



Cranberries are the BEST Fall Superfood

Cranberries are a popular choice around the holidays. There might be cranberry sauce on Thanksgiving, cranberries strung together with popcorn for the Christmas tree, or a cranberry cocktail at a holiday party (yum!). While cranberries are an essential part of the holiday season, it wouldn't be a bad idea to eat them regularly as they have a number of health benefits that other foods don't. A few health benefits include:

Promotes Heart Health – Antioxidants in cranberries have been shown to help lower blood pressure, reduce inflammation, and decrease stiffness in vessels in those with heart disease.

Improves Gut Health – Studies suggest that cranberries may help gut health by reducing bile acids in the gut that link to colon and gastrointestinal cancers.

Even the Seeds are Healthy – Cranberry seeds are loaded with omega-3 fatty acids, fiber, and plant-based protein. The seeds are versatile and can be sprinkled on salads, oatmeal, or blended in a smoothie.

If you're looking to give your meals a super boost, we have the solution for you. Our **infused dried cranberries** deliver exceptional taste, vibrant color, and a boost of nutrition in various **applications**. Contact our **experts** today for customized solutions to fit your needs!



In This Issue

PAGE 1	Cranberries – The Fall Superfood
PAGE 2	Now Trending: Sustainability
PAGE 2	Supply Chain Disruptions
PAGE 3	The Trends of 2021
PAGE 3	New Salt Guidelines
PAGE 4	The Future of Innovation
PAGE 4	Application of the Month: Trail Mixes & Snacks

What's the New Normal for Supply Chains?

The global pandemic, natural disasters, infrastructure challenges, and financial disruptions have led to shipping delays, supply constraints, labor shortages, and rising costs. Unfortunately, the end does not seem to be near, but we can take steps to adapt to this 'new normal' and minimize disruptions for consumers.

An important thing to do to remain financially stable while serving consumers is establishing strategic alliances with providers and service companies. These alliances can help mitigate the risk that your supply chain gets interrupted. With strong alliances, consumers will be reassured that their raw materials or finished product will be prioritized and transported safely from point A to B.

With no end in sight for these supply chain disruptions, one of the best things we can do is accept the current reality and adjust to it. Eventually, there will be a return to inventories being built, delivery expectations being met, and costs decreasing. Until then, all we can do is adjust and take steps to minimize disruption.

Sustainability Leads 2022 Consumer Trends

Innova Market Insights' list of consumer trends for 2022 shows sustainability near the top of the list.

Market research revealed that the top two environmental actions consumers take when making food choices are reducing waste and eating in moderation. "One of the biggest shifts we are seeing is that the health of the planet is now the top concern of consumers," explained LuAnn Williams, director of global insights. "Sustainability is no longer just a Wall Street issue. It might not be the top purchase driver for all consumers, but for many, it clinches the deal when it comes to choosing between products".

Consumer interest in plant-based innovation is Innova's number two trend but is linked to interest in sustainability. When asked about their interest in plant-based innovation, consumers told Innova that they consider plant-based products to be healthier and better for the planet. Consumers crave diet variation beyond the traditional vegan and vegetarian sectors, resulting in a 59% increase in launches of new plant-based products in the past year.

At Graceland Fruit, environmental sustainability is one of our top priorities and we are committed to practices that protect the environment and our communities. Areas of focus include organic agriculture and processing, water stewardship, energy consumption, and waste reduction. Learn more about our dedication to environmental sustainability [here](#).



Trends that Topped 2021

The National Association of Convenience Stores (NACS) held its 2021 show in Chicago which highlighted a few trends that dominated 2021.

Healthy Energy Drinks

A significant driver of this basket growth is energy drinks which have become more important in the past year, especially during the morning. New energy drinks introduced at the NACS Show in Chicago featured sugar-free formulations and offered health benefits. 5 Hour Energy is introducing energy shots featuring zinc and vitamins C, D3, B12, and B5.

Familiar Snacks with a Spin

New takes on familiar snacks were also trending at the 2021 NACS show. Mars Inc. showcased their new Snicker Almond Brownie that features a brownie filling mix with chopped almonds.

