



79th

Annual Production Conference Digital Program

Tuesday, April 14 - Wednesday, April 15, 2026
Lancaster County Convention Center, PA



PMCA

Professional Manufacturing Confectioners Association

LEARN. CONNECT. GROW.

Please be advised that PMCA employees and contractors will take photographs as well as audio and video recordings in the conference sessions, exhibit hall and other public areas for promotional or commercial purposes.

PLEASE NOTE: Audio or video recording and photography of the technical sessions by attendees is prohibited. Please turn cell phones to silent or vibrate during the technical sessions.



Allergen Statement: Samples displayed or distributed at the PMCA Annual Production Conference may contain, or may have been processed in, facilities that also process peanuts, tree nuts, soy, wheat, dairy or other allergens.

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April 14-15, 2026

Lancaster County Convention Center
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

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CONNECT WITH US

Schedule at a Glance

Monday, April 13

2:00-4:00pm Registration Desk Hours

Tuesday, April 14

7:00am-4:30pm Registration Desk Hours

8:15am Welcome & Opening Remarks

8:25am-12:15pm Technology Tuesday Program Presentations

12:30-5:00pm LEARN | CONNECT | GROW EXPO

Lunch will be provided in Freedom Hall

5:15-6:15pm Reception – Freedom Hall lobby

Attendees to make their own dinner arrangements

Wednesday, April 15

7:30am-4:30pm Registration Desk Hours

8:15am Welcome & Opening Remarks

8:25-11:50am Speaker Presentations

12:00-1:30pm Buffet Lunch

1:00-1:30pm Annual Meeting of Members

1:45-4:30pm Breakout Sessions

5:30-8:00pm Culinary Delights, Cocktails & Connections

Distribution of the PMCA Candy Bag will immediately follow.





TECHNOLOGY TUESDAY

NATURAL COLORS ACROSS APPLICATIONS

Tuesday, April 14 – Heritage Ballroom

PROGRAM COORDINATORS & CONTRIBUTORS

Technology Tuesday Planning Lead

Eric Schmoyer, IRCA Group Americas

Technology Tuesday Planning Team

Judy Cooley, retired, Global Confection Connections LLC

Pam Gesford, The Hershey Company

Audio/Visual Liaison:

Colleen Dommel, The Hershey Company

The **Technology Tuesday** program takes attendees on a deeper dive into important technologies in the confectionery and snack industry. This half-day seminar will feature presentations from experienced industry professionals accompanied by live demonstrations and audience tasting samples.

TUESDAY, APRIL 14

7:00am	Registration	Heritage Ballroom Lobby
8:15am	Welcome & Opening Remarks Steve Genzoli, <i>Ghirardelli Chocolate Company</i> , PMCA Chair	Heritage Ballroom

Technology Tuesday Seminar: Natural Colors Across Applications *Presentations will feature audience tasting samples*

A Q&A period will follow each speaker. Submit questions in writing to session officials.

8:25am	Moderator Welcome & Introduction Pam Gesford, Staff Scientist – Sweets & Refreshment Product Development, <i>The Hershey Company</i> The opening remarks will provide an overview of the topic and highlights of the program to follow.
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8:35am	Gummies & Hard Candies Cristina De Silva, Technical Innovation Director, <i>LATAM–Bellis Food Solutions</i>
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The confectionery industry is undergoing a rapid transition from artificial to natural colors, driven by consumer demand for clean labels, brand commitments and evolving regulatory expectations—particularly in the United States. While natural colors offer strong marketing advantages, their successful implementation in confectionery

manufacturing presents significant technical and operational challenges. Unlike artificial colors, natural colorants are complex ingredients whose performance is strongly influenced by processing conditions, formulation parameters and raw material variability. Failure to account for these variables often results in color fading, shade inconsistency, migration, unexpected flavor impact and reduced shelf-life stability. This presentation will focus on the practical use of natural colors in confectionery manufacturing, emphasizing real-world challenges encountered at plant level. After a brief overview of the regulatory context of natural colors in the U.S., the discussion will center on how carrier systems and processing parameters influence color performance. Common manufacturing failures will be analyzed with direct troubleshooting strategies. Confectionery professionals will gain actionable guidance to successfully implement natural colors at scale, reduce production variability and improve product consistency under industrial conditions.

