



Healthy focus

Increasing demand for healthier baked products means a greater focus from bakers on functional ingredients. Anne Bruce reports

A COUPLE OF decades ago you might have gone to a bakery to seek out a sugar rush and forget the diet, but today's consumer has upped the ante.

Yes, they want the indulgence of a bakery treat, but they don't want to compromise on health, and so they are increasingly selecting 'healthier' products.

Bakery giant Greggs, for example, reported that in the six months to July, 2016, more than 10% of its sales came from healthier products, and it recently launched a lower-fat sourdough pasty.

In fact, anything from gluten-free white bread to dairy-free éclairs, vitamin D-enhanced sandwiches or sugar-free cupcakes, as well as reduced salt or enhanced protein options, is on the menu in this new health-focused era of bakery.

◆ **Carl Smith,**
head of
innovations at
**International
Taste Solutions**

And while some bakers may find it a strange turn of events, for others it's the best thing since sliced bread to happen to the baking industry, with healthy margins on offer alongside healthy products.

Innovation's golden age

Indeed, the industry is seeing something of a golden age of innovation, with major ingredients suppliers opening new product development & testing centres and new and unexpected bakery sub-categories emerging.

Gary Tucker, head of bakery & cereals processing at research body Campden BRI, says that sourdough fermentation, as well as malting and sprouting of grains are currently generating fresh interest because both offer improvements in the nutrient profile of ingredients, as well as

functional 'clean label' benefits that can replace some of the additives.

The use of ancient grains is becoming more mainstream, he says, with grains and pseudocereals such as quinoa, amaranth, buckwheat and ancient wheat cultivars, such as spelt and emmer, gaining popularity. The nutrient density, as well as their gluten-free status, make these grains attractive.

Meanwhile, ingredients firm Cornelius says new products such as cleaner-label, fat-reduced content, organic and gluten-free breads are replacing the traditional versions that once dominated the industry. Gareth Clark, bakery and meat sales manager, says that consumer focus has shifted to the quality of ingredients with more emphasis on local sourcing and traceability. "As a result, we are seeing continuing ingredients innovation by our principal partners and a drive to



add functionality, taste and texture benefits to their products," he says.

Most recently, Cornelius teamed up with New Holland Extraction, which produces Bettergerm, a high-quality, 100% British defatted wheat germ. The company says the brand contains 30% protein, 14% fibre and many nutritional vitamins, minerals and healthy oils and is suitable for use in bakery and snack products. Bettergerm is made from the heart of the wheat grain and is produced through a unique process, says Cornelius, which retains the natural goodness and flavour of the wheat germ, but creates a product that is virtually fat-free, with an increased shelf-life of 12 months.

On the new ingredients front, there are several innovative techniques coming through, such as using alginate/oil emulsions to reduce fat content in baked products, he says. The use of natural salt replacers, such as seaweed, is gaining popularity. Low carbohydrate or high protein is another key focus area and sugar replacement with inulin materials is of interest to the cake sector.

Meanwhile, health concerns and the growth of the gluten-free sector are also fuelling demand for flours and mixes from cereals such as spelt, barley and rye, as well as pulse origins.

A challenge with bakery ingredient replacement is loss of functionality, he says. "Sugar, for example, has at least seven functions in cakes – from batter viscosity control through to mould-free shelf-life. Hence the need arises to introduce one or more additional ingredients to replace the lost functionality."

All around, suppliers are ramping up their ingredients development infrastructure in line with consumer demands for more nutritional bakery items. Bakery supplier Puratos UK has opened one of the most recent new product development centres, a \$1.27m site at its UK Fringford Mill in Oxfordshire. Julian Lewis, Puratos UK managing director, says the opening

◆ Greggs' lower-fat sourdough pasty



will mean that Puratos, which invented the first bread improver in 1953, is ready for the latest challenges facing the industry.

Meanwhile, ingredients supplier AB Mauri's Centre of Excellence in Corby, Northamptonshire was opened in November 2015. Customers use the centre to do anything from formulate gluten-free products, reduce sugar content, replace allergens or enhance shelf-life. Andy Pollard, managing director UK and Ireland at AB Mauri, says that, previously, a product might have taken 18 months to come to fruition, but can now be created on-site in a matter of weeks or even days.

Alternatives

Marta Comas, marketing manager at Newbury-based International Taste Solutions (ITS) says the company's core expertise is in flavourings, but it is

diversifying to offer solutions for sugar, salt and fat reduction, in line with market trends.

Its best-sellers in this area are a natural sugar reduction sweetener and a masking solution to allow extra protein to be added to products, including flapjacks and muffins, without affecting the texture. These are selling well in the industrial bakery sector she says, and a salt reduction product which adds sour notes is also a big seller.

ITS believes that future growth in the baking industry will be driven by sports nutrition and added-value snacking products. Comas says: "The main challenge is to help our customers launch really indulgent products which are healthy and clean label too." Products that help improve the keeping qualities of clean-label products are also in demand, she tells *British Baker*.

Meanwhile, leading plant bakery Warburtons is running a three-year project to March 2019 with the Canadian International Grains institute on pulse flours. The research will see breads, rolls, crumpets, sandwich thins and tortillas made using flours milled from different pulse types such as yellow peas, red and green lentils, chickpeas and navy beans.



"WITH THE NEW CENTRE PURATOS IS READY FOR THE CHALLENGES FACING THE INDUSTRY"

JULIAN LEWIS, MANAGING DIRECTOR, PURATOS UK