

**BRIEF**

No-flour power: Gluten-free ingredients boost nutrition, texture and taste

By Keith Loria • April 13, 2017

Dive Brief:

- The nutritional value of gluten-free ingredients is continuing to rise, with pulses offering more fiber, protein and micronutrients than traditionally used gluten-free staples like rice and tapioca flour, according to a new Packaged Facts report on gluten-free foods in the U.S. written about in a Food Business News article.
- Despite the gluten-free trend, it isn't necessarily a bad ingredient on its own. Research presented at the American Heart Association's Epidemiology and Prevention/Lifestyle and Cardiometabolic Health 2017 Scientific Sessions showed those who consumed more gluten had a lower risk of developing Type 2 diabetes.

- Quinoa, which is increasingly being used in gluten-free products, is believed to increase the protein content of pasta.

Dive Insight:

As the gluten-free foods market matures, manufacturers are getting better at adding ingredients that add to products' nutritional benefits, texture and flavor profile. Reports show that nuts, pulses such as chickpeas, and ancient grains like buckwheat and quinoa are being added to more and more foods in an effort to remain gluten-free.

Although people once only purchased gluten-free products out of need, that's no longer the case. Some believe that gluten-free products are healthier. According to a study from The Hartman Group, 35% of consumers who purchase gluten-free items say they have no particular reason for doing so. Only 8% of those surveyed said they actually have a gluten intolerance.

The market for these products is projected to keep growing. According to Packaged Facts, U.S. sales of gluten-free products, estimated at \$973 million in 2014, are expected to exceed \$2 billion by 2019.

While some analysts have gone on record to say the gluten-free industry could eventually reach a saturation point, many brands continue to see consumer demand for products and continue to put out new gluten-free items. Manufacturers like General Mills, Progresso and Snyder's have all jumped on the bandwagon and put out gluten-free products that sell well.

As the market continues to grow and mature, it makes sense for manufacturers to discover ways to enhance gluten-free's taste and nutritional profile. More advances to make better gluten-free products can be expected in the months and years to come.

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