



BRIEF

New spring chicken: Johnsonville launches poultry line

By Doug Harris • March 6, 2017

Dive Brief:

- Johnsonville, a meat company famous for its bratwursts, will be introducing five varieties of convenience-sized flame-grilled chicken breasts in supermarkets this spring, according to Meat + Poultry. Varieties include Garlic & Herb, Teriyaki, Black Pepper and Sea Salt, South Western and Honey Mustard.
- Johnsonville's chicken will be free from fillers, MSG, and artificial preservatives, flavors and colors. They will be sold fully cooked. The chicken breasts will be packaged in 3-oz portions and sold in the refrigerated case.
- “Consumers are hungry for convenient and high quality protein options and currently there are limited options that deliver, Johnsonville vice president of innovation Andria Long said. “This product hits three priorities for consumers: convenience, lean protein and unmatched flavor.”

Dive Insight:

Why would a company built on bratwurst suddenly be interested in chicken? In a word, opportunity: No one else is packaging fully cooked

chicken pieces in convenient, portable, easy-to-consume portions. It takes less than two minutes for consumers to microwave the product, and each breast contains a max of only 130 calories — ticking off consumer demand for health and convenience.


The flame-grilled chicken breasts also offers Johnsonville customers something new, and will give the company more shelf space in stores, boosting its chances of capturing consumers who aren't yet familiar with or loyal to the brand.

According to the Hartman Group, millennials tend to eat impulsively, not thinking much about what they're eating (they like to “just eat whatever [I] want when I feel like it”), and convenient foods away from home fit into their lifestyles.

OK Specialty Foods notes that their eating practices “make more ‘snackable’ items particularly appealing. Johnsonville clearly considered this in deciding how to package and market its new produce.

Innovating and diversifying are the ways companies stay ahead of the curve these days. Johnsonville's move into is hardly a “chicken” move — it's a very smart one.

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