

Heterochem Monthly

Featuring..

Key Trends & Insights for 2026

RTD Market Growth

The Ready-to-Drink (RTD) market continues to experience dynamic growth, driven by evolving consumer tastes, convenience trends, and functional ingredients.

Learn more about thoughtful ingredient choices and reliable supply chains playing a key role in bringing high-quality RTD products to market—an area where Heterochem's expertise in specialty ingredients can support your next innovation.



MOMENTIVE™

Biopharma Expo Cork January 22nd

Heterochem will be exhibiting at the Biopharma Expo this January in Cork! Visit Stand 30 to explore our cutting-edge antifoams designed specifically for biopharma applications, and discover how we can help optimise your processes.

Functional Mushrooms – The Shroom Boom & working with a Trusted Partner.

Functional mushrooms are taking the wellness world by storm and it's important to understand your source. Our feature article explores the surge in demand and why choosing a reliable, quality-focused supplier is crucial for your products efficacy, and unique edge on the market.





RTDs in 2026: Your Guide to leading the RTD Market and developing a stand-out product.

The Ready-to-Drink (RTD) market in the UK and Ireland is at an inflection point. Demand for No Alcohol and Low ABV options is soaring, putting immense pressure on brands to deliver products that are low in sugar and calories, but uncompromising on flavour. Consumers no longer tolerate the watery taste or off-notes that once plagued this segment.

At Heterochem, we support brands navigating this evolving market. With our expertise in the market and international partnerships, we help our customers create RTDs that deliver on taste, authenticity, and quality whilst meeting the demands of health-conscious consumers.

If you are in this space, you know that the market is evolving fast. Consumers – especially GenZ are looking for drinks with natural, transparent ingredients that reflect their values. Low-ABV, alcohol-free and functional beverage options continue to grow, and there's strong demand for products that combine health benefits with indulgence. Brands that can deliver flavour, premium experience, and authenticity will lead the way in 2026.



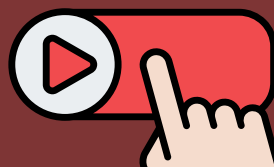
Stay tuned for our next article, where we'll dive into the technical challenges of RTD formulation.

KEY TOPICS:

- Sugar Reduction: Solutions for lower sugar content in RTDs in line with current consumers trends.
- Balancing Mouthfeel and Viscosity: How to achieve the right texture and body in low-sugar or low-alcohol formulations, ensuring a satisfying drinking experience
- Managing Off-Notes in Alcoholic Formulations: Solutions for minimising unwanted flavors and aromas.



Click the button to subscribe to our Newsletter and learn more.



Connecting with Ireland's Brewing & Distilling Industry

Irish Section AGM and Annual Dinner 2026 20th February 2026

Ireland's brewing and distilling industries continue to show strong growth and diversification, with established producers operating alongside an expanding number of independent breweries and distilleries. Ongoing investment in quality, skills, and sustainability continues to shape both sectors.

In the beer sector, Irish brewers are responding to evolving consumer preferences with an increasing focus on flavour-led innovation and premiumisation. There is continued demand for craft beers alongside growth in low- and no-alcohol options, reflecting changing drinking habits and a greater emphasis on moderation.

The spirits industry remains a major success story for Ireland, with Irish whiskey continuing to perform strongly in both domestic and export markets. At the same time, there is ongoing diversification and Producers are increasingly exploring innovation through maturation techniques, flavour infusions, and limited-edition releases, while maintaining a strong focus on provenance, authenticity, and consistency.

We will be attending the CIBD AGM and Annual Dinner this February and will be continuing our support as a sponsor. The AGM and dinner remain an important date in the Irish brewing and distilling calendar, bringing together brewers & distillers, suppliers, and industry professionals from across the sector.



The Functional Shroom Boom – Why the Right Supplier Matters

Beta-Glucans aren't the full story

The functional mushroom space has seen explosive growth in recent years, driven by demand for cognitive health, immune support, sports performance, and stress management solutions. However, rapid market expansion has also led to significant variability in ingredient quality. For formulators, brand owners, and product developers, this makes one thing very clear: Not all mushroom extracts are equal or as potent.

