Consumer Trends: Healthier Frozen Treats On the Rise

Packaged Facts

ROCKVILLE, Md. (PRNewswire) — Considering that 90 percent of all U.S. households purchase frozen desserts, the consumption of these products is as American as apple pie-flavored ice cream. Previous generations of ice cream advertising stuck to the same themes: fun, indulgence and nostalgia. However, these days health has become a prominent addition to the mix, according to *Ice Cream and Frozen Desserts in the U.S.: Opportunities in Retail and Foodservice, 8th Edition* by market research company Packaged Facts.

Traditionally, consumers often perceive regular ice cream as having questionable nutritional value because of its high fat and high sugar content. However over the years, marketers have addressed consumers' health and nutrition concerns by introducing numerous healthier frozen desserts, including low-fat, fat-free, and no-sugar-added formulations; dairy-free alternatives; and all- natural fruit sorbets and ices. Such efforts will continue to reinvigorate the mature, but still growing $26 billion market for ice cream and frozen desserts.

Besides companies that specialize in healthier frozen desserts, most major marketers of ice cream and frozen desserts have at least one product line positioned on the basis of its nutritional profile. Frozen yogurt historically was positioned as a lower fat alternative to ice cream. Over the past few years, frozen yogurt marketers and foodservice chains have been touting the probiotic value of their products' live and active cultures. The newest additions to the frozen desserts spectrum—frozen Greek yogurts—are being positioned as containing a high protein content as well as probiotic value. Greek-style products are ideal for frozen yogurt consumers, who are exceptionally health-conscious and drawn to the increased protein in these products as well as to their special flavor, notes Packaged Facts research director David Sprinkle.

The move toward healthier frozen desserts has also lead to new flavor trends, namely the rising popularity of coconut-flavored products. A "health halo" surrounds coconut and coconut products, as coconut is acknowledged for its inherent nutritional properties as well as its potential as a substitute for sweeteners. Another big part of the growing appeal of coconut has been consumers' increasing interest in world cuisine, including that from the tropical locales.

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