“Consumer Perceptions of Food Ingredients”

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Today’s Agenda

• LSI Survey Discussion
  • Top Line Results
  • Implications for the food and beverage industry
• IFIC’s consumer research available at www.foodinsight.org
Methodology

One thousand fifty-four interviews were conducted among adults ages 18+ from May 6 to May 10, 2021 and were weighted to ensure proportional results.

The Bayesian confidence level for 1,000 interviews is 3.5, which is roughly equivalent to a margin of error ±3.1 at the 95% confidence level.

Statistical Significance

Something is statistically significant if the result cannot be attributed to random chance. Statistical significance in this presentation should be compared within each demographic (e.g. age, race, gender, etc.).

For example, if the responses from female respondents is considered to be significant, it is in relation to male respondents and not necessarily other demographic groups.
IFIC’s Long History of Consumer Research

• Food & Health Survey
  • IFIC’ annual survey of over 1,000 American households
  • Includes trended data on diet, health and food safety
  • 2021 Survey includes generational profiles of Baby Boomers, Gen X and Millennials
  • Available at www.foodinsight.org
Our Current Research on Clean Eating

- “Clean Eating Values among Millennials and Gen Z”, 2018
  - Baltimore, MD focus group discussions
  - Participants were not highly aware of “clean”
  - Not willing to accept trade-offs (taste, price, convenience) for clean ingredients
  - Eating occasion mostly influenced food purchase decisions
- Clean Eating Perspectives among RDs, 2019 (internal)
  - RDs discuss clean eating up to 4 times per week
  - Require/seek out consumer friendly resources on clean
Top 5 Survey Results

What You Should Know About our Survey, “Consumer Perspectives on Food Ingredients”, 2021
Available at: www.foodinsight.org
1. Sources of Information

When looking for information on ingredients when shopping, **the ingredient list** is the most popular source.
1. **Sources** of Information

When looking for information on specific ingredients, friends/family and online searches are the most likely sources.
2. Clean Eating

• Approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of Americans (64%) try to choose foods with clean ingredients
  • Not artificial or synthetic
  • Natural
  • Perceived as nutritious

• Health benefits are the top motivator for clean ingredients (25%), among those that seek out clean ingredients

• Almost half of Americans (46%) consider themselves as “clean eaters”
  • Among clean eaters, 49% define clean as “not highly processed”
Those who were more likely to strongly agree with the statement, “I consider myself to be a ‘clean’ eater” included:

- **Men** (24%, vs. 12% of women)
- **Under age 45** (24%, vs. 11% of 45-64)
- **With college degrees** (24% vs., 13% non-college)
4. Consumer Response to Nomenclature

- More than half (56%) try to avoid foods and beverages with chemical sounding names
- Of them, 64% avoid chemical sounding ingredients due to perceived health concerns
5. Natural vs. Artificial

### Colors from natural sources
- Seek out at least some of the time: 35%
- Makes no difference: 36%
- Avoid at least some of the time: 13%
- Don't know how to identify these: 7%
- Not sure: 10%

### Artificial colors
- Seek out at least some of the time: 7%
- Makes no difference: 31%
- Avoid at least some of the time: 48%
- Don't know how to identify these: 6%
- Not sure: 8%

*See slide 31 for the full set of data on colors, flavors, preservatives and sweeteners*
5. Natural vs. Artificial

Demographic Comparisons

People with college degrees were more likely to say they at least sometimes avoid:

- Artificial sweeteners (60%, vs. 43% non-college)
- Artificial preservatives (55%, vs. 42% non-college)
- Artificial colors (55%, vs. 41% non-college)
- Artificial flavors (52%, vs. 40% non-college)
Our survey results suggest

• Consumers are becoming more aware of the ingredients in foods and beverages
• Their focus is on health benefits, not necessarily safety concerns
• Artificial and chemical sounding names are perceived negatively
• Our current messaging on safety and function has been heard; now is the time to consider a health and wellness message in our outreach and education efforts

It’s not always about safety; healthfulness of ingredients is critical to consumer acceptance
Implications for the food industry

- Increased stakeholder awareness and visibility
  - Targeted outreach to key ingredient stakeholders
  - Multistakeholder educational forums
- Share insights via speaking engagements
  - Global Food Forum (virtual), October 2021
  - IFT, 2022, *TBD*
- Strategic collaboration to develop consumer-friendly resources
  - Consider partnerships with the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and others
www.foodinsight.org

Thank you
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