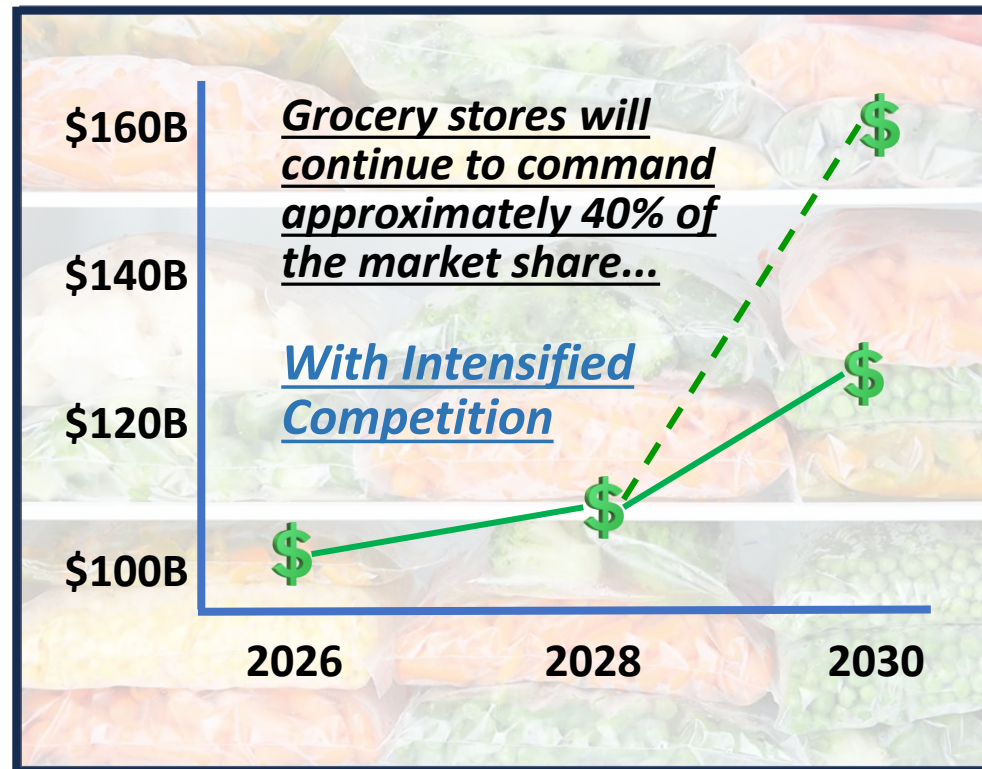




# A PERSPECTIVE ON THE FROZEN AND REFRIGERATED INDUSTRIES

# Strong category growth is expected – and we believe currently under-estimated

Key drivers include demand for convenient, ready-to-eat meals, premium products, and rising e-commerce in grocery retail



## Key Market Drivers – 2026 - 2030

- ✓ Both categories require reinvention/transformation driven by shopper demographics and needs
- ✓ Healthier Frozen and Refrigerated becomes a merchandising and marketing differentiator
- ✓ Simple Meals (individual and Family) offer unparalleled convenience (quality and value)
- ✓ Premium and Super premium emerge as category expansion strategies (chef-branded products)
- ✓ New capabilities in e-commerce-driven frozen and refrigerated meal planning and purchasing

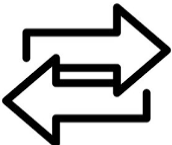
# Both categories are entering a structural “cold convenience” transformation phase



**Change will be fueled by:**



**Time Scarcity And  
Fragmented Meal Occasions**



**Shifting Definitions Of Value (Price  
And Quality/Health)**



**Better Cold-chain Capabilities And  
Tech-enabled Monitoring**



**Regulatory Pressure On Traceability,  
Packaging, And Refrigerants**

# The Next Five Years...Executive Summary -- *Challenges and Opportunities*

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Frozen food demand is expected to intensify driven by convenience

There is a growing shift in consumer health consciousness

Premium and Super-Premium products emerge as key differentiators

Technology will drive all aspects of frozen food innovation

Refrigerated Foods will experience increased focus on sustainability

Merchandising will be driven by Experience Enhancements (Physical and Digital)

Refrigerated will expand from the basics to nutrient-dense meal and snacking solutions

Technology is expected to touch every element in the refrigerated supply chain

# Five data points summarize “what’s changing” and “what matters” for strategy:



## Key Forces and Factors:

- ✓ Shoppers will increasingly seek a balance between "healthier frozen" options and the freshness of refrigerated products.
- ✓ Frozen is longer is a “center-of-store afterthought” but an everyday meal platform.
- ✓ Private label becomes a primary growth engine
- ✓ Refrigerated wellness presents a promising business opportunity, characterized by high scalability and dynamic pricing.
- ✓ The integrity of cold chains becomes as critical to our climate as it is to food security.



