

US gets nearly 1/4 daily calories from drinks, report

By Clarisse Douaud

1/10/2007 - **The results of a recent study on US beverage consumption could highlight opportunities for functional beverage marketers to inject more value-added beverages into a market that has become increasingly saturated with calorie-laden soft drinks.**

The [What America Drinks](#) report was commissioned by the [Milk Processor Education Program](#) (MilkPEP) and found that beverages account for 22 percent of calories in the average American diet.

While [functional beverages](#) - using ingredients from soy, to pomegranate, to acai - have experienced large market growth in recent years, this current report could prod marketers to get the message out to consumers to choose nutritional beverages.

Nearly 50 percent of Americans aged four and above consume sugary soft drinks on any given day, according to MilkPEP.

With almost a third of the US population obese, getting healthier drinks to consumers could become a growing concern.

In its recent report "Nutritional supplements in the US", Packaged Facts highlighted alternative delivery systems for nutraceuticals - namely functional food and beverage - as growing at a faster rate than the traditional supplements category within the \$4.7bn market.

Antioxidant-rich 'superfruits' such as goji berries, acai and pomegranate are also positioned for mainstream acceptance, Datamonitor's Productscan Online recently reported. These fruits and berries lend well to smoothies and hip functional beverage formats. While being tasty and perhaps filling, they can also bring nutritional value.

In the US, soft drinks add 36 percent of all added sugars to the American diet, MilkPEP said. Mean regular soft drink intake per capita was calculated at 12 fluid ounces per day, or one and a half glasses.

According to the report, 28 percent of Americans consume fruit or vegetable juices, from which they derive only 2 percent of their total calories, but 28 percent of their vitamin C intake.

While beverages with nutritional value-added appeal make inroads into the mainstream market, other players are proposing to actually burn calories through their beverages.

Controversial products such as newly-launched Celsius or Coca-Cola's and Nestle's Enviga bring the promise of negative calories through green tea extracts with EGCG.

Nutritional experts have long touted the benefits of quenching your thirst with water, however, it would appear consumers crave the taste of flavoured beverages instead.

The Mayo Clinic recommends people drink water with each meal and between each meal. *"To ward off dehydration and make sure your body has the fluids it needs, make water your beverage of choice,"* reads the Clinic's website.

"Pure water is your best bet," writes health guru Dr. Andrew Weil in his bestseller Eating Well for Optimum Health.

What America Drinks analyzed data from over 10,000 Americans aged four and older who participated in the government's National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) between 1999-2000 and 2001-2002.

<http://www.foodnavigator-usa.com/news/ng.asp?id=73247>