



IN PERFECT TASTE



According to recent research, there has been a clearly charted surge in demand for natural and clean label flavours and ingredients. Abigail Saltmarsh reports on a revolution in taste.

Consumers want authentic taste through natural flavour ingredients, according to credible research organisations, such as Mintel. Market trends distinctly identified by extensive research collated by the likes of Giract, GNPD, Datamonitor and Leffingwell, include natural and clean label flavours and ingredients, as well as low salt, fast innovation, food minus, adventurous and ethnic tastes, stability of quality and mitigation against fluctuations in cost.

Jane Barnett, trends and innovations consultant for Mintel's global new products database, also confirmed this was the picture. In general, she said, consumer focus is definitely now on "natural" nutri-

tion and products incorporating inherently natural, fresh, wholesome, balanced nutrition are increasingly popular in the savoury goods sector.

All natural

"In the food and drink landscape today, 'natural' and 'additive-free' have become part of the consumer's health and wellness vocabulary. Overall, consumers want transparency – they want to understand what they are eating and are interested in its authenticity," she said.

"They seek real food values and take measures to avoid the over-processed. The focus on natural for savoury goods is in line with overall trends in the broader food category, where freshness has gained ground as a point of difference as consumers look for more natural products. Natural colours and flavours are moving increasingly mainstream, whether via new products or on-going reformulations"

A specialist

In response to these clear market trends, and to meet soaring demands, leading producer of value-added ingredient solutions for the international food and bev-

erage industries, DSM Food Specialties, is increasing production of its Maxavor® Chicken YE flavour ingredients.

Coen Van Oorschot, business line manager for process flavours, said research from a wide variety of highly credible sources highlighted the dramatic change in eating habits over the years, which have seen people across the world becoming increasingly concerned about the content of their food.

"About 10 years ago we identified that all-natural was becoming of great interest and we were right - this trend has really been evolving over the years," he explained.

"We have been investing in this since then, and working on the technology. It has been more than six years since we started researching with chicken, in particular, and a year now since we launched our 100 per cent natural flavour ingredients."

Long experience

Mr Van Oorschot stressed that DSM Food Specialties' products, technologies and processes were responding to these clearly identified trends. The company had developed an expertise and was now ready to respond to the surge in demand.

Maxavor Chicken YE, is a prime example of this, he stressed, and is now being produced in high quantities at the company's state-of-the-art production facility in Shanghai, using its patented dynamic semi-continuous technology (DYSC), which has been proven to deliver high quality, consistent products with no batch variation.

A leading supplier

Part of the DSM group, DSM Food Specialties has decades of experience in the development of flavour ingredients. More than 100 years old, it is known for the authenticity and innovation of the "flavour building blocks" that it delivers to members of the flavour and food industries for use in culinary and savoury products such as noodles, soups, sauces, dressings and seasoning mixes.

"We have been active in yeast extracts for more than 50 years and in process flavours for 25 years," said Mr Van Oorschot. "We are a leading supplier in these 'middle blocks,' which can then be taken further by manufacturers and used in their products. It was in 2007 that we developed the technology that has allowed us to diversify into this area of natural flavour ingredients and to really respond to the huge demand we are seeing."

More authentic

Traditionally, "middle block flavours" have been created with the help of amino acids, specifically L-Cysteine. DSM Food

Specialties' technology, however, now allows it to create a flavour using yeast extract that tastes more like home-prepared chicken prepared. It is also free from GMO, MSG, allergens and E-numbers.

"We started with Maxavor® Chicken YE because it is one of the predominant tastes and is global so we saw there would be good opportunities with it," he said. "This middle block can deliver a flavour that tastes more like the chicken you would prepare at home. It is less "spikey" than flavours made with amino acids."

He added: "At the moment we have the roast and boiled chicken varieties of this product. Dark roast and beef will be launched later this year."

A strong position

He said that with its long-time emphasis on science, DSM Food Specialties was the only company to have launched a product like this developed using yeast extract.

"We foresaw the demand for natural products and cleaner labels a few years ago, which puts us in a strong position," he said. "Others started working on it too - then there was the economic crisis, which meant some companies had to change their focus for a time. But we kept pushing forward with it and now natural is back and is moving fast, and we are moving with it."

He added: "Customers know they can use our flavour building blocks without >



worry, because it will enable them not only to comply with upcoming new EC regulations but also with world-wide legislation. Our market-leading technology means we can reliably supply in quality and quantity, to the specific profiles that our customers request.”

Regional goes global

In response to trends towards more regional tastes, other DSM Food Specialties products, such as Maxagusto®, which can be developed into flavours that have the taste and aroma of freshly crushed and fried garlic, and roast, are also set to become popular. The technology will also see more true vegetable flavours captured in the middle blocks.

Mr Van Oorschot said: “In the future, I think we will see more dominance of Asian Pacific flavours, and this is where products such as Maxagusto® will be ideal.

“Indonesian and Thai flavours in this area have been a great success in that part of the world and these flavours are being picked up by the US and Europe very fast too. Regional flavours are becoming more global.”

He added: “One of the other main benefits is that it is easy to use in large scale industrial food processing, because of its powder (stability) properties.”

The natural flavour ingredients are also ideal for products to be eaten by those with



particular religious or cultural beliefs, such as Halal. “It makes marketing sense for manufacturers to be able to use a base product that is free to move around the world and to be consumed by everyone,” he stressed. “If every recipe can be taken to every country in the world, everyone wins.”

Products for the future

The trends identified and picked up on by research organisations and DSM Food Specialties are set to continue and to develop, stressed Mr Van Oorschot.

“We identified years ago that all natural and clean labels were coming and so it is wonderful to see our products doing so well,” he said. “This is only set to continue. People want to be healthier now, they want to eat better, to feel good and for their foods to be sustainable. This is now unstoppable.” □