9:20am Break

9:35am **Fat-Based Confections**

Lindsey Doring, R&D Food Scientist, *Clasen Quality Chocolate*

As natural colors shift from trend to industry standard, it's important to understand the realities of making the switch from artificial to natural colors. Fat-based confections, such as compound coating and fillings, require compatible oil-soluble color solutions. This presentation will cover oil-soluble natural color solutions and the considerations and challenges when formulating with natural colors in confectionery coatings.

10:20am **Panning**

Jeff Bogusz, *Lucky Teapot Consulting*

11:05am Break

11:20am **Troubleshooting**

Dana Trull, Product & R&D Manager, *Vivify*



This presentation will explore common failure modes and troubleshooting strategies for natural colors across a range of confectionery applications, including water-based centers, gummies, hard candy, fat-based systems and chocolate coatings. It will highlight how processing conditions such as temperature, pH, shear, ingredient interactions and order of addition impact

color performance, as well as how storage and packaging influence long-term stability. The session is designed to provide practical, application-driven guidance to help product managers and formulators anticipate issues, diagnose root causes and improve the consistency and durability of natural colors in confectionery products.

12:05pm **Closing Remarks**

12:15pm **Adjourn**

TUESDAY, APRIL 14



LEARN | CONNECT | GROW EXPO

12:30-5:00pm — FREEDOM HALL

EXPO HALL PASSES

Passes may be picked up in Freedom Hall starting at 12:30pm

HOSTED LUNCH

Freedom Hall • 12:30-2:00pm

Thank you to our lunch sponsors



To register for your expo hall-only passes, visit our [registration page](#).

For an up-to-date list of exhibitors and their descriptions, please visit [this page](#).

NETWORKING RECEPTION

Freedom Hall Lobby • 5:15-6:15pm

Open bar and hors d'oeuvres

Thank you to our reception sponsor



7:30am	Registration	Heritage Ballroom Lobby
8:15am	Welcome & Opening Remarks Shawn Houser-Fedor, <i>The Hershey Company</i> , PMCA Vice President Moderator Abdoulaye Traore, <i>Advanced Food Products</i>	Heritage Ballroom

Presentations may feature audience tasting samples

A Q&A period will follow each speaker. Submit questions in writing to session officials.

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|---------------|---|
| 8:25am | Flavor Innovation in the Age of AI: Predicting the Next Candy Craze
Serena Bitzer, Manager Operations Network Design – Supply Chain Strategy, <i>The Hershey Company</i> & Thomas Hsiao, Client Partner – AI Strategy & Product Delivery, <i>Blend360</i> |
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Flavor innovation is entering a new era as artificial intelligence reshapes how confectionery companies discover, develop and launch new products. This presentation will explore how AI can analyze signals from social media, digital recipes, menus and cultural trends to surface emerging flavor combinations before they reach the mainstream. Rather than replacing human expertise, AI serves as a creative partner, helping product developers, sensory scientists and marketers focus their intuition and experimentation where it matters most. Through practical examples and innovation frameworks, the session will highlight how AI-enabled flavor exploration can accelerate development cycles and unlock unexpected ideas for the next generation of candy.

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|---------------|--|
| 9:10am | Creating Different Textures Using a Hard-Boiled Candy Line & Soft Panning |
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Emma Nyström, R&D Manager, *OV Sweden*

Texture is very important for our perception of food, and we generally enjoy texture variations. This presentation will focus on how to develop different textures using a hard-boiled candy line combined with a soft panning process. We will dive into the processes, the ingredients and how to achieve different end textures by manipulating processing parameters and ingredient combinations. Attendees will enjoy tasting sample products illustrating these differences.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15

9:55am Break

10:10am **May the Cocoa Be with You – Preserving the Essence of Chocolate Amidst Rising Costs**

Bo Kim, R&D Scientist – Innovation, *Blommer Chocolate Company*



This presentation will take attendees on a deep dive into cocoa alternatives and enhancers, exploring how to preserve the essence of chocolate despite the unprecedented global cocoa market volatility. We will examine the primary drivers of the current cocoa crisis, the science behind the solutions and the consumer

perception and acceptance of these solutions. We'll also highlight regulatory considerations and the standard of identity concerns. Key takeaways include understanding the benefits and limitations of available solutions, unraveling the flavor complexities of chocolate and strategies for cost-optimizing formulations while maintaining the quality we know and love about chocolate.

