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Gluten-free labelling finally decoded by the FDA



After years in the draft stage the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has published a regulation defining the term “gluten-free” for voluntary food labelling. Although the final ruling contained few surprises, it will bring certainty to a market experiencing tremendous growth in demand, while providing more peace-of-mind to the 3 million American consumers living with celiac disease or gluten intolerance.

The term “gluten” refers to proteins that occur naturally in wheat, rye, barley and cross-bred hybrids of these grains. In people with celiac disease, foods that contain gluten trigger production of antibodies that attack and damage the lining of the small intestine. Such damage limits the ability of celiac disease patients to absorb nutrients and puts them at risk for a number of serious health problems, including but not limited to nutritional deficiencies, osteoporosis and intestinal cancers.

The new definition as set out by the FDA standardizes the meaning of “gluten-free” claims across the food industry. It requires that, in order to use the term “gluten-free” on its label, a food must meet all of the requirements of the definition, including that the food must contain less than 20 parts per million of gluten. The rule also requires foods with the claims “no gluten,” “free of gluten,” and “without gluten” to meet the definition for “gluten-free.”

According to an FDA press release, many food manufacturers are already in compliance with the new federal ruling, which mirrors Health Canada’s stance on gluten-free claims, published in June 2012. Food manufacturers not in compliance with the regulation will have one year to meet the definition for gluten free.

The FDA’s most recent ruling solidifies that gluten-free has gone mainstream. Consumer sales of gluten-free products, in the United States alone, reached \$4.4 billion in 2011, a 20% growth, according to Nutrition Business Journal, which also predicted the rate of increase will remain around 15-20% over the next several years.

In January 2013, Dieting Monitor, a publication issued by The NPD Group, which provides global market information and advisory services, about a third of U.S. adults currently say they want to cut down or be free of gluten in their diets. With the FDA finally taking a position on the term, consumers living with celiac disease or those hoping to eat gluten-free will be able to make informed purchasing decisions.

Sources: Dieting Monitor, 2013; FDA, 2013; Nutrition Business Journal 2011;



Ask Jenny: *Natural health products*



Jennifer Andrews, M.Sc., a nutritional scientist at Nutrasource Diagnostics, answers all your burning questions about the not-so-straightforward world of natural health products.

Q: I'm aware of the many health benefits associated with omega-3 fatty acids, but am worried about the sustainability of the industry.

Is fish oil sustainable?



Have a question?
Just ask!
newsletter@nutrasource.ca

A: Fish oil as it relates to sustainability is a hot topic. Over the past decade consumers have become more aware of the benefits associated with omega-3 fatty acids, in particular from EPA and DHA. As a result, demand for omega-3s has sky-rocketed, causing a high level of scrutiny and consumer confusion over the sustainability of the industry.

The most valuable components of fish oil are the omega-3 fatty acids EPA and DHA. Consequently, the fish used in fish oil manufacturing are typically rich in EPA and DHA. Sardines, anchovies, herring, tuna, cod and salmon among others, are the most commonly used fish for fish oil supplements due to their high EPA and DHA.

Generally, sardines and anchovies contain the highest concentration of EPA and DHA, which explains why the majority of fish oil on the market today is sourced from these fisheries.

With the vast majority of fish oil supply coming from two fish species, sustainability is of the utmost importance to all stakeholders involved. By using simple approaches such as measuring the biomass, understanding the reproductive rate of the fishery, and knowing the amount of fish harvested annually, the aquatic ecosystem is able to remain healthy and is managed in a sustainable fashion.

The global nature of most fisheries calls for measures such as multi-national treaties and organizations to oversee the management of fisheries internationally, to ensure fisheries are managed in a sustainable fashion.

The most influential agencies as they relate to the fish oil industry are the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the International Council for Exploration of the Sea (ICES) and the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF). The health of the aquatic eco-system is the top priority for these organizations.

The introduction of strict codes of conduct such as the FAO's "Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries" provides principles and standards pertaining to the conversation, management, and development of all fisheries. Successful implementation of codes of conduct throughout the industry, result in the maintenance of healthy, sustainable fisheries, as well as providing fish products for consumption by present and future generations.

This is just one example of how interested parties are doing their part to manage sustainable fisheries.

Of course, fish oils are by-products of other industries and their availability is subject to the responsible management of fisheries. Fortunately for the fish oil industry and its consumers, anchovies and sardines are among the best managed fisheries in the world.

Sources: Food and Agriculture Organizations of the United Nations, 1995; Frost & Sullivan Omega-3 Ingredient Market Overview report commissioned by GOED, 2009.



Natural health products 101

Industry Buzzwords for 2013

It's been an exciting year for the natural health product and functional food industries. In addition to ground breaking research findings, regulatory changes and ingenious innovations, the industry has been chock-full of buzzwords. We break down this year's most buzz-worthy terms to help keep you on trend.

Natural

The most vague **marketing term**, natural claims imply that foods are **minimally processed** and **do not contain manufactured ingredients**. There are no standards for natural claims, meaning that unfortunately the term assures nothing. However, New Nutrition Business selected "**naturality**" as one of its "**10 Key Trends in Food, Nutrition & Health**" for its annual trend spotting report.

Non-GMO

Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) are a hot topic! Our Summer edition of NutraLiving explored GMOs and GMO labelling regulation and reform. Non-GMO products containing no genetically modified ingredients is a definite trend to watch. New legislation recently passed in some states **requiring products that contain GMOs to be labelled** accordingly.

