

Specialized Ingredients Improving Waistlines

Contributed by Euromonitor International
Monday, 27 October 2008
Last Updated Sunday, 04 January 2009

2008

In its latest report, Euromonitor International examines key opportunities for weight management ingredients in foods and beverages

Fiber, green tea extract and soy protein, to name a few, are the ingredients food and beverage manufacturers are turning towards to help lighten the growing pressures of the global obesity epidemic. According to Euromonitor International's new report "Weight Management Ingredients in Foods and Beverages," as consumers increasingly turn to healthier lifestyle choices and governments push to address and create a solution for rising obesity rates, manufacturers are looking towards ingredients with weight management attributes to help boost sales.

According to the report, consumers are shifting their attitudes towards healthier food options and are increasingly looking for products with "positive nutrition," meaning those with added ingredients perceived to offer health benefits versus the usual low fat, low sugar, low sodium options. "Functional properties, which enhance the benefits of a product, are proving to be the key to growth. This is especially true in emerging markets where consumers justify paying more money for products with added ingredients, rather than products that have had them removed," says Euromonitor Industry Manager, John Madden. "Food and beverage players are looking towards functional innovation as a means of attracting consumers willing to spend more on one product without sacrificing its good taste."

The report highlights three key categories in weight management ingredients:

Ingredients which suppress appetite and induce satiety;

Ingredients which boost metabolism/fat burning;

Ingredients which inhibit digestion (eg of fats or carbohydrates).

Incorporating these types of ingredients into foods and beverages has helped the global market for fortified/functional foods and beverages achieve growth of 10% in 2007. "There remains untapped potential in this dynamic market, including ingredients like omega-3 fatty acids, chromium and Hoodia gordonii – an African cactus-plant used to suppress appetite. "Marketing weight management product ingredients, however, does present its challenges," adds Madden. "As global obesity creates a tougher regulatory environment, it will be important for manufacturers seeking long-term advantages to assure their ingredients are accepted by the proper legislative bodies and that consumers are educated on the health gains of these added ingredients," concludes Madden.

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