

Tapping into plant-based trends and nutrition with Ingredion

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Demand for plant-based ingredients and in particular, plant-based proteins, continues to grow. So much so, that a huge 70% of global consumers seek products with 'good sources' of plant protein.¹ With consumers embracing plant-based proteins and a plant-based lifestyle, Ingredion's Liesl Gruber looks at the plant-based ingredient trends food and beverage manufacturers must be aware of, in order to meet consumer demand.

Without knowing what's trending in plant-based, it is difficult for manufacturers to deliver what consumers want. Today, around 15% of millennials are already meat-free² and more consumers are changing their diets to flexitarian, vegetarian or vegan.³ There has also been a rise in flexitarians (consumers who eat less meat rather than cut it out entirely) while meat substitute and dairy alternative launches continue to grow. Geographically, meanwhile, Europe accounts for 43.1% of global launches in products featuring plant-based, vegan and vegetarian claims.⁴



There's a lot of growth happening in all areas of plant-based ingredients. And there are big reasons around consumers' shift towards plant-based. This shift, which has happened largely over the last few years, is strongly related to the fact that a plant-based lifestyle is associated with increased health and wellness. Plant-based diets are often lower in saturated fats and higher in fibre, vitamins and minerals, often making them a healthier alternative to traditional meat-based diets. Furthermore, plant-based food production requires less water and produces fewer greenhouse gas emissions, making it a more sustainable option. And it's sustainability that consumers are also becoming increasingly worried about, with the top cited reason for eating meat-free being that it is less harmful to the environment.⁵

Increased awareness around sustainability and sustainable food production means today's consumers are becoming more discerning when comparing plant-based and animal-based products. By proactively meeting this demand, manufacturers can meet consumers at the decision-making crux of adopting plant-based products.

Embracing sustainability with modern transparency

With sustainability playing a huge part in consumers' reasons to embrace a plant-based lifestyle, manufacturers must embrace 'modern transparency' by being clear and honest with their communication of a product's journey — from source to shelf — in support of consumers' sustainable, clean living and ethical goals. With studies showing that a meat-eater's diet can produce almost double the CO₂ emissions of a vegan diet,⁶ it's no surprise that eco-conscious consumers are associating plant-based diets with a more sustainable lifestyle. We can see this, for instance, in the fact that sustainability is a key selling point for meat alternatives. In Ingredion's proprietary research, the top reasons for eating meat alternatives were because they are 'better for the environment,' followed by the fact they are a 'good source of protein' and 'healthier.'

If manufacturers are clear and honest in their communications, consumers are able to seek ingredients lists that meet their needs. In fact, 50% of today's consumers are likely to check a QR code if it appears on-pack,⁷ meaning it's important for manufacturers to ensure their ingredients are sustainably sourced, but also easy to understand.

Paying a premium

Knowing that consumers are embracing a plant-based lifestyle, and value 'good sources' of plant protein, and sustainable claims, it's no surprise that research has uncovered that consumers will pay a premium for plant-based products. Ingredion proprietary research has discovered that the propensity to pay more for high protein and plant-based products increased between 2020 and 2022.⁸ This means that the moderate price premium for 'high protein' and 'plant-based products' is better perceived now compared to around a couple of years ago. This same proprietary research also uncovered the fact that almost 70% of global consumers will pay more for products with plant-based ingredient claims.

With consumers willing to pay a premium for high-quality plant-based foods and beverages, manufacturers can charge more for these products, making plant-based ingredients a potentially profitable option for today's manufacturers.

The rise of plant-based meat and dairy alternatives

Tapping into the fact that consumers are willing to pay a premium is a key opportunity for manufacturers, but to truly capitalise, it is worth understanding what specific areas of the plant-based market looks like in terms of growth, in order to create the products that consumers want.

One such product area that is achieving particularly strong growth is meat alternatives. Research states that the demand of global plant-based meat market size and share, in terms of revenue, was valued at USD 7.5 billion in 2021, and it is expected to surpass around the USD 15.8 billion mark by 2028, growing at a compound annual growth rate of approximately 15% during the forecast period 2022 to 2028.⁹ Meanwhile, when it comes to dairy alternatives, one in four European consumers say that they now typically buy a dairy alternative product on a grocery trip.¹⁰

Rising to the plant-based challenge: Taste and texture

There are several key challenges, though, that



companies need to address, in order to successfully harness growth opportunities in plant-based meat and dairy alternatives. Addressing taste and texture, which is the number one challenge in plant-based, should be a key focus for manufacturers. Consumers want their plant-based meats to be succulent — with just the right amount of chewiness — and their plant-based yoghurts to be silky and smooth. As well as a desirable sensory experience, consumers also want improved nutritional quality and a clean ingredients list — one that contains recognisable ingredients. Label-reading consumers will choose between products by peering at the ingredients list first. With this in mind, companies should also aim to keep the number of ingredients to a minimum while ensuring ingredients are recognisable.

Choosing the right claim is also very important. When looking to put out a plant-based product, manufacturers should ensure they fulfil the claims that consumers are most interested in, such as

plant-based protein claims, which are particularly very well received in alternative dairy beverages, especially in France and the UK.¹¹

What's next in plant-based ingredients?

The opportunities are there already for manufacturers to take advantage of the increased demand for plant-based products and proteins, but it's important to know what trends are here to stay, and what trends are expected in the future, in order to truly deliver the best current and future plant-based products.

Vegan formulations, in particular, have a growing association with plant-based claims. For example, vegan positioning is on the rise, with 'V-label' or '100% vegan' claims cited on some packages¹² while the use of vegan claims on soft drinks have risen sharply since 2017 — by 21% in 2022.¹³ Some products are also starting to carry explicit plant-based claims, driven by perceived healthiness and taste.¹⁴ These research findings





present an opportunity for manufacturers to target niche markets with vegan and plant-based ingredients.

Accelerating product innovation in plant-based

As consumers continue to show increased interest in the sources and purposes of the ingredients in foods and beverages, manufacturers must also design products with specific label requirements in mind. Food and beverage developers are constantly working to innovate their formulations to align with their labelling goals, which in turn align with the requirements of consumers. Whether it is the need for an organic label, enhanced protein, reduced sugar or even an ingredient substitution due to supply shortage, formulators have their hands full protecting the integrity of their end product.

Ingredion helps manufacturers take product innovations from whiteboard to reality faster. Ingredion partners with manufacturers to understand manufacturers' product formulation innovation or renovation needs. Then Ingredion's technical experts create optimised systems of ingredients that work in synergy in formulations and help reduce complexity in operations. With direct access to technical experts and Ingredion SOLUTION GURUS™, Ingredion can assist at every step to make product formulation or reformulation efforts easier, with fewer surprises and greater success.

Ingredion's specialty ingredient portfolio has also expanded even further over the last few years, following the acquisition of KaTech. The acquisition expands Ingredion's Food Systems platform with stabilising and texturising solutions, broadening Ingredion's ability to assist food and beverage manufacturers with product formulation and ingredient functionality.

Be what's next in plant-based

The latest innovations in plant-based food and beverage ingredients include pea proteins, which are a high-quality, sustainable alternative to traditional animal-based proteins. Pea proteins can also be used in a variety of applications, including protein bars, shakes, and meat alternatives.

Ingredion is a provider of plant-based protein solutions, including pea proteins, and offers a range of options to meet the needs of today's forward-thinking food and beverage manufacturers. Ingredion's solutions are sustainable, high-quality and versatile, making them an ideal choice for manufacturers looking to tap into the latest plant-based trends and consumers' plant-based lifestyles.

Ingredion's range of VITESSENCE® pea protein

isolates are great for formulations with a balanced nutrition positioning, enabling manufacturers to create exciting new food products that are highly nutritious and are packed with fibre and micro-nutrients. Naturally gluten-free and based on plant protein, Ingredion's pulse proteins can be used to enrich a wide range of new and differentiated products, from bakery products, snacks and cereals, pasta, batters and breadings to meat substitutes. The range also contains a broad selection of protein isolates — derived from pea — which help support 'high in protein' claims, and are therefore perfect for nutrition bars, meat or dairy applications and drink mixes.

Ingredion have also launched VITESSENCE® Prista, a new range of pea and fava bean concentrates designed to help new product developers build the right taste, nutritional profile and consumer-preferred natural, non-soy based products. The concentrates do not have a plant flavour, bitter taste or uncontrolled microbial levels, often inherent in dry-milled pulse products.

In addition, Ingredion's VITESSENCE® TEX textured pea and faba bean proteins are designed to build the right texture, nutritional profile and front-of-pack claims. This means that the product range is perfect for capitalising on consumer demand for a high-quality eating experience that incorporates the right balance of taste and texture. Manufactured in Europe and consisting of 65% protein (on a dry basis), these textured proteins also help manufacturers to formulate non-soy based and gluten-free meat alternatives with a consumer-preferred, meat-like texture with bite and succulence. In addition, the range enables manufacturers to formulate plant-based meat and seafood alternatives with protein-related claims that attract health-conscious consumers, without using a soy or wheat base.

Tap into trends; tap into success

Understanding the top trends and demographics for plant-based products and where to focus attention will help manufacturers to build a secure future. Consumers are increasingly aware of the foods and beverages they are purchasing — in terms of the ingredients in the products — and how the product ingredients have been sourced. Consumers are also very aware of the fact that plant-based lifestyles offer numerous health benefits and are more sustainable, making the lifestyle an attractive option.





The plant-based lifestyle is one that is here to stay for consumers, meaning consumers will increasingly purchase plant-based products — and be willing to pay a premium for the products. This, in turn, means manufacturers must make plant-based formulations that, crucially, meet demand around taste and texture.

Creating consumer-preferred plant-based products is one thing, but manufacturers — in line

with insights explored in this article — must also utilise the most appealing consumer-preferred claims on-pack. The latest innovations in plant-based food and beverage ingredients, such as pea proteins, offer high-quality, sustainable options for manufacturers, so it's important for manufacturers to utilise these ingredients to enable key claim opportunities such as 'high in protein.'

Only by offering high-quality, plant-based

protein solutions — along with clear and honest communications — can manufacturers truly tap into the plant-based trend and meet the needs of today's consumers.

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New deal gives Stratum Nutrition® USA and Canada distribution rights for Bimuno® GOS prebiotic ingredient

Clasado Biosciences, a leading international biotechnology company that develops advanced prebiotic solutions for food, supplement and healthcare companies across the global wellness market, recently announced a brand-new distribution agreement with dietary supplement ingredient distributor, Stratum Nutrition® ('Stratum').

The agreement gives Stratum exclusive rights to distribute the multi award-winning prebiotic galactooligosaccharide ingredient, Bimuno® GOS, to the United States of America (USA) and Canadian markets, providing a robust distribution channel for functional foods and beverages as well as health and nutrition brands.

Dr. Frederic Narbel, VP of B2B Sales at Clasado, comments: "As gut microbiome health awareness continues to accelerate, we are delighted to announce our exclusive distribution deal with Stratum. Prebiotics are climbing the consumer agenda, with a global compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of almost fifteen per cent*. With consumer interest in prebiotics accelerating at pace across North America, the future of health and nutrition formulation is an exciting area for microbiome modulating products.

"With a focus on unique ingredients combined with their outstanding technical and market expertise, Stratum is an ideal partner to supply our prebiotic ingredient. Bimuno GOS stands apart from alternatives through the scientific studies behind it, which forms one of the most comprehensive

portfolios on the market as well as approved health claims in select territories. Versatile, stable and rooted in scientific research, it's never been easier to formulate the next generation of health and nutrition supplements!"

The most studied ingredient of its kind, the safety and efficacy of Bimuno GOS is supported by over 100 scientific publications, including more than 20 clinical trials. The ingredient's unique composition enables it to selectively nourish bifidobacteria, a beneficial bacteria in the gut microbiome, that helps to support numerous health areas such as gastrointestinal, immune and

cognitive health. In addition, its strong scientific portfolio enables the use of 25 possible structure and function claims in the USA to help formulators using Bimuno GOS stand out from the crowd.

Extremely stable and resistant to heat and acidity, Bimuno GOS can be added to formulations at any stage of manufacturing and offers one of the most attractively low efficacious dosages on the market, beginning from just 1.37g per day.

Micah Osborne, CEO at Stratum, adds: "Today's health audience is more proactive than ever before. Consumers the world over are getting more attuned to the benefits of better gut health, the importance of the gut microbiome and its role in supporting everyday health. Understanding that beneficial gut bacteria influence non-digestive health in important areas such as immunity and mental health unlocks entirely new paths for product development, and presents a fantastic opportunity to meet rising consumer demand.

"We are in the age of gut health innovation, and the commercial potential of prebiotics is significant. Their stability also makes them suitable for a wide range of applications, no longer are they exclusively used in supplements, but increasingly in functional food and beverages. We are pleased to add Bimuno GOS to our ingredient portfolio as it aligns with our scientific values, and we look forward to supporting our customers in formulating their own prebiotic product ranges."

www.stratumnutrition.com