Organic

The **organic movement is here to stay**. Demand for products free of synthetic pesticides, chemical fertilizers and GMOs continues to grow rapidly. Distinct from "natural" claims, the organic industry is **heavily regulated** and must comply with standards set by governments and international organizations.

ARTISAN

In part **driven by the foodie revolution** "artisan" products are hot on supermarket shelves. Products associated with handcrafted, time honoured traditions. Chiefly baked goods, meats, cheeses and confections, market themselves as artisan.

CLEAN labels

Manufacturers have begun presenting "clean labels" to consumers, who are **increasingly scrutinizing the ingredients** found in the products they're purchasing. **Clean simple labels** highlighting natural, wholesome ingredients is one of the **strongest consumer trends of 2013**.

Sources: Canada Organic Trade Association, 2012; Food Product Design, 2011; New Nutrition Business, 2009; Nutraceuticals World, 2013.



Food & Nutrition

What's in season this Fall?

Walnuts

We are nuts about walnuts! Full of plant-based omega-3 fatty acid, ALA, and plant sterols, walnuts have shown in clinical studies to lower cholesterol and reduce the risk of heart disease.

This yummy nut is also rich in cancer fighting antioxidants and vitamin E. An excellent source of plant-based protein and high in fibre, walnuts help you to feel you fuller...longer.

Although walnuts are high in "good" or polyunsaturated fats, they are calorically dense, so its best to practice portion control. Just 7 nuts contain 185 calories and 18 grams of fat!

Apples

This fall, snack on your favourite variety to get your fill in antioxidants, vitamin C, vitamin K and fibre.

It turns out an apple a day really does keep the doctor away! High in flavonoids, a diet containing this tasty fruit could prevent heart disease. Apples also contain phenols, which lower bad (LDL) cholesterol, while increasing good (HDL) cholesterol.

With a wide range of apple choices available, this beloved fruit is a perfect addition to any recipe. Want a quick an easy snack? Substitute your favourite nutbutter for the tried-and-true snack: apples and PB.

Spaghetti Squash

This stringy member of the winter squash family is famous for its ability to mimic pasta, making it a great main dish topped with sauce. Spaghetti squash is rich in belly-filling dietary fibre and also contains vitamin C which helps to promote overall health and wellness.

More good news: preparing spaghetti squash is easy! Using a large knife, cut in half lengthwise (no need to peel) and scoop out the seeds with a spoon. Place both halves skin side down on a baking sheet and bake at 375°F for about 45 minutes or until the flesh is fork-tender all the way through.

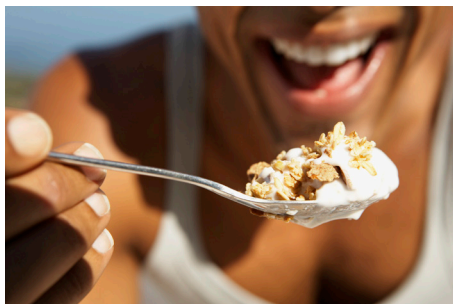
To get perfect pasta-like strands, rake the cooked flesh with a fork and collect the resulting strands. Top with your favourite pasta sauce and serve hot.



Sources: Mayo Clinic 2011; Nutrition Data, 2012; Nutrition Journal 2009; USDA National Nutrient Laboratory, 2013



Going Greek: Greek yogurt trend shows no signs of slowing



In a trend packed year, there have been few food categories that have shown staying power quite like Greek yogurt. Throughout 2013, category innovations and the entrance of new industry players have breathed further life into dairy's fastest growing category.

Why Go Greek

Greek yogurt is strained through cheesecloth multiple times to remove more whey, leaving a thicker consistency compared to traditional yogurt, making it a great addition or substitute for fat-laden dips, sauces and dressings. Greek yogurt has approximately double the protein and half the sodium of its counter part and is also a great source of probiotics and calcium.

Money Talks

Greek yogurt is arguably one of the hottest trends to hit the food product industry this decade. According to trade publication Packaged Facts, Greek yogurt can be credited single-handedly for the boom in yogurt consumption in the US last year, where sales rose nearly 7 per cent from 2011 to \$7.3 billion.

According to the report Greek yogurt surged from being just a sliver of the yogurt market in 2007 to becoming the most important trend in the industry. In 2012, Danone Oikos, the fastest-growing brand in the Greek yogurt segment reported sales of \$400 million. With consumer demand showing no signs of stopping, players such as Starbucks - which plans to launch its own brand through a strategic partnership with Danone - are all going greek.

Trending Right Now

Trendwatchers are keeping their eye on this thriving segment and its market potential. Check out the trends we're watching.

1. Traditionally marketed towards women Greek yogurt has undergone a transformation. '**Brogurt**' targeted to men, for its high protein content is sure to make a splash.
2. **Functional ingredients** were also a trend to watch this year. We're betting our favourite Greek yogurts will soon be fortified with omega-3, calcium or vitamin D.
3. **Funky flavours** are not hard to find in the supermarket these days! We believe the foodie-revolution will soon be the dairy isle with nostalgic, artisan and exotic fruit creations.
4. Greek yogurt brands using **buzz-words**? Keep an eye out for natural, organic and GMO-free label claims on your favourite brands.

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