10:55am **Protein Incorporation into Confections & Snacks**

Deb Anderson, Director of New Business Development – NA, *The Protein Brewery*

Consumers are increasingly looking for indulgent treats that also deliver functional benefits, making protein-fortified confectionery a growing opportunity. Adding protein allows manufacturers to meet demand for better-for-you snacks that support satiety, energy and wellness without sacrificing taste or texture. With advances in protein ingredients and processing, brands can now successfully incorporate protein into a wide range of confections while maintaining quality and shelf stability. As snacking and nutrition continue to converge, protein-enhanced confectionery offers a powerful way to add value and meet evolving consumer expectations.

11:40am **Closing Remarks**

11:50am **Adjourn**

BUFFET LUNCH

Freedom Hall A, 1st Floor • 12:00-1:30pm

Thank you to our lunch sponsors



ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

Hickory Room, 3rd Floor • 1:00-1:30pm

Customize your Wednesday afternoon conference experience by choosing from six different interactive sessions led by experienced industry professionals.

Pre-registration is not required.

BREAKOUT SESSION SCHEDULE

	Session 1 1:45-2:30pm	Session 2 2:45-3:30pm	Session 3 3:45-4:30pm
A	Replacement of Titanium Dioxide in Confections Hickory Room (3 rd floor)	Replacement of Titanium Dioxide in Confections Hickory Room (3 rd floor)	How Do Fats & Oils Influence Confectionery Filling Textures? Hickory Room (3 rd floor)
B	State of the Premium Nut Industry: Hazelnut, Almond & Pistachio Heritage Ballroom (3 rd floor)	Regulatory Update Heritage Ballroom (3 rd floor)	Regulatory Update Heritage Ballroom (3 rd floor)
C	Shifting Palates: Savory Trends in Candy Federal Room (2 nd floor)	Shifting Palates: Savory Trends in Candy Federal Room (2 nd floor)	FUN-ctional Confectionery Trends: Delivering Benefits Through Sweet Treats Federal Room (2 nd floor)

Each session lasts 45 minutes. 15 minutes are allotted to switch to the next session.

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

Sessions 1A, 2A: Replacement of Titanium Dioxide in Confections

Christi Boxx, Technical Service Manager II, Confection & Pet Food, *Sensient Colors*

As regulatory scrutiny and shifting consumer expectations intensify, confectioners are increasingly seeking alternatives to titanium dioxide. Yet despite that demand, titanium dioxide remains exceptionally challenging to replace due to its unique functional and optical properties. This presentation will explore how titanium dioxide performs in a variety of confectionery systems, why common substitutes often fall short and which emerging solutions show the most promise.

Session 1B: State of the Premium Nut Industry: Hazelnut, Almond & Pistachio

Moderator: Sean Burns, Managing Partner, *Sollich NA*

Panelists:

Laurent Besin, Director R&D, *Nutlicious*

Aaron McGraw, Sales Director & Grower Relationships, *The Northwest Hazelnut Company*

Rick Mignella, VP of Retail & Food Service Sales, *Nutlicious*

This three-part session provides a focused review of the global hazelnut industry and its expanding role in confectionery and bakery applications. The presentation begins with an overview of worldwide production, 2025 crop impacts, pricing volatility and the United States' position within the evolving supply landscape, with additional perspective on pistachios and almonds. Building on this foundation, the discussion examines key market and product trends, including cocoa volatility, growth in centers and fillings, premiumization and the coexistence of indulgent and better-for-you positioning that are influencing nut usage across finished products. The session concludes with a technical discussion outlining formulation approaches for nut butters, spreads and fillings. Premium nuts are increasingly used to deliver texture, contrast and flavor intensity while supporting formulation flexibility and supply chain resilience. Attendees will gain practical insight into processing parameters and stability requirements for nut-based systems in chocolate and baked applications.

