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PRESS RELEASE

Sportiest consumers most focused on protein source, Arla Foods Ingredients research shows

The most physically active consumers are the most focused on the source, naturality and nutritional quality of the protein they consume, research by Arla Foods Ingredients has found.

The global nutrition leader analysed data from a survey of 11,500 health-conscious consumers in 21 major markets, including the US, UK, China, Japan and Brazil.* Over eight in ten (84%) were interested in protein – up from 81% in 2020 when the survey was last conducted – with 59% interested in dairy protein specifically.

Nearly seven in ten (69%) had some preference regarding protein source, with 28% saying they were very particular and would avoid certain sources. The most important factors when selecting a protein were health (60%), nutrition (57%) and quality (57%). Over a third (36%) said it was important that the protein they consume is complete.

However, the research also reveals significant differences between consumer segments. Arla Foods Ingredients used the data to identify three distinct profiles, each with different attitudes to exercise, nutrition and protein.

The first were '*Performance Nutrition consumers*', who exercise strenuously at least three times a week and frequently choose food and beverages designed to support athletic performance. They were more likely than average to say that health, naturality and nutritional quality were important factors when choosing a protein, and the most likely to seek out complete proteins.

Performance Nutrition consumers were by far the most likely to be very particular about protein source (52%) with only 10% saying "I have no preference over the source of protein as long as I get enough." They were the group most interested in whey and pea protein and – unsurprisingly, given that they tend to be early adopters – the most receptive to novel protein sources such as insect, fungi and lab-grown.

The second group, '*Active Nutrition consumers*', follow a relatively active lifestyle. Despite being very interested in healthy diet and nutrition, they were less willing than the performance nutrition group to compromise on taste and texture. They were also characterised by a tendency to combine protein sources.

Finally, '*Lifestyle nutrition consumers*' do not prioritise exercise, but have a keen interest in diet. People in this group mirrored average consumers in terms of their protein preferences.

Anne Høst Stenbæk, Head of Marketing at Arla Foods Ingredients, said: “It’s well documented that high protein is now a goal for consumers across the board. We also know that they’re increasingly focusing not just on the amount of protein in the products they consume, but on its source and nutritional quality too. What this new research shows is that this trend is particularly clear among the most physically active consumers.”

Arla Foods Ingredients has years of experience in supplying sports nutrition markets with ingredients such as beta-lactoglobulin, whey protein isolates, whey concentrates and whey hydrolysates. The new study is part of its commitment to providing leadership and valuable insights in the sports nutrition space.

*Research carried out by HealthFocus® International in 2022.

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About Arla Foods Ingredients

Arla Foods Ingredients is a global leader in improving premium nutrition. Together with our customers, research partners, suppliers, NGOs and others, we discover and deliver documented ingredients and products that can advance lifelong nutrition for the benefit of consumers around the world.

We serve leading global brands in early life nutrition, medical nutrition, sports nutrition, health foods, and other foods and beverages.

Five reasons to choose us:

- We're passionate about improving nutrition
- We innovate by connecting the best
- We master both discovery and delivery
- We build strong, long-lasting partnerships
- We are committed to sustainability

Headquartered in Denmark, Arla Foods Ingredients is a 100% owned subsidiary of Arla Foods.

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