

Body Care



Truth-in-Labeling

Towards the end of 2009, the Organic Consumers Association threatened a boycott of organic “cheater” brands in an effort to stop misleading claims and to promote compliance with the USDA’s NOP program or NSF International’s standards. During 2010, retailers such as Whole Foods Market and the National Cooperative Grocers Association adopted organic integrity policies to insure that all vendor partners making an “organic” claim are in compliance with USDA NOP standards or the NSF/ANSI 305 standards.

Manufacturers have responded to the demand for certified organic body care products. The number of product launches containing 95%- 99% Organic content nearly doubled from 2009 to 2010, and products with 100% Organic content had more than 6 times the number of product launches in 2010 compared to 2009. In addition, manufacturers are adjusting their labels and reformulating their products in order to comply with NOP and NSF/ANSI 305 standards.

Going Bare and Going Green

As consumers become more eco-conscious, we will see added attention being given to packaging using less material, such as smaller containers and less plastic, and more post-consumer recycled content, particularly that which is compostable and biodegradable. Less packaging may also translate to less space during transportation and thus lower shipping costs. Expect to see personal care products capitalizing on this trend.

Consumers and manufacturers should keep in mind that compostable, biodegradable packaging often comes with an environmental tradeoff; corn based biodegradable containers promote the use of GMO crops. Watch as GMO free corn based biodegradable containers make a debut in the coming year.

Consumers are still catching on to the fact that companies are using green packaging, so there is still room for increased awareness of, as well as research and development surrounding the trend. Manufacturers will need to pay particularly close attention to consumer reception of the green packaging movement in order to avoid mistakes like the Sun Chip biodegradable bag, which consumers rejected due to the noise the bag made.

Grocery

High-end Ethnic

Conventional ethnic food products are beginning to be replaced with more natural, gourmet and foodie-esque ethnic products. Quality, authentic ethnic items have done quite well in the natural realm for years and the trend is starting to pick up in other outlets as well.



Local

Regionality and the oft-mentioned terroir are key points of interest for consumers right now. The local trend is really taking off in artisanal charcuterie (butchery) and in products like beer, cheese and coffee. Additionally, regional fruits and vegetables are finding their way into jams, jellies, salsas and other processed items that are made using local, seasonal produce. Locally produced kombuchas that remained on the shelves during the “great kombucha drought of 2010” may have also gained on the national brands, both in sales and among consumers.

An increasing number of local farmers are setting up delivery services direct to their consumers. This is a potential win/win for both the consumers, who are saving money and trips to the store as well as getting the freshest possible produce, and the farmers, who are able to offer their goods at a discount but still profit more than they would at wholesale.

Non GMO

We are still on the crest of the Non-GMO trend. As demand grows across consumers and channels, we can expect to see an increasing number of products labeled GMO free over the next year. The NON GMO Project has been instrumental in spreading awareness about the dangers of genetically modified ingredients and has provided the Natural Products Industry with a valuable resource in its certification program.

3rd Party Certification on the Rise

Consumers are favoring simple ingredients and natural products these days. Brands and products that offer substantiated information pertaining to their quality and sourcing of ingredients are resonating with today’s natural products shopper. Moreover, products with multiple certifications validating their natural and/or environmental claims stand apart from the more conventional ‘green-washers’.

Products that are labeled with third party certifications are already beginning to see positive returns on their investments. According to UNFI’s September Trend Analysis presentation, “certified whole grain products posted the greatest dollar growth, over \$200M, even though there are fewer whole grain certified products than Fair Trade or non-GMO.” (BBurke, 2010) Furthermore, products with Fair Trade, non-GMO and/or Whole Grain certifications saw sales rise by over \$300M when compared to the previous year’s sales. Clearly, consumers are seeking products that are safe, wholesome and that contribute to the welfare of the environment.

It is important to note, however, that education is vital to the successful integration of third party certifications. To avoid leaving consumers overwhelmed by the amount of information on product packaging, certifiers to make sure that their labels are clear, concise and easily understandable.

Green Washing

As natural products continue to gain momentum across all channels, it is inevitable that there will be an increase in the number of ‘green washed’ products, or those that deceptively use green marketing to promote a false perception that they are natural or environmentally friendly.

While some companies truly are putting forth the effort to make better products, others are simply looking for the easiest way to capitalize on a trend without fully committing to the deeper changes and philosophy it represents.

Unfortunately, body care and general merchandise are two departments that are easy targets for green washed product attempts. These categories are largely unregulated in regards to natural and organic content claims, leaving a lot of “grey” area for the typical unsubstantiated claims that green-washed products tend to make.

Where does it come from?

Product traceability and transparency are fast becoming key business trends in the natural products industry. From produce to teas to herbal supplements, companies are stepping up and providing consumers with information that had been kept secret in the past.



The Vegan Option

Veganism has gained exposure thanks to celebrities like Ellen DeGeneres and "Biggest Loser" coach Bob Harper. With the trend going mainstream, expect to see an increase in new and innovative vegan products being sold in the conventional channel.

Daiya vegan cheese was released in 2009 and has already experienced overwhelming success in both the natural and conventional retail channels, an impressive feat given that Daiya only has two products and they may be difficult to find in conventional stores. Daiya is also being used in a wide variety of other popular products such as Tofurky frozen pizzas, Amy's mac and cheese, and Gardein frozen foods.

