

Health, environment amongst key trends for 2007, says market researcher

By Lorraine Heller

12/1/2006 - **Local sourcing of ingredients, fresh food, and health are some of the major trends expected to gain increasing importance in the food and beverage market next year, according to Datamonitor's Productscan Online.**

These often involve *"new approaches to old problems"*, says the market researcher, which identified the trends based on new product introductions.

Indeed, innovation remains the driving force behind new consumer packaged goods launches, as manufacturers try to capture consumer interest through novel ingredient and packaging concepts.

Two major movements identified are linked to the age-old consumer concern with losing weight. This is seen through the introduction of calorie burning beverages, such as newly-launched Celsius or Coca-Cola's and Nestle's Enviga. Both products contain green tea extracts with EGCG, an ingredient [Datamonitor](#) suspects *"we will be hearing a lot more about in 2007"*.

Satiety-enhancing foods and drinks are also top of the agenda, headed up by new products such as LightFull Satiety Smoothie, a 90-100 calorie high fiber, high protein beverage, and Shape Lasting Satisfaction Yoghurt, launched by Danone in Europe, which is again high in fiber and protein to help maintain a feeling of fullness for longer.

Another group of trends identified are connected to the growing demand for health-enhancing food and beverage products, or [functional foods](#).

These include antioxidants, found in products such as fruits, vegetables, tea, cacao and coffee, and which protect the body from disease and are said to slow down the aging process. An increasing consumer awareness of the benefits of antioxidants prompted a boom in dark chocolate sales in 2006, and also has the *"potential to elevate the fortunes of tea and coffee"*, according to Datamonitor. Antioxidant-rich 'superfruits' such as goji berries, acai and pomegranate are also positioned for mainstream acceptance, it said.

Immunity boosting foods and drinks are another growing segment in the health and nutrition market, with consumers increasingly realizing that some foods and beverages can give the body a healthy boost against sickness. Probiotic foods that help regulate digestive tract health including cultured dairy drinks and yogurts are leading the way. But a new generation of immunity boosting, probiotic juices, snack bars and even breakfast cereals are also emerging, as food makers find ways to add the benefits of dairy cultures to non-dairy foods. Kashi's new Vive Probiotic Digestive Wellness Cereal demonstrates this expansion.

Functional beer is another emerging product identified by Datamonitor, with beer manufacturers trying to regain ground lost to increasingly popular wine by launching new products with health benefits. These include vitamin beers, such as Stampede Light, which contains B-vitamins, folic acid and folate, as well as Germany's Karlesberg

Braueri functional beers aimed at women, made with lecithin, folic acid and other vitamins.

Still in the health vein, nutritious [kids foods](#) are gaining importance, with schools tightening up their policies on junk foods, as well as marketers like Disney establishing their own healthy food guidelines. Examples of products offered by Datamonitor include Pilgrims Pride's EatWellStayHealthy Kids Chicken Breast Nuggets, the first to feature the word 'healthy' on the packaging, and Fizzy Fruit Sparkling Fresh Grapes, which add carbonation to grapes for new snacking fun for kids.

Consumers are also becoming increasingly concerned with the environment, and this awareness is being conveyed through a turn towards ethical consumption habits. This is seen through a growth in demand for locally grown and raised foods, with the USDA identifying a near 80 percent growth in the number of farmers' markets from 1994 to 2002. This interest is driven by the desire for fresher food, but also for helping the environment.

Indeed, the concept of 'food miles' is just beginning to surface, communicating the high-energy consumption required to bring foods from far-flung areas to market.

"It isn't too far fetched to speculate that we might see carbon ratings on packaged foods and beverages to encourage energy conservation and fight global warming. These ratings could express the carbon released into the atmosphere to grow, package and transport goods to market," said Datamonitor.

Innovation in packaging and product presentation is also growing, with the market researcher estimating that 'smart' packaging is due to gain popularity, for example in the use of labels that change color to indicate the proper serving temperature or the freshness of a product. Product adaptation to make them more mobile is also on the agenda, starting with Frito-Lay's new Doritos Action Cups, which offer crush-proof packaging for chips for 'on the go' consumption.

Finally, Datamonitor identified a growing focus on food and beverage products targeting single person households, seen in the introduction of 'for one' ready meals and baked goods.

<http://www.foodnavigator-usa.com/news/ng.asp?id=72464>