# CONSUMER PROFILES FOR FROZEN AND REFRIGERATED FOODS

# Imagine the Power.....



**Earn & Save on Everything**

Join over 3 million people who use Pogo to save on their everyday finances, while getting paid for their data.

Scan to download the Pogo app →

**Earn rewards on every purchase**

Link your cards and accounts to earn cash every time you spend, from your daily coffee to your grocery runs. No receipt photos needed.

Congrats! You just got paid \$25

**...of accessing over three million shoppers in an instant to gain valuable insights into their preferences and behaviors...**

- **Introduction of new products**
- **Changes in packaging sizes**
- **Shopper reactions to competitors' actions**
- **Modifications to product formulas**
- **Opportunities for product innovation**
- **Effects of GLP-1 on shoppers**
- **Effects of changes to SNAP benefits**
- **Virtually any question is possible...**

**What took weeks now takes an hour**

**Pogo's participating database contains over 715,000 verified shoppers of frozen and refrigerated foods**

# Fitting into shoppers' grocery routines – trips are purposeful



## Hearing directly from frozen and refrigerated shoppers...



- ✓ **Eating Options:** Frozen foods provide quick meals, later-in-the-week coverage, and insurance against spoilage when schedules change.
- ✓ **Economics:** Budget pressure often pushes shoppers toward frozen options
- ✓ **Health and Wellness:** Frozen vegetables are often treated differently from frozen prepared meals, showing that shoppers make nuanced judgments rather than rejecting frozen outright.

- ✓ **Eating Options:** Built around refrigerated staples for near-term meals
  - ✓ Refrigerated options are favored for immediate use, raw applications, and meals where taste or texture matters more.
- ✓ **Economics:** Continuous tradeoffs between healthier for you and cost – promotions reign
- ✓ **Health and Wellness:** A traditional fresh-equals-healthier view remains common

# Where both categories typically lack in delivering a superior shopping experience



Shoppers draw a sharp line between frozen prepared meals and refrigerated meal options, raising the bar for better-for-you innovation

## FROZEN



## REFRIGERATED



- ✓ **Shopping Experience:** Product availability, inconsistent pricing/promotion, and assortment confusion/scattered placement
- ✓ **Economics:** Frozen is cheaper, lasts longer, or is on promotion in a way that fits the household budget
- ✓ **Health and Wellness:** Growing interest in healthier convenience driven by personal health and family purchasing patterns

- ✓ **Shopping Experience:** Product availability, inconsistent pricing,/promotion, and assortment confusion/scattered placement
- ✓ **Economics:** Concerns regarding waste, in-refrigerator shelf life
- ✓ **Health and Wellness:** Viewed as healthier for you, minimally processed, and concerns regarding portion management

# The Gen Z Shopper

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## Purchase Behaviors

- Gen Z isn't choosing between frozen and fresh
  - Choosing "fast versus slow"
  - Frozen equals everyday fuel (winning big)  
Fresh equals occasional upgrade (only if ready-to-eat)
- 

## Winning Retailers:

- Collapse frozen + fresh into meal solutions
- Deliver speed + flavor + value simultaneously

*How well do your Frozen and Refrigerated GTM strategies and capabilities meet their needs?*

# The Gen Z Shopper

Category	Winner	Why
Frozen (cultural relevance)		Discovery + global + viral
Frozen (scale/value)		Price + omnichannel dominance
Frozen (value + cool)		Cheap + trendy
Fresh (prepared meals)		Health + convenience
Fresh (value + innovation)		Unique + affordable
Fresh (scaled execution)		Meal solutions

*How well do your Frozen and Refrigerated GTM strategies and capabilities serve Gen Z Shoppers?*

## Whole Foods Market — Premium fresh and prepared leader



## WHY THEY WIN

- Prepared foods (bowls, sushi, hot bar)
- Health-forward, clean-label
- “Lifestyle brand” appeal

👉 *Wins when Gen Z wants “healthy but no effort”*

## Trader Joe's — Refrigerated innovation leader



## WHY THEY WIN

- Ready-to-eat refrigerated meals
  - Unique flavors plus strong value
  - Cross-over with frozen (same mission)
- 👉 *Blurs frozen versus fresh into “meal solutions”*

## Kroger (and banners) — Scaled meal solution player



## WHY THEY WIN

- Expanding **ready-to-eat meals and meal kits**
- Better execution in **“dinner tonight” solutions**

