



2021 ANNUAL REPORT – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

See more at www.crnusa.org/whole



COUNCIL FOR RESPONSIBLE NUTRITION
THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE SUPPLEMENTS – SINCE 1973

FROM CRN PRESIDENT & CEO STEVE MISTER



Consumers are turning to dietary supplements and functional food more than ever to support their better health and wellness.

With this unprecedented potential to serve consumers—enhancing lives around the world and even helping to protect the earth itself—the dietary supplement industry needs CRN’s thoughtful collaboration, carefully executed strategic advocacy, and accessible, inclusive stakeholder education.

Dietary supplements and functional foods are not just another consumer product goods (CPG) category. They represent a whole different way of looking at wellness—and empower consumers to take charge of their health, as intended by the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act (DSHEA).

Supplements are fundamentally different and so are the reasons why consumers take them. That calls for different approaches to advance our mission of improving the climate for our members to develop, source, manufacture, and market science-backed dietary supplements, functional food, and their ingredients.

Our industry is thriving, but it is not immune to supply chain disruptions, labor shortages, and inflationary pressures. CRN is helping our members navigate these market challenges.

We also face the challenge of regulatory uncertainty, as I discussed in my address at CRN’s 2021 *Now, New, Next* annual event. The dietary supplement industry must adapt to a climate in which FDA is underfunded, understaffed—and perhaps even under-incentivized to aggressively enforce DSHEA as it was envisioned.

We must chart our own course forward if we want to maintain and enhance the consumer confidence that has brought us to this point of tremendous growth—but CRN members are not alone on this path.

CRN’s work demonstrates both our ongoing commitment to advancing the industry with real solutions and strategies for success and assurance all members have input into our initiatives and policy decisions.

CRN members are proactively shaping the industry they want, together.

That work includes driving change to bring more diversity, equity, and inclusion to our industry. We have consciously examined our board and committee leadership and made efforts to create a more inclusive community that also reflects our diverse consumer base—and the consumer base we hope to cultivate. At the CRN staff level, we have changed even small things, like where we post career openings to attract a more diverse talent pool. But there is so much more we need to do, and more will be announced in 2022.

CRN’s staff of experienced professionals start every workday with the singular goal to further our mission. Our team is actively engaged in the four areas I identified in my address as priorities for our attention:

- 1. ADVOCATING** for new tools to strengthen FDA’s toolbox, while at the same time preserving the fundamental principles that built this industry—and being mindful of what’s possible in the current political environment.
- 2. DEFENDING** against actors who would step into the role of regulator and guiding their action in productive ways.
- 3. STRENGTHENING** self-regulation to show the maturity and integrity of the industry.
- 4. COMMUNICATING** directly with stakeholders, including consumers, to provide a narrative consistent with the safety and health benefits of our products.

This 2021 report summary highlights ways the CRN team has delivered in each of these areas and brings unique value to companies in the dietary supplement and functional food space. Please see our website at www.crnusa.org/whole for more.



**OUR WHOLE IS
STRONGER THAN THE
SUM OF OUR PARTS.**

CRN's work in 2021 demonstrated our unique capabilities and longstanding commitment to advance the industry.

CRN delivered real solutions, driven by our depth of focus and expertise in dietary supplements and functional foods.

Our members benefited from CRN's carefully executed strategy, marked by thoughtful collaboration, tenacious advocacy, and creative, accessible, and inclusive stakeholder education. Here we briefly highlight some of the ways CRN provided unique value to our diverse membership.

CRN ADVOCATED for new tools to strengthen FDA's capacity for appropriate enforcement as we also protected the fundamental principles of DSHEA. We:

- Advocated for mandatory product listing while tenaciously representing member interests to prevent inclusion of burdensome provisions.
- Aggressively pushed back on FDA's inaction on NAC, defending consumer access in the wake of illegal "rulemaking by warning letter."
- Promoted bipartisan legislation to establish a federal regulatory pathway for CBD.
- Reinvigorated our longstanding position in support of proprietary blends.
- Connected stakeholders across the globe to promote science-based nutrition policy.
- Commented on policy proposals in the U.S., as well as Europe and China.

CRN STRENGTHENED self-regulation and other core competencies, demonstrating our members' maturity and integrity. We:

- Revised our bylaws regarding CRN's code of ethical conduct and qualifications for membership.
- Advanced harmonization of retail standards.
- Promoted association membership to private equity firms to acclimate growing companies (and their funders) to the unique culture and regulatory environment of the supplement space.
- Grew participation in the Supplement OWL product label registry in anticipation of mandatory product listing.
- Created new member groups with a focus on health care practitioners and chain drug and "big box" retailers.
- Conducted our first toxicology workshop sharing approaches to safety, GRAS submissions, and NDIs.

CRN DEFENDED against those seeking to fill regulatory gaps and worked to redirect their actions in productive, mutually agreeable ways. We:

- Advanced alternatives to age-restriction legislation, leading the fight against proposals to restrict weight management and sports nutrition products in several states.
- Led stakeholder conversations on reforms to DSHEA to find common ground that's responsive to critics' concerns and balanced with the consumer access and freedom to innovate that DSHEA intended.
- Spotlighted ongoing issues with FDA's interpretation of drug preclusion language and its effects on innovation.
- Submitted comments in coalition with our partners on Prop 65 proposals.
- Supported appropriate regulatory enforcement against spiked products.
- Submitted amicus briefs in relevant class actions.

CRN COMMUNICATED with a variety of stakeholders, including consumers, promoting the safety and benefits of our products, and provided education to the industry. We:

- Shared topline data from our annual consumer survey demonstrating supplements are widely and safely used by more than 200 million Americans.
- Reached more than 5.7 million consumers with science-based information through "Vitamin D & Me."
- Launched "Probiotics: What's Inside is Alive" educational campaign for retail buyers and consumers.
- Highlighted the role of supplements in the new Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- Presented a full calendar of in-person and virtual educational offerings to inspire and elevate industry's ability to respond to challenges including supply chain issues, counterfeit products, and standards harmonization.
- Proactively engaged media to place content promoting the safety and benefits of dietary supplements and ingredients.



“If you’re a participant in the dietary supplement industry and believe that the future of your company and our industry requires thoughtful collaboration and advocacy, then you need CRN, and CRN needs you.”

Ben Teicher, President & CEO, Healthy Directions

“CRN is a very important organization for Cargill. Understanding what the industry landscape is, what are the industry norms, what are people getting around and agreeing on...that’s very important, especially when you’re dealing in a regulated environment where not everything is clearly defined.”

Alex Eapen, Ph.D.
Director, R&D Scientific & Regulatory Affairs, Cargill

“Being a CRN member helps us be better...There is value in convening as an industry in an ever-changing environment. The diversity of members allows us to look at the business from all perspectives to guide our work. CRN consistently communicates changes, champions significant initiatives, and is a persistent advocate on the industry’s behalf...”

Tammy Johnson, Vice President,
Human Nutritional Business, FoodScience LLC

“CRN has a unique understanding and depth of knowledge on age restriction proposals. CRN’s team is careful to respectfully engage those stakeholders we aim to educate, which takes strategic relationship building to ensure an open dialogue.”

Ingrid Lebert, Director, Government & Corporate Relations, Pharmavite

“It’s really afforded me an opportunity to stay current on the latest trends, science and areas of focus within the sports nutrition industry. It’s also allowed me to connect and network with like-minded professionals in the industry to discuss relevant topics and learn from each other’s challenges and successes in the category.”

Adam Branfman, Director, e-Business, Professional Brands,
Atrium Innovations/Nestlé Health Science

See more at www.crnusa.org/whole