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# Dietary Supplement Players Have a Lot to Work With

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Food & Agribusiness  
[far.rabobank.com](http://far.rabobank.com)

[Michelle Huang](#)

Analyst  
+86 21 28934677

Precision nutrition, sports nutrition, weight management, and traceability are the four up-and-coming trends relevant for dietary supplement players. This is what we took away from the 8th China International Nutraceutical and Functional Food Summit 2018.

Over 100 professionals from across the food and drinks industry came to Beijing to attend this year's summit, which addressed the growing importance of health foods and nutritional supplements in China. Many food and drink companies are tapping into this segment to realise future growth. Subjects discussed at the summit ranged from functional food to dietary supplements, from the pharmacy to the cross-border e-commerce channel (CBEC), and from sports and energy nutrition to healthy aging. We expect the following four key trends to have a big impact in the future.

## 1. Precision nutrition

Precision nutrition is *the* direction for dietary supplement players. Companies such as By-Health will shift from being a pure product provider to 'product plus service' model, with precision nutrition as the ultimate goal. Companies need to create databases to monitor the consumer's personal health. Based on data and technology, dietary supplement players can better meet individual needs, for example by providing personalised supplement formulations.

## 2. Sports/energy nutrition

Sports/energy nutrition is entering a golden growth era in China, because its consumer group has expanded from just professional athletes to the masses. Both international players like General Nutrition Corporation and domestic players like By-Health and Beijing Competitor (CPT) have invested in this emerging segment and developed new products. Product ingredients vary from whey protein to L-carnitine, which is commonly used for building muscle and burning fat. Formats range from powders and bars to the latest innovation: gels (like By-Health's Isotonic Energy Gel).

Another important factor driving sports/energy nutrition sales in China is the quick development of internet retail, especially through CBEC. As the CEO of Nutrition Depot, a leading sports supplement retailer in Asia, Australia and New Zealand, said during the presentation: "CBEC accounts for 50% of sports nutrition sales in China."

## 3. Weight management/meal replacement

Many companies at the summit felt optimistic about the weight management/meal replacement segment, due to the increasing obesity rate. Dietary supplement players have focused their efforts on developing high-protein meal replacement, targeting consumers that want to lose weight and improve their shape.

Food and beverage companies are also catching up with weight management trends by offering reduced-sugar, high-fibre and high-protein alternatives. For instance, Coca-Cola provided more choices for its reduced or zero-sugar Coke products by launching new high-fibre products like Cola Fibre+ as well as Fairlife high-protein drinks.

## 4. Traceability

In future, product traceability will be key for dietary supplement players. Some keynote speakers pointed out that many Chinese consumers have felt cheated by fake products or domestically produced products with a poor quality.

AliHealth, the health company under Alibaba Group, addresses this issue through technology. It introduced the Ma Shang Fang Xin ('Immediately Assured') platform, which uses Alibaba technology to track a supplement from the production to the end consumer, enhancing the consumer's trust in dietary supplements.

# Imprint

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Michelle Huang

Analyst

michelle.huang@rabobank.com

+86 21 28934677

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