👉 *Less cool, but operationally strong*

# The Family Shopper

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## Purchase Behaviors

- Families are not looking for innovation the way Gen Z is
  - Looking for “repeatable meal and snacking solutions”
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## Winning Retailers:

*Turn frozen into a weekly system/occasions:*

- Pizza night -- Nuggets + veggies creating frozen shortcuts for dinner
- Make fresh low-risk (Staples (milk, eggs, produce))
- Ready-to-cook, not aspirational cooking
- Enable hybrid meals -- frozen entrée + fresh sides
- Deliver speed + flavor + value simultaneously

*How well do your Frozen and Refrigerated GTM strategies and capabilities meet their needs?*

# The Family Shopper

Category	Winner	Why
Frozen (cultural relevance)	Walmart 	Price + scale + convenience
Frozen (scale/value)	 <b>COSTCO</b> WHOLESALE	Cost per serving
Frozen (value + cool)	 <b>Kroger</b> FRESH FOR EVERYONE™	Variety + promotions
Fresh (prepared meals)	 <b>Kroger</b> FRESH FOR EVERYONE™	Full-basket weekly shop
Fresh (value + innovation)	Walmart 	Price leadership
Fresh (scaled execution)	 <b>COSTCO</b> WHOLESALE	Volume + quality

*How well do your Frozen and Refrigerated GTM strategies and capabilities serve Family Shoppers?*

# The Family Shopper

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**Walmart — The dominant family winner**



## WHY THEY WIN

- Best **price-per-meal at scale**
- Massive assortment (pizza, nuggets, family meals, vegetables)
- Strong **stock-up + bulk behavior**
- Leading in **pickup/delivery** (critical for busy households)

👉 *Walmart wins because it solves “feed 4–5 people cheaply, fast, every week”*

## Costco — The bulk efficiency leader



## WHY THEY WIN

- **Family-size formats** (lasagna, pizza, proteins)
  - High trust in **Kirkland quality**
  - Strong **cost per serving**
- 👉 *Costco wins the “stock the freezer for the week/month” mission*

## Kroger — The balanced operator



## WHY THEY WIN

- Strong mix of: **National brands + private label**
  - **Expanding meal solutions** (not just items)
  - **Promotional strength** (weekly deals)
- 👉 *Kroger wins when families want value + variety without warehouse shopping*



# THE IMPACT OF TRENDS IN FROZEN AND REFRIGERATED SHOPPING

# Shopper strategies destined to reshape the frozen/refrigerated categories

To win the industry needs to respond to changing shopper needs

## *Shopper Requirements*

*The Growing Impact of GLP1*

*SNAP and the Shopper*

*Healthier Eating*

*Growing Requirement for Premium and Super Premium*

## *Industry Responses*

*Demand for High Quality Convenience*

*Mandate for Label Transparency*

*Removing artificial ingredients*

*Food Waste Management*

# How GLP1 is reshaping Consumer Foods Behaviors in Frozen and Refrigerated Foods

A growing trend toward smaller portions, reshaped carts, and a lens of healthier for my family and me

## Four Driving Forces and Factors

- ✓ Appetite suppression leads to shoppers consuming less food
- ✓ Shifts in consumer preferences and aversions are actively shaping structural changes in the basket
- ✓ Anything sugar or processed is being assessed and/or eliminated (split basket syndrome)
- ✓ Protein is becoming the “trade up” category destination
- ✓ Smaller baskets and packages, more trips, and convenient formats are the new norm

*How will GLP-1 be expected to change your Frozen and Refrigerated category, merchandising, marketing, and banner promise strategies?*

# How changes in SNAP benefits are impacting frozen and refrigerated foods

For 41M – 42M consumers on SNAP, both categories are expected to experience restricted spending

