

THE WHEY TO WIN THE PERFORMANCE-PRODUCT RACE

Food and beverage manufacturers who formulate with whey protein are finding they can easily deliver both nutritional value and taste. This natural dairy protein has made a flash on the US food and beverage market, with nearly 1,900 products containing whey protein introduced in the last five years, according to Mintel.¹

“Whey protein is a high-quality protein found naturally in milk,” says Alan Reed, senior vice president, US manufacturing and ingredient marketing for Dairy Management Inc. “Whey protein is a nutrient-rich ingredient, making it ideal for performance product formulations. It is an easy-to-use, highly soluble ingredient that upholds clarity.”

Whey protein remains clear at the low pH range of 2.8 to 3.5 found in high-acid beverages, such as isotonic. This attribute allows formulators to pack more protein into each beverage while maintaining clarity and mouthfeel. And because whey protein has a clean, natural taste, it is well suited for fruit-flavoured sports drinks and numerous food-product applications, including nutrition bars, yoghurts and smoothies.

Healthful attributes

Formulators can offer consumers an array of health benefits by incorporating whey protein into performance food and beverage products. Calorie for calorie, protein curbs hunger better than carbohydrates or fats.^{2,3,4} Diets higher in protein may help suppress appetite and improve perceptions of satiety and pleasure after a meal.^{3,5} And as bodybuilders know, after resistance exercise the amino acids in whey stimulate the repair and rebuilding of lean muscle necessary to support muscle recovery.⁶

“Whey protein contains essential amino acids that are needed to build new muscle and reduce muscle breakdown following exercise,” says Matt Pikosky, director of research transfer, DMI.

According to an April 2008 Mintel study, consumers are willing to pay a premium for value-added beverages – those they perceive either as contributing to their goal of promoting good health or helping them participate in a certain lifestyle.⁷



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