

Market Intelligence Digest

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Highlights

- **The better-for-you-snacks industry is now exploring more unique selling points that will benefit consumers. It is now prioritizing sustainable nutrition from plant-based snacks and promoting gut health.**
- **This issue provides some examples of plant-based snacks with more sustainable and functional ingredients.**
- **DTI-EMB recommends PH brands to create or explore more products that have sustainable and healthy base ingredients. It will be more attractive to health-conscious consumers if the products also promote gut health.**

The next frontier for better-for-you snacks

The next generation of better-for-you snacks can differentiate itself by focusing on plant-centric sustainable nutrition and promoting gut health.

Gut health, an untapped market for better-for-you snacks

A unique selling point, and often a key differentiator for snacks with new bases such as beans or peas, is the use of health claims including 'low fat,' 'low calorie,' or 'source of protein and fiber.' Fiber, a common ingredient of many plant-based better-for-you (BFY) snacks, has the potential to be elevated further as a standout ingredient linked to gut health.

The relevance of gut health is increasing. Research shows that a healthy gut microflora not only affects

digestion but also other layers of wellbeing. In countries such as the UK, 68% of consumers state that gut health is essential for overall wellbeing, while only 20% have eaten foods which support gut health. This gap shows that snack brands can play an active role in promoting gut-health-friendly diets among consumers.

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BFY snacks can effectively create a link to gut health

While between 10-15% of bean- and vegetable-based snacks emphasize their dietary fiber content, there is more potential to increase the use of functional digestive health claims.

Depending on the regulatory framework of the market, products could explore additional value-added ingredients such as prebiotics (e.g. chicory root fiber) to support the gut microbiome or probiotic bacteria (e.g. *Bacillus coagulans*) to help improve the gut flora.

Use beneficial bacteria to bridge the gut health gap

Products can combine high-fiber claims with probiotic or bacterial culture claims to build a pro-gut image. Additionally, sour and fermented flavors resulting from fermentation could be a sensory segue to connect snacks with gut health.

Tangy flavors such as Kombucha or kimchi could act as an alternative for traditional sour flavors (e.g. lime). Kombucha is already being used as a cooking ingredient in foodservice, highlighting its flavor potential.



Go Natural Lentil and Chickpea Probiotic Chips (Australia)



The jerky from leftover Kombucha Scoby is high in probiotics and fiber

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BFY snacks should promote sustainable and plant-centric nutrition

BFY snacks should promote sustainable and plant-centric nutrition on-pack. Brands can achieve this by elevating the importance of plants while clearly linking them to health and sustainability benefits. Inspiration can be gained from brands such as Beanitos, which describes its product as ‘a super snack, deliciously filled with plant nutrition, and with the power to keep the soil and planet happy.’

Moreover, several governments have already included sustainability in their dietary guidelines, while also advocating to choose mainly plant-based foods and consuming animal products only in moderation. Denmark, for example, encourages Danes to choose a more plant-rich diet, cut down on meat and choose from climate-friendly foods to cut the CO₂ footprint of one's diet by up to 35%.

Explore plants that deliver on sustainable nutrition and functionality

BFY snacking products should promote plant proteins and whole grains.

Additionally, functional plant ingredients are currently underleveraged in salty snacks.



Whole grains (e.g. linseed and quinoa)

Mãe Terra Tribos Olive Oil and Herbs Flavored Wholegrain Snack

follows several principles, including using real whole grains, less processing, organic ingredients, supporting Brazilian biodiversity and sustainable agriculture (Brazil).

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Underused legumes (e.g. fava bean)

Prozis Crispy B's Chili Lemon Flavor Crunchy Snack uses fava beans

which are highly efficient plants in the symbiotic fixation of atmospheric nitrogen – they help improve soil fertility and reduce the need for added fertilizers (Germany).

Provide compelling substitutes for meat-based snacks and flavors

In order to promote the shift towards plant-based, BFY snacks can

provide alternatives to meat by emulating their taste and texture.



'Pork rind'-like cracklings using navy beans

Beanfields Ranch Vegan Cracklins are made from navy beans. The pork rind-like crunchies are buttery and made from a home-style blend of garlic and herbs said to deliver on texture and to be full of flavor (US).



Plant-based jerky that is good for the planet

The Plantfull Food Co. 100% Vegan BBQ Mushroom Jerky is said to feature a smoky, barbecue flavor straight out of North Carolina with real mushrooms. This plant-based product claims to be good for the planet (UK).

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Explore less well-known sustainable and healthy base ingredients

Some 58% of Italian, 55% of French, and 39% of Germans enjoy trying new savory snacks made with

different base ingredients, highlighting the potential for new sustainable bases.



Algae: the sustainable superfood of the future

Pop Zero Sea Salt Plant-Based Popcorn

uses algae oil which is high in polyunsaturated fatty acids for a heart-healthy snack. Beyond oil, algae are a promising and sustainable protein source, high in fiber, antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals (US).

Repurpose healthy plant ingredients to tackle sustainability challenges

BFY snacks are well-positioned as a medium to solve sustainability challenges such as food waste, as they can be made from almost any vegetable that can easily be shaped into a new format. For example, Nudie Snacks from Scotland uses 40% locally sourced wonky cauliflowers that do not meet retailers' quality standards to produce cauliflower crisps that are 115kcal per 22g pack.

Manufacturers need to be careful about how to create appeal around the topic of food waste and upcycling. A good example is Regrained, which turns less-attractive spent grains from breweries and upcycles them into 'super grains' that deliver on nutritional benefits (e.g. fiber and protein), while claiming to save the planet.

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The Opportunity

Explore gut health as the next big health platform for BFY snacks. Formulate products with new ingredient bases to appeal to those consumers who enjoy trying new snack bases.

Incorporate healthy and sustainable plant-based ingredients such as less-explored legumes or whole grains as well as upcycled vegetables.

DTI-EMB recommends

PH brands which cater to BFY snacks should consider adding sustainable and healthy base ingredients in their products that promote gut health

They could also explore snacks that are plant-based with sustainable nutrition and functionality.



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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) 8465.3300
Fax No.: (632) 8899.0111
<http://www.dti.gov.ph/exports/>
<http://tradeline.dti.gov.ph/>



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