

# Edlong showcases dairy-free range at IFT

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The amount of people in the US who claim to be vegan has jumped to 6%, up from just 1% in 2014, according to GlobalData. A Nielsen study revealed that sales of vegan alternatives increased by 20% in 2017 compared to 2016.

Flavor company Edlong has served food and beverage manufacturers with authentic dairy innovations for more than 100 years. Now it is a global leader in both dairy and non-dairy solutions, to meet the growing consumer demand for more options.

Edlong boasts more than 250 dairy-free flavors across all categories that can *“help to make vegan products taste more authentic,”* according to Anne Marie Butler, global applications manager at Edlong.

*“You can also use dairy flavors to mask cooked notes from processing, to add back freshness in shelf-stable products or to re-balance flavors,”* she said.

Some of the non-dairy flavors from Edlong work to mask meaty and metallic taste from plant proteins, keeping products rich and creamy like traditional dairy.

At the IFT expo in Chicago, Edlong showcased a vegan Speculoos-flavored ice cream and accompanying cookie stick, formulated with its natural vanilla and brown sugar flavors and 100% butter replacement.

On the dairy side, Edlong's flavor scientists presented cottage cheese-based dips, including balsamic and feta, buffalo bleu cheese and Peruvian.

*"As we've seen in healthier reduction trends throughout the years, even when consumers are seeking out lower fat, sugar or calorie products, they continue to look for the best taste and eating experience first,"* said Beth Warren, Edlong's chief commercial officer.

## Anticipating future trends

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Though Edlong has traditionally served the dairy industry, its proactive approach to veganism is a forward-thinking move for its bottom line.

Veganism may still be considered somewhat of a niche diet, but a recent report by the Hartman Group revealed a majority of consumers who have tried a vegan or vegetarian diet, as well as those who have switched to a dairy or lactose free diet, are millennials.

The popularity of the trend with young people indicates that it may stick around for a while and only expand as the forthcoming Generation Z ages into adulthood.

The crowded food delivery app marketplace is an obvious clue that tech-fluent millennials like having multiple on-demand options. Popular apps like Postmates, UberEats, Doordash and Seamless allow users to filter by food allergens, location proximity and cuisine type, and category-leading GrubHub reported a 19% increase in vegan orders for the first half of 2017 compared to 2016.

According to a 2017 Mintel report, US consumers are now looking for plant-based proteins alternatives to cheese (45%), milk (41%), yogurt (38%) and desserts (32%).

But despite the growing popularity of non-dairy alternatives, consumers won't compromise on taste. Mintel reported that it is the most important factor for US shoppers buying plant-based protein products, which Edlong considers a vital aspect of its flavor development.

*"The opportunity for food product developers is to provide the satisfying taste and indulgent richness consumers expect from traditional dairy applications in dairy-free formats,"* said Warren.