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## 2022 Trends in the Food Processing Industry

As 2022 approaches, we can evaluate the lessons learned in 2021 and look ahead to see what trends to keep an eye on in the new year. A few trends you can expect to see in 2022 include:

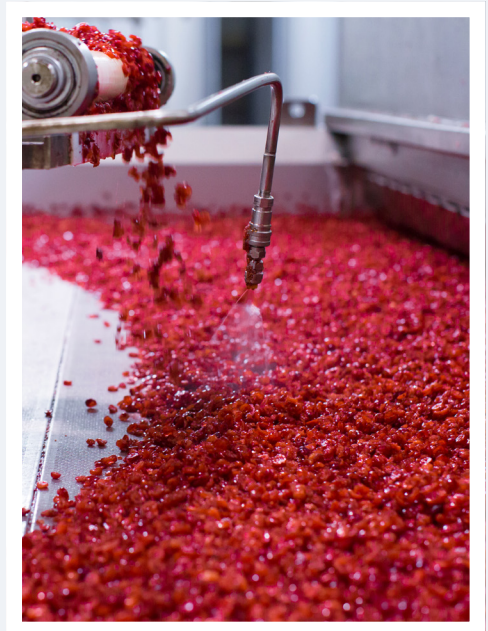
**Supply Chain Struggles** – Supply chain delays have affected nearly every business as they struggle to deliver products to consumers. As a result, there have been unpredictable shortages in resources. Luckily, the supply chain issues are most likely short-term and should be resolved in the next 12 months or so.

**Inflation** – Prices are rising all around us and the inflation rate is higher than we've seen in a long time. This has the potential to change market dynamics in significant ways. Processors spend more to manufacture products, meaning consumers pay more for the product.

**Labor Shortages** – Lack of workers creates bottlenecks in production, contributing to supply chain struggles. This problem can be solved by paying higher wages but at the expense of higher costs for the consumer.

**Automation** – Related to labor shortages, automation is coming to the forefront to help combat this challenge. Keep in mind that automation doesn't result in layoffs and isn't replacing anyone; it's filling in the gaps where human labor isn't available.

Read more about these trends [here](#).



## Ports Will Likely Remain Clogged Until Mid-2022

Clogged ports, supply chain disruptions, and rising inflation are likely here to stay until mid-2022. However, increasing mobility could lead to increased spending in categories that saw slowdowns during the first waves of the pandemic.

Nik Modi, president of client engagement at [IRI](#), predicts inflation will remain at 6-7% for food and 7-8% for beverages through 2022.

Modi also predicts that supply chain disruptions, especially at the ports, will continue through at least mid-2022. It's predicted that, in the best-case scenario, the ports will "hit the reset button in early summer of 2022," at which point the congestion will clear, and the supply chain will normalize.

To counter these challenges, Modi suggests that brands and stores focus on attractive price points with a wide variety of assortment to retain consumers and diversify product and service selection to meet a range of demands.

## Texture and Consumer Satisfaction

As brands look to enhance product appeal, many turn to texture to improve the sensory experience and promote an indulgent image of their product.

Texture heightens the sensory experience and can create a sense of indulgence, making it a valuable tool in product development and marketing. In a 2019 report from Innova Market Insights, 7 in 10 global consumers indicated that texture gave food and beverages a more interesting experience. 56% of consumers aged 26-35 reported they cared more about texture experience than ingredients and 37% of consumers over 55 expressed similar interest.

Brands are keeping up with the texture trend. General Mills Convenience, Minneapolis, extended their Muddy Buddies line by introducing a new Muddy Buddy that features crunchy pretzel bites with a powdery coating and Mars Wrigley, Newark, introduced a M&M's crunchy cookie candy. In the dairy category, terms such as "smooth," "thick," and "creamy" are increasingly used for milk drinks, yogurt, and cheese.