## Four Driving Forces and Factors

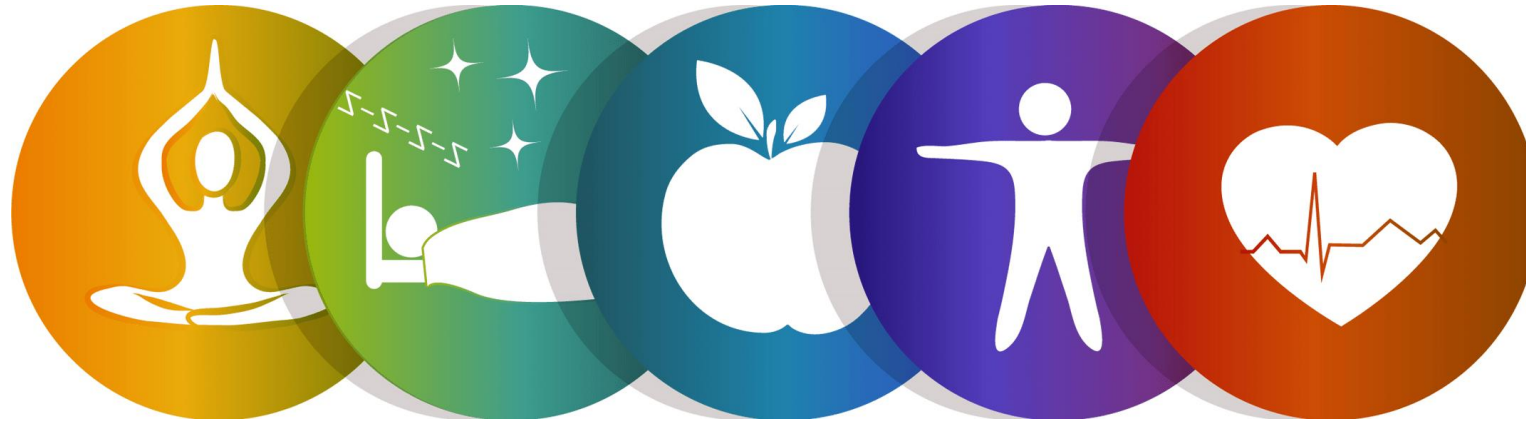
- ✓ In most cases, frozen and refrigerated items are categories are not viewed as value driven
- ✓ SNAP Funds are expected to be redirected toward core/essential food categories
- ✓ Both Frozen and Refrigerated are not viewed as meal ingredients – primarily meal solutions
- ✓ Neither category is viewed as a healthier alternative (too many processed products)
- ✓ Category merchandising and marketing have not kept pace with SNAP benefits



*How are changes in the SNAP program expected to change your Frozen and Refrigerated category, merchandising, marketing, and banner promise strategies?*

# Frozen and refrigerated foods can influence health and wellness

Between 40% and 84% of consumers have increased their focus on healthier living and eating



**40%+**

*...of consumers indicate that their most important purchase criteria will be “better for my family and me”.*

**73%+**

*...of consumers expect to be more conscious about their physical health and wellness*

**74%+**

*...of consumers indicate concerns regarding mental health and wellness*

**84%+**

*...of consumers are concerned about their current state of physical health and wellness*

*How is health and wellness expected to change your Frozen and Refrigerated category, merchandising, marketing, and banner promise strategies?*

# Shoppers shared opinions on which frozen and refrigerated items appealed most

These frozen and refrigerated foods emphasize high-quality, convenient, and globally inspired flavors



Good Foods Group Dairy Free Nacho Cheeze Dip



Deep Indian Kitchen Momo Dumplings



Dolly Parton's Frozen Meals



New York Bakery Gluten-Free Texas Toast:



Banquet MEGA Bowls x Mikes Hot Honey



Doughlicious Cookie Dough and Gelato Bites



Mings Spicy Dan Noodles



Lukes Lobster Ravioli with Vodka Sauce



Real Goods Lightly Breaded Chicken Chunks



Bubbies Spicy Bread and Butter Chips

*How are brands supporting the evolving consumer purchase patterns for frozen and refrigerated products?*

# Expansion transitions from "backup options" to "meal-planning staples"

Growth drivers include economic pressures, food waste reduction, and specialized cooking methods like air-frying

PREMIUM



Rao's Made for Home Chicken Parmesan



Healthy Choice Café Steamers



Kevin's Natural Foods

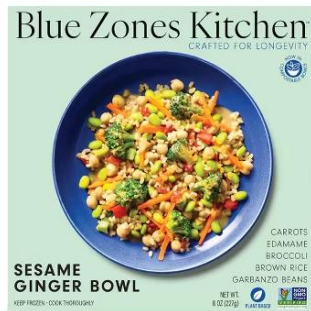


Birds Eye Voila! Skillet Meals



Zatarain's Alfredo Blackened Chicken New Orleans Style

SUPER-PREMIUM



Blue Zones Kitchen



Saffron Road



Mosaic Foods



Bil-Jac Super Premium Frozen Dog Food



Tillamook Special Batch Ice Creams

*How are Premium and Super-Premium products expected to change your Frozen and Refrigerated category, merchandising, marketing, and banner promise strategies?*

# In frozen and refrigerated products, innovation is essential for maintaining loyalty

Suppliers must adopt technology-driven engagement to lead in the frozen and refrigerated market

