



SWEET FEAT:

How EverSweet® brings together trends, taste and economics

In today's dynamic marketplace, beverage brands are grappling with a trio of critical challenges: Health-conscious consumers are scrutinizing product labels, high ingredient costs are squeezing margins, and corporate Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) goals have elevated sustainability considerations. Against this backdrop, brands are reevaluating their sweetener choices – and innovative solutions like EverSweet® stevia sweetener are rising to the top.

“Sugars and artificial sweeteners were once the go-to for beverage brands, but the use of low-/no-calorie, plant-based sweeteners is rising to meet consumer demand for alternatives.” says Amber McKinzie, Cargill Marketing Manager–Sugar Reduction and Sweeteners. The shift has come as brands attempt to balance a myriad of factors, including taste, label expectations, sugar content, cost-in-use and sustainability.

Today's beverage formulation may seem more complicated, but Cargill's sweetener toolbox – led by EverSweet – is up for the challenge. “When we partnered with dsm-firmenich to commercialize EverSweet, we knew we had something special,” recalls Wade Schmelzer, Principal Scientist at Cargill. “Now five years in, beverage developers are seeing its value, too.”

EverSweet is different from other stevia products on the market. It's produced through the time-tested practice of fermentation, enabling Cargill's researchers to gain access to the stevia plant's best-tasting sweet compounds – Reb M and Reb D. That pioneering approach to ingredient production brought several advantages, including supply security, sustainability benefits and competitive cost-in-use numbers.



Sweet savings

It's the last point that McKinzie says is top-of-mind for many brands: “High ingredient costs – including caloric sweeteners – are impacting margins and sales of established brands, prompting formulators to explore alternatives for new product development and even consider tweaking formulas.”

Enter EverSweet. Thanks to its higher sweetness potency and great taste, this zero-calorie sweetener changes the game in beverage formulations. “With EverSweet, you get a cleaner, sweeter taste, with an upfront sweetness that's closer to sugar,” Schmelzer explains. “Compare it to a Reb A-based stevia product, and the difference in off-notes and sweetness perception is night and day.”

That great taste gives EverSweet a decisive edge over other stevia products, offering unparalleled versatility in application, minimizing the need for flavor modifiers and delivering deeper sugar reductions than were possible before. As a result, EverSweet delivers compelling cost-in-use numbers compared to leaf-based stevia products. The potential savings are even higher when compared to full-calorie sweeteners, where relatively small reductions in sugar can add up to noticeable cost-in-use benefits.

Sustainable solution

Still, McKinzie acknowledges that sweetener selection isn't just a dollars-and-cents decision. Evolving consumer attitudes around managing sugar and calorie intake – as well as artificial avoidance – all loom large. And more recently, sustainability considerations have been entering the conversation.

Many beverage manufacturers have set bold sustainability goals around water, land use and carbon emissions. Ingredient sourcing will play a major role in their ability to meet those targets.

“Agronomic production consumes significant amounts of land and water – whether for sugar beets or stevia,” McKinzie notes. “In contrast, we’ve found that fermentation requires fewer resources and also reduces greenhouse gas emissions.”

Cargill’s independently verified Life Cycle assessment (LCA) supports these claims, showing EverSweet’s reduced CO₂ emissions, land-use-related impacts and water footprint compared to sugar and other stevia products. For brands buying carbon credits, replacing an ingredient like sugar with EverSweet can reduce the carbon footprint of their supply chain, offering the potential to avoid greenhouse gas reduction costs, in addition to formula savings.

Model metrics

To help customers quantify the sweetener’s full value, Cargill developed a model to compare EverSweet’s economic and environmental impacts with other sweetening solutions. Initially focused only on cost-in-use, customer feedback led to an integrated approach.

“By combining cost-in-use and sustainability metrics, we provide a comprehensive, quantifiable view of EverSweet’s impact,” McKinzie explains. Brand teams

can collaborate with their Cargill representatives to compare their current sweeteners with EverSweet, adjusting sugar-reduction targets to gauge potential savings for different scenarios in real time. The model considers current sweetener prices, shipping costs, supply chain sustainability impact, carbon offsets and other factors to assist in decision-making.

