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MARCH 2015

Ingredient Safety & Transparency

Does your ingredient
statement make the
right statement?



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Ingredient Trends for the New Year

Clean labels for millennials, fortification for baby boomers and food's effects on the environment will be among the product development trends of 2015.

By Mark Anthony, Ph.D., Technical Editor

This year, we're moving beyond the "what's in/what's out" predictions typical of the past. There are too many overriding themes driving consumer demands in food product development.

For one, fully 68 percent of Americans are overweight or obese. For another, the National Diabetes Statistics Report released last June showed the number of people with diabetes in the U.S. rose from 28.8 million in 2010 to 29.1 million in 2012.

According to at least one report, the global spread of both conditions has coincided with increased consumption of meats, "empty calories" (refined fats, oils and sugars) and total calories, according to a December 2013 article, "Global diets link environmental sustainability and human health" in the journal *Nature*. The research, led by David Tilman and Michael Clark, compared modern dietary patterns of developed countries to several popular alternatives with regard to health, sustainability and carbon footprint.

The article portends that these three converging forces will ultimately shape food demands. Agriculture contributes at least 25 percent of greenhouse gases and is an unavoidable complicating factor when looking to upcoming food demands. We can see much of this future playing out in predictions of food trends for 2015.

Innova Market Insights (www.innovadatabase.com), based in the Netherlands, analyzed global developments affecting food & beverage markets and has an excellent accuracy record for predicting markets. The organization's recent release of the top 10 trends reflects the basic themes of health and environment. Topping Innova's list of developments is that of clear labeling, along with marketing to millennials – the 15- to 35-year-old set.

Millennials are increasingly uncertain about vague terms such as "natural," and are seeking clarity and transparency. "Millennials are exerting their influence; they want more information about their food – where it comes from and what's in it," says Jennifer Lindsey, regional marketing director for DuPont Nutrition & Health Inc. (www.dupont.com), New Century, Kan. "As a result, we believe we'll see

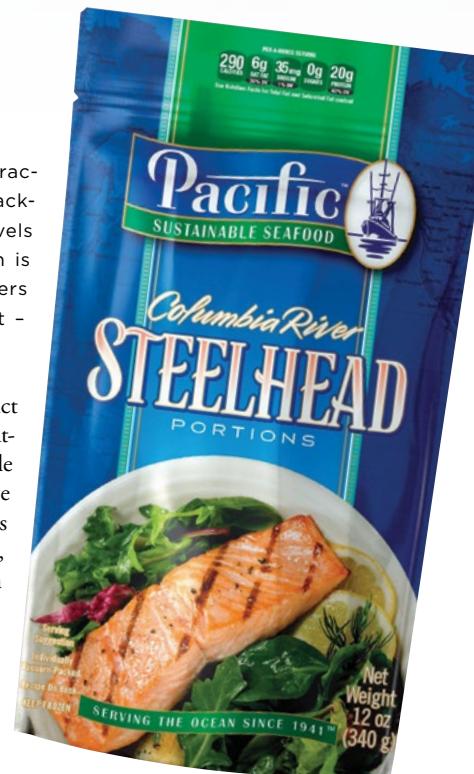
There are lots of attractive messages on this package. Healthy nutrient levels are called out, the salmon is sustainable, and consumers know where it was caught – in the Columbia River.

more health-conscious product development, with thoughtful ingredient choices. While weight management will be addressed, it won't be in terms of 'diet' products. Instead, we'll see products focused on delivering satiety, energy and positive nutrition, without empty calories."

Millennials tend to be tech-savvy, well-informed, mobile and eager to try new things. Innova's research predicts expanding choices for healthy snacks and convenience foods will be another trend, one that many ingredient providers already are gearing up for.

"Consumers have come a long way in their understanding of the role that proper nutrition plays in long-term overall health and wellness," says Patrick Morris, communications manager for the Fortitech Premixes division of DSM Nutritional Products Inc. (www.fortitechpremixes.com), Schenectady, N.Y.

