

Kosher Food Attracts Non-Jewish Consumers

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Mintel Report Cites Food Safety; Health as New Sales Drivers for \$14.6 Billion Market

CHICAGO (September 27, 2005)- Kosher food has garnered major attention from a new crop of consumers who do not follow traditional Jewish dietary laws.

According to a recent Mintel report on Kosher Foods, more than 55 percent of respondents who buy kosher foods feel that kosher products hold a higher mark of safety and health than non-kosher items. Overall, one in five respondents in Mintel's survey said that they purchase kosher products. As the Jewish population continues to decrease, kosher foods are migrating into more mainstream food channel offerings.

Considering kosher products to be produced under stricter monitoring than mainstream items, consumers worried about the integrity of the food supply will provide a stronger growth opportunity in the market. Due to clear labeling practices of kosher food, consumers who are vegetarian, food sensitive or even allergic to certain ingredients are relying upon this market to monitor their diets. According to the report, the increased interest in food ingredients will continue to contribute significantly to the growth of the kosher food industry in the U.S. Mintel's 2005 Food Allergies and Intolerances report cites that one in 25 Americans suffer from a true food allergy, but that a larger percentage of the population is sensitive or intolerant of specific ingredients.

"Consumers are happy when they can clearly see what they are going to get," said Marcia Mogelonsky, senior research analyst for Mintel. "Food allergies and sensitivities affect some 28 percent of Americans, and kosher foods' clear labeling makes it easy for consumers to find dairy-free products as well as those that are meat free."

The kosher segment is facing a major battle due to the shrinking U.S. Jewish population. This decline has been due to intermarriage, low-birth rates, and the aging population. However, in addition to the increase in health-conscious consumers, the growing Muslim population is anticipated to rejuvenate the kosher market since the dietary restrictions for Muslims are similar to those for kosher consumers.

"Vegetarians and health conscious consumers are also influencing the kosher sales numbers," said Mogelonsky. "There is a major opportunity for kosher manufacturers to build sales within this category. This category is positioned to build, specifically as sales of organic and health-oriented foods continue to rise. Due to increased awareness of food safety and preparation procedures, more consumers feel that specific kosher products are more healthful than their mainstream, non-kosher counterparts."

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