Chewy, moist, and dense, our [infused dried fruits](#) are perfect for adding texture to a wide range of [applications](#). Our infused dried fruits perform exceptionally in [baked goods](#), [cereals](#), [salads](#), [trail mixes](#), and more by adding a moist and chewy texture. Looking to add a bit of texture in your products? Contact our [experts](#) today!



## Tackling Food Waste

**Around 30–40% of U.S. food supply goes to waste, and over 38 million Americans experience food insecurity. While consumers do play a role in food waste, food producers and distributors can also take steps to reduce food waste.**

There are a lot of labels on food products. Between “best by,” “sell by,” and “use by,” consumers can get confused and toss out food that is still good. A study showed that 46% of consumers understand “best if used by” labels and 24% understand “use by” labels. These results suggest that as long as consumers continue to misunderstand these food labels, expiration dates are ineffective at reducing waste. Researchers are currently working on packaging technology that uses color-changing sensors to detect expired food. Researchers at the University of South Wales in Sydney are working on sensors that turn blue when food is fresh, purple when the food is starting to turn, and red when it’s not safe to eat.

Another way to reduce food waste is by upcycling, which is a process that creates new products out of imperfect ingredients. Upcycling is gaining popularity among consumers as 8 in 10 consumers reported that they would look for upcycled food products on the shelves. Additionally, adding an Upcycled Certified food label increases consumers’ willingness to pay, making upcycled foods beneficial for the environment and company profits.

Digital systems such as artificial intelligence can also help reduce food waste. Traceability technologies can help companies pinpoint which products were impacted to prevent safe foods from ending up in landfills if a recall occurs. In addition to reducing food waste, artificial intelligence can also optimize operations, track food products along the supply chain, and build trust & transparency with consumers.

## U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council’s MAP Funding Doubles for 2022

**The U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council’s (USHBC) funding for its 2022 Market Access Program (MAP) will nearly double to \$597,810 from \$299,195 in 2021.**

USHBC will use this new funding to expand promotions of fresh, frozen, and dried blueberries in targeted export markets throughout Asia. “We’ve been extremely successful in choosing new markets for U.S. highbush blueberries, particularly China and Southeast Asia, and the additional funding will allow us to continue to grow our program and develop additional new international markets,” said Alicia Adler, USHBC vice president of global business development. For more information about USHBC, click [here](#).

**blue**  
**berries**  
**Inspiring Possibilities™**  
U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council



## Application of the Month: Nutrition & Snack Bars

This month, we're highlighting our exceptional infused dried fruit in **nutrition and snack bars**!

Our nutrient-rich infused dried fruits elevate nutrition and snack bars as they are authentically delicious, naturally nutritious, and distinctively vibrant. Consumers prefer ingredients that are real, simple, and wholesome as they become more health conscious and our **infused dried fruit** hits the spot!

Are you ready to add a pop of color and intense flavor to your nutrition and snack bars? Talk to our **experts** today!



## Is Nutrient Density the New Marketing Tool?

According to Julian Mellentin, director of New Nutrition Business, nutrient density could increase in use as a marketing tool over the next five years. The term "nutrient-dense" has been around for nearly 20 years but has gained popularity as it is used frequently in the new U.S. Dietary Guidelines.

Nutrient-dense foods and beverages are packed with vitamins, minerals, and other health-promoting components. They also have little to no added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium.

One advantage of this terminology for marketers is the ambiguity it presents. There is no single agreed definition. Consumers learn about nutrient density through social media and can lean towards the definition they find most appealing. Examples of nutrient-dense foods include plants, grains, nuts, and seeds.

This goes to show that consumers want nutrient-rich and authentic foods and beverages and our **infused dried fruits** hit that mark. At Graceland Fruit, we use high-quality fruit from farmers that use ethical and sustainable practices, some of our products are straight from our backyard. Does it get any more authentic than that?!

Our infused dried fruit is packed with nutrients and antioxidants that have several health-promoting components that give consumers the boost of nutrition they need. Looking to add a health halo around your products? Contact our **experts** today!



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.

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