

Britons Begin to Listen to Healthy Eating Message

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BRITONS BEGIN TO LISTEN TO HEALTHY EATING MESSAGE, BUT REFUSE TO GIVE UP THEIR "FAVOURITES"

London, UK. 31st October 2005. Rising at five per cent year-on-year, health is the fastest growing motivator behind the food we consume in Britain, according to the latest research from TNS, a leading global provider of market information. It suggests we are finally paying attention to the health warnings and appreciating the dangers of a high fat diet.

Despite these positive early signs, enjoyment still remains the number one motivating factor behind the food we eat – 42 per cent of meals are chosen for enjoyment versus 20 per cent for health reasons. Whilst we want to lower the fat content of our diets, we are not prepared to give up the foods we like, creating a new breed of consumers demanding healthy alternatives to popular everyday products.

TNS research shows that traditional frying as a cooking method, for example, has seen a 12 per cent decline in the last two years, compared to a one per cent growth in baking and an 18 per cent per cent growth in stir frying (over the last 12 months). Alongside this, chips have seen a 10 per cent growth in oven baking against an 11 per cent decline in frying. Microwaving, although a smaller market, is also increasing with Microwave chips seeing an 11 per cent growth over the same period.

Simon Eyles, McCain's Director of Communications, explains how they have had to innovate to stay abreast of changing consumer choices: "The health debate has been raging for a few years now, with consumers increasingly looking for healthier versions of their favourite foods. Simplicity is a key motivator for those health conscious consumers who want to do the right thing while eating the foods they love. Oven cooking some of those foods such as chips mean they can eat something that contains only 5% fat, made with only potatoes and sunflower oil."

TNS figures show that adapting to consumer needs has paid off for McCain who have seen their chips feature in an additional 6.4 million meals in the last year, a growth of one per cent in a market which has seen a decline of three per cent in consumption over the same period.

Giles Quick, Managing Director of TNS usage panel UK, concludes: "McCain is just one example of a business diversifying to stay ahead in a market trying to acclimatise to increasingly health conscious consumers. Adaptation is vital in this rapidly shifting market. Crisps and soft drinks, among the top selling grocery categories, are also seeing significant changes, with diet drinks now making up 47 per cent of the overall market (up five per cent year on year) and 36 per cent of the British population buying reduced fat crisps in the last year.

"The public is realising that by taking simple steps to reduce fat intake, which fit in with their everyday lifestyles they can enjoy a healthier diet. Research shows that radical changes and fad-dieting simply won't work in the long term." These findings are based on TNS Superpanel and Family Food Panel (FFP) data over Annual data to May 2005 (FFP). TNS Superpanel and FFP monitor the household grocery purchasing and consumption trends of a demographically representative sample of 15,000 households and 11,000 British individuals, respectively. TNS will only support data that is published in the context we have presented it and our own interpretation of these findings. We cannot be held responsible for any other interpretation of these findings.

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