5 Trends and Ingredients
Redefining the Beverage Aisle
Today’s beverage aisle is filled with products that appeal to health- and label-conscious consumers. Bottled and canned waters, sports drinks, coffees, teas and dairy drinks now occupy grocery store space once dominated by high-calorie carbonated sodas. Interest in nutritious food and drink is helping to drive this change, while next-generation sweeteners, texturizers and other ingredients are helping formulators deliver products that taste as good as their labels look.

Beverage aisle trends

1. **Reduced sugar.** Next-generation sweeteners are helping manufacturers reduce or replace sugar in a wide variety of beverages. While many consumers are unclear about alternative sweeteners, data from Innova Market Insights shows that stevia use grew dramatically between 2013 and 2017: by 17% in North America, 21% in Australasia and 37% in Latin America.

Cargill’s sweetener portfolio can help beverage manufacturers meet consumer demand for great-tasting, lower-sugar beverages. EverSweet™ stevia sweetener and ViaTech® stevia leaf extract can help reduce sugar by 50-100%. Zerose® erythritol, a zero-calorie bulk sweetener, partners well with high-intensity sweeteners to reduce any off-notes.

2. **Natural, non-GMO and organic.** According to Beverage Industry Magazine’s 2018 product development outlook, 62% of U.S. consumers are seeking natural beverage options. The rapid growth of organic beverages (with a 10.5% sales gain in 2017, to $5.9 billion), together with the decline in soft drinks and sodas, is helping to drive this trend.

Organic beverages are now the third-largest organic category, behind fresh produce and dairy/eggs. Fresh juices are the main driver of organic beverages. Organic non-dairy alternatives also gained popularity in 2017.

3. **Cold-brew coffee and tea.** Consumer interest in instant energy is driving the ready-to-drink tea and coffee market. Sales soared to $75 billion in 2016, and are expected to reach a 5.6% Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) by 2024. Tea’s healthful reputation is contributing to its strong growth. Ready-to-drink (RTD) coffee beverages are finding greater acceptance in the marketplace, thanks to improved taste and new flavors.
4. **Trendy flavors.** Many of today’s consumers are looking for more from their beverages. Herbs, spices, exotic fruits, and even savory vegetables are desired tastes.

5. **Beverages with benefits.** Interest in functional beverages – non-alcoholic drinks that provide health benefits and contain vitamins, amino acids or other non-traditional ingredients – is on the rise. This market was valued at $26.2 billion in 2015, and is expected to grow at a CAGR of 6.5% between 2018 and 2023.³

Protein drinks are popular, especially those made with plant-based proteins. Many beverage makers appreciate the functionality of pea protein. It’s more soluble than most other botanical proteins, making it easier to keep in suspension. PURIS™ pea protein is also non-GMO*, vegan-friendly and delivers a proven, consumer-pleasing flavor profile.

There is also interest in fiber-enhanced beverages. Cargill's Oligo-Fiber® chicory root fiber blends invisibly into solutions, making it a great choice for beverages. This prebiotic soluble fiber has been shown to support digestive health and enhances dietary calcium absorption. It’s also mildly sweet and can act as a bulking agent. These characteristics can help formulators meet their sugar-reduction goals.

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* There is no single definition of “non-GMO” in the USA. Contact Cargill for source and processing information.

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