To create effective, differentiated products, it's important to look beyond simple compositional claims revolving around beta-glucan percentages and focus instead on the specific bioactive compounds that drive real health benefits.

The Beta-Glucan Misconception

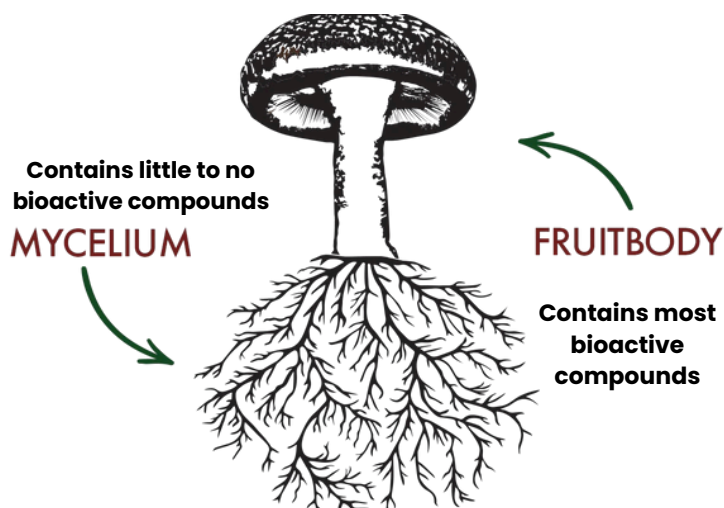
Beta-glucans are often used as a quick marker of quality in mushroom products. While they are important polysaccharides, they do not represent the full functional profile of a mushroom.

Many beta-glucan tests cannot distinguish between:

- Mushroom-derived beta-glucans and
- Grain-derived beta-glucans (commonly found in mycelium grown on substrates)

This means a product may show a high beta-glucan level while offering minimal mushroom-specific functionality.

Bioactive Compounds: The Real Indicators of Efficacy



The clinically relevant benefits of functional mushrooms come from species-specific bioactive compounds, which are found at meaningful concentrations only in the fruiting body – the part of the mushroom visible above ground.

By contrast, mycelium and lower-body extracts often contain little to no key bioactives, resulting in significantly reduced efficacy in manufacturers formulations.

Heterochem delivers high-quality, fruiting-body-only extracts ensuring your formulations have genuine, measurable benefits to end users.

differentiate your product in a competitive market, where consumer loyalty is driven by proven performance.

Contact us to discuss which functional mushroom is best suited for your application.

The Formulator's Guide to Functional Fungi: Bioactive Compounds Explained



► **Lions Mane – Cognitive Health**

Key bioactives: Hericenones & hericenones.
These compounds promote NGF (nerve growth factor) synthesis, support memory, focus, and neural health. Essential for manufacturers developing cognitive enhancement formulations.

► **Chaga – Immune, Longevity & Gut Support**

Key bioactives: Inotiodal, betulinic acid.
Known for strong antioxidant activity, Chaga helps protect against oxidative DNA/RNA damage and supports cellular resilience.



► **Reishi – Stress Relief & Sleep Support**

Key bioactives: Triterpenoids, lucidenic acid.
Reishi helps modulate immune response, promote relaxation, and support healthy sleep cycles, making it ideal for calm and recovery products.



► **Cordyceps – Energy & Athletic Performance**

Key bioactives: Cordycepin, adenosine
These compounds help enhance ATP production, reduce fatigue, and improve physical performance—making Cordyceps a top choice for sports nutrition.



Contact us to discuss which functional mushroom is best suited for your application.



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Trending Ingredients

► Matcha Powder

Our premium Matcha Powder delivers vibrant color, rich flavor, and natural antioxidants, making it a standout ingredient for beverages, bakery, and functional foods. Consistently high-quality and reliable, it's perfect for manufacturers looking to create products that impress both in taste and presentation.



► FOS (Fructooligosaccharides)

Fructooligosaccharides (FOS) are natural prebiotic fibers that support gut health by promoting beneficial bacteria. Mildly sweet and low in calories, FOS can be added to beverages, bakery goods, and functional foods. It also enhances texture and mouthfeel, making it a versatile choice for innovative, clean-label products.



