



TRENDS IN HIGH-PROTEIN FOOD

The demand for high-protein foods, including bioactive dairy protein for sports performance, next-generation plant-based meats and protein-rich snacks, is growing steadily across the globe. The global protein market was valued at 22,03 billion in 2021. It is estimated to reach 26,46 billion growing at a CAGR of 3.74%. The largest segment by end user is the food and beverages industry. The industry is expected to experience tremendous growth as manufacturers develop numerous protein products containing a broad spectrum of amino acids and performing distinct functions such as satiety, muscle recovery, weight loss and energy balance.

High protein foods can be classified into two distinct categories: Animal proteins and plant-based proteins. Animal proteins include whey (dairy), Casein (dairy), egg, beef, chicken, insects. Plant-based proteins include soy, pea, brown rice, and chickpea.



EUROPE MARKET IS DOMINATED BY PLANT PROTEINS

Due to the growing trend of veganism in Europe, plant proteins have increased in popularity. Among them, soy protein is the most widely incorporated as an ingredient. It is present as flour, concentrate and isolate forms. Another popular protein source is legumes, which has low fat content and macronutrients such as calcium, folate, zinc and iron. Pea protein is also gaining ground as it is considered healthier and has nine essential amino acids.

Some of the global trends shaping the high-protein food and beverage industry are as follows:

- **Rising health-consciousness:** Consumers have become more health-conscious since the pandemic, and this is reflected in their eating habits. As protein is an essential nutrient, food products that have this in high quantity are preferred.
- **Taste preference:** While consumers seek healthy food options, they are not ready to compromise on taste. Whey proteins are typically easier to incorporate into food without altering the taste than other proteins.
- **Sustainability:** Millennials and Gen Z drive the demand for sustainable proteins, especially in Europe. Producing sustainable proteins needs less land or fresh water and reduces greenhouse gas emission. Protein derived from plants resistant to climate change, such as native millets in India and indigenous quinoa in Bolivia, can be considered more sustainable. Recycled proteins (from waste streams of food production), those linked to regenerative farming techniques and marine-based proteins such as algae are also included in this category. Insect protein is also more sustainable as the resources needed to breed insects is far lesser than the requirement for animals.
- **Ethical consumption:** Sustainable and ethical consumption has become a global trend. Aware customers are now looking for sustainability labels which provide information about the production process. There are different specialized labels for animal welfare, climate impact, organic ingredients etc. Food and beverage companies should try to get the most relevant ones that showcase the efforts they are taking to be environmentally conscious.
- **Sports nutrition:** This is a growing segment in food is sports nutrition, with eatables and drinks especially designed to meet the requirements of the active lifestyles of sports people. The quickest and simplest way to receive the proteins needed to create muscle mass after exercise is through whey protein products. Other proteins gaining traction in this segment are insect, soy and pea.
- **Functional food:** Products such as nutrition bars, supplements, and meal replacers fall under the category of functional food. Nutrition and a high protein content are the two most important requirements for this food. The demand for protein will rise as functional foods become more popular.
- **Blended protein products:** Consumer demand for protein diversity can also be satisfied by creating blends of animal, plant or fungal proteins. Such a blend gives consumers access to the full protein benefits of animal proteins and the superfood advantages of specific plants and mushrooms. Dairy-free almond milk and beef and mushroom 'blended burgers' are also available.
- **Veganism:** The trend of veganism has steadily gained traction in the last few years. While the global vegan population is growing, Europe is believed to have the highest number of vegans currently. Food producers are exploring new varieties of proteins derived from legumes, seeds, nuts, fungi or even algae. Some other new protein ingredients include sunflower, pumpkin, flax and chia seeds to meet this demand.



NEW PROTEIN FORMATS

Protein is now available in different forms such as the following:

- **Functional beverages** - Convenient and tasty beverages that enhance mental and emotional well-being find more takers. As functional beverages become more popular, manufacturers focus on innovation to deliver new experiences. Moving away from the usual protein shakes, they are designing water, juices, and even coffee with the required protein content.
- **Baked products** - High-protein mixes for cakes, cookies and other baked items are coming to the fore. These mixes are easy-to-use and help customers achieve their nutritional goals. Among the proteins, insect protein, specifically cricket flour is being used to make protein-rich bread, energy bars, and cakes.
- **Ice cream** - While ice cream is considered an indulgence, new products with high protein and low sugar are now available in the market. Many brands offer high-protein ice cream in different flavors and types.
- **Snacks** - Healthy snacking is the new buzzword, and modern consumers want their nutrition on the go. Seed and nut snack packs, string cheese, jerky and yogurt are easy and portable snack options with high protein content. Mealworms are also being used as an alternative to chips or salty snacks.
- **Ready meals** - Frozen ready meals such as snacks, pizzas, seafood and chicken meals are also incorporating more protein intensive items.

CONCLUSION

The simplest method for selecting the appropriate protein ingredient for any product is to determine the benefits required to create the optimal product for the target consumer. Protein selection is influenced by its functionality, nutrient quality, cost and consumer trends. Specifically in Europe, customers have become highly environment-conscious and want their nutrition needs met in a sustainable manner. This can prove to be a challenge, as we see in everyday life of our customers. End customers analyse the source of the raw material to ensure environment-friendly practices such as regenerative agriculture are used. Hence, manufacturers have to use ingredients that match these exacting standards. Considering protein options are available for all types of food and beverage, making the right choice will help food manufacturers achieve success and brand popularity. In particular, plant-based proteins are on the ascent, given the UN's estimate of a doubling of protein demand by 2050, which will unlikely be filled with animal-based proteins.

COPYRIGHT AND DISCLAIMER

The contents of the newsletter are protected by copyright. Any reproduction oder commercial use is subject to the written consent of Zuegg Com GmbH, based in Lana, Boznerstraße 2 [BZ] – Italy. All contents of the newsletter have been carefully researched. Nevertheless, we cannot assume any liability for the correctness, completeness, up-to-dateness and/or usability of the contents for the user's purposes.