

# Monthly Market Update: Food, Beverage & Agribusiness

## February recap

Mesirow All-Food Equity Composite **-3.87%** for the month ended 2.28<sup>1</sup>

Mesirow All-Grain Commodity Composite **+5.01%** for the month ended 2.28<sup>2</sup>

S&P 500 **-1.42%** for the month ended 2.28<sup>3</sup>

NASDAQ Composite **-3.97%** for the month ended 2.28<sup>4</sup>

## Strategic Plays and February Takeaways

February 2025 was another active month for M&A in the food, beverage, and agribusiness industry, as companies leveraged early-year momentum to refine their portfolios. Notably, alcoholic + NA beverages and value-added distribution led U.S. target activity for the month, overlaid with significant cross-border interest, an acceleration in mega deals, and an increased emphasis on health-conscious investments.

## Notable Global FB&A Activity

### **Celsius Powers Up: Acquires Alani Nutrition in \$1.8B Deal to Expand Wellness Portfolio |**

Celsius Holdings, Inc., a U.S.-based manufacturer and marketer of calorie-burning beverages, is set to acquire Alani Nutrition LLC, a wellness brand known for its energy drinks, daily essentials, and snacks. The deal, valued at \$1.8 billion, comprises primarily cash and stock, with a nominal earn-out. This acquisition further diversifies Celsius' portfolio in the wellness and energy drink sectors.

**Bakkavor Rejects Greencore's Takeover Offers |** Bakkavor, a key supplier of fresh prepared meals to Tesco, rejected two takeover offers from Greencore, including the latest bid valuing the company at £1.1 billion. The board dismissed the proposals on February 15, stating they undervalued the company's potential.

**Lakeview Farms and Noosa Yoghurt Combine to Form Novus Foods |** Lakeview Farms, a portfolio company of CapVest Partners, completed its acquisition of Noosa Holdings, Inc., resulting in the formation of Novus Foods. This combination positions Novus Foods as a leading CPG company in the refrigerated category. The acquisition broadens Lakeview's product range, strengthens its existing position in refrigerated foods, and capitalizes on growth opportunities within the U.S. yogurt market.

**GrainCorp Signals Expansion via M&A |** GrainCorp announced its intent to pursue acquisitions in the animal nutrition and agri-energy sectors. The company is actively seeking targets to diversify beyond grain handling.

## Key Trends

**Regulatory Scrutiny Intensifies** | On February 10, 2025, new HSR Act rules took effect, increasing M&A filing costs and timelines with stricter disclosure requirements. Assistant Attorney General Gail Slater recently stated the Department of Justice's Antitrust Division will focus on utilizing in-house economists to reduce reliance on costly external experts and prioritize addressing inflation and enhancing consumer market competitiveness.

**Health & Wellness Takes Center Stage** | The acquisition of Alani by Celsius, Poppi by PepsiCo (rumored in Feb. and now confirmed) and Olipop's recent equity round highlight how major players and investors are increasingly focusing on health-oriented and functional products. This trend is expected to drive further acquisitions in the functional beverage and "alt" food sectors in the coming months.

## Looking Ahead

With M&A activity gaining momentum, February 2025 set a strong tone for dealmaking in the industry. As companies continue to realign their portfolios and competition intensifies, expect continued consolidation, accelerated private equity activity (both buy-side and exits), and strategic shifts throughout 1Q and beyond.

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

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF TRANSACTIONS BY STATUS

	January	February
Announced	40	40
Closed/Effective/Expired	35	48
Total Number of Transactions	75	88

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF TRANSACTIONS BY TYPE

	January	February
Private Placement	38	36
Merger/Acquisition	30	26
Public Offering	4	23
Bankruptcy	3	3
Total Number of Transactions	75	88

TABLE 3: M&A STATS

Valuation Summary	January	February
Total Deal Value (\$mm)	\$817.9	\$1,863.8
Average Deal Value (\$mm)	\$272.6	\$621.3
Average EV/Revenue	3.33x	3.82x
Average EV/EBITDA	-	16.6x
Average Day Prior Premium	27.3%	-
Average Week Prior Premium	88.2%	-
Average Month Prior Premium	88.2%	-

