



Better-for-You Ingredients, Better for All

As consumers reach for more natural GMO-free products, they are also asking for more socially and environmentally responsible ingredients. Companies are following suit.

By Nielsen-Massey Vanillas

GMO-free, natural, sustainable, organic and fair trade are all buzzwords that have been circulating in the foodservice and food manufacturing industries for some time now. Aside from growing health concerns leading consumers to choose more natural, organic products, they are also buying products that have a positive impact on the environment and global community.

In this digital age, consumers are more knowledgeable about their products, having easy access to information that addresses the healthfulness of food ingredients. Additionally, consumers are connected globally, allowing them to trace the impacts of their purchase decisions on eco- and socio-economic systems worldwide. Organizations promoting natural, green and fair trade ideals are also stronger than ever due to a reach that is not bound by geographical restrictions. With growing digital influence, the general public is demanding healthier, more responsible food production.

On the health side, requests for more natural products are on the rise. This means cleaner labels and wholesome ingredients. While there has been some controversy over the term “natural” on labels, as it can be quite pervasive even on processed items, one thing is clear: Consumers want foods that are actually clean. Nielsen-Massey Vanillas, a leading manufacturer of high-quality pure vanillas and fine flavor extracts located in Waukegan, Illinois, and Leeuwarden, the Netherlands, has set a high industry standard by offering all-natural, kosher, gluten-free and allergen-free products to their customers. Nielsen-Massey also offers an organic line, which is certified to the National Organic Program (NOP) provided by Quality Assurance International (QAI) which is a USDA-accredited certifying agency.

For many years consumers have been choosing organic products that have not been altered by synthetic substances.



In March of 2014, Consumer Reports National Research Center conducted a survey of 1,016 adults and found 84% of U.S. households buy organic food, with 45% of Americans buying organic once a month or more.

Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) have also been examined more closely. Non-GMO products have become a strong contender in regards to brand choice, according to the 2014 Market LOHAS (Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability) Mambo Sprouts Marketing Annual Natural and Organic Consumer Research. In fact, 80% of consumers participating in the MamboTrack survey said they seek out non-GMO products when shopping for food.

While U.S. government agencies, like the FDA and USDA, do not require GMO labeling, other organizations are encouraging non-GMO products to be verified and included on labeling. Organizations such as, Non-GMO Project, an independent non-profit verification organization, believe consumers should have access to clearly-labeled non-GMO free products to help them make informed purchase decisions.

A potential concern of those seeking GMO-free products is the increased use of herbicides and pesticides in GMO plants, which are engineered to stand up to harmful chemicals. Chemicals used against common pests and weeds may also be harmful for the environment by polluting water, harming wildlife and contaminating soil, as reported by responsibletechnology.org. As a result, food and ingredient manufacturers, such as Nielsen-Massey, are embracing the call for GMO-free products.

Recently, Nielsen-Massey has switched from corn alcohol

to sugarcane alcohol to ensure products are GMO source free in the United States. Nielsen-Massey's conventional products are tested and verified to contain no GMO material. These steps have helped Nielsen-Massey guarantee their products surpass customers' and consumers' standards worldwide.

Just as organic and GMO-free products appeal to environmental concerns, Fairtrade organizations, such as Fairtrade Canada, an internationally recognized non-profit Fairtrade certification organization and member of Fairtrade International, help regulate environmental components involved with agriculturally-based products. This certification process ensures small-scale farmers in developing countries receive fair price and use sustainable farming practices, which in return, stabilizes crop producing communities and protects the environment.

"We are excited to be able to offer Organic Fairtrade Madagascar Bourbon Pure Vanilla Extract that is both certified Organic and Fairtrade," said Craig Nielsen, CEO of Nielsen-Massey. "Although Fairtrade products are commonly known to be coffees, teas and cocoa, it is just as important for our vanillas to be Fairtrade certified to promote sustainability and help producers in the countries where our vanilla beans are grown."

With products like Organic Madagascar Bourbon Pure Vanilla Extract and Organic Fairtrade Madagascar Bourbon Pure Vanilla Extract, Nielsen-Massey is committed to customers, and strives to meet the changing demands of consumers, retailers, food manufacturers and foodservice professionals. 