"Because our fast-paced lifestyles in many cases leave little time to regularly sit down for a well-rounded meal, fortified, functional products are an ideal vehicle to fill the nutrient gaps most of us have," he continues. "Increasing health and wellness





concerns have moved functional foods and drinks from a niche segment to a mainstream product now readily available in one's local supermarket."

According to Morris, since baby boomers are the largest consumer segment, the products that will be of interest to them include those addressing the areas of bone and joint health (including osteoporosis) and cardiovascular health.

"The ingredients I believe will continue to be most in demand are glucosamine and chondroitin for bone/joint health, along with calcium, vitamin D3 and magnesium for osteoporosis," he continues. "For heart health, nutrients like CoQ10, resveratrol, omega-3 fatty acids and plant sterols and stanols address these health concerns."

Heading the list of ingredients for the healthy snack and convenience food categories is protein. "Consumers' changing snacking habits will continue to fuel demand for protein and fiber in nutrition bars, beverages and dairy," says DuPont's Lindsey. "In dairy, the protein trend will mature beyond Greek yogurt into other areas, such as cottage cheese, ice cream and frozen yogurt. And carrying the protein trend a step further, we'll likely continue to see a focus on meat alternatives in a meat-like format."

Protein high

Protein presently is the centerpiece of most modern dietary regimens. While soy protein is now considered mainstream and why continues to grow in popularity, the hunt is on for new sources that can reduce cost and environmental impact.

According to Tilman and Clark, production methods have a powerful effect on greenhouse gases. For example, catching fish by dragging nets across the ocean floor produces greenhouse gases at three times the rate of traditional fishing.

"We continue to see a demand from consumers for clean and sustainably caught – and 100-percent traceable – seafood, such as albacore tuna that are troll-line caught, one at a time, by Pacific Northwest fishermen," says Mike Babcock, owner of Oregon Seafoods Inc. (www.oregonseafoods.com), Coos Bay, Ore. (also doing business as Sea Fare Pacific – www.seafarepacific.com). "Food trends for 2015 will continue to be food that is produced by local or U.S. manufacturers, packed in BPA-free packaging, free of preservatives and additives, non-GMO and gluten free."

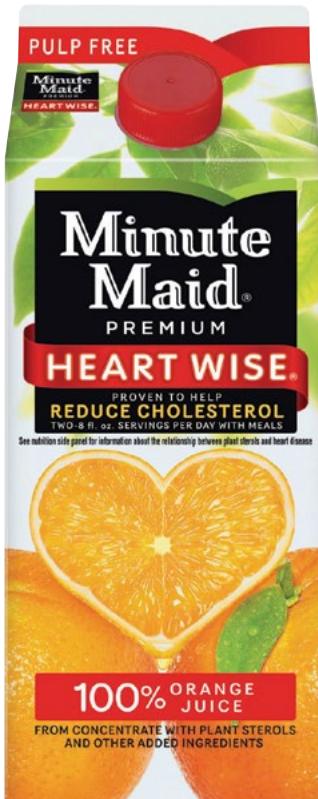
Tilman and Clark also point out that raising and processing meat from ruminant animals (beef and lamb) contribute greenhouse gases at a rate 250 times that of legumes (beans, peas and lentils). This is one reason for the rise in popularity of legume proteins. However, when animals are sustainably grazed on land not suitable for growing crops, they provide environmental benefit by cycling nutrients.

Two other trends to look for, according to Innova, are more algae protein applications and the use of alternative high-protein sources that include several species of insects.

Also in the new year, there will be increased interest in so-called "good fats" and "good carbs," according to Innova. With regard to healthy fats, this trend translates to a rising interest in sources of omega-3 fatty acids as well as a return to naturally occurring fats such as those in nuts, coconut and eco-friendly palm oil, along with butter as a replacement for margarines and other sources of hydrogenated oils and trans-fatty acids.

"The increase in demand for palm oil has also meant an increase in demand for more farm and plantation land," says Courtney LeDrew, marketing manager for Cargill Inc. Cocoa & Chocolate (www.cargill-cocoachocolate.com), Lititz, Pa. "This has raised environmental and social concerns, including forest and habitat conservation, peatland conversion, the need to protect waterways and the rights of indigenous communities.

