# Consumer Trends: Shoppers Motivated by Taste and Price

WASHINGTON (Corn Refiners Association) — Sweetener360, a new, custom research study completed in part by Nielsen and Mintel Consulting and commissioned by the Corn Refiners Association, revealed the thoughts and actions of six distinct consumer lifestyle segments and answered the following questions:

- What are the top motivators for buying specific foods and beverages?
- Do consumers who say they actively pursue a healthy lifestyle and avoid total sugars still buy sweetened products at the same rate as other segments?
- Are consumers avoiding specific sweeteners, total sugars or calories?

**Top Motivators of F&B Purchases**

The study found that while more than half of consumers say they are actively pursuing a healthy lifestyle and avoiding sugars, it doesn't translate to their purchase decisions. Specifically, three quarters of consumers are more motivated to purchase a food and beverage because it is: "good tasting" (90 percent), "good value for the price" (82 percent), "a price I can afford" (80 percent) and "something I know my kids will like" (79 percent).

"People can say all day long which ingredients they want or don't, but it isn't proving out at the checkout," said Marty Concannon, founder and managing director, Lafayette Associates. "In the end, taste and price matter more. Businesses need to recognize this before investing in expensive formulation and marketing efforts based on the changing winds of consumer sentiment alone."

**Actual Behavior Compared to Lifestyle Aspirations**

Additionally, the study revealed six distinct lifestyle segments based on social factors such as income, nutritional goals and attitudes toward sweeteners. Shopping habits were then tracked and analyzed across 15 high-volume food and beverage categories, including carbonated soft drinks, bread and yogurt. Further, the study found that regardless of whether or not consumers in each segment identify themselves as taste-driven, budget-constrained, time-strapped or health conscious, all of the six segments buy sweetened food and beverage products in numbers reflective of their proportion of the total population.

"Sweetener360 reinforces again, that despite what they say all consumers from the junk food junkie to the self-proclaimed health nut continue to buy sweetened food and beverages," said Sara Martens, consumer research expert and vice president of The MSR Group. "All consumer segments will continue to eat sweetened products.

What varies is how much each segment is proactively managing total sugar consumption across their entire diet of food and beverage choices."

**What Consumers Avoid Most**

With regard to avoidance of specific sweeteners, total sugars or calories, the study found that 67 percent of consumers agree that in order to live a healthy lifestyle, moderation is more important than sweetening ingredients.

Conducted in 2013, the 30-question survey was designed to expand on and benchmark previous sweetener research studies conducted since 2010.

Consistent with prior studies [1], the Sweetener360 found that 75 percent of consumers say they regularly or occasionally read the nutritional information or list of ingredients on food and beverage labels and packages. Among label readers, four times as many consumers say they read nutrition labels to avoid total sugars rather than the specific ingredient high fructose corn syrup (HFCS).

For more information, visit http://www.CornNaturally.com/Sweetener-360 [2].

*About the Corn Refiners Association*

*The Corn Refiners Association is the national trade association representing the corn refining (wet milling) industry of the United States. CRA and its predecessors have served this important segment of American agribusiness since 1913. To learn more, visit* www.CornNaturally.com *[3].*

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