



# State of the Industry Report

2026 Executive Summary



FOODSERVICE PACKAGING  
INSTITUTE®

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## INTRODUCTION

Every year, the Foodservice Packaging Institute (FPI) conducts a survey to glean information on the industry. FPI looks at issues, like changes to volume and profits; expansion and purchasing plans; opportunities and challenges facing the industry; and more. The survey is sent to FPI members and non-members, representing the entire value chain in North America, including:

- raw material suppliers;
- machinery suppliers;
- converters;
- foodservice distributors; and
- foodservice operators.

Participation in the survey is completely voluntary and respondents can opt out of any question asked.

The results of this survey are compiled to produce FPI's 27th annual State of the Industry Report.

In 2026, more than 45 organizations from the foodservice packaging value chain in North America responded to the survey. Their responses were tabulated and published in a 37-page State of the Industry Report, which was distributed to FPI members and contributing participants only. What follows are the highlights from the 2026 report.

All questions are welcome. Please contact Ashley Elzinga, Director of Sustainability & Outreach, at [aelzinga@fpi.org](mailto:aelzinga@fpi.org) with any questions or to participate in next year's survey.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In a year full of changes and regulations, many in the foodservice packaging industry see a market that's stabilizing. Despite continued uncertainty, respondents feel cautiously optimistic about 2026. Survey responses, collected in Q1 2026, reveal continued, cautious optimism among industry players.

This is evident in the latest State of the Industry survey. Results show more than 35% of foodservice packaging manufacturers and suppliers experienced growth in volume, while 34% experienced loss in volume. This is reflected in profit growth with 65% worsening or staying the same in 2025 compared to 2024. Signaling a bit of optimism, 50% of the industry expect volume expansion while more than 85% expect profits to grow or remain the same. Foodservice operator respondents predominantly saw increased or flat sales, and were optimistic that this trend would continue in 2026.

In a further sign of market stabilization, nearly 40% of the North American manufacturer respondents reported another year of corporate expansion plans with 56% doing it through the expansion of current facilities. This remains in line with 2025 survey results. Less than 50% plan to expand through building a new plant or merger/acquisition. Also similar to previous years, more than 70% of North American converters plan to purchase machinery in 2026.

Long noted as an area of opportunity, convenience stores are still seen by respondents as one of the greatest areas for market expansion, followed by the fast casual restaurants, chain quick service restaurants and supermarket/grocery store segments. This is due in part to the convenience of meeting multiple needs in one location, combined with the increasing quality of foodservice options in these types of stores. Finding foodservice items at a lower price as cost-of-living expenses continue rising, also makes these good opportunities for expansion.

For the first time, nursing homes were noted frequently as an area of opportunity, due to an aging population. Regardless of market segment, convenience and value amid high costs were cited as influences on growth opportunities.

It's not just consumers weighing price in their purchasing decisions — foodservice operators are also prioritizing cost-conscious choices. Operator respondents overwhelmingly identified cost as the most important characteristic when selecting foodservice packaging, followed by performance, packaging made from recycled content and performance.

As in years past, North American converter and supplier respondents continue to have differing views on the top challenges facing the industry. Overall, traditional business issues, such as government legislation/regulation and margin compression, remain at the forefront, along with increasing raw material costs. The call for changes to EPR/product stewardship remains challenging, too.

The results highlighted five common challenges facing the industry (ordered from most to least important):

1. Government legislation/regulation.
2. Margin compression.
3. Increasing raw material costs.
4. Call for changes to EPR/product stewardship.
5. Globalization and the increased competition from outside national borders.