

Monthly Market Update: Food, Beverage & Agribusiness

May recap

Mesirow All-Food Equity Composite **5.22%** for the month ended 5.31¹

Mesirow All-Grain Commodity Composite **-0.18%** for the month ended 5.31²

S&P 500 **6.15%** for the month ended 5.31³

NASDAQ Composite **9.56%** for the month ended 5.31⁴

May Food & Beverage M&A Steady with Strategics Still Out Front

M&A activity remained steady in May with 33 announced transactions, slightly ahead of April, marking another month of elevated deal flow. Disclosed enterprise value surpassed \$1 billion for the fourth consecutive month, driven primarily by strategics and hybrid acquirers, while private equity platform buyers continued to show restraint from the sidelines. Looking ahead, we expect the mix of acquirers to shift as the year progresses, with private equity platform activity likely to pick up alongside greater clarity in the financing markets. This could rebalance what has recently been a strategic- and hybrid-led deal environment.

Macro signals were mixed but showed signs of resilience. While consumer sentiment in May remained near historic lows, matching levels not seen since 1980, spending remained relatively stable. Meanwhile, a planned increase in steel and aluminum tariffs, set to double to 50% starting June 4, may add near-term cost pressure to food and packaging supply chains. That said, many operators appear better positioned to manage input volatility than in prior cycles, potentially softening the impact on inflation expectations.

Indulgence is still on the rise

Innovation in snacking and confections showed no signs of slowing, with the Sweets & Snacks Expo in Indianapolis underscoring strong category momentum. Standout trends from the show included:

Global Meets Bold

Spicy, sour, and globally inspired flavor profiles dominated — from chamoy to pickle to Dubai-style pistachio-chocolate. Both emerging brands and heritage players are drawing on international influences to catalyze trial and drive differentiation.

Cultural Relevance Drives Volume

Nostalgic revivals (PB&J, lemonade, Certs) and seasonal or moment-driven SKUs are fueling occasion-led snacking. Limited-time drops tied to holidays or cultural moments are creating urgency, boosting volume, and delivering high-margin lift.

Function Is the Future

Consumers are increasingly expecting snacks that do more. Functional benefits from nootropics to prebiotics to protein are blurring the line between indulgence and self-care. “Smart snacking” is now a high-growth category and a key area of M&A interest.

Innovation Takes Centerstage

More than 400 new SKUs showcased fresh takes on texture, flavors, formats, and packaging. Freeze-dried builds, layered inclusions, and interactive textures stood out for their sensory impact. Brands with agile R&D and fast execution are setting the pace.

Experience Is the Product

Snacks are evolving into full sensory experiences. Crunch, color and format are all part of the value proposition. Poppable, stackable, and visually engaging formats are designed not just to be eaten but shared.

Savory Steps Up

Protein-forward snacks — jerky, meat sticks, savory bars continue to surge, appealing to health-conscious consumers seeking satiety and convenience. Elk, bison, and even pickle-flavored formats signal ongoing differentiation and premiumization.

Permissible Indulgence Wins

Even amid economic pressure, snacks remain accessible luxuries. Brands are positioning treats as “mini moments” of joy — affordable indulgences that deliver emotional resonance and justify repeat purchases.

Monthly M&A Market Brief: Food, Beverage & Agribusiness

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF TRANSACTIONS BY STATUS

	April	May
Announced	37	52
Closed/Effective/Expired	41	53
Total Number of Transactions	78	105

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF TRANSACTIONS BY TYPE

	April	May
Private Placement	33	58
Merger/Acquisition	29	33
Public Offering	8	12
Bankruptcy	8	2
Total Number of Transactions	78	105

TABLE 3: M&A STATS¹

Valuation Summary	April	May
Total Deal Value (\$mm)	\$2,032.4	\$1,289.4
Average Deal Value (\$mm)	\$508.1	\$322.4
Average EV/Revenue	2.81x	0.65x
Average EV/EBITDA	–	14.4x
Average Day Prior Premium	–	152.1%
Average Week Prior Premium	–	153.2%
Average Month Prior Premium	–	156.3%

