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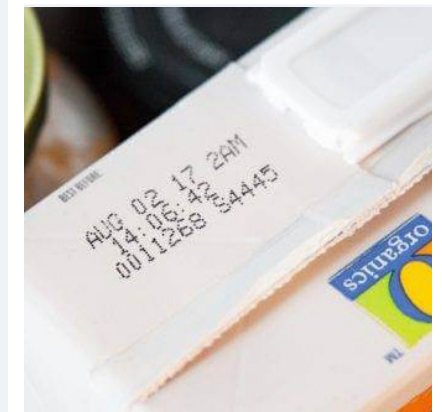
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What's New at Graceland
Fruit

Are Labels Contributing to Food Waste?

Labels aren't just intended to help consumers select the product that best fits their dietary needs and lifestyle, they're also useful for determining a product's freshness. However, could these labels be contributing to food waste? The short answer is yes.

Most consumers assume that if a product has passed its sell-by date, it belongs in the trash. In fact, the average American family throws away around \$2,275 worth of food every year and 7% of food waste in America is linked to date marking. "Best before," "sell by," and "best if used by" dates have led consumers to believe that their food is no longer edible if the product has passed the date on the label. What manufacturers really mean by these dates is that they can't guarantee peak freshness past the date. However, this doesn't mean that dates should be stripped off all food products. Ready-to-eat foods like fish, meats, and unpasteurized produce need dates for precaution.



Organizations are trying to minimize this food waste and push for food recovery through labels. The Consumer Brands Association is encouraging its members to use harmonious labels and the Natural Resources Defense Council is pushing for QR codes on food products that display information like storage instructions and freshness.

Our **infused dried fruit ingredients** are produced with the planet in mind. Authentically delicious and distinctively versatile, our exceptional ingredients start with fresh fruit from quality-obsessed **growers** who follow good agricultural

practice standards. Additionally, our Michigan growers are Michigan Agriculture Environment Assurance Program (MAEAP) verified. With our infused dried fruits, there's no need to look for an expiration date thanks to their naturally long shelf life, making them easy to store and the perfect inclusion for all types of finished products. Learn more about our commitment to **sustainability**!

Demand for Affordable Nutrition is on the Rise

Affordable nutrition was named Innova's No. 2 trend for 2023 and it's becoming increasingly relevant as 50% of consumers agree that they've spent more on food & beverage since lockdowns.

Thanks to inflation, grocery and restaurant prices rose 11.3% and 8.2% respectively year-over-year, according to the Consumer Price Index in January 2023. Additionally, consumers are noting "shrinkflation", saying they're noticing smaller grocery packs and restaurant portions. This perceived smaller value with a higher price has resulted in more meals being cooked from scratch or favoring discounted food items to save money. "This is not just 'give me cheap food', this is 'I want affordable nutrition.'" explained Lu Ann Williams, director of global insights for Innova.

Companies are responding to this demand as there's been an 86% year-over-year growth in new products with affordability claims. Consumer packaged goods manufacturers have committed to increasing access to affordable nutrition and include it in their brand messaging. Companies like Nestle have employed artificial intelligence to design products to balance consumer needs while companies focus on charitable initiatives. PepsiCo Inc., for example, recently launched a Food for Good program which is aimed at solving food insecurity issues.



Superfruit Spotlight: Cultivated Blueberries

Our cultivated blueberries are crazy-popular for a reason. Rich, sweet, and chewy, our cultivated blueberries are packed with that fresh blueberry flavor that consumers crave.

Our **cultivated blueberries** are available in two sizes and precision diced. Whether it's a wild or cultivated blueberry, our infused dried blueberries run smoothly throughout finished goods production, eliminate color bleeding in baked goods, and perform exceptionally in a number of commercial food **applications**. Order your cultivated blueberry **sample** today!

Northwest Michigan Businesses Receive \$1.7M from State Grants

Michigan's Going PRO Talent Fund will provide businesses in Michigan \$1,700,109 for employee training this year.