TABLE 4: NUMBER OF DEALS BY RANGE OF VALUE

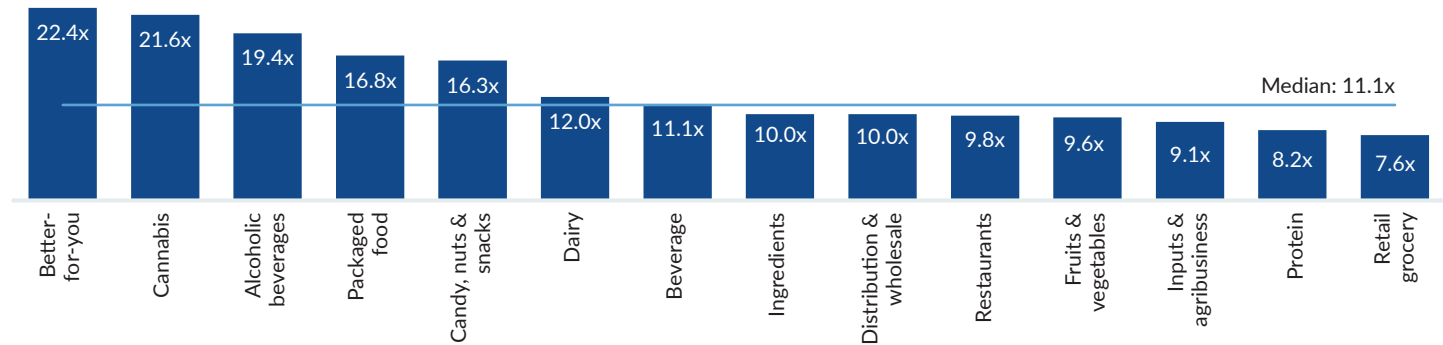
Valuation Summary	January	February
Greater than \$1 billion	0	1
\$500 - \$999.9mm	1	0
\$100 - \$499.9mm	0	0
Less than \$100mm	2	2
Undisclosed	27	23

TABLE 5: ACTIVE BUYERS/INVESTORS BY TOTAL TRANSACTION SIZE (FOR MONTH ENDED 2.28.2025)

Company name	Total transaction size (\$mm)
Celsius Holdings, Inc.	\$1,860.8
Neuberger Berman BD LLC	\$200.0
Wellington Management Group LLP	\$200.0
Stripes, LLC	\$200.0
D1 Capital Partners L.P.	\$200.0
Arena Business Solutions Global SPC II, Ltd.	\$59.0
Arena Investors, LP	\$59.0
Brightwood Capital Advisors, LLC	\$32.5
Asilia Investments, LLC	\$32.5
Savory Fund	\$32.5