TABLE 4: NUMBER OF M&A DEALS BY RANGE OF VALUE

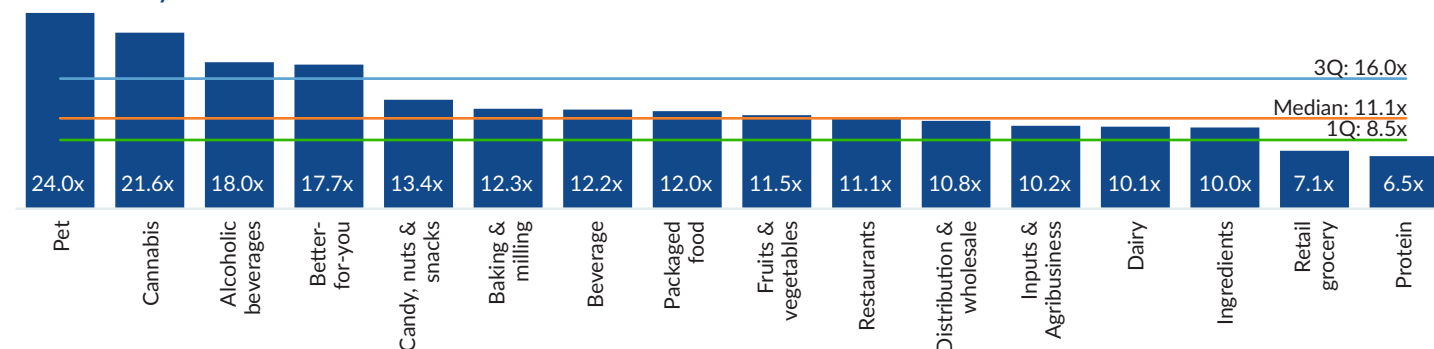
Valuation Summary	April	May
Greater than \$1 billion	1	0
\$500 – \$999.9mm	1	1
\$100 – \$499.9mm	1	2
Less than \$100mm	1	1
Undisclosed	25	29

TABLE 5: ACTIVE BUYERS/INVESTORS BY TOTAL TRANSACTION SIZE (FOR MONTH ENDED 5.31.2025)

Company name	Total transaction size (\$mm)
Accel Partners	\$600.0
New Enterprise Associates, Inc.	\$600.0
GV Management Company, LLC	\$600.0
Forerunner Ventures	\$600.0
American Express Ventures	\$600.0
Hometown Food Company	\$600.0
Kameda Seika Co.,Ltd. (TSE:2220)	\$221.0
Bartlett and Company, Inc.	\$220.5
Valor Management LLC	\$75.0
Greenoaks Capital Partners LLC	\$75.0

M&A Multiples by Sub-sector

Latest ten years



M&A deals with disclosed multiples over the latest ten years. Source: S&P Capital IQ as of May 31, 2025.

