

29 June 2022

PRESS RELEASE

Arla Foods Ingredients' research highlights distinct shopper traits in mainstream sports nutrition

Mainstream consumers are increasingly seeking out protein for sports nutrition, but their needs and purchase motivations vary, according to a major global study¹ by Arla Foods Ingredients.

A total of 43% of the 12,000 consumers surveyed said they looked for added protein when choosing foods and beverages for exercise, rising to 52% for those aged 18-29. This interest in protein is rising, with 31% stating they had increased their use in the past two years compared with only 7% who had decreased usage.

The in-depth research, which looked at how people buy into the sports nutrition market and perceive healthy living, enabled Arla Foods Ingredients to identify three distinct consumer types, each with different attitudes to exercise, nutrition, and protein.

The first group, called The Enthusiasts, exercise strenuously at least three times per week and frequently choose food and beverages designed to support athletic performance. They score above average in many areas – for example 93% have a very high interest in protein and 60% actively search for added-protein sports nutrition products.

'Easy Health' refers to the second group of consumers. They follow a relatively active lifestyle, balanced with an interest in nutrition, and are likely to respond positively to popular health trends. Like Enthusiasts, they choose protein-rich foods to help with areas such as sports recovery, but are unlikely to sacrifice taste in favour of functionality.

Those in the third segment – Healthy Feel Goods – do not prioritise exercise but they have a big focus on how diet impacts health. Healthy Feel Goods are likely to favour drinkable products such as smoothies, waters, and kefir, because they buy into their health benefits (59%) and want beverages that add vitamins and nutrients to their overall diet (56%).

Troels Nørgaard Laursen, Director of Health & Performance Nutrition at Arla Foods Ingredients said: "Now that the sports nutrition has moved into the mainstream it has become increasingly important for manufacturers in this category to understand consumer attitudes to exercise, nutrition and key ingredients such as protein. We have been able to identify three distinct

¹ Arla Foods Ingredients' 'Mainstream Exercise and Nutrition Global Consumer Segments Report' (August 2021) uses Health Focus International's 2020 International Trend Study 'Consumers and Healthy Living', which is based on research across 12,336 consumers from 22 countries. Arla Foods Ingredients is also in possession of findings from the research specifically related to respondents from the US, UK, Brazil, China or Japan.

consumer types, giving some useful pointers in how producers can promote protein to these different segments.”

Anne Høst Stenbæk, Head of Marketing at Arla Foods Ingredients added: “A high proportion of Enthusiasts say they make a conscious effort to eat a healthy diet and they choose food to improve their athletic performance. They are willing to give up on both taste and convenience to get there, so for them it’s all about functionality. In contrast, Easy Health consumers agree that an active lifestyle is very important in contributing to overall health but this group is not willing to compromise on taste, so manufacturers would do well to target them differently.

She continued: “And while those in the third group – Healthy Feel Goods – are not focused on exercise, their interest in nutrition is high, perhaps higher than those in the other groups. They are highly receptive to documented health claims so focusing on protein’s health benefits as a super ingredient is a good strategy for manufacturers. This group does not necessarily look for food which is directly linked to being active but they do show a strong interest in protein for things like energy, weight management, and mental energy.”

Arla Foods Ingredients has years of experience in supplying ingredients – such as whey protein isolates, concentrates and hydrolysates – for the sports nutrition market and this latest study is part of the company’s strategy to maintain its position as a leading player in this industry.

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About Arla Foods Ingredients

Arla Foods Ingredients is a global leader in value-added whey solutions. We discover and deliver ingredients derived from whey, supporting the food industry with the development and efficient processing of more natural, functional and nutritious foods. We serve global markets within early life nutrition, medical nutrition, sports nutrition, health foods and other foods and beverage products.

Five reasons to choose us:

- We have R&D in our DNA
- We offer superior quality
- We are your trusted business partner
- We support sustainability
- We ensure security of supply

Arla Foods Ingredients is a 100% owned subsidiary of Arla Foods. Our head office is in Denmark.

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