

Keep yogurt in growth mode

Stay abreast of — and cater to — consumer preferences.

According to “The Yogurt Market and Yogurt Innovation, 3rd edition,” a January report from the Packaged Facts division of Rockville, Md.-based MarketResearch.com, U.S. retail yogurt sales reached almost \$9 billion in 2017. Sales of the creamy cultured dairy product increased at a compound annual growth rate of 2% between 2012 and 2017.

“In recent years, U.S. consumers have embraced not only Greek yogurt, but have also taken to authentic, clean-label and organic versions, and to yogurt drinks, which are becoming more accepted with sales growing rapidly,” Packaged Facts said. “The sustained consumer interest in yogurt is forecast to spur the industry to continued sales growth looking ahead to 2022.”

Key to continued growth for yogurt processors, of course, is staying abreast of — and catering to — consumer preferences. A new study* from Comax Flavors on consumers’ behavior usage and attitudes toward yogurt found that:

Photo courtesy of Comax Flavors



Flavor

is the No. 1 driver of yogurt purchases. More than half (52%) of surveyed consumers said it is the most important attribute. **Berry** is the No. 1 flavor, with 61% of adults and 58% of children citing it. **Tropical** comes in second, while **vanilla** is third.

Consumers use yogurt in **multiple food and beverages**. More than half (51%) use yogurt in beverages; 39% use it in sweet preparations; 28% use it in dips and dressings; and 18% use it in savory preparations.

Less-traditional flavors

also boast appeal. For example, **coffee** flavors are consumed by 21% of baby boomers and 19% of 15- to 17-year-olds. **Vegetable** flavors are consumed by 20% of 3- to 5-year-olds, while 21% of 9 to 11-year-olds consume **botanical/floral** flavors. Gen-Zers, meanwhile, are the heaviest consumers of **spicy** flavors (5%).

Consumers view yogurt as a **healthy swap** for some staples. For example, 36% of adults and 47% of parents use yogurt in place of mayonnaise, sour cream, crème fraiche and/or oil. And 69% of adults and 79% of children consume yogurt as an alternative to ice cream or another indulgent dessert.

Add-ins/toppings

are popular, with 23% of children and 17% of adults consuming prepackaged yogurt featuring these **inclusions**.

*Fielded in June 2017, the study included 500 U.S. adults age 18-70-plus (250 were female and 250 were male). Half of the respondents were parents of children aged 1 to 17.