"Cargill has made a commitment that the palm oil products we supply to our customers in Europe, the



Coca-Cola's Minute Maid no longer makes an orange juice with glucosamine and chondroitin but does fortify one variety with plant sterols for heart health. Elations still believes the combination helps creaky joints.

U.S., Canada, Australia and New Zealand will be certified according to the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil standards this year, and for all our customers worldwide by 2020.”

Nuts are healthy sources of fatty acids that also contain protein and a wide variety of micronutrients. Walnuts continue to be popular, as they are a natural source of omega-3 fatty acids. Almonds, pistachios, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts and even peanuts are rich in monounsaturated fatty acids. This is the same healthful fatty acid dominant in olive oil, a prominent feature of the popular Mediterranean diet. For the upcoming year, nuts fit well into every category of modern health solutions and figure prominently in most healthy eating plans.

Grains of change

The term “good carbs,” which has become interchangeable with “low glycemic index,” might finally begin to lose clout as more studies show that this highly variable measure has little predictive or therapeutic value.

Whole grains – ingredients that better constitute healthy sources of carbohydrate – will be in greater demand in 2015. There simply is no practical way to feed a large population healthfully and sustainably without the use of whole grains, although method of preparation is certainly important. The simpler, the better.

The earliest cultivation of grains goes back about 11,000 years, although this is by no means the first use of grains as food. It only marks the beginning of their cultivation. Unquestionably they were important sources of food for tens of thousands of years before domestication as were other foods, vegetables, nuts and animal products. In fact, we have a difficult time tracing the first use of grass seeds from which we have derived modern grains.

Most Americans fail to meet fiber recommendations despite the science that demonstrates the benefits of a healthy diet that includes fiber and whole grains. “Fiber continues to be an important trend, both for people who are actively seeking it in a variety of foods and for those who don’t think about it very often,” says Don Trouba, director of marketing for Ardent Mills Corp. (www.ardentmills.com), Denver.

“Fiber will play an increasingly important role in snack foods,” he continues. “Data show Americans are snacking more, and many food companies are making these foods healthier and more satisfying. This is particularly important in K-12 school foodservice, where all snacks, even those sold in vending machines, now must comply with USDA guidelines.”

Studies related to the gut microbiome and its many connections to health are increasing in number and

Smart Balance, part of Boulder Brands, found success in consumers’ increasing understanding that some fats can be good. Its original spread has a “unique, natural blend of polyunsaturated, monounsaturated and saturated fats designed to help improve the ratio of good HDL cholesterol to bad LDL cholesterol.” Some of the products have omega-3s and some have gone non-GMO.

will continue to drive interest in dietary fiber and its expanded applications this year. “Although the growth in snacking has been a powerful driver for extruded foods, one area that hasn’t kept pace has been the nutritional profile of many items, particularly with regard to whole grains and fiber,” says Zachery Sanders, also a director of marketing for Ardent Mills.

“Continuing improvements in technology and formula optimization make extrusion a new frontier for whole grains,” he continues. “Ancient grains such as amaranth, quinoa, millet, sorghum, teff and buckwheat, as well as custom multigrain blends can be used in crisps and flakes to add whole grain nutrition, exotic interest and culinary authenticity.”

Most ancient grains also are gluten free, another theme that will continue in popularity in the near future, as will sprouted grains. “Sprouted grains are another fast-growing category also on-trend with consumers,” adds Sanders. “Sprouted White Spring Whole Wheat Flour can be used in a number of ways in a variety of applications, from breads to breakfast cereals. Additionally, whole grain and seed mixtures can add texture and visual appeal to a wide range of popular foods.”

Grains fit well within the predictions by the Sterling Rice Group (www.srg.com), Boulder, Colo., for an increased presence of “advanced Asian cuisine,” a category that includes Thai, Japanese and Filipino foods. Rice is the most dominant grain worldwide.

Something sweet this way comes

Naturally occurring sugars and non-nutritive replacements are expected to compete favorably with traditionally refined sugars and artificial sweeteners. For example, sugar derived from coconut is gaining interest because of its natural appeal.