Public sector valuations, margins and growth

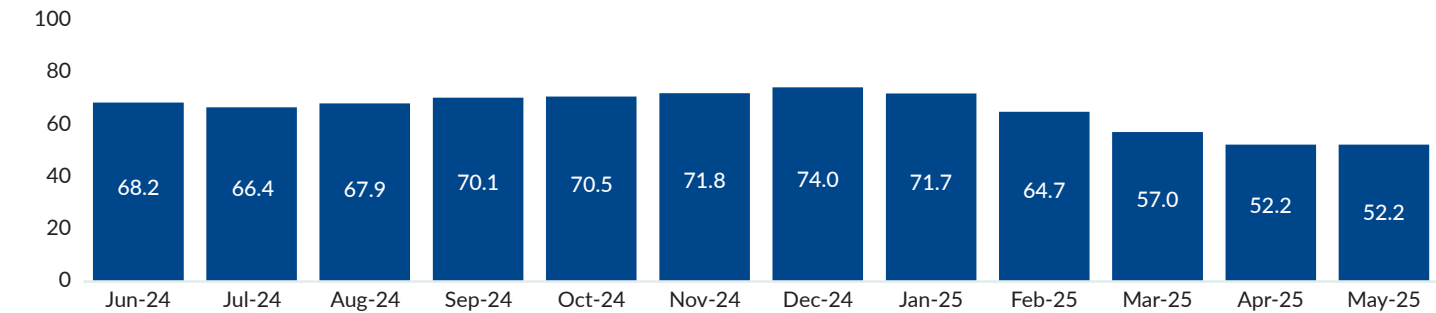
Food, beverage and agribusiness

	% of 52 week high	Enterprise value as a multiple of:				LTM gross margin	LTM EBITDA margin	LTM – NTM revenue growth	Net debt / LTM EBITDA
		Revenue		EBITDA					
		LTM	NTM	LTM	NTM				
Agribusiness	71.6%	0.43x	0.81x	8.5x	7.0x	8.8%	4.8%	3.8%	2.0x
Baking	74.8%	1.12x	1.06x	11.5x	9.0x	39.0%	12.4%	12.1%	2.4x
Beverages: Non-Alcoholic	88.1%	3.31x	2.84x	17.3x	15.8x	42.4%	18.5%	7.1%	3.2x
Better-for-you	68.0%	1.53x	1.56x	14.3x	13.2x	27.1%	8.2%	10.1%	3.0x
Biofuels	45.3%	0.40x	0.39x	20.5x	10.2x	4.9%	0.6%	(1.3%)	4.8x
Candy, Nuts and Snacks	63.7%	1.49x	1.68x	13.3x	12.4x	33.9%	10.3%	4.8%	1.1x
Cannabis	34.9%	1.17x	0.86x	7.3x	7.2x	36.6%	(4.2%)	10.2%	2.6x
Dairy	82.8%	1.72x	1.56x	15.5x	11.9x	27.1%	8.2%	10.5%	2.1x
Distribution and Wholesale	87.9%	0.35x	0.33x	11.4x	10.1x	15.8%	2.9%	3.9%	3.7x
Food Services and Facilities Management	83.1%	0.94x	0.86x	10.6x	7.7x	17.0%	6.8%	9.4%	2.7x
Fruits and Vegetables	83.7%	0.71x	0.87x	9.1x	10.0x	10.8%	5.3%	0.0%	2.8x
Ingredients	84.0%	2.45x	2.34x	16.4x	13.0x	35.5%	16.8%	10.4%	1.7x
Inputs	94.6%	1.85x	1.76x	9.6x	8.1x	27.6%	18.1%	4.8%	2.1x
Meal / Home Delivery	85.5%	3.04x	2.79x	17.8x	11.3x	50.2%	18.9%	9.0%	1.5x
Packaged Foods	83.4%	2.11x	2.13x	9.5x	9.3x	31.7%	17.4%	1.7%	3.1x
Protein	83.8%	0.75x	0.74x	7.3x	7.0x	18.9%	9.0%	7.1%	2.6x
Restaurants	74.1%	2.00x	1.81x	15.3x	12.7x	28.9%	11.8%	5.9%	4.0x
Retail Grocery	88.3%	0.51x	0.58x	9.2x	9.6x	27.7%	5.2%	4.7%	2.1x
3rd Quartile	90.7%	2.44x	2.46x	17.1x	14.2x	38.2%	18.0%	10.2%	4.3x
Median	79.7%	1.43x	1.42x	11.7x	10.7x	29.2%	10.3%	5.7%	2.8x
1st Quartile	63.3%	0.70x	0.73x	8.5x	7.9x	17.8%	4.8%	2.1%	1.7x

Source: S&P Capital IQ as of May 31, 2025.

Consumer Sentiment Index

Latest twelve months



Source: Surveys of Consumers (umich.edu).