## 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 February 28, 2025.

## Public sector valuations, margins and growth

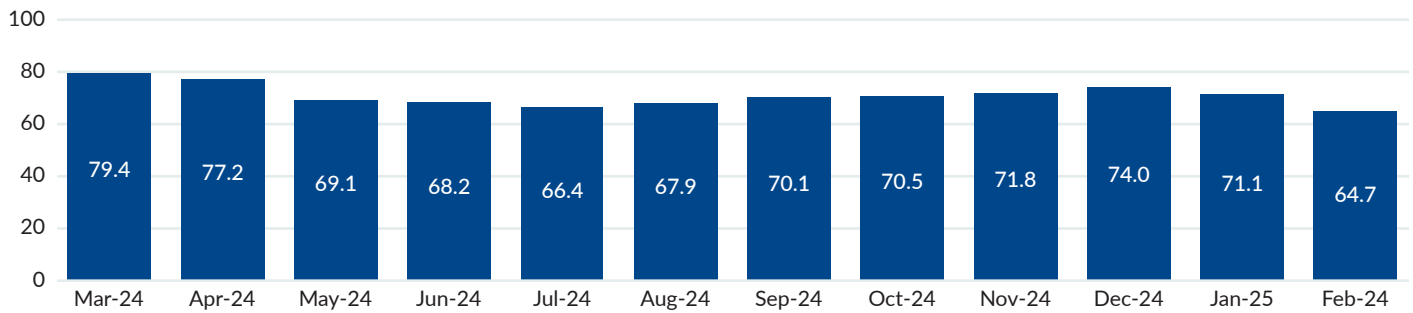
### Food, beverage and agribusiness

	% 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	74.6%	0.43x	0.78x	7.7x	7.0x	8.9%	4.7%	2.3%	1.2x
Baking	70.3%	1.02x	0.96x	8.0x	7.5x	41.0%	11.7%	5.7%	2.3x
Beverages: Non-Alcoholic	85.6%	3.17x	2.84x	17.6x	14.1x	42.5%	18.2%	4.8%	3.1x
Better-for-you	73.6%	1.58x	1.47x	15.3x	12.3x	28.1%	9.2%	9.3%	2.9x
Biofuels	67.1%	0.41x	0.39x	7.7x	10.8x	5.0%	0.5%	(0.8%)	5.5x
Candy, Nuts and Snacks	71.5%	1.52x	1.77x	12.7x	12.8x	33.0%	10.6%	2.8%	1.3x
Cannabis	33.8%	0.95x	0.94x	7.0x	6.2x	39.1%	(12.2%)	14.6%	3.4x
Dairy	79.3%	1.61x	1.47x	12.0x	11.2x	28.1%	12.2%	4.5%	2.0x
Distribution and Wholesale	91.5%	0.29x	0.31x	11.2x	10.4x	15.8%	3.4%	3.9%	3.7x
Food Services and Facilities Management	82.8%	0.87x	0.82x	10.2x	8.1x	17.0%	6.7%	1.1%	2.3x
Fruits and Vegetables	78.2%	0.75x	0.96x	8.7x	9.4x	11.0%	4.8%	1.4%	2.6x
Ingredients	82.5%	2.30x	2.24x	13.9x	12.7x	35.3%	17.1%	5.5%	1.7x
Inputs	77.0%	1.45x	1.37x	8.6x	8.1x	28.8%	18.4%	3.0%	2.1x
Meal / Home Delivery	87.5%	2.78x	2.55x	19.9x	10.6x	49.4%	17.7%	9.3%	1.7x
Packaged Foods	85.5%	2.20x	2.13x	10.1x	9.6x	33.0%	18.7%	1.3%	3.2x
Protein	77.7%	0.79x	0.78x	7.3x	6.8x	18.5%	8.0%	3.4%	2.5x
Restaurants	73.3%	2.15x	1.99x	16.2x	12.9x	27.9%	13.6%	12.3%	4.1x
Retail Grocery	88.2%	0.47x	0.53x	7.5x	9.1x	27.7%	5.3%	2.7%	1.8x
<b>3rd Quartile</b>	90.2%	2.41x	2.49x	17.1x	14.2x	37.9%	18.1%	8.6%	4.3x
<b>Median</b>	77.9%	1.43x	1.41x	11.6x	10.4x	28.7%	10.8%	3.8%	2.8x
<b>1st Quartile</b>	61.2%	0.66x	0.77x	7.9x	7.6x	17.4%	4.9%	0.6%	1.7x

Source: S&P Capital IQ as of February 28, 2025. | Past performance is not necessarily indicative of future results.

## Consumer Sentiment Index

### Latest twelve months



Source: Surveys of Consumers (umich.edu).