Kellogg Co. showcased their Cheez-It Puff'd, a bite-size version of a Cheeze-It with an airy, puffy texture. Kellogg also showcased Pringles Scorchin' in chili lime and sour cream. "What we've experienced over the past year and a half is consumers gravitating towards established brands." explained Ami O'Keefe, senior commercial strategy manager at Kellogg Co. "I think it provided a sense of comfort in some cases. We're building on that by bringing brands into new spaces".

Data from NACS revealed that spicy is one of the top flavors in the salty snacks category. Brands have caught on to this trend as PepsiCo introduced Ruffles Flamin' Hot Cheddar Sour Cream and Beneststar Brands showed off their new Cheddar Bomb Blazin' Hot cheese snacks.

Foodservice Trends

Along with spicy flavors, unique and globally inspired flavors are at the top of the list this year. At the NACS show, Hormel Foodservice showcased their ATX-Style Breakfast Taco and displayed their fully cooked bacon and chicken products to help retailers face labor shortages. "The number one pain point for c-stores right now is labor." explained Greg Hetfield, director of sales at Hormel Foodservice. "An operator just needs to spend 30 seconds heating the bacon, and they don't need to have that skilled labor set to cook our fire braised chicken".

FDA Issues New Salt Guidelines

Heart disease is one of the country's leading causes of death. Every day, roughly 1,800 Americans die from heart disease in the U.S., and much of this can be prevented by a healthier diet.

The Food and Drug Administration released new sodium targets aimed at nudging food companies to reduce the amount of salt in processed foods. The cuts are intended to lessen Americans' sodium intake by 12% over the next two and a half years.

Americans consume about 3,400 mg of sodium a day which exceeds the recommendation of 2,300 mg a day. More than 70% of that sodium comes from packaged and prepared foods. According to the [American Heart Association](#), if Americans take steps to reduce their sodium intake, it could prevent 450,000 cases of cardiovascular disease and save around \$40 billion in health care costs.

The sodium guidelines are voluntary, but other countries have found success with this approach. The U.K. implemented a salt reduction which saw a 15% reduction in the average salt intake, resulting in lower average blood pressure. While it's unrealistic to expect a mass behavior change, a 12% reduction is a step in the right direction for reducing cardiovascular disease.

Application of the Month: Trail Mix & Snacks

The November breeze and changing leaves make for a scenic bike ride, hike, or jog. According to a RunRepeat report, exercising outdoors was the top trend of 2021 with 59% of active adults indicating they most enjoy outdoor exercise.

One of the best snacks for outdoor activities is infused dried fruit. Infused dried fruit is popular among athletes thanks to its portability, longer shelf life, resistance to heat, and of course, its nutritional level. Infused dried fruit is also versatile and performs well in a number of applications, especially trail mixes and snacks.

Elevate your **trail mixes and snacks** with **infused dried fruit** to add distinct texture, vibrant color, and authentic taste. Chat with our **experts** today to get customized solutions.

Is This the Future of Innovation?



Three years ago, Nestle USA introduced the Open Channel internal crowdsourcing initiative. Open Channel encourages employees throughout the company, regardless of job title or function, to submit and vote on ideas. Since the introduction of Open Channel, more than 4,000 ideas have been submitted, and several of those have become market successes.

Other brands have used similar tactics to foster innovation as well. Kellogg Co. hosts an annual Tiger Tank competition that solicits business ideas and rewards winners with funding and support. Kellogg Co.'s Pringles Scorchin' and Cheez-It Loaded Popcorn are product concepts of competitions like these. Another successful concept wasn't a food product, but an app update to help low-income families access nutritious foods through the U.S. Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

Ready to brainstorm new product ideas with us? Have a concept you want to explore? Need help with process improvements? With our expertise, personal service, and superior technology, we're ready to support your product portfolio. Contact our **experts** today, and let's **innovate!**



We deliver *delight.*

Graceland Fruit, Inc. is a leading producer and global distributor of premium quality dried fruit ingredients for the food industry. Our exceptional product and service performance make it easy for innovative food manufacturers and providers to create delicious, on-trend products to surprise and delight their consumers.

GracelandFruit.com © Graceland Fruit, Inc. All Rights Reserved

Subscribe to Bits 'n Pieces [HERE](#)