Market data (1/2)

Last five years and latest twelve months

CHART 1: CORN (\$ PER BUSHEL)

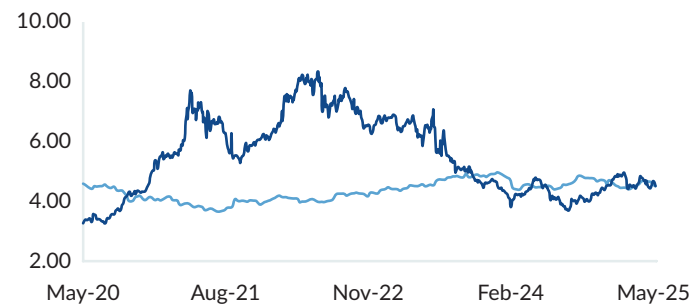


CHART 2: WHEAT (\$ PER BUSHEL)



CHART 3: SOYBEANS (\$ PER BUSHEL)

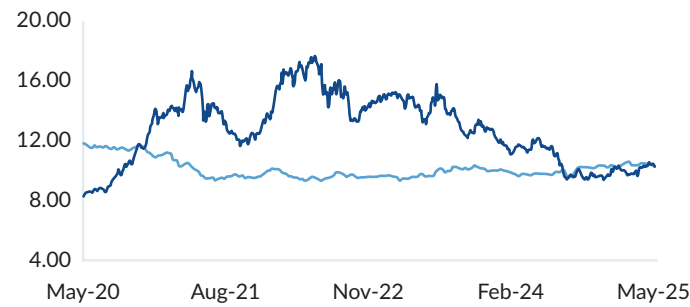


CHART 4: SOYBEAN MEAL (\$ PER TON)

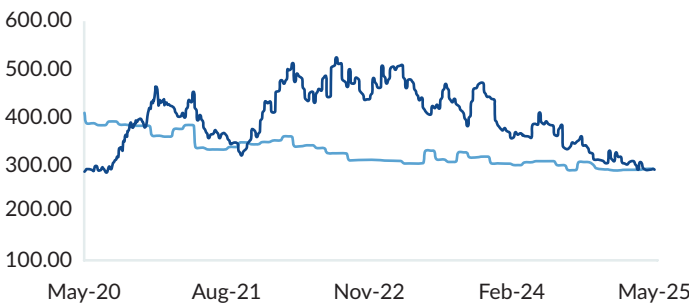


CHART 5: SOYBEAN OIL (\$ PER LB)

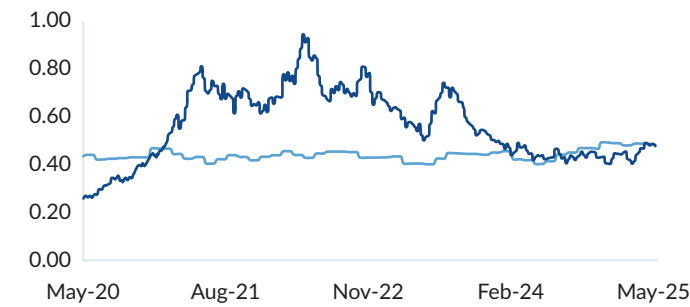
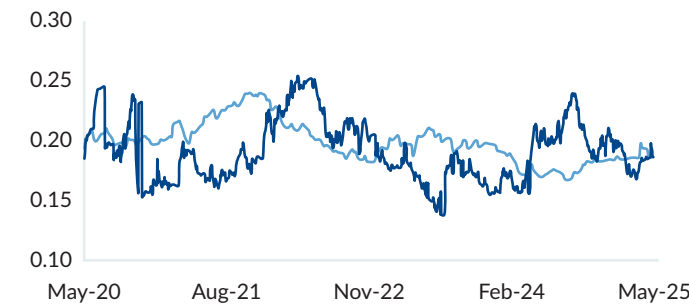


CHART 6: MILK CLASS III (\$ PER LB)



Market data (2/2)
Last five years and latest twelve months

CHART 7: LIVE CATTLE (\$ PER LB)

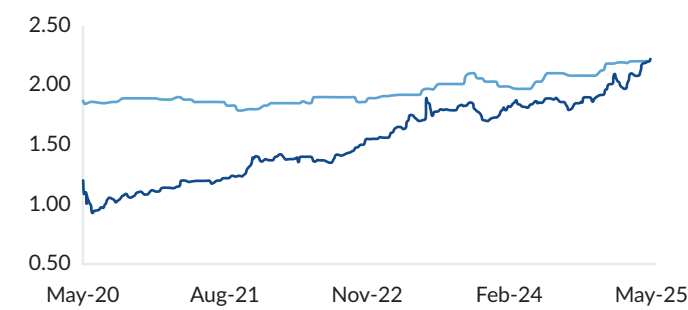


CHART 8: LEAN HOGS (\$ PER LB)

