

The 2016 Global Outlook & Review

Dow Jones Private Equity Analyst • Dow Jones Private Equity News

In Their Own Words Venture Capital



► JORDAN GASPAR, managing partner,
AccelFoods

What surprised you most about 2015?

The pleasant surprise of 2015 is the caliber of first-time food and beverage entrepreneurs entering the space. We've seen sophisticated entrepreneurs leaving other sectors like tech and financial services to come and start businesses in this industry. These founders bring a unique aspect and approach to how they produce their product, go to market and engage with consumers.

What do you think will be the biggest challenge the industry will face in 2016? From retailers increasing shelf space for natural products to online and mobile platforms creating direct-to-consumer sales strategies to large corporates shifting focus to emphasize fresh divisions or investing in and supporting early-stage companies, the entire industry is rethinking how to approach the next generation of innovative brands. With the industry at a defining moment of unprecedented change, it remains to be seen how so many strategic shifts will play out.

Do you expect a change in competition at your level of investing? Why or why not? We are now investing out of a new fund that is substantially larger, allowing us to continue running a next-generation accelerator while committing larger sums of capital in companies generating \$1 million to \$3 million-plus in revenue. While there is always competition for great deals, we primarily invest in the AccelFoods "graduates," a strong group of high-quality potential portfolio companies. The AccelFoods platform allows us to offer unique, proprietary partnerships to our companies.