## PRODUCT INNOVATION

- ✓ Gut-Health Frozen Bowls
- ✓ Algae & Seaweed "Super-Meals"
- ✓ Upside Foods & GOOD Meat (Cell-Cultivated Chicken)
- ✓ Future Meat Technologies (Cultured Lamb)
- ✓ JOYN Foods (Mushroom-Meat Hybrids)
- ✓ Perfect Day (Animal-Free Whey)
- ✓ The EVERY Company (Animal-Free Egg Whites)
- ✓ Vivici (Lactoferrin & Beta-lactoglobulin)

## SELF-MONITORING PACKAGING:

- ✓ Edible & Dissolvable Wraps
- ✓ Zero-Waste "Paperization"
- ✓ Aryballe's Digital Nose

## FREEZING TECHNOLOGIES:

- ✓ Cryogenic Coffee Capsules
- ✓ Thermoelectric Refrigeration
- ✓ Cryogenic Freezing at Scale

*Innovation designed to transform the shopping experience through full-scale digital automation and monitoring*



# FIVE MOST IMPORTANT, FORWARD-LOOKING INSIGHTS ON THE FUTURE OF FROZEN FOODS

# 1. Frozen Becomes the “Primary Meal Platform” (Not Backup)



*Frozen is no longer a secondary option—it is becoming the default weekday meal system*

## What's changing:

- Consumers now plan meals *around* frozen, not despite it
- Quality parity with fresh is being achieved (taste, texture, nutrition)
- Freezer = “inventory of meals,” not just ingredients

## Why it matters:

- Penetration expands from convenience users → mainstream households
- Frozen shifts from **category** to **meal architecture**

👉 **Implication:** *Retailers should merchandise frozen products by solution (dinners, occasions), not by aisles of SKUs*

## 2. The Rise of “Fresh-Frozen Convergence”



*The historical divide between fresh and frozen is collapsing*

### What's emerging:

- Flash-freezing preserves nutrition → challenges “fresh superiority”
- Consumers mix: Frozen entrée + fresh sides; Fresh proteins + frozen components
- Retailers blur boundaries with **adjacent merchandising**

### Why it matters:

- Frozen captures share from perimeter categories
- Redefines store layout and category ownership

👉 **Implication:** *Winners will integrate frozen into **total meal ecosystems**, not isolate it in center store*

### 3. Private Label Becomes the Innovation Engine



*Private label is overtaking national brands as the center of innovation in frozen*

#### What's changing:

- Retailers launching:
  - Global cuisine; Plant-based; Functional (high protein, low carb, etc.)
  - Quality gap vs. brands has closed - and often reversed

#### Why it matters:

- Margin expansion for retailers
- Disintermediation of legacy CPG brands

👉 **Implication:** *Frozen becomes the battleground for retailer brand equity, not just price*

## 4. Frozen Wins the “Value + Waste” Equation



**Frozen uniquely solves two of the biggest consumer tensions: inflation and food waste**

### What's driving growth:

- Longer shelf life = lower waste
- Portion control = better cost management
- Stock-up behavior during economic pressure

### Why it matters:

- Particularly powerful with families and budget-conscious shoppers

👉 **Implication:** *Messaging should shift from convenience → economic intelligence (“smart food”)*

## 5. Technology Transforms Frozen from Static to Intelligent



**Frozen is poised to become the most “digitally orchestrated” category in grocery**

### What's emerging:

- AI-driven meal planning tied to freezer inventory
- In-store robotics (e.g., Simbe Robotics) is improving availability
- Personalization:
  - ***“You have 2 meals left—reorder?”***; Subscription-style replenishment

### Why it matters:

- Frozen's predictability makes it ideal for automation
- Drives higher loyalty and repeat purchase cycles

**👉 Implication:** *Frozen will lead grocery in autonomous replenishment + personalized meal systems*

A photograph of a modern grocery store aisle. The aisle is lined with tall, refrigerated shelves filled with various packaged goods. In the foreground, there is a deli counter with several trays of prepared food, including pizzas and salads. The lighting is bright and even, highlighting the products. The overall atmosphere is clean and organized.

# EXPLORATION OF INSIGHTFUL TAKEAWAYS AND FUTURE ACTIONS

# Insightful Takeaways

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- *What conditions must be fulfilled for the discussed trends to be valid?*
- *How would your organization respond to and lead in the frozen and refrigerated foods market??”*



# Future Actions

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- - *“What will be true about our customers, the economic landscape, and the competitive environment in the next 3–5 years that is not true today?”*
- *“What are the three most important next steps our industry must take to stay competitive in these categories?”*

# FURTHER QUESTIONS...

***DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT:***

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# THANK YOU