



Bountiful harvest; Although price, place, and promotion are essential, products—particularly new ones— persist as the linchpins of food retailing.

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While it's a given that a high percentage of new products fail in today's crowded marketplace, retailers can benefit from new light shed on the subject, courtesy of Mintel International's product-tasting sessions at this past summer's 2007 Institute for Food Technologists (IFT) expo in Chicago.

Specifically, revamped versions of all-American favorites—think ketchup, peanut butter, and ice cream—are viewed as the big hitters, while new kids on the block, such as açai from South America and goji berries from Asia, have also proved themselves must-have ingredients for future standout products.

Over 1,000 food and beverage experts voted for their favorites of the 150 new products sampled during Mintel's tasting sessions, which focused primarily on three specific food trends: "free-from" foods (foods that are free from, or have a reduced content of, known allergens such as lactose or gluten), emerging flavors, and food for improved brain function.

"We are increasingly seeing everyday foods modified appropriately for a wide variety of allergy sufferers," notes Mintel's Lynn Dornblaser. In addition to often being perceived as better-for-you, "in the future these products will undoubtedly benefit from general health-and-wellness trends. We could even see them become part of the cultural fabric, in the same way that vegetarianism has done in Europe."

From the emerging-flavors section, the power of "superfoods" such as açai and goji berries was crystal clear.

"Superfoods are products inherently rich in a variety of healthful ingredients, such as antioxidants, that can improve health or ward off disease. Because of this, we have seen a huge increase in the number and the kinds of products containing superfoods," says Dornblaser.

Ditto for the rapid growth over the past year or so of products that highlight their ability to improve brain function, says Dornblaser, who adds that while many of the products focus on babies and children, "there is clearly an unexploited market for these products targeting older adults and working executives who need short-term energy boosts for the brain."

Think5 packs bushel of fruits, veggies in a bar

Ventura, Calif.-based Thinkproducts, one of the nation's largest natural nutrition bar companies, packs five cups of fruits and vegetables into its new think5 bar.

Think5 is the newest product to be added to the Thinkproducts family of all-natural, gluten-free nutrition bars, which also include thinkThin (high-protein), thinkOrganic (raw fruit and nut), and thinkGreen (a superfood nutrition bar with two tablespoons of fruits and vegetables).

The five-cup think5 bar is available in Red Berries (240 calories per serving) and Chocolate Covered Red Berries (290 calories) varieties. A good source of omega-3 fatty acids and naturally occurring fiber, other think5 ingredients include acerola berries, sweet potatoes, brown rice, carrots, parsley, alfalfa grass, watercress, chlorella, and grapes, providing essential nutrients and vitamins and minerals.

Featuring apples, cranberries, spinach, and broccoli, think5 bills itself as the first product of its kind to offer five cups of pure fruit and vegetables in one bar. With a suggested retail price of \$2.79 to \$3.29, think5 is in distribution at Trader Joe's, Whole Foods, Kroger, Fred Meyer, Ralphs, and Target.