# Americans Adore Ranch Dressing

The NPD Group

Chicago — Ranch flavor is the Swiss Army knife of salad dressings. It dresses salads, gets kids to eat their vegetables, and adds oomph as an ingredient; all reasons why it is the top ready-to-use dressing flavor shipped to foodservice outlets, reports The NPD Group [1], a leading global information company. Ranch holds double the share of dollars and units shipped than blue cheese dressing, which holds the number two spot in the ready-to-use salad dressing category.

Besides holding the number one spot, ranch dressing sales are growing in an otherwise flat category. Dollar sales volume of ranch flavor salad dressing shipped through broadline foodservice distributors to total foodservice outlets was up three percent while total salad dressing dollar sales were flat in the year ending December 2013 compared to year ago, according to NPD's SupplyTrack® [2], which is the first monthly tracking service that codes, aggregates, and tracks every product shipped from a critical mass of leading broadline distributors to each of their foodservice operators. Ranch chipotle salad dressing, a blending of two popular flavors, netted double-digit gains in dollars and units shipped.

Other double-digit dressing flavor gainers in terms of dollar volume shipped to eating and drinking establishments, lodging and other foodservice outlets, were honey Dijon, Asian peanut, and several vinaigrette flavors. Green Goddess dressing, a creamy flavor that has been around since the 1920s but recently became more available at foodservice, tripled in unit and dollar volumes shipped last year, reports NPD's SupplyTrack.

Eating and drinking establishments represent the largest dollar and unit share of ready-to-use salad dressing and lodging follows in share. Flavored salad dressing mix, which holds a single-digit share of the category's dollars and units shipped, increased by 4 percent and is primarily used at recreation foodservice outlets.

"Salad dressing is a good example of how a staple item can extend beyond its traditional use. Ranch dressing has become a mainstay not just for salads but also for wings and other dishes as well," says Annie Roberts, vice president, NPD SupplyTrack. "Understanding the salad dressing flavors that are growing or declining will provide distributors, manufacturers, and operators with the detail and insights needed to build a more profitable category."

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