



Gulfood Manufacturing: Spotlighting healthy food processing

Launched in 2014, Gulfood Manufacturing is a sector-specific trade exhibition for ingredients, processing, packaging and food logistics providers who service the rapidly growing food and beverage production industries established in the Middle East, Europe, Africa, Far East and Sub-Continent. The event provides food manufacturers with the ingredients, equipment and business improvement tools that enable more efficient production and distribution. Gulfood Manufacturing has five focused sectors namely Ingredients, Processing, Packaging, Automation and Controls and Supply Chain Solutions. Gulfood Manufacturing 2018 takes place from 6 -

8 November 2018.

Free-from, organic, all-natural and low-calorie are just a few of the food industry buzzwords we're paying attention to this year at Gulfood Manufacturing. Rising obesity levels and the exponential increase of preventable diseases, such as diabetes and some cancers are easily two of the most significant reasons why consumers are reportedly demanding more health foods. Globally, the rise in population and urbanization is also having an effect; as consumers' purchasing power increases, as does their standards of living, thus allowing them to focus on a healthier, more sustainable lifestyle.

Another major contributing factor is the rise of veganism and vegetarianism among many of the world's populations. In fact, according to the Mintel Global and Drink Trends 2017 report, the number of vegan food and beverage launches in 2016 was up 256 % compared to five years ago.

Meanwhile, in the UK, Tesco, the country's biggest supermarket, announced demand for vegetarian and vegan ready-meals and snacks increased by 40 percent in the past year, according to a report in The Guardian in May 2017.

The company therefore introduced new labeling to clearly mark vegan prod-

ucts. "Interest in naturalness and clean label continues to feature strongly," said Lu Ann Williams, director of innovation at Innova Market Insights, as the market research firm revealed its Top Ten Trends List for 2017.

Interestingly, we see this trend extend to this year's Gulfood Manufacturing event, where a range of exhibitors will be showcasing equipment and ingredients to enhance their customer's portfolio of health-conscious offerings.

For example, Italian company Chimab, a distributor of ingredients and producer of functional blends for meat, savoury, ice cream and baking industries, has announced it's investing in research and development projects that focus on healthy, natural products with clean label. This includes a renewed Meat and Cheese analogue product range, said to be good for vegan and vegetarian products, as well as innovations within their Ice Cream and Desserts departments, which now offer ingredient solutions without animal proteins. Their Bakery Business Unit, too, features a range of enzyme-based concentrate enhancers and other products that are designed to fall in line with the free-from, clean label trends.



Meanwhile, within the sphere of natural flavours, esarom an Austria-based company that is known for creating flavours, bases, compounds and emulsions will be at Gulfood Manufacturing to showcase its latest research and developments on another growing health-food movement: foraging. The company argues there is an avid interest in wild foods and going "back to roots", as on-trend restaurants in Austria are incorporating ingredients such as wild herbs and fir cones onto plates. One such example is the firm's focus on wild berries for its flavour, colour and health-boosting credentials.

Jumping on a similar bandwagon is Archer Daniels Midland Company (ADM), which will be presenting its newly extended range of sweeteners. As one of

the world's largest agricultural processors and food ingredient providers, ADM has extensively researched consumer trends in order to offer innovative solutions that plant-based proteins for meat and vegetarian applications, lecithins, and more. It's showing off samples of its reduced sugar cookies and chocolates, protein bars and fruit snacks formulated with Fibersol, a low-viscosity, soluble dietary fibre that won't contribute to sugar levels. ADM has picked up on one very clear trend a reduction in the use of sugar.

This has also led to exponential growth in the stevia industry, which has been addressing increasing consumer awareness around high-sugar drinks and other foods. It is anticipated that the sweetener and sugar substitute, which is extracted from the leaves of the plant species *Stevia rebaudiana*, will account for 15 % of the share of the global sweetener market by 2020. This is made more likely as governments around the world encourage the cultivation of stevia, and advocate for a reduced sugar intake among civilians.

Britain's soft drink manufacturers, for example, have already begun reformulating their products to stay ahead of the game and reduce sugar content, as new nationwide guidelines governing children's total intake come into play. While some attempts among the industry to cut down sugar and calories have not been well received like Toblerone's more spaced out chocolate bars others could prove to be more popular. ♦