► Astaxanthin 5%

Astaxanthin is a powerful natural antioxidant known for its vibrant red-orange hue and health benefits, including supporting skin, eye, and immune health. Ideal for functional foods, beverages, supplements, and nutraceutical applications, our high-quality Astaxanthin ensures consistency, potency, and reliability for manufacturers.



Control Foam. Protect Your Process.



Scaling Success: Overcoming Foam Challenges in Modern Bio-Fermentation

In the competitive landscape of biopharmaceutical and food-enzyme production, process efficiency is often won or lost in the details of the bioreactor. One of the most persistent and costly threats to a stable batch is uncontrolled foam formation.

To address these challenges, we work with our partner Momentive to offer advanced SAG™ and Esca™ antifoam solutions specifically formulated for the rigorous demands of pharma and food-grade fermentation.

The Silent Erosion of Yield

Bio-fermentation environments characterised by high aeration rates, protein-rich broths, and complex media are inherently prone to foaming. If left unmanaged, foam does more than just create a mess – it silently erodes your bottom line by:

- Reducing Oxygen Transfer: Impeding the vital gas exchange required for optimal microbial growth.
- Increasing Contamination Risks: Foam reaching the headspaces and exhaust lines can cause filter blockages and provide a bridge for contaminants.
- Disrupting Batch Consistency: Inconsistent foam levels lead to variations in pressure and nutrient distribution, threatening product quality.

Key Benefits for Manufacturers:

- High Efficiency at Low Doses
- Regulatory Peace of Mind: Formulated for compliance and trusted in highly regulated pharmaceutical and food applications.
- Process Stability: Minimizes disruptions during scale-up, ensuring that performance in the lab translates to success at production volumes.

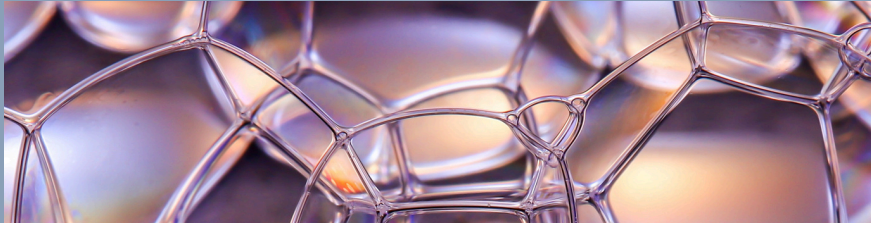
MOMENTIVE™

BC SIMETHICONE ANTIFOAMS

Ensure rapid relief from gas
and bloating discomfort



CASE STUDY



TRIPLING ANTIBIOTIC PRODUCTION BY OPTIMIZING FOAM CONTROL WITH SAG™ 471 SILICONE ANTIFOAM

An antibiotic manufacturer producing treatments for *Clostridium difficile* achieved a significant increase in production yields by optimizing its fermentation process and adopting a more effective antifoam solution.

To increase production capacity, the company raised airflow rates in its fermenters. This approach improved oxygen transfer, accelerated microbial growth, and shortened production cycle times. However, the higher aeration also led to excessive foam formation.

Conventional polyol-based antifoams, such as polypropylene glycol (PPG), were unable to control the foam effectively under these conditions. Larger dosages were required, complicating process control and creating challenges in downstream processing.

After evaluating alternative solutions, the team transitioned to Momentive's SAG™ 471 silicone antifoam, paired with optimized process conditions. The results were significant.

Batch frequency increased from 1–2 per week to 5–6 per week

Cycle time dropped from 3–4 days to just over 1 day

Output nearly tripled, substantially improving productivity

RESULTS AT A GLANCE

3-4

MORE BATCHES PER WEEK

UP TO 104

MORE KG PRODUCED PER WEEK



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**Thank you
for staying
connected
with
Heterochem**



**Explore the latest
trends on
Ingredients
Network**



CONTACT INFO

Contact us today to learn more about our products and services. Our dedicated team is here to assist you in finding the perfect solutions for your business.

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**Need help sourcing
ingredients for your next
RTD Formulation?**

