

Market Intelligence Digest

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Export Marketing Bureau

G/F and 2/F DTI International Bldg.

375 Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue

Makati City 1200, Philippines

Tel. No.: (632) 465 3300

Fax No.: (632) 899 0111

<http://www.dti.gov.ph/exports/>

<http://tradelinephilippines.dti.gov.ph/>

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What's trending in Thailand's functional drinks? (Part 1)

The current lifestyles of Thai consumers, characterized by longer hours on screens and high levels of stress, pose an opportunity in eye and mental health.

Mintel highlights

❑ Local consumer trends

The digital era is bringing focus to eye health. At the same time, mental health is becoming more important among Thai consumers.

❑ The market

Growing interest in health will be a driving force for the functional drinks market; however, brands will need to establish clear added value as well as the efficiency of delivering functional benefits to drive greater appeal.

❑ Key innovation trends

Delivering functional benefits through natural ingredients and highlighting well-known functional ingredients are the current approaches among functional drinks brands.

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Local consumer trends impacting the Thai functional drinks market

Digital era puts eye health in the spotlight

At present, consumers are spending more time on digital devices, and this exposure to digital screens is also happening at an earlier age. This will bring higher concerns on eye health.

Mental wellbeing as part of holistic health

Consumers are paying closer attention to their mental wellbeing, driving opportunities in functional food and drink containing nutrition to boost their mental health.

Consumers seek natural products

Natural ingredients still have a strong appeal to consumers. Brands can capitalize on this trend by incorporating natural ingredients as well as exploring traditional processing techniques.

The market

Increasing interest in health among consumers is a positive driver for future growth in functional food and drinks in the Thai market. 79% of metro Thai consumers say that they want to eat healthier as their personal goal in 2018.

Even though many consumers express their interest in healthy eating, only 29% associate healthy food with a product that comes with functional benefits. This might be due to the fact that the concept of functional products is still new to some consumers. To drive greater appeal of functional food and drinks, brands will need to position their functional product as an efficient way to get specific health benefits that consumers seek as well as showing proof of their health benefit claims.

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The use of functional claims is growing and expanding

Thailand: percentage of food and drink launches carrying functional claims, Nov 2015-Oct 2018 (% of launches)



In Thailand, there is an increasing trend of food and drinks launched with functional claims: among all food and drink product launches between November 2015 and October 2016, 7% were launched with functional claims; the figure rose to 10% between November 2017 and October 2018.

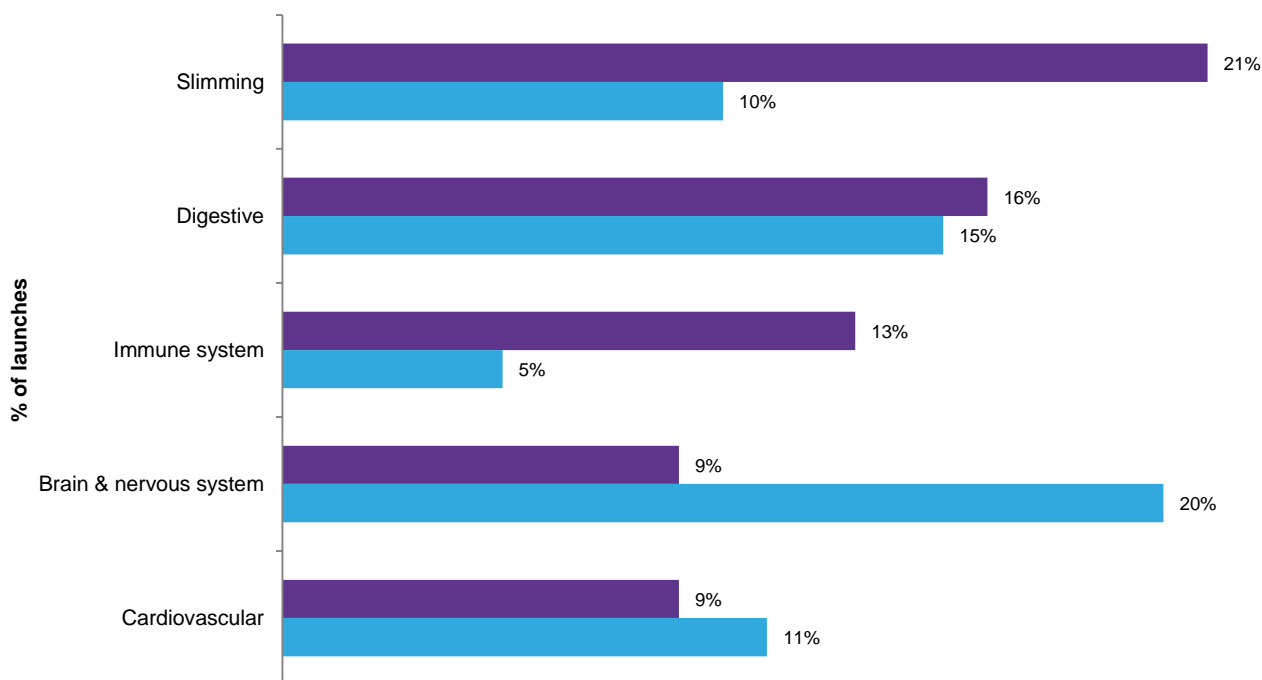
When looking at product categories, dairy and baby are the main categories that contribute to launches. However, the market also saw less traditional categories, such as snacks, rice and noodles, enhancing their health appeal by including functional claims on-pack. This also means that consumers can get functional benefits from everyday products they consume, which further highlights the importance of how brands communicate the benefits and positioning of their functional drink products.

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Brain health is the most common functional claim in Thai functional drinks

APAC and Thailand: launches of functional drinks by functional claims
Top 5, Jan 2015-Oct 2018



Base: Functional drinks covers Sports & Energy Drinks, Water, RTDs, Carbonated Soft Drinks, Juice Drinks, Meal Replacements & Other Drinks, Vitamins & Dietary Supplements (liquid format), and Beverage Concentrates that carry functional claims

Source: [Mintel GNPD](#)

When comparing functional drink product launches in APAC, manufacturers of functional drinks in the [Thai market](#) are focusing their functional claims on brain, digestive and bone health.

On the other hand, in [APAC](#), slimming is the most popular claim among all functional drinks launches, with Japan and India leading in product innovation. Immunity-boosting as well as weight & muscle gain are also becoming more prevalent in the functional drinks space in the region.