“Consumers want to reduce sugar consumption, but are shifting away from traditional, artificial low- and no-calorie sweeteners in favor of alternatives such as stevia and erythritol,” says Scott Fabro, global business development director for Cargill Inc.’s Corn Milling North America (www.cargill.com), Minneapolis. “Nowhere is this more evident than in beverages, where the use of these low- and





no-calorie sweeteners has doubled in the past six years. Increasingly, consumers recognize products such as stevia sweeteners as healthy and good tasting.”

Expect to see more real fruits and vegetables of all kinds on the market to meet the increased demand for natural colors and flavors. Fruits and vegetables convey a healthier image to products.

Popular new items in these related categories include ready-to-eat, steamed and peeled organic baby beets, baby Brussels sprouts, steamed garbanzo beans, steamed lentils and steamed artichoke hearts, according to Robert Schueller director of public relations for Melissa’s/World Variety Produce (www.melissas.com), Los Angeles.

Sterling Rice Group adds so-called “ugly” fruits and cannabis to future fruit and vegetable trends. About the former: “In line with growing concerns over food waste, this French-born trend gives misshapen and funny-looking produce a place at the table and in recipes where looks don’t matter.” Despite some interesting press about the latter, we have our doubts whether marijuana will work its way into mainstream foods.

The debate over the impact of genetically modified foods and whether they will get mandatory labels is by no means decided. Even though a November 2014 ballot initiative in his home state failed (by just 0.06 percent), “The non-GMO movement and debate will con-

tinue to be on the forefront of the political and food industry agendas,” predicts Domic Biggi, CEO of Beaverton Foods Inc. (beavertonfoods.com), Hillsboro, Ore.

Biggi also predicts, “Consumers want affordable and locally produced foods, as well as healthy specialty products with unique and innovative flavor profiles.”

At the very least, the continuing GMO debate will shape how we see the future of food and spur more interest in organic foods and organic food research.

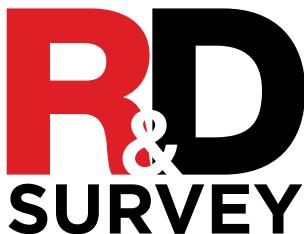
“The next year promises to be an exciting year for science supporting the benefits of organic,” says Jessica Shade, director of science programs for The Organic Center (organic-center.org) Washington, D.C. “2015 is the International Year of the Soils, so keep an eye out for more research showing organic farming’s benefits to soil health.”

The Organic Center, for example, is collaborating with the National Soil Project to test organic matter on organic versus conventional farms to quantify the extent to which conventional fertilizers have degraded soils. “We will be collecting samples throughout the year with a project completion estimated date of mid-2016,” she explains. It’s important to recall that one recent research study suggested that organic foods indeed are richer in important phytochemicals than their conventionally grown counterparts.

We have a couple of R&D questions for you

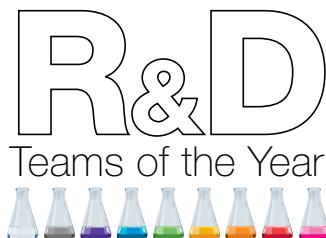
Are you involved in product development at your food & beverage processing company?

We have two projects on the horizon that require your input:



OUR 44TH ANNUAL R&D SURVEY

We’ve been doing this for quite a while, but we still need your assistance. Help us identify the research trends and product development priorities you’ll be following this year by taking our survey. Every R&D member with an email in our circulation list should be getting a survey in your in-box on March 20. Please take the web-based survey it links to or go to <http://hubs.ly/yOwnyQ0>. The results will be our May cover story.



R&D TEAMS OF THE YEAR

Do you think you have a great product development team? Nominate your team now for our web-based poll that begins in April. We’re looking for nominees in three size categories: small (less than \$100 million in sales), medium (\$100-749 million) and large (\$750 million in sales and above). We’ll pit the essays of two or three teams in each category against each other in what is unabashedly a popularity contest – the most votes wins. The winners will be profiled in our June issue. Nominate now at <http://hubs.ly/yOwnGB0>.



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Carrageenan: A Natural Solution to Clean Label Meat and Poultry

By Ingredients Solutions Inc.