“With EverSweet – or any high-intensity sweetener – it’s important to think in terms of sucrose equivalent values and compare total cost-in-use,” McKinzie notes. “Compared to full-calorie sweeteners, only a fraction is needed to deliver similar sweetness. Customers are often surprised by the projected impact in shipping and storage alone.”

It’s stevia’s time

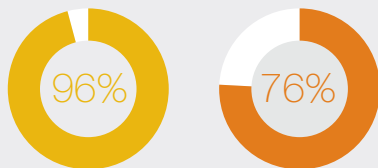
For all the benefits, McKinzie admits the elephant in the room is taste. “If a beverage doesn’t deliver on taste, all bets are off,” she acknowledges. However, the steady stream of new product launches suggest stevia has overcome this final hurdle, too. EverSweet is Cargill’s next-generation stevia, comprised of the sweetest and best-tasting steviol glycosides, Reb M and Reb D. Fermentation allows for production of commercial volumes, consistent supply, affordability... and impressive sustainability advantages.

EverSweet sustainability advantages

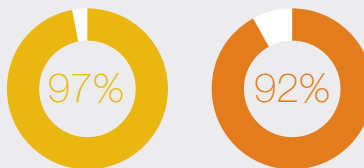
● vs. sugar

● vs. bioconverted Reb M

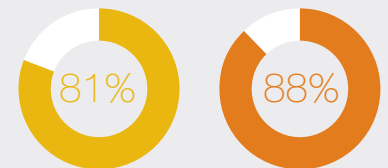
Lower land-use related impacts



Lower water footprint



Reduction in carbon footprint



Learn more about the results of our EverSweet Life Cycle Assessment.

Since 2019 (the year EverSweet hit the market), beverages made with stevia have accounted for 16% of all product launches –

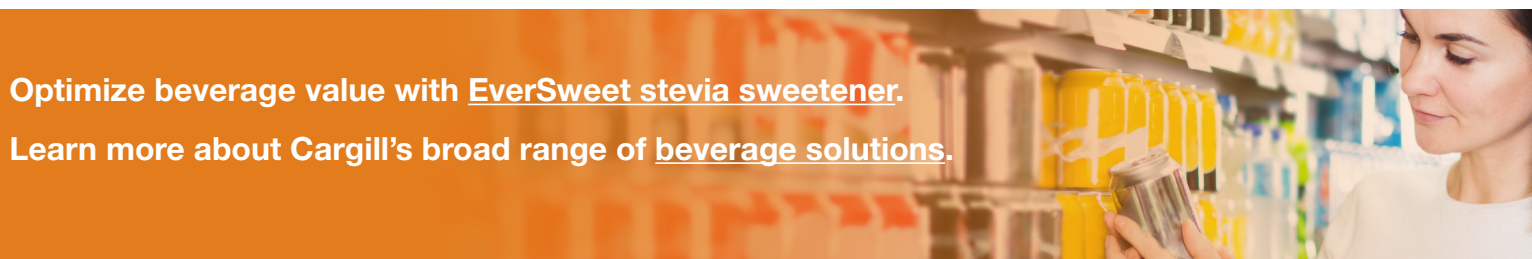
on par with sucralose and just 3 percentage points behind granulated sugar.

Its flexibility in formulation is evident, too, as the sweetener has gained a foothold across beverage subcategories, from carbonates and sports drinks to RTD teas, energy drinks, juices and alcoholic beverages.

McKinzie envisions a day when stevia will overtake sugar as the top beverage sweetener – and she believes EverSweet holds the key as beverage brands navigate consumer demands, cost pressures and sustainability goals.

“It checks all the boxes – taste, sugar reduction, label-friendliness, security of supply, sustainability and affordable cost-in-use,” she says. “For product developers who aim to optimize value for consumers and their brands, EverSweet is the ideal choice.”

Optimize beverage value with EverSweet stevia sweetener.
Learn more about Cargill’s broad range of beverage solutions.



EverSweet is a product of Avansya, a joint venture of Cargill and dsm-firmenich.

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