

# FOOD PROCESSING

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## Formulation Trends for 2017

In 2017, processed foods & beverages will reflect the impact of updated regulations and the laser focus on healthier, free-from ingredients and macronutrients. Clean-label will be more heavily emphasized as will exotic flavors and more nutrients like protein.

By Lauren R. Hartman, Product Development Editor

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In 2017, more food and beverage products will reflect healthy lifestyle trends and the demand for transparency. America is recalibrating its collective eating habits and overall diet, prompting food companies to hunt further and faster for the next healthy, fresh but also bold new thing. Cleaner versions of functional ingredients must be found, and fruit and vegetables will be moving to the center of the plate.

Formulators should make transparency imperative, emphasizes IRI Worldwide ([www.iriworldwide.com](http://www.iriworldwide.com)), Chicago. "Consumers want to know where food comes from. Soon, adopting food transparency strategies will no longer be optional. Those who can use in-depth data, hot consumer trends and new insights to foster more innovation in this area will be able to better leverage this emerging opportunity and develop their own fresh strategies."

"In 2017, consumers who demanded clean labels, no chemicals and a shorter ingredients list will ask for clear traceability of where food ingredients come from," adds Jean Shieh, marketing manager at Sensient Natural Ingredients ([sensientnaturalingredients.com](http://sensientnaturalingredients.com)), Turlock, Calif. "Our customers are calling out 'California Garlic' and 'California Onion' on their ingredients lists."

Speaking of vegetables, and fruits too, ingredient suppliers are going back to the natural sources of many ingredients. "Fruit and vegetable extracts can deliver a concentrated dose of the antioxidant compound beta-carotene and anthocyanins in variety of food, beverage and supplement applications," says Mark Rainey, vice president of global food marketing at Archer Daniels Midland ([www.adm.com](http://www.adm.com)), Chicago. "Our beta-carotene-rich vegetable extracts originate from carrots, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, paprika from chili peppers and Reishi mushrooms. Our anthocyanin extracts originate from purple sweet potatoes and carrots, purple maize, beets, rhubarb, tomatoes and red cabbage."

GMO-free ingredients will be a critical component for the clean label of 2017, predicts Innova Market Insights ([www.innovadatabase.com](http://www.innovadatabase.com)), which lists clean and clear labels, natural, less processed foods, plant protein and sugar reduction as its top five trends. "There's been an explosion of GMO-free claims in the U.S., so the consumer focus is going back to the source of the product," notes Robin Wyers, Innova chief editor. Food makers are evaluating simpler ingredients to mask off flavors and enhance good flavors and textures. In addition, they're creating products with less added sugar, fat and sodium and no artificial ingredients. They're also experimenting with specific types of fiber in conjunction with vegetables, and veggie-based meat alternatives and ancient and whole grains are showing up on menus and supermarket cases.

## More fiber, plant protein

Whole grains and fiber will play larger roles in new foods and beverages because of demand for ingredients consumers consider healthy. Healthy is where the food and beverage culture in the U.S. is heading, according to the Hartman Group ([www.hartman-group.com](http://www.hartman-group.com)), Bellevue, Wash.

"America's real nutrient intake, not just its retail grocery dollars, is shifting toward macronutrients that fight against the margin model of the industry, at least for now," Hartman states. "The temptation - with the explosion of everything protein - will be to simply develop highly processed forms of on-trend macronutrients that fit the old margin model. Those who can ride these unacknowledged nutritional trends through minimally processed forms (fresh and packaged) will be the real growth leaders in the next 10 years."

Protein certainly looks to continue its multi-year run. While animal proteins had a few good years, thanks to the initial wave of protein interest and the paleo diet, animal-based proteins suffered a hit in 2015 with the World Health Organization statements on their health risks. Interest in plant proteins shows no sign of abating.

Better-tasting plant-enhanced foods will be in big demand from vegans, flexitarians and even full-fledged red meat eaters, Chicago's Mintel Group ([www.mintel.com](http://www.mintel.com)) predicts in its 2017 trend report. "Products incorporating fruit, seeds, nuts, grains, vegetables and other plants will be immensely popular, aligned with modern consumers' preoccupation with health and wellness."

One flaxseed-based dairy-free line of yogurts was introduced in November by Good Karma Foods ([www.goodkarmafoods.com](http://www.goodkarmafoods.com)), a Boulder, Colo. producer of flaxseed milk alternatives. Available in flavors such as blueberry, strawberry, vanilla, raspberry and plain, the product has 5-6g of plant-based protein, 800g of omega-3 fats, vitamin D, calcium and seven live and active cultures per 6-oz. serving, and it's free of all major allergens.

"We see continued growth as consumers incorporate more plant-based foods into their diet," says Doug Radi, Good Karma's CEO. While he thinks the dairy-free yogurt segment is ready for explosive growth, he warns that the bulk of that segment "will require improvements in taste, texture and overall nutrition profiles that match dairy counterparts."

The company also reformulated its probiotic drinkable yogurts with less sugar per 4-7g serving, upgraded its Flaxmilk + Protein items from 5g to 8g of pea protein per serving, and improved flavors and texture to be smoother and creamier.

Fiber remains a favorite healthful ingredient, although qualifying your ingredient as a functional fiber is undergoing great change, as the FDA has created a strict definition of what qualifies as a fiber.



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