Gardein meat substitute products have sky rocketed in popularity. Although they still trail behind the longtime established brands, their sales are notable for a relatively new brand. Until the recent introduction of new meat substitutes, vegans were underserved by products that contained egg and/or dairy. Hopefully the success of new vegan varieties will make manufacturers realize that meat substitutes without animal products taste good and resonate with the consumer.

These new products have an appeal that reaches beyond the strict vegan consumer. Their taste, texture and overall quality are setting new standards, similar to the evolution of gluten-free products years ago. The new vegan products are selling very well on their own, but there are significant opportunities for co-branding with other new and established vegan and vegetarian frozen/refrigerated meals.

Gluten Free Expands to Allergen Free

The Gluten Free trend shows no signs of slowing down over the next year. On the contrary, we are seeing the trend expand as gluten free products are also addressing sensitivity to other common food allergens such as soy, dairy and corn.

The number of Americans diagnosed with celiac disease continues to rise year after year, and still many people remain undiagnosed. In addition, the malabsorption of gluten (also, casein from dairy) is recognized in Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that 1 in every 110 children has ASD. Thankfully, the number and variety of gluten free and allergen free products is greater than ever before, giving people suffering from these conditions a means for managing their symptoms. Third party certification is vital for the continued growth and success for gluten free and allergen free products, particularly because the problems cross contamination could cause for consumers and manufacturers are potentially devastating. Over the next year we expect to see an increase in the number of allergen free dedicated manufacturer facilities as a result of the stringent testing required by third party certifiers.

Stevia – Oh the Possibilities!

Over the last year stevia has received much attention in the table top sweetener and beverage arenas. Stevia is now poised to take over the diet snack and dessert segments as well. Yogurt, ice cream and baked goods are a clear next step for this amazing sweetener. Conventional manufactures have big plans for stevia, so expect to see many exciting new product launches over the next year. Additionally, watch for other new sweeteners to hit the market, including Lo Han and Yacon.

Anti-Stress and Relaxation Formulas

In stark contrast to the energy drink phenomenon of the past several years, drinks aimed at reducing stress and promoting relaxation are now taking hold, particularly in the areas of functional beverages, ready-to-drink teas, and drink mixes. Consumers seem to be drawn to these beverages for a variety of reasons, including as a healthier alternative to alcohol and a means of shedding some of that stress from our hectic lifestyles!



Superfruits, Sweet Potatoes, and Supergrains

Maqui Berry - This berry has the potential to become the next acai. In fact, it's said to contain several times the antioxidants of acai. Maqui comes from the Patagonia region of Chile and has been used traditionally for general vitality, endurance and immunity. Because of its high antioxidant profile, Maqui is believed to assist the body's detoxification ability during weight loss which, in turn could greatly increase the effectiveness of any weight loss program. Expect to see this ingredient popping up more and more in weight loss products over the next year.

Capuacu - This fruit comes from the Amazon rain forest and has long been a staple for the indigenous people of that region. Capuacu is rich in Vitamins A, B, C, niacin and polyphenols. The seed has a sweet and sour taste that is pleasant and unique. It can also be used topically as a skin emollient and has a variety of potential applications in skincare.

Yumberry - This little red berry from China looks a little like a raspberry and has a sour taste that is similar to cranberry or pomegranate. Yumberrries are loaded with oligomeric proanthocyanidins (OPC), which are the antioxidants that give the berries their vibrant red color. OPCs are thought to fight free radicals and protect the heart by reducing high blood pressure and cholesterol.

Coconuts

When life gives you coconuts, make, well, practically anything. In addition to the highly successful coconut water products, the coconut is being used to make sugar, dietary fiber, baking flour, garden soil supplements, and a myriad of non-dairy products. With the added health benefits and naturally occurring electrolytes, we continue to see this as a lasting trend.

Sweet Potatoes

Sweet potatoes and products made with sweet potatoes are on the rise. Not only are sweet potatoes a nutritional powerhouse but they are also used as an alternative to white potatoes for people with diabetes and people who want to eat low on the glycemic index. With diabetes on the rise, this trend is poised for continued growth in the coming year.

Super Grains

Quinoa already has a presence in natural stores and is found in products like pasta and cereal. Expect it to become more widely available and used as this year goes on. One of the major benefits of this particular grain is that it contains all 9 amino acids and provides a good vegetarian/vegan source of protein.

Vitamins and Supplements

Got Immunity?

The recent flu scare still weighs heavily on consumers' minds, so products that give the immune system an extra boost will continue to do well. Look for growth in all vitamin and supplement products that boost immunity, including medicinal mushrooms, echinacea, astragalus, and prebiotic and probiotic foods.



Chia Seed – The New Flax

Not only is chia rich in omega 3 essential fatty acids, but it also contains a very high percentage of fiber and protein. Concerns over depleting deep water fish stores and GMO contamination of flax seeds will likely add to chia's success over the next year.

Vitamin D

Over the past couple years research surrounding vitamin D has exploded. Consumers are looking to correct their newly diagnosed deficiencies. Look for vitamin D supplement combination formulas and new functional food and beverage products that highlight added vitamin D.