Carrageenan is a naturally-occurring seaweed extract. It is produced from seaweeds either farmed or naturally harvested. Seaweed farming is totally sustainable and provides a livelihood for over 100,000 farming families in the Philippines, Indonesia and other tropical regions.

The numerous types of carrageenan produce a wide range of gel textures, from firm brittle gels (kappa type) to highly elastic compliant gels (iota). Lambda carrageenans are generally non-gelling and cold soluble. These are used to thicken and stabilize a wide range of beverage products.

Carrageenan is widely used in foods and non-foods to improve texture and stability. Common uses include meat and poultry, dairy products, canned pet food, cosmetics and toothpaste.

Carrageenan is considered “Natural” by current standards and is “Organic-Allowed”. This allows for formulation of “Natural” and “Organic” food products, replacing non-natural ingredients such as modified food starches and phosphates.

Examples of Clean Label products include:

- **All-Natural deli ham and turkey.** Kappa carrageenan is used to replace both phosphates and modified starches to bind water, improve cook yield, and enhance slicing properties.
- **All-Natural case-ready poultry.** Iota carrageenan is used to increase yield and moisture holding in raw case-ready chicken breasts, bone-in parts, and rotisserie. Carrageenan also reduces cook loss so consumers get a juicier more flavorful product.

Regarding the safety of carrageenan

There has been an amazing amount of misinformation being blogged about carrageenan being unsafe as a food ingredient. In spite of this misinformation, carrageenan continues as the safe food ingredient it has always been. If it were not, the principal regulatory agencies of the world (US FDA, FAO/WHO JECFA, EU EFSA, and Japan Ministry of Health) would not approve its use, and all of them give the necessary approvals. The only application restricted as a precautionary measure was stabilizing liquid infant formula in the EU but with the release of new studies has now been approved by the EU for use.

Numerous studies have been published on the overall toxicol-

ogy of carrageenan and, in particular, around its interaction with gastrointestinal activity. Some of these studies have been performed in compliance with regulatory guidelines, using oral administration (consistent with the route of human ingestion), large groups of animals and several dose groups. Many others have been research studies, often using smaller numbers of animals, fewer or single dose groups, and including non-oral routes of administration of carrageenan. There are considerable discrepancies in outcomes among these studies, both with respect to the nature of the effects observed and, where reported, the levels at which they occur.

Discussions in the media around scientific findings have also falsely attributed the effects of poligeenan, a small molecular weight polysaccharide, to carrageenan under the theory that “degradation may occur” during ingestions changing carrageenan into poligeenan. But oral feeding studies have consistently confirmed that carrageenan, a natural high-molecular weight compound, passes through the body unaltered. (Poligeenan is a synthetic compound that is intentionally created using strong acids and high temperatures over an



Seaweed farming in the clear coastal waters of Zanzibar island.

extended period of time; it is not produced naturally. Poligeenan is not allowed for use in food and has not been found in food that contains carrageenan.)

Conclusions

In spite of recent social media hype, carrageenans remain one of the most versatile, safe groups of food ingredients available to the food formulator. Carrageenans produce an almost infinite range of textures and mouthfeel options while offering Natural and Organic labeling.

In looking at specific studies to assess health risk factors for usage as a food additive the following should be considered:

- The route of administration
- The dosage administered
- The actual material used (“carrageenan” or “poligeenan”) and whether it was in combination with another active ingredient

Many studies will inform the overall knowledge about carrageenan, but not all will be relevant to the safety of carrageenan as a food additive. It is important to remember that carrageenan when used as a food additive is ingested through an oral administration. Carrageenan when ingested is known to not have a systemic effect specifically because it has been reported that < 6% of the excreted carrageenan is below 100,000 Da. and <1% is below 50,000 Da. Because of its large molecular weight carrageenan remains within the lumen of the digestive tract and is not absorbed (Weiner, 1988; 1991). Thus, there are no systemic effects of carrageenan following ingestion by rats, mice, or monkeys.

