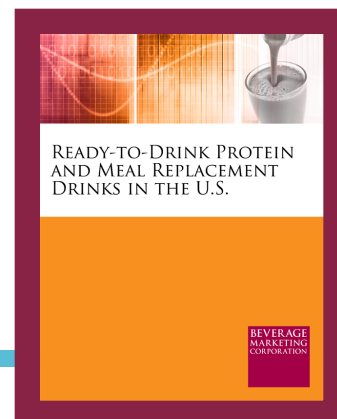


# READY-TO-DRINK PROTEIN AND MEAL REPLACEMENT DRINKS IN THE U.S.

**2020 EDITION** (Published March 2020. Data through 2019. Market projections through 2024.) More than 35 pages, with extensive text analysis, graphs, charts and tables



**W**ill the RTD protein and meal replacement drink market, which have grown steadily if unspectacularly in the past five years, get its second wind?

Beverage Marketing Corporation analyzes this question in its industry report entitled: *Ready-to-Drink Protein and Meal-Replacement Drinks in the U.S.* Considering that RTD protein and meal replacement drinks is a segment that theoretically has not fulfilled its full potential, it is important to consider what can be learned here for entrepreneurs and market veterans alike.

## AVAILABLE FORMAT & PRICING



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**HAVE  
QUESTIONS?**

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## THE ANSWERS YOU NEED

This brief but insightful market report discusses key issues in the RTD protein drinks category. It measures volume, as well as wholesale and retail dollar sales. BMC's exclusive five-year projections are also included. Questions answered include:

- How did RTD protein and meal replacement drinks originate and evolve in the U.S. market?
- Which are the leading brands? Is the market sewn up by big companies or is there room for smaller players to capture a significant percentage of market share?
- Why has the category been successful? Also, why has the category slowed down? How do RTD protein and meal replacement drinks relate to the rest of the better-for-you beverage market?
- How much is the RTD protein and meal replacement drink market expected to grow in the next five years? What are the tailwinds and headwinds going forward?

## THIS REPORT FEATURES

This report examines a unique niche of the wellness and functional beverage space that borders the sports beverage segment and is encompassed in the overall sports nutrition realm. The presentation of industry research begins with an overview of the RTD protein and meal replacement drink market, then then analyzes various brands and the companies behind them. Innovations these brands have achieved and the marketing strategies behind them are analyzed.

After outlining this context, the report describes the issues likely to determine what is next in the U.S. RTD protein and meal replacement drink marketplace and projects market size five years into the future. In this report, readers get a thorough understanding of all facets of the RTD protein and meal replacement drink market including:

- Wholesale dollar sales and volume of the RTD protein and meal replacement drink market going back to 2014.
- Discussion of the main competitors and their likely prospects, including analysis of the strategies of the largest brands in the segment.
- Analysis of the prospects of the RTD protein and meal replacement drinks market in the next five years, with Beverage Marketing's wholesale dollar and volume category projections to 2024.



# READY-TO-DRINK PROTEIN AND MEAL REPLACEMENT DRINKS IN THE U.S.

BEVERAGE  
MARKETING  
CORPORATION

# Ready-to-Drink Protein and Meal Replacement Drinks in the U.S.

March 2020



RESEARCH • DATA • CONSULTING

**NOTE:** The information contained in this report is confidential and solely intended for the benefit of the immediate recipient hereof.

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Although traditionally protein drinks mainly were the narrow province of gym rats who purchased them in powder form, this changed dramatically over the past decade once the beverage world saw the explosive success awaiting the ready-to-drink version of powder-based Muscle Milk.

- This occurred after diets like Atkins, while discrediting carbohydrates, helped to make protein a buzzword in nutrition earlier in the 2000s. When giant Pepsi Bottling Group (PBG) forged a national distribution alliance with Muscle Milk over a decade ago, this was enough to legitimize the segment in the channel, and this was one alliance in which the bottling system does appear to have accorded a guest brand a reasonable amount of attention, even if it took a while before PepsiCo was willing to fully integrate the brand via acquisition.
- Not surprisingly the Pepsi alliance prompted a frenzy of activity as other entrants look to get their protein lines into the distributors who were dispossessed of their Muscle Milk. These included independent companies with roots in the supplement space, such as VPX (with Redline) and Labrada Lean Body, and the major pharmaceutical company Abbott Laboratories with EAS Myoplex. VPX has made some headway, but the others have generally faltered, unable to get their hands around an alien sector, mainstream retail, and the distributors used to reach it.
- Major food and beverage companies have been attracted to the segment for its robust shelf price and lack of overlap with their core items, but a pair have stubbed their toes badly. Soft drink marketer DPS invested millions in 2007 in launching a RTD version of the powdered Accelerade brand to which it had obtained RTD rights, but found the effort ultimately undermined by positioning and production issues that caused it to pull the brand quickly.
- PepsiCo several years ago restaged its Gatorade sports drink brand to include a protein “recovery” drink, but that effort too sputtered.
- For their part, the breakfast cereal manufacturers also want in on a good thing and have launched their own protein-oriented beverage lines positioned as a grab-and-go breakfast alternative under names like BFast (from General Mills) and Special K2O without any noteworthy breakouts emerging
- Even Anheuser-Busch has gotten in on the game, with an interesting twist: it has helped launch a brand called Canvas that employs spent grains from the brewing process to make a protein-rich and emphatically plant-based beverage.
- All of the RTD brands springing out of the endemic protein manufacturers have been pushed toward the mainstream both as performance beverages and also as contemporary on-the-go meals that are a far cry from the dust-gathering canned products like Ensure that clutter the lower shelves of grocery and convenience stores (although in fairness it should be noted that the owners of those brands have been freshening them up so as not to miss the wave).



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**Exhibit 7**

**U.S. RTD PROTEIN DRINK AND MEAL REPLACEMENT DRINK MARKET**  
**CHANGE IN WHOLESALE DOLLARS BY SEGMENT (r)**  
**2015 – 2024(P)**

Segment	5-Yr CAGR					
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/24(P)
Protein Drinks	■ %	■ %	■ %	■ %	■ %	■ %
Meal Replacement Drinks	■ %	■ %	■ %	■ %	■ %	■ %
<b>TOTAL</b>	■ %	■ %	■ %	■ %	■ %	■ %

*CAGR: Compound Annual Growth Rate*

*(r) Revised; (P) Projected*

*Source: Beverage Marketing Corporation*