## Market data (1/2)

Last five years and latest twelve months

— LTM — 5 years

CHART 1: CORN (\$ PER BUSHEL)

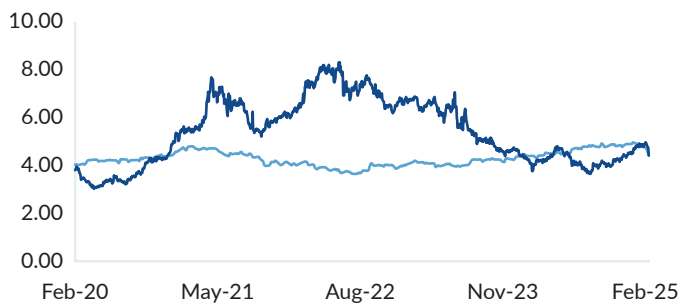


CHART 2: WHEAT (\$ PER BUSHEL)



CHART 3: SOYBEANS (\$ PER BUSHEL)

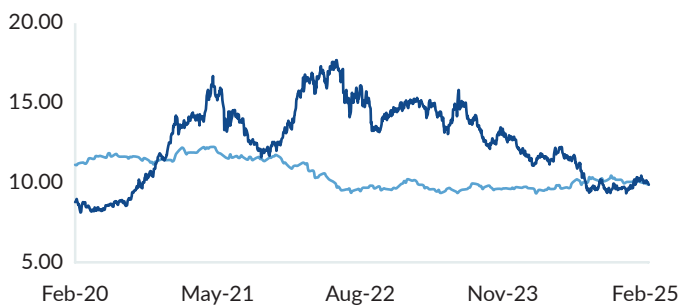


CHART 4: SOYBEAN MEAL (\$ PER TON)

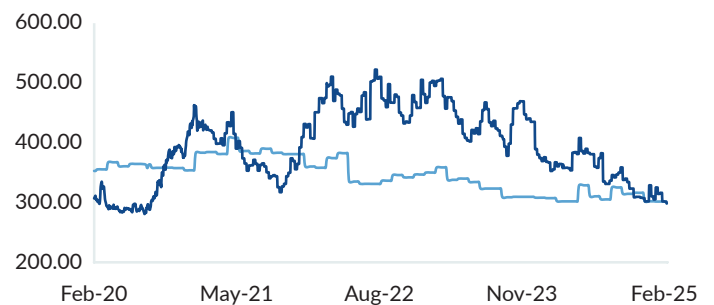


CHART 5: SOYBEAN OIL (\$ PER LB)

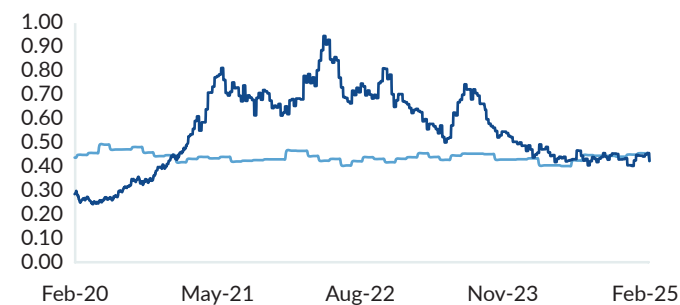


CHART 6: MILK CLASS III (\$ PER LB)



## Market data (2/2)

Last five years and latest twelve months

— LTM — 5 years

CHART 7: LIVE CATTLE (\$ PER LB)

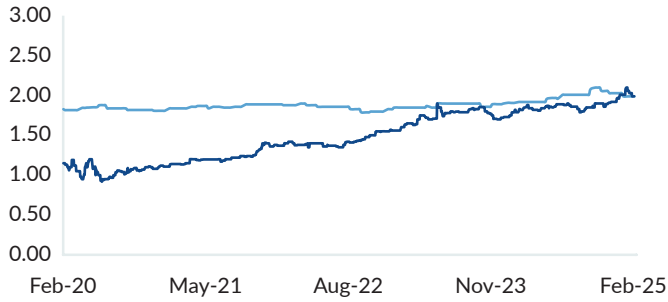


CHART 8: LEAN HOGS (\$ PER LB)