Many of the experiments or “studies” currently being discussed in media are in vitro (outside the living body/artificial environment) some involving human colonic cells to elicit an immune response. Due to the lack of a systemic effect as noted above with carrageenan, the in vivo or studies involving direct oral administration are more pertinent. Chronic administration of carrageenan in the diet of numerous species did not result in adverse effects, other than soft stools or diarrhea. These effects are commonly seen when bulking agents or dietary fibers are fed at high doses. No evidence of tumor promotion or colon cancer has been found due to carrageenan in animal dietary feeding studies in vivo (Cohen and Ito, 2002).

The issue of gastrointestinal inflammation is often thought to be still under debate with some studies verifying that carrageenan is associated with induction or promotion of gastrointestinal tract inflammation, ulcerations and neoplasms in animal models (e.g. Bernard et al, 2010) and human tissues (e.g. Borthakur et al, 2007; Bernard et al, 2010) while other studies have contradicted this finding (e.g. in vivo: Weiner et al, 2007; and in vitro: Tobacman and Walters, 2001). However, a more careful evaluation of the test materials in animal studies shows that the intestinal lesions stated (ulcerated, neoplasms) were reported only in studies where poligeenan (small molecular weight polysaccharide) was the test substance. Such effects were not found when food-grade carrageenan was the test substance in animal dietary feeding studies.

Key findings

The weight of scientific evidence confirms the safety of carrageenan as a food additive.

Many of the smaller research studies are in conflict with established findings that have not shown any induction or promotion of gastrointestinal tract inflammation, ulceration and/or neoplasms in animal models. Highlights of the more established studies focusing on the gastrointestinal tract as well as an epidemiological study focusing on immunosuppression listed as a snapshot below support the conclusion of carrageenan as a safe food ingredient.

- Studies of male and female infant baboons raised from birth to 112 days of age on infant formulas containing concentrations of carrageenan varying from zero to 5 times the commercially-available formulas for human infants had no effects on infant development. No effect was seen through microscopic or macroscopic examination of the GI tract. (McGill, et al. 1977).
- Long-term multigenerational studies, conducted by the FDA, feeding rats with a diet containing carrageenan at 5.0% found no effects on reproduction, fertility, average litter size, average number of live born animals, viability or survival of offspring, weight gain or any specific external, skeletal or soft tissue anomalies. (Collins, Black, Prew, 1977)
- Rats and hamsters were fed 0, 0.5%, 2.5% or 5.0% carrageenan for their lifetime in a study by Rustia et al., 1980. Survival was not affected in either species. No statistically significant pathological effects were seen in either species at any of the dietary levels used in the study.
- Retrospective study reported by Sherry et al (1993, 1999) between two populations of full term human infants in the first six months of life – those exclusively fed infant formula containing 0.03% carrageenan and those exclusively fed powdered formula containing 0% carrageenan showed no difference in frequency of upper respiratory infections between the two populations.

Regulatory opinion to date

Consistent with the scientific evidence, carrageenan has consistently been recognized as a safe food additive, including for use in organic foods:

- United States FDA approval as a safe direct food additive (1961) and Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS) listing assigned in 1973
- Listing as a permitted additive in the Codex Alimentarius Commission of the Joint FAO/WHO (1999)
- International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements lists as a permissible food additive (1999)
- The Pacific Organic Standards list carrageenan as an additive allowed in organic food processing (2006)
- The East African Organic Product Standards lists carrageenan as an additive allowed in organic food processing (2007)
- The European Economic Community (EEC) Council Regulation permits the use of carrageenan as a food additive in preparation of plant-origin organic food products of animal-origin, dairy-based organic food products (Commission of the European Communities, 2008)
- Carrageenan is permitted for use in Canadian Organic handling and processing (2011); and
- The U.S. National Organic Standards Board relists carrageenan as a permissible additive for organic foods (2012). 

CLEAN LABELS ARE SO 2013



2011



2013



2015

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Transparency as a Brand Asset: Beyond ‘Quality’

By MarketPlace, the Food Marketing Agency

Transparency. Perhaps no word so preoccupies the food industry today. If we’re going to talk about safe ingredients, we have to talk about transparency, because — like it or not — little else communicates food safety to consumers like detailed information about how their food is made.

