

Superfoods market set to double by 2011

By Alex McNally

10/08/2007 - **The superfood and drink market is expected to almost double in the ten year period up to 2011, says a report published today, with soy products and exotic fruits leading the charge.**

This rise is down to consumers looking for foods deemed good for them, [Datamonitor](#) said, with more than half of the 5,413 European and US consumers surveyed by the firm claiming they had taken more active steps to eat and drink healthily in 2006.

Michael Hughes, market analyst and author of the report *Super Food and Drinks: Consumer Attitudes To Nutrient Rich Products*, said shoppers are actively seeking nutrient rich fresh, organic and functional food and drinks and turning their backs on foods high in fats, sugars and salts.

Hughes said: "*The trend towards 'positive nutrition' is well reflected by the recent popularization of [superfoods](#), especially in the UK and US.*"

As a result, superfoods and drinks, like acai and goji berries, are seeing a surge in demand. Datamonitor defined superfoods for the purpose of the report as foods rich in "*specific nutrients and phyto-chemicals (i.e. anti-oxidants) and are promoted as being able to improve health condition and/or disease prevention.*" A spokesperson told [NutraIngredients.com](#) that the definition includes both foods which are naturally high in nutritional value and those with added nutrition. This means it can include much of the functional food market.

Many food and drinks associated with superfood status have also enjoyed healthy growth in the last five years and this - in part - can be attributed to this status, he added.

Hughes said: "*The popularization of superfoods means that many food and drinks now have a 'healthy-halo' which significantly influences consumer preferences.*"

Exotic, highly fashionable fruits such as acai berries, goji berries and pomegranates have all risen in popularity, with pomegranate currently one of the most fashionable superfood ingredients, the analyst said. In the period January 2005 to May 2007, there had already been a 500 per cent increase in the number of products using pomegranate as an ingredient compared to the period 1999 to 2004.

Hughes added: "*Right now, pomegranate is the hot ingredient, but this is likely to be superseded given that new ingredients are being continuously touted. 'Monitoring these developments will be vital if industry players are going to fully capitalize on the superfoods movement.'*"

On the down side, the report waves a question mark over the environmental ethics around superfoods - as many originate from countries away from the US or European market, their sale is at the cost of a high carbon footprint.

The report is also cautious about the future of super foods and warns companies about their marketing of the category, especially if manufacturers use explicit branding initiatives, which promote superfoods as a "magic bullet." This is now particularly relevant to the category, as under the new EU health claims regulations there must be accepted scientific data to support statements of health promotion.

Datamonitor said food companies should focus on the good content of the product and not "*overly promote the products on the basis of superfood branding,*" adding that consumers are "*savvier and seeking to consume ... a nutritionally balanced diet from a diverse range of food types.*"

Soy product sales more than tripled in Western Europe in the period 2001 to 2006. Sales in the US nearly doubled in the same time period.

Green tea sales have grown substantially in the US. The market grew from €18m (\$119m) in 2001 to €116m (\$160m) in 2006, but such growth in Europe was not as apparent.

Datamonitor also identified an opportunity for manufacturers to respond to growing time constraints which are leading to people in Europe missing around 100 meals a years because they do not have time.

The report suggests companies can take advantage of this by offering nutritionally enhanced snacks as a substitution for missed meals.

<http://www.foodnavigator.com/news/ng.asp?n=78969&m=1FNE810&c=coihwetnaplzfhk>