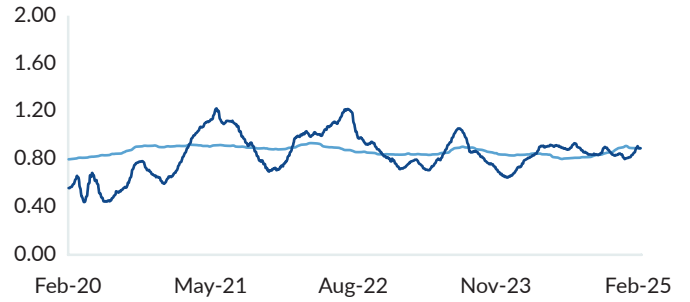


CHART 9: CHICKEN BROILERS (\$ PER LB)

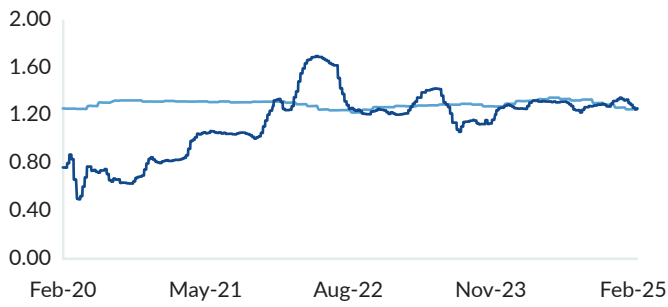


CHART 10: SUGAR (\$ PER LB)

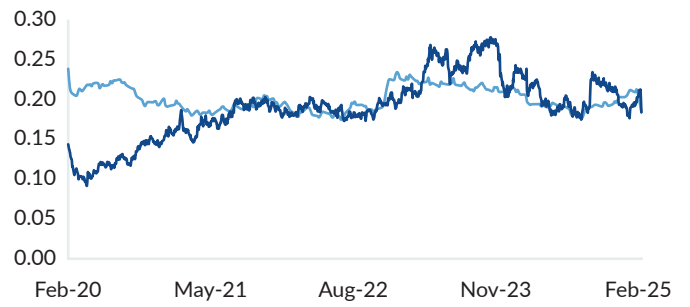


CHART 11: COFFEE (\$ PER LB)

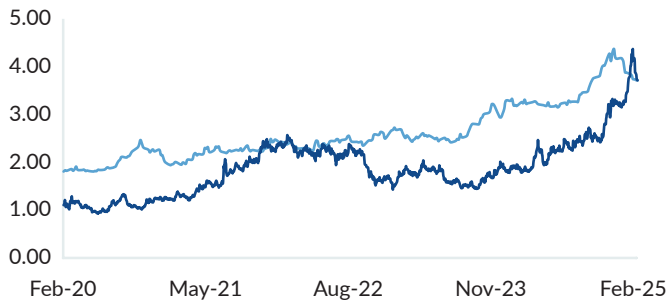
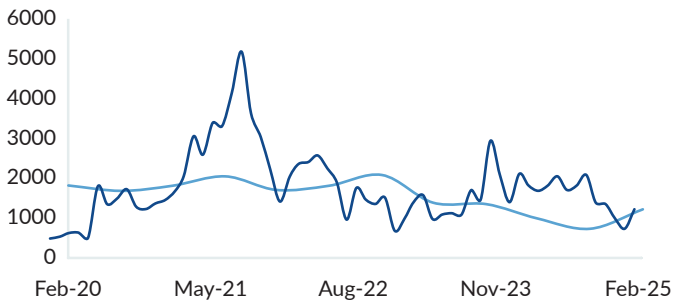


CHART 12: BALTIC DRY INDEX



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
- Business Services
- Consumer & eCommerce
- Distribution & Supply Chain
- Healthcare
- Industrials
- Industrial Technology
- Packaging
- Technology & Services

## About Mesirow

Mesirow is an independent, employee-owned financial services firm founded in 1937. Headquartered in Chicago, with locations 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 Global Investment Management, Capital Markets & Investment Banking, and Advisory Services, we invest in what matters: our clients, our communities and our culture. To learn more, visit [mesirow.com](https://mesirow.com) and follow us on [LinkedIn](#).

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LATEST INSIGHTS