Where promoting “quality” once met most messaging needs for food marketers, consumers’ expectations have been raised: now, consumers all but assume quality but demand information. Without assurances that they have information about all stages of the food production cycle, consumers — who have learned from a variety of food safety and false labeling scandals — feel uneasy about the safety and social responsibility of the products they buy.

Regulatory agencies have discerned this consumer anxiety and are beginning to respond accordingly. The monumental Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) places transparency at the center of food safety, expanding the power of the FDA dramatically, especially in the realm of transparency.

One key statute, the Foreign Supplier Verification Program (FSVP), requires American food companies to perform greatly expanded checks on the food safety programs of any companies that supply them with ingredients from abroad. The proposed rule places a heavy burden on importers and ingredient suppliers to ensure that food sourced from foreign countries meets the same standards for food safety as those produced domestically.

In short, FSMA will require food ingredient and food manufacturing companies to track and share far more information than ever

before, necessitating a careful look into the supply chain as well as readiness to share information forward to regulators and consumers. With these regulatory changes, transparency moves from being a buzzword to a reality of the industry.

For food companies, this will mean an increased emphasis on telling your story — even if you don’t have a consumer-facing presence. Feature lists and technical details are no longer enough. Unless your brand can explain the history of your products, from sourcing to processing, and relate that process to tangible customer benefits, your risk being left behind.

More importantly, however, telling your story is a brand building opportunity. Your transparency equates to your customer’s transparency, and that is key to a successful partnership.

We at MarketPlace have always advised our partners at food ingredient companies and food brands to adopt transparency. In recent years, many brands have employed transparency *initiatives* that address specific consumer concerns, and while that can certainly be useful, we encourage our partners to move beyond initiatives.

We advise our clients to put transparency *at the center* of their brands. The reason is simple: today, transparency is like quality — it cannot be practiced in small amounts. In short, transparency can only be a brand asset if it is a core brand attribute.

As new regulations enforce a higher level of transparency, any marketing advantage to short-lived campaigns will be lost. However, companies that put transparency at the center of their brand stories will continue to reap the benefits in brand equity.



Consumers, especially those who care about transparency the most, make subtle distinctions between brands on the basis of how “real” or “authentic” their transparency, sustainability, and social responsibility branding feels — and that feeling of authenticity is built over time, based on first impressions and continuing associations. Brands who establish their credibility on this matter preemptively will position themselves as a more committed to the values that transparency conveys, and will thus build a positive association with their brands that will not quickly fade.

Similarly, for B2B brands, trust on the part of their food industry customers is built over time, and brands that offer transpar-

ency on the brand level will demonstrate their trustworthiness and capability in a compelling manner. Transparency also makes B2B companies more accessible to the end consumer, in a time when that accessibility is of great value from a regulatory as well as a marketing perspective.

A compelling brand story is the essence of the world’s most successful brands, and in the food industry such stories must increasingly be stories of transparency: stories of the sourcing and transport of ingredients, the methods used to process them, and the people who make it all possible. If a story like that is not at the heart of your brand, it needs to be. 

FOUR STEPS TO TRANSPARENCY AS A BRAND ASSET

Go Beyond Compliance

Meeting FSMA requirements is a necessity, but consumers and industry partners have even higher expectations. You need to have information about every stage of your process, even if FSMA does not require it. Not owning this position, and having this information available to your partners, may be the difference between being a partner or not.

Learn the Information Your Customers Want to Know

Food companies that lack awareness of hot-button consumer issues will fail to turn transparency into an asset. Sharing your food safety record is great, but if it does not address issues your customers want to know about—like GMOs, allergen concerns, or social responsibility—it provides little benefit.

Make Your Process Part of Your Brand

It is crucial not to just throw your efforts into a single transparency campaign—instead, that information should be made part of your brand. Your brand is communicated through your position, as is a part of your brand story. (And if you do not have a brand story, your position in the marketplace is likely being affected in some way).

Tell Your Brand Story to Gain Opportunities

Having created a brand story that showcases your transparency, that story should begin to inform your tactical marketing materials. Rather than launching a single transparency campaign, your brand story—with transparency infused throughout—serves as an asset that can support all your marketing efforts.