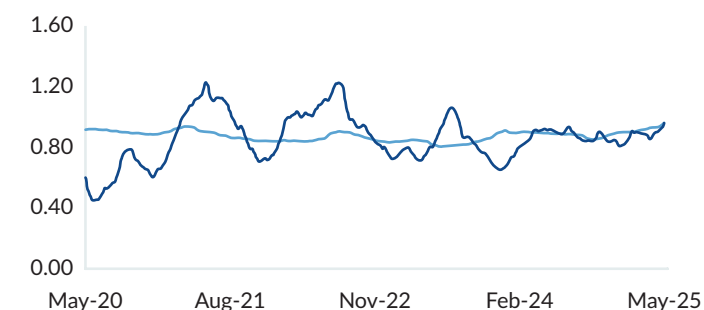


CHART 9: CHICKEN BROILERS (\$ PER LB)



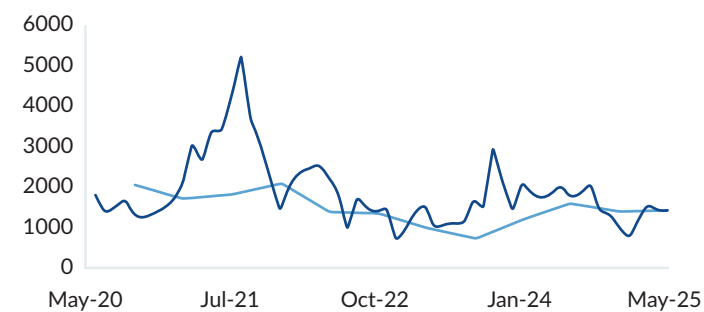
CHART 10: SUGAR (\$ PER LB)



CHART 11: COFFEE (\$ PER LB)



CHART 12: BALTIC DRY INDEX



Mesirow's exclusive focus on the middle market means we understand and relate to entrepreneurial business owners and their management teams. We take a long-term approach to client relationships and combine long-standing relationships with expert advisory services to provide custom solutions for leading food, beverage and agribusiness companies. With years of relevant transaction experience and a global network, our senior bankers devote a high level of attention to every transaction and ensure we meet the unique needs of our clients.

Sector focus

Branded & private label

- Packaged food & beverage
- Emerging brands
- Heritage brands
- Natural and organic
- Prepared foods

Distributors & wholesalers

- Foodservice
- Retail
- Re-distributors

Fruits & vegetables

- Growers
- Packers
- Shippers
- Processors

Ingredients & flavors

- Functional & sensory
- Edible oils
- Inclusions
- Sauces
- Spices & sweeteners
- Upcycled

Inputs & agribusiness

- Agronomy
- Agtech
- Biofuels
- Crop inputs
- Feed & ingredients
- Production
- Storage & distribution

Restaurants & retail grocery

- Independent grocery chains
- Food services management
- Franchisors & franchisees
- Multi-unit concepts
- Multi-concept chains

Specialty beverage

- Coffee, tea & kombucha
- Beer, wine, spirits & zero proof
- Functional beverages
- Craft soda & seltzers
- Bottlers & co-packers

Other industry concentrations

In addition to food, beverage and agribusiness, we are a dedicated advisor to a wide array of middle-market companies and have developed an in-depth expertise in a range of industries, including:

- | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| • Aerospace & Defense | • Distribution & Supply Chain | • Industrial Technology |
| • Business Services | • Healthcare | • Packaging |
| • Consumer & eCommerce | • Industrials | • Technology & Services |

About Mesirow

Mesirow is an independent, employee-owned financial services firm founded in 1937. Headquartered in Chicago, with offices around the world, we serve clients through a personal, custom approach to reaching financial goals and acting as a force for social good. With capabilities spanning Private Capital & Currency, Capital Markets & Investment Banking, and Advisory Services, we invest in what matters: our clients, our communities and our culture. To learn more, visit mesrow.com, follow us on [LinkedIn](#) and subscribe to [Spark](#), our quarterly newsletter.

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