



## In This Issue

PAGE 1

Trends Affecting the  
Restaurant Industry in  
2022

PAGE 2

The Rise in Protein  
Snacks

PAGE 2

Superfruit Spotlight:  
Apples

PAGE 3

Consumers Show  
Skepticism about  
Wellness Products

PAGE 3

Plant-Based Products up  
6% in 2021

PAGE 4

Consumers Want More  
'Healthy' Food

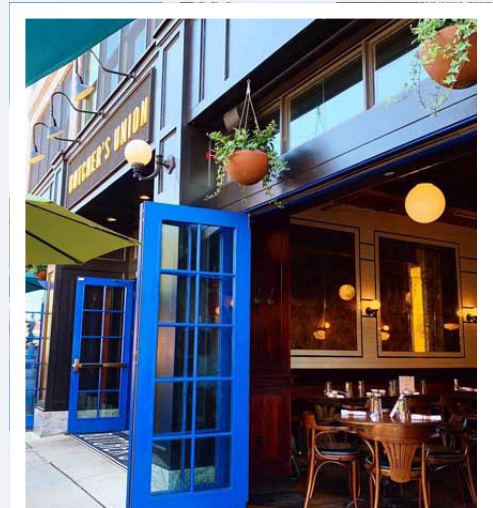
PAGE 4

Few Consumers  
Understand Food Labels

## Trends Affecting the Restaurant Industry in 2022

Although we're slowly coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, restaurant owners are still facing challenges operating their businesses. As we enter a post-pandemic era, a few trends are expected to stay.

**Home Delivery:** In the early days of the pandemic, consumers took advantage of home delivery services as it provided a contactless and convenient way of getting groceries and other necessities. It's unlikely that this trend will disappear as the pandemic eases up because it continues to be a convenience to consumers.



**Labor Shortages:** Labor shortages are expected to significantly impact the food industry and the cost of maintaining a restaurant. The number of employees willing to work during these times is a critical situation which leaves restaurants needing to operate for shorter hours and fewer days. Additionally, trucker shortages and delivery delays have created congestion in restaurants' delivery processes, leaving restaurants to modify their menu.

**Vaccination Restrictions Lifting:** The "No Vax, No Entry" restrictions are lifting in cities like New York. Over 68% of the American population are fully vaxxed which allows for some easing up on restrictions, moving us toward a pre-pandemic normal. Vaccination rates and compliance with mandates has allowed us to sit and enjoy meals.

## The Rise of Protein Snacks

Protein is popular among consumers as it's associated with a healthier lifestyle and can help build muscle. Food manufacturers are responding to this new demand with new protein innovations and alternatives.

"High protein snacks have a health halo among consumers because of their health benefits in human nutrition and weight management," explained Tanya Jeradechachai, Vice President of MGP Ingredients Inc. Snack bar manufacturers are capitalizing on this trend by promoting other claims such as low-sugar, gluten-free, grain-free, plant-based, clean label, and more.

A wide variety of proteins can be used in high protein snacks such as wheat, soy, whey, nuts, and other grains. Wheat protein is highly versatile and can be used in pretzels, chips, and crackers. Dairy proteins are ideal for high protein snacks as they are high in protein and clean flavored. Plant-based proteins such as peas and legumes are gaining popularity as consumers become more aware of their eating habits.

"Consumers are reflecting more on their food choices in the wake of the ongoing pandemic and making choices that directly impact their health and the health of the planet," explained Emily Jackson, technical service manager at the Manildra Group USA.

As consumers become more aware of their food options, it's expected that they're going to continue to search for snacks high in protein that deliver taste and nutrition while also maintaining a clean label.



## Superfruit Spotlight : Apples

A perfect sweet-tart flavor balance, firm holding texture, and a light natural color, it's no wonder our exceptional **infused dried apples** are a favorite.

In addition to their versatility and excellent taste, our nutrient-dense apples are packed with antioxidants, phytonutrients, and flavonoids that support heart, brain, and digestive health. Perfect for pies, trail mixes, snack bars, cereals, and more, our infused dried apples hit the spot!