Sessions 1C, 2C: Shifting Palates: Savory Trends in Candy

Amy Trout Hughes, Owner, *48 Blocks Fine Candy*

In this session, we will explore the ongoing trends of blending savory flavors with candy. 2026 influences include spicy, sour and nutty flavors from Southeast Asia and North Africa. Using her culinary and travel background, Amy will share ideas for blending savory and sweet flavors as well as recommendations on how to use these flavors in conjunction with more traditional flavors.

Sessions 2B, 3B: Regulatory Update

Dr. Julie Moss, VP of Food Safety & Scientific Affairs, NCA

In the past year, federal and state have issued regulations or policies that will affect the confectionery industry. The major driver in the US has been the administration's Make America Healthy Again initiative. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) released the 2026-2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans with an emphasis on "real food" and limiting highly processed food. The HHS and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) carried out food-related priorities with a focus on the safety of chemicals in food, including the phasing out of synthetic colors and encouraging natural colors, as well as allergen management through the use of thresholds. The legislative actions at the state level specific to food and nutrition (e.g., SNAP restrictions) increased dramatically given the MAHA initiative as well. This talk will address these policy and regulatory developments and more.

Session 3A: How Do Fats & Oils Influence Confectionery Filling Textures?

Sneha Karthikeyan, Senior Scientist, AAK USA

The eating experience of many filled bakery and confectionery products can be strongly influenced by the properties of the filling. Fat-based confectionery fillings can have a multitude of textures ranging from firm to soft, creamy, gooey, chewy, fluffy and more. The type of fat chosen for the filling is one of the key determinants of texture. This presentation aims to demonstrate the impact of fats and oils on the texture of confectionery fillings.

Session 3C: FUN-ctional Confectionery Trends: Delivering Benefits Through Sweet Treats

Nayara Jordan, Customer Technical Support Manager & Jamie Matthews, Head of Technical Service for the Americas, Beneo

Beyond gummy vitamins for kids, confections continue to emerge and evolve as a fun, consumer-friendly platform for delivering functional benefits. This session will highlight key market trends, functional ingredient opportunities and formulation insights, along with sample recipes showcasing how to successfully develop supplement-style confections. We'll delve into market trends like the growth of functional/supplement-style confections and the consumer drivers behind them. We'll discuss high-interest actives (botanicals, vitamins, minerals, fibers) and dosage considerations as well as formulation challenges. Finally, we'll illustrate some prototype examples with sample formulations and technical tips across confectionery applications.



Culinary Delights, Cocktails & Connections



Freedom Hall A, 1st Floor • 5:30-8:00pm

Join us for an engaging evening reception designed to spark conversation, celebrate achievement and bring our community together. Guests will enjoy an abundant selection of food, an open bar and several awards recognizing excellence within PMCA.

Toastmaster

PMCA President Cynthia Angelo, *Givaudan Flavors*

Thank you to our reception sponsor



Awards Program

Distinguished Service Award

Presented to Patrick Hurley, retired, *Spangler Candy Company*
(award acceptance on his behalf by Lynn Wieland, *Spangler Candy Company*)
by Award Chair Rose Potts, *Blommer Chocolate Company*

Marie Kelso Memorial Award

Presented to Rachel Quiring, *Blommer Chocolate Company*
by Award Chair Sarah Houle, *Ghirardelli Chocolate Company*

for the 2025 conference presentation titled
Overcoming Sourcing Obstacles: Strategies for Achieving Stability in Sustainability

Dennis L. Zak Education Award

Presented by Karen Zak



*Distribution of the PMCA Candy Bag will immediately follow the program! Please bring your **blue badge ticket** with you .*

PARKING INFORMATION & DRIVING ADDRESSES

Attendees commuting daily to the conference may choose to park in the Penn Square, Prince Street or East King Street parking garages. Attendees will be charged each time they go in and out of the parking garages. Attendees staying overnight at the Lancaster Marriott will have their parking passes validated upon hotel check-in and will have unlimited in and out access.

GPS ADDRESSES

City, state and zip for each address below is Lancaster, PA 17602.

