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Food trends point to simpler eating, organic opportunities

December 6, 2019

Simpler eating, which includes organic choices as well as several other close-to-the-farm options, is expected to be one of the top food trends of 2020.

It's that time of the year when a host of "experts" reveal their food trends for 2020. Many of the forecasters have touted a continuation of the back-to-basics movement that has been ongoing for most of the past decade.

The nation's top organics-first retailer, Amazon's Whole Foods, has published its food trends list for the past several years and it comes as no surprise that its 2020 version is highlighted with many items that fit that sustainable food niche. It has predicted that organics for kids will continue to gain traction as food brands will expand their offerings to supply healthier, organic versions of nostalgic foods. Although Whole Foods acknowledges this isn't a new trend, it believes these products will increase in popularity and availability in 2020. "The brands are bridging the gap from old-school basic kids' menus and taking more sophisticated younger palates into consideration," according to the Whole Foods press release announcing its trend list.

Regenerative agriculture is another trend the retailer touts, which Whole Foods defines as farming practices "that restore degraded soil, improve biodiversity and increase carbon capture to create long-lasting environmental benefits." This basically defines organic farming, giving it a new name. Whole Foods said some of the larger food companies in the country, including General Mills, are investing resources in developing and researching the impact of regenerative agriculture. "We recognize that our biggest opportunity to drive positive impact for the planet we all share lies within our own supply chain," said Jeff Harmening, chairman and chief executive officer of General Mills.

Whole Foods is also singling out flavors from west Africa as being popular next year. Tomatoes, onions and chili peppers are a common base for many west African dishes, according to Whole Foods, and “peanuts, ginger and lemongrass are all common additions.”

The retailer pointed to a couple of other trends as well, including refrigerated single-serve packaged goods to fill the grab-and-go and snacking tendency of today’s shopper. The continued rise in plant-based foods is also a trend that Whole Foods is predicting, with many different base products being utilized, including grains, mung beans, hempseed, pumpkin, avocado and watermelon seed. Whole Foods predicts the plant-based movement will continue to boom with the market for meat substitutes expected to hit \$2.5 billion by 2023.

Along this same line, Whole Foods expects there to be more blended products as food makers offer consumers healthier choices by adding plant-based ingredients to meat products.

Another retailers, Waitrose of Great Britain, also recently released a report on food and drink trends for 2019-20. On the top of its list was also “simpler eating,” as it noted that consumers are opting for uncomplicated meals with fewer ingredients. The retailer also predicted more cooking at home for its customers, less salt being utilized and eating fewer servings of meat.

Innova Market Insights pointed to several trends that work well with increased consumption of organic fruits and vegetables. It noted that consumers are much more interested than they once were in the story behind the food. They want to learn more about how the food was produced.

The market research firm also believes plant-based innovation in food and beverages will continue to flourish as a result of consumer interest in health and sustainability and ethics, which ties into the broader consumer lifestyle trend toward cleaner living.

The researcher says consumers increasingly expect companies to invest in sustainability efforts and reduce food waste. In concert with some of the other forecasters, Innova’s report said there is increased demand for nutritious foods that are easy to prepare, convenient and portable.

One last piece of evidence about the growth of organics is new research made available by Market Study Report LLC, a Delaware company that prepares and offers research reports on a wide variety of topics. This year it has added new research on the rise of organic vegetables. It claims that its detailed analysis of this business space is inclusive of the trends, competitive landscape and the market size. “The report on the organic vegetables market pertains to a collective synopsis of the estimations of this business space as well as an analysis of its segmentation. The report exhibits the organic vegetables market to evolve as one of most lucrative verticals, accumulating immense remuneration by the end of the estimated duration, recording a commendable growth rate over the estimated timespan. The expansion opportunities prevalent in this business followed by the industry’s geographical expanse have also been mentioned in the report.”

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