Are you interested in elevating your **applications**? Talk to our **experts** and request your **sample** today!



## Consumers Show Skepticism about Wellness Products

**Health and wellness is one of the biggest trends in the food industry, but are the products actually healthy? Consumers aren't so sure.**

A study conducted by consumer research firm, Attest, reveals a gap between consumers' understanding of nutrition labeling and what food companies can do to more clearly communicate a product's wellness message. 46% of participants expressed their concern that wellness products aren't actually healthy. 41% worry that the health benefits of ingredients haven't been scientifically proven, and 32% worry that the amount of healthy ingredients isn't enough to make a difference. "This data shows that identifying real, healthy products appears to be a serious difficulty for American shoppers," commented Jeremy King, CEO of Attest. "Addressing the issue will be of significant benefit to the industry."



## Plant-Based Products Up 6% in 2021

**The total market value for plant-based foods in the U.S. is continuing to rise and has reached a high of \$7.4 billion last year, up from \$6.9 billion in 2020, according to the Plant Based Food Association.**

Plant-based milk led the way for plant-based growth as it brought in \$2.6 billion in sales in 2021, a 4% increase from 2020. Sales of other plant-based dairy products reached \$2.1 billion in 2021, with the most growth in plant-based creamers (+33%). Plant-based eggs only reached \$39 million in 2021, but this was a 42% increase from 2020.

With more plant-based foods showing up in grocery stores, it's not surprising to see consumers stocking up on these products. Younger generations, primarily Millennials and Gen Z, who represent nearly half of the population, are expected to drive the demand for plant-based products. As plant-based products become increasingly accessible, with a variety of products and innovations, plant-based retail sales are expected to keep growing.

Graceland Fruit infused dried fruit ingredients are naturally plant-based, after all – they are fruit! Along with being plant-based, our infused dried fruits are also Non-GMO project verified, USDA organic, Kosher, allergen-free, gluten-free, and vegan. All of our certifications



and documentation can be easily accessed on our website or by clicking [HERE!](#)

## Few Consumers Understand Food Labels

Attest, a consumer research platform, surveyed 2,000 U.S. consumers and found that 60% are actively seeking food and beverage products that support their health.

The survey found that consumers were confused when it came to determining what foods are and aren't healthy. As part of their research, Attest presented participants with six different cereal bars and asked them to identify the healthiest. Just 9% of participants were able to identify the healthiest choice while 13% incorrectly chose the lowest-ranking choice. Labels such as "whole grain" and "naturally flavored" seemed to produce the most confusion. Attest's research suggests that the food and beverage industry needs to simplify how it sells its products.

## Consumers Want More than 'Healthy' Food

It's been more than two years since the world drastically changed due to the pandemic. Businesses and restaurants had to adjust, school went remote, but some of the most changes occurred in consumers as they ate more meals at home, took advantage of delivery services, and became more health conscious. As we enter a post-pandemic era, consumers want more than just healthy food. From 'gut health-supporting' to 'immune boosting', consumers are seeking foods that promote a wide range of health benefits.

Israeli food tech start-up Tastewise analyzed social media posts, reviews, restaurant menus, and recipes to provide information about current industry insights, predictions, and trends. According to Tastewise, 30% more consumers are seeking functional benefits now than they were in 2019. A deeper dive into their analyses shows that consumers are most interested in functions such as sleep (up 61%), brain function (up 35%), and immunity (up 128%). While specific health functions are on the rise, Tastewise found that 'healthiness' as a broad term has actually decreased in consumer conversations. For Tastewise, this indicates that consumers are targeting specific health benefits rather than addressing 'health' as a general claim.

Our nutrient-dense **infused dried fruit** ingredients add an extra boost of health. Our superfruits are packed with antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals that support a number of health benefits. As an added bonus, our exceptional ingredients are highly versatile and perform well in a number of **applications**. Request your **sample** today!



We deliver *delight*.

Graceland Fruit, Inc. is a leading producer and global distributor of premium quality dried fruit ingredients for the food industry. Our exceptional product and service performance make it easy for innovative food manufacturers and providers to create delicious, on-trend products to surprise and delight their consumers.

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