Out of the 66 applicants, 54 employers from the Northwest region were awarded the funds. The employers will use the funding to train 1,020 new employees, 70 of which are apprentices. Recipients included businesses from a number of industries including construction, manufacturing, banking, and information technology to name a few. "The Going PRO Talent Fund helps workers get the skills they need to build their lives and advance their careers in Michigan," said Gov. Gretchen Whitmer in a press release. "Let's keep our foot on the accelerator as we grow our economy, create unparalleled economic opportunity and empower more people to 'Make it in Michigan.'"



Vibrant Colors to Dominate the Baking Industry

From bright reds to deep purples, today's baked goods seem to have every color in the rainbow and it's only expected to get bigger this year.

"Globally, 56% of consumers say they like food to have bright and intense colors," explained Kelly Newsome, senior marketing manager at ADM. Bright shades of pink are expected to be a new wave of over-the-top expression in baked goods. In fact, Barbiecore and magenta were Pantone's 2023 color of the year. Colors expected to help lighten the mood include blue, purple, and orange. Bright

colors are not just eye-catching, but it also helps brands connect with consumers on an emotional and psychological level. "Consumers are hugely receptive to the use of vibrant shades because they're craving products that have a story to tell and spark feelings of joy and creativity. Bright colors are also an indicator for how things taste. Consumers expect bright red colors to taste like cherries or strawberries while yellow colors taste like lemons. "The more intense the color, the more flavor we expect," said Susan Frecker, senior application scientist at Oterra.

Small but mighty, our **exceptional ingredients** deliver vibrant color and intense flavor to a number of commercial food applications. From tart cranberries to sweet blueberries, we have the product profile you need for your next innovation. Our superfruits start

with fresh fruit harvested at peak season and flash frozen to preserve its brilliant hue and authentic flavor. Additionally, our infused dried fruits maintain piece integrity in rigorous mixing applications, distribute evenly in dough structures, and prevent bleeding, discoloration, oxidation, and moisture migration. Order your samples today!





What's New At Graceland Fruit: HAZWOPER Training

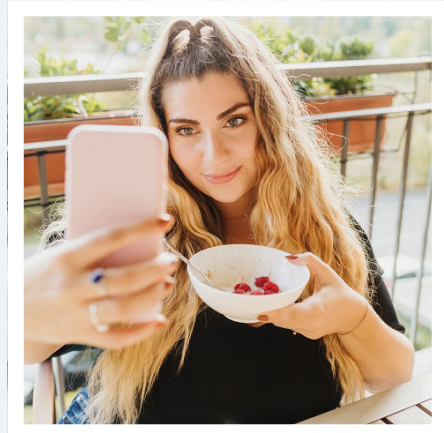
HAZWOPER, which stands for Hazardous Waste Operations & Emergency Response, is a set of guidelines aimed to prevent and minimize the probability of a worker injury or illness from exposure to hazardous substances. Our HAZWOPER Team consists of 18 dedicated and dependable employees. These exceptional employees are the first to respond in the event we have hazardous waste release. All team members are 24 hour technician level certified and are required to complete 8 hours of refresher training to maintain their certification.

Gen Z Could Change the Face of Food

Research from The Center for Food Integrity (CFI) showed that Gen Z, an emerging consumer segment with a distinct set of values, behaviors, and preferences, has the potential to transform the face of food. CFI conducted digital ethnography, quantitative research, and immersive Gen Z experiences to get a 360-degree view of this generation to find the best way to engage and earn trust from this segment.

Gen Z accounts for 20.67% of U.S. consumers and almost a third of the global population. Gen Z's economic power is the fastest-growing and it's expected to increase fivefold to \$33 trillion by 2030. Unlike other generations, this generation thinks differently about the products they buy. "They are driven by social causes, including environmental and social justice issues. This means they support brands that align with their values," explained Roxi Beck, CFI consumer engagement director.

When it comes to eating habits, CFI's Illuminate™ digital ethnography research found three distinct trends. First, it found that Gen Z consumers want a better relationship with food, one that's both stress-free and guilt-free. Second, Gen Z wants balanced nutrition by eating a variety of foods, including plant-based. Third, this generation wants to follow a sustainable diet that reduces their carbon footprint whether that's by consuming less meat or buying local ingredients.



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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