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Industry Viewpoint: New year, new (and returning) trends

By

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The new year has forever been a time for resolutions, new beginnings and lifestyle changes. 2021 is a beacon of hope for so many who suffered through trials and tribulations in 2020. Will the new year deliver? I don't know for sure, but I do know there are many excited for a fresh start, and what better way to help them do that than through marketing fresh and healthy products?

After reading through end of year and new year trends, here are a few highlights to kick off your marketing and merchandising strategies for 2021.

HEALTHY FOODS TO REDUCE ANXIETY



Salmon



Yogurt



Chamomile Tea



Whole Grains



Avocado



Blueberries



Nuts & Seeds



Dark Leafