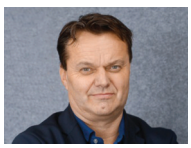
Practical sodium reduction: Why Europe's food industry is moving from ambition to implementation



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Across Europe, sodium reduction is becoming less of a specialist nutrition topic and more of a mainstream formulation priority. I believe this is being shaped by a combination of public health guidance, product reformulation goals, front-of-pack nutrition labelling and rising expectations around healthier food choices. For manufacturers, this creates a clear opportunity: to reduce sodium in everyday foods in ways that align with market and policy trends while still protecting taste, texture and technical performance.

Across Europe, sodium reduction is being shaped by a mix of policy measures and market-driven change. For example, in the UK, the government's latest published salt reduction targets continue to guide reformulation across a

wide range of food and drink categories, while newer nutrition policies are adding further pressure for healthier product profiles. In Germany, the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture's National Reduction and Innovation Strategy explicitly targets lower levels of sugar, fat and salt in processed foods. In Belgium, Nutri-Score has been officially adopted on a voluntary basis, reinforcing the role of front-of-pack nutrition communication in shaping reformulation priorities and product positioning. Together, these examples show that sodium reduction is becoming part of the practical commercial framework within which food producers operate.

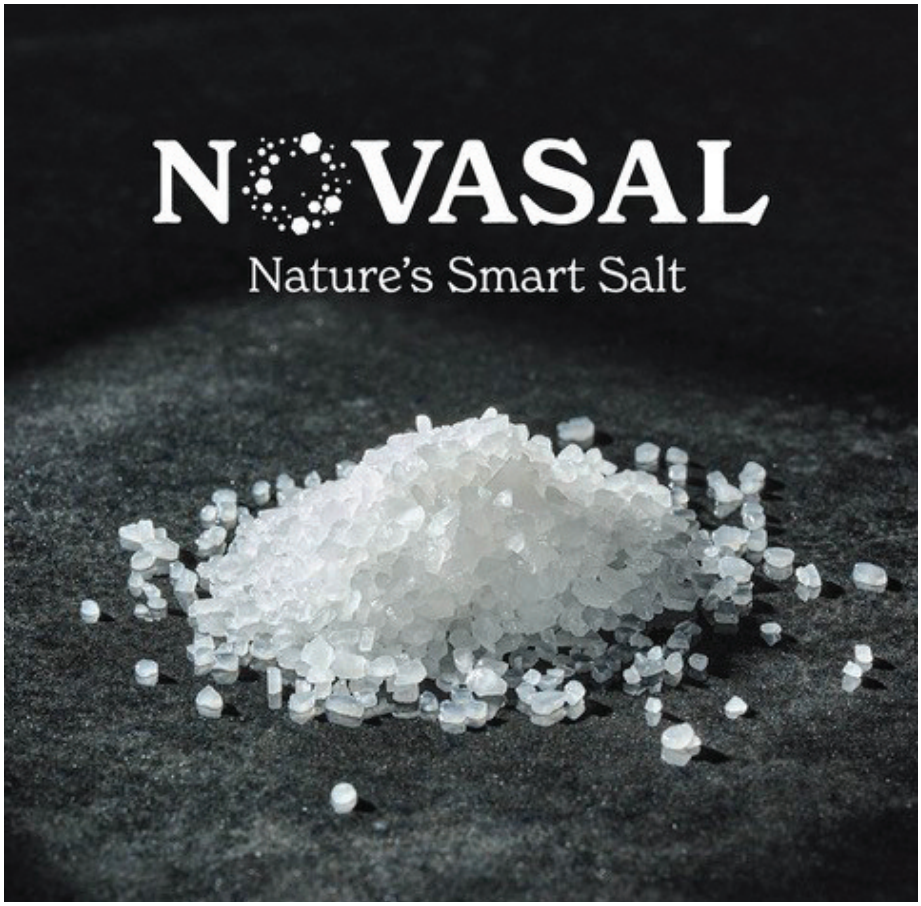
At the same time, sodium reduction is becoming more visible through nutrition communication. Front-of-pack nutrition labelling and broader nutritional profiling are helping shape both consumer perception and reformulation priorities. That matters because sodium reduction is increasingly linked not only to technical compliance, but also to on-pack communication, nutritional positioning and competitiveness on shelf.

The real challenge, however, is not deciding that sodium should be reduced. It is doing so in a way that works in practice. Salt contributes much more than salty taste. Depending on the application, it can influence dough behaviour, flavour balance, texture, preservation and process stability. The most useful solutions are those that help manufacturers reduce sodium without triggering extensive reformulation. Food producers do not simply need a target or a healthier positioning claim. They need ingredients that can be introduced into existing products without creating unnecessary formulation complexity.

That is the context in which our Novasal Blend, launched in April 2026, is especially relevant. It has been developed it as a ready-to-use 1-to-1 replacement for regular salt, combining sodium chloride with magnesium chloride, specifically to help manufacturers move faster and more easily on sodium reduction. Novasal Blend is designed to deliver approximately 30% less sodium without recipe changes or process adjustments. Just as importantly for European food producers, it is based on magnesium chloride sourced in the Netherlands from the ancient Zechstein Sea, offering a local and reliable supply proposition within Europe. This makes it more than another salt reduction concept, it as a practical route to implementation for manufacturers that want to respond to sodium reduction demands without taking on a major reformulation burden.

That solution-led approach is central to its value proposition. Because magnesium chloride is a source of magnesium, the blend replaces part of the sodium with magnesium, helping manufacturers create products with less sodium and added magnesium. Magnesium is an essential mineral, so this gives producers a way to reduce sodium while also adding a positive nutritional element to the final product. At the same time, the blend is designed to support taste, functionality and ease of use in formulation and, in some applications, may help improve nutritional value or Nutri-Score positioning.

There is also an important flavour dimension to this approach. In some applications, magnesium-based sodium reduction can help support flavour intensity, which creates opportunities to optimise recipes while maintaining the desired taste profile. We have seen this as a relevant point in prepared foods and in flavour-led applications such as spices and cacao. That means the value of magnesium chloride is not limited to sodium reduction alone. It can also play a role in helping manufacturers maintain flavour performance while working towards cleaner, healthier or more balanced formulations.



Just as importantly, this is not a niche solution for one category alone. Novasal Blend is suitable for a broad range of food applications, including bakery, dairy, soups, plant-based products, meat, fish and ready-made meals. Moreover, it is especially well suited to soups, sauces and ready meals, where simple formulation and easy incorporation into existing recipes are particularly valuable. In these categories, manufacturers often need sodium reduction solutions that can be adopted quickly and cleanly, without disrupting established production processes.

- In **speculaas**, traditional Dutch spiced biscuits, 40% of the sodium salt was replaced with Novasal magnesium salt to create a reduced-sodium biscuit that remains balanced, flavourful and true to its traditional Dutch character.
- In **De Veendammer Old 50+ cheese**, Novasal was used to reduce sodium while preserving flavour, texture and ripening quality, while also contributing magnesium.
- In **Mr. Kitchen's Veggie Spread**, replacing traditional salt with Novasal helped move products from Nutri-Score B and C to A.

Examples already on the market also show how this broader magnesium-based approach can translate across very different food categories. The wider Novasal range features in products including traditional biscuits, cheese and prepared vegetable spreads, offering useful proof points for how sodium reduction can be delivered while maintaining taste and functionality. These examples are important because they move the conversation beyond theory. They show that lower-sodium formulation can work in real products and, in some cases, can also support nutritional positioning.

The wider message for Europe's food industry is, in my view, a positive one. Sodium reduction is becoming more important, but the solutions are also becoming more practical. As reformulation targets, nutrition labelling and healthier product positioning continue to evolve, manufacturers will increasingly need options that combine technical performance with speed and ease of implementation. That is precisely where Novasal Blend fits: as a newly launched, ready-to-use solution designed to help food producers turn sodium reduction from a difficult aspiration into a realistic and workable formulation step.

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