

Lifeway® Foods Named to Fortune's 100 Fastest-Growing Companies List, Ranking No. 45 in 2026

Leading Kefir and Probiotic Company Celebrates National Recognition for Exceptional Growth, Financial Performance and Long-Term Shareholder Value

MORTON GROVE, IL., October 26, 2026 — Lifeway Foods, Inc. (Nasdaq: LWAY), the leading U.S. supplier of kefir and fermented probiotic products, today proudly announced that it has been named to the prestigious 2026 Fortune 100 Fastest-Growing Companies list, ranking No. 45 nationwide.

The recognition places Lifeway among an elite group of publicly traded companies demonstrating outstanding performance across revenue growth, earnings growth and shareholder returns. Now in its 41st year, *Fortune's* annual ranking recognizes companies that have delivered exceptional financial performance over a three-year period. The 2026 list evaluates growth in revenue, profits, and stock returns through June 2026.

Lifeway's inclusion at No. 45 represents a significant milestone for the company and underscores the strength of its business, its continued momentum and growing consumer demand for its probiotic-rich fermented dairy products.

"We are incredibly proud to be recognized by *Fortune* as one of the 100 fastest-growing companies in America," said Julie Smolyansky, President and CEO of Lifeway Foods. "To be ranked No. 45 among companies across every industry is an extraordinary honor and a powerful validation of the vision, discipline and relentless innovation that have driven Lifeway's growth."

"This achievement belongs to our entire Lifeway family, our employees, customers, retail partners, shareholders and the millions of consumers who have embraced Lifeway kefir and Lifeway Farmer Cheese as part of their daily wellness routines. What began as a family business built around the transformative power of fermented foods has grown into a nationally recognized leader in the health and wellness industry."

A Legacy of Innovation, Growth and Purpose

Founded in 1986, Lifeway Foods has helped pioneer the kefir category in the United States, introducing generations of consumers to the benefits of fermented foods and live and active cultures.

Under Smolyansky's leadership, the company has continued to expand its reach, strengthen its brand, and capitalize on rising consumer interest in gut health, protein-rich nutrition and functional foods. As consumers increasingly seek foods that combine nutrition, convenience and great taste, Lifeway has positioned kefir at the intersection of several powerful consumer trends.

"At Lifeway, we've always believed that better health begins in the gut," Smolyansky continued. "Long before probiotics and gut health became mainstream conversations, our family was introducing Americans to the ancient tradition of kefir. Today, that vision is helping power a new era of growth."

Recognized Among America's Growth Leaders

According to *Fortune*, the companies featured on its 2026 Fastest-Growing Companies list represent a combined \$15.4 trillion in market capitalization and delivered an average annual shareholder return of 49% over the past three years, compared with 21% for the S&P 500 over the same period.

Lifeway's No. 45 ranking highlights the company's ability to compete alongside some of the most dynamic businesses in the country, demonstrating that innovation in food, nutrition and wellness can create meaningful long-term economic value.

“This recognition is especially meaningful because it reflects more than a single year of success,” added Smolyansky. “It recognizes sustained performance, the strength of our strategy, and the extraordinary dedication of our team. We are proud of how far we’ve come, and even more excited about the opportunities ahead.”

Building the Future of Functional Nutrition

Looking ahead, Lifeway remains focused on advancing innovation, expanding consumer awareness of kefir, deepening retail relationships and bringing its portfolio of cultured dairy products to more households.

The company’s mission remains rooted in its founding belief that nutritious food can improve lives while building a sustainable, growing business.

“Being named one of America’s fastest-growing companies is a moment to celebrate, but it’s also motivation to keep pushing forward,” said Smolyansky. “We are building for the next generation of consumers, the next chapter of Lifeway, and the future of functional nutrition. Our journey is far from over.”

About Lifeway Foods, Inc.

Lifeway Foods, Inc. is the brand that introduced kefir to generations of American consumers. For 40 years, Lifeway has defined authentic, real kefir in the U.S. market while building the expertise, consumer trust and scale that support its category leadership. The Company has been recognized as one of America’s Growth Leaders by TIME, as Dairy Foods’ Processor of the Year 2025, as one of Forbes’ Best Small Companies and on Inc.’s 2025 Best in Business list in the Best Challenger Brands category. In addition to its drinkable kefir portfolio, Lifeway produces Farmer Cheese – a 40-year legacy line now expanding to mass retail – Kefir Butter, Muscle Mates™, a variety of cheeses and ProBugs® for kids. Lifeway products are sold across the United States, Mexico, the United Arab Emirates, Central America and the Caribbean. Learn more at lifewayfoods.com

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