Lancaster County Convention Center Penn Square Parking Garage
24 South Duke Street

East King Street Parking Garage
146-52 E. King Street

Prince Street Parking Garage
111 N. Prince Street

Marriott & Lancaster County Convention Center Valet Parking
25 South Queen Street

Lancaster County Convention Center Loading Dock (Exhibitors Only)
3 East Vine Street

Thank you for joining us!

We hope you'll continue to learn, connect and grow
with us throughout the year.

GENERAL CONFERENCE INFORMATION

ELIGIBILITY

Production conference registration is open to anyone in the confectionery industry, or in its related industries. The technical program is primarily designed to educate confectionery industry personnel responsible for production, management, R&D, engineering and quality control.

REGISTRATION

The online registration form can be completed at pmca.com. Mastercard, Visa and American Express credit cards accepted. All pre-registered attendees will receive a registration acknowledgement. Onsite registration is available.

FEES

Member registration includes admission to all technical and exhibition events and food and beverage as follows:

Events

Technology Tuesday Presentations, Tuesday Afternoon Expo, Wednesday AM Presentations, Wednesday Afternoon Breakout Sessions

Food & Beverage

Continental breakfast Tuesday & Wednesday, lunches Tuesday & Wednesday, receptions Tuesday & Wednesday, Awards reception Wednesday

Expo Pass registration includes admission for any industry professional that wishes to ONLY WALK THE SHOW FLOOR Tuesday afternoon. Lunch and a post-show reception are included.

Registration Types

PMCA Member Companies	\$650.00
Students	\$150.00
Expo Hall Pass	\$50.00

Cancellations received by March 9, 2026 will be refunded, less a \$100.00 cancellation fee. **After March 9, 2026, NO REFUNDS will be made, for any reason (medical or otherwise).** All non-refunded full registrants will receive the conference proceedings in electronic format when produced in the fall. **A substitute may be named at any time.**

HOTEL RESERVATIONS

A block of rooms has been set aside at Lancaster Marriott at Penn Square at a rate of \$192.00 per night plus tax. Rooms are available on a first come, first serve basis. Attendees should reference PMCA when making reservations. Please visit [here](#) to make an online reservation. Reservations can also be made directly with the hotel via telephone at 717-239-1600.

REGISTRATION DESK

Upon arrival all conference attendees should check in at the conference registration desk located in the Heritage Ballroom Lobby to pick up their registration badge and conference information. Please note, the desk will be located in Freedom Hall Tuesday afternoon.

The desk will be open as follows:

Monday 2:00-4:00pm

Tuesday 7:00am-4:30pm

Wednesday 7:30am-4:30pm

PMCA PRODUCTION CONFERENCE MEETING POLICIES

1. While respecting the right of organizations and individuals to gather as they wish, PMCA discourages any organized meetings or activities which conflict with the technical presentations or any part of the program of the production conference.
2. Attendees **MUST** turn off or set to silent all cell phones while in the session and meeting rooms.
3. Photography is **NOT** permitted during any PMCA technical session.
4. Audio or video recording of any PMCA technical session or meeting is strictly prohibited.

Production Conference Committee

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Givaudan Flavors

Vice Chair

Shawn Houser-Fedor
The Hershey Company

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Yvette Thomas
Brandy Kresge
Rachel Halkias

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Retired, *Global Confection Connections LLC*

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Amy Allured*MC/Manufacturing Confectioner*
Kristine Bender.....*Blommer Chocolate Company*
Serena Bitzer *The Hershey Company*
Sean Burns..... *Sollich NA*
Colleen Dommel..... *The Hershey Company*
Diane Douglas *Sethness Roquette*
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Binu Eapen *AAK USA*
Steven L. Genzoli..... *Ghirardelli Chocolate Company*
Pam Gesford *The Hershey Company*
Sarah Houle..... *Ghirardelli Chocolate Company*
Robert Huzinec *retired, The Hershey Company*
Christina Jenkins.....*Barry Callebaut*
Steven Marcanello.....*retired, Asher's Chocolates*
Edward Minson *retired, Tate & Lyle*
Reginald Ohlson *retired, Mars, Inc.*
Rose Potts *Blommer Chocolate Company*
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