



Bakery hot topic

Are taste and nutrition mutually exclusive in baked goods?

'Clean eating' has been around for decades but it's only in recent years that it's truly gained mass-market appeal. Today's consumers are well and truly clued in to what goes in to their food, and they have high expectations.

But how does this impact the bakery sector? How can baked goods providers ensure they are meeting consumer demands for delicious and nutritious products? Michael Q Kemp, PhD, RD, Nutrition Manager at Kerry asks, are taste and nutrition mutually exclusive in baked goods?

A history of poor eating patterns have a cumulative effect and have contributed to significant nutrition-related health challenges that now face the US population.

About half of all American adults—117 million individuals—have one or more preventable chronic diseases, many of which are related to poor quality eating patterns. These include cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and poor bone health.

The characteristics of our diet contributing to preventable disease can be identified using the Health Eating Index or HEI. The Health Eating Index, which is a 100-point score used to identify the conformance to US Dietary Guidelines.

A higher score indicates a higher quality diet: Good >80, Need Improvement >50, and Poor <50. The HEI scores over the last 25 years identifies that the average American has an eating patterns that is "poor". Specifically, typical American consumers do not eat enough whole grains, and too much refined grain, sodium, and empty calories.

Baked goods as a vehicle for nutrition

Modern baked goods are often blamed for contributing to these dietary gaps. However, baked foods can serve as key vehicle to deliver nutrient dense foods to help consumers meet their dietary and nutrient recommendations.

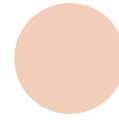
The industry tried to address these health concerns by reducing sugar and salt and increasing whole grains. Unfortunately, the resulting products were bland and did not attract customers. This taught us that even though health consciousness is rising, in consumers' minds, we must also win on taste too.

The future of baked goods

Moving forward, both taste and nutrition now get consideration. The HEI is still the blueprint for how to improve bread and how bread can improve total diet quality. But rather than just loading up on whole grains and decreasing salt and sugar from bread, new approaches help us improve nutrition and retain taste.

For example:

- There is no need to remove all sugar and salt, because a combination of modest but effective salt and sugar changes can help our product conform to the dietary guidelines.
- Sugar can be combined with natural, no calorie sweeteners like monk fruit or stevia.
- Whole grains carry important nutrition but can taste bitter, dry, and dense, which can compound the effect of reducing sugar. Enzymatically digesting grains can increase sweetness and can improve the functionality of the grains.
- Salt can be reduced in conjunction with addition of sprouted grains, which naturally liberates flavour and nutrition by increasing the availability of essential minerals and amino acids.



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What's more, flavour modulation technologies for salt, fat and sugar can be used to help provide the flavour that all of our customers are looking for while allowing us to reduce challenging ingredients such as salt, sugar, and fat. Flavours can be further enhanced by mixing various grains or using unique heirloom varieties to create new taste synergies.

Plus, fortification technologies can improve vitamin and mineral profiles in baked goods, which can be powerful tools in helping Americans fill common nutrition gaps such as Vitamin A, D, E, K, Potassium and Magnesium.

Finally, consumers want all the benefits of these new technologies but they don't want their labels to read like directions to another planet. Clean labels that remove texturants and emulsifiers can entice customers and will help us all achieve market success.

Talk to Kerry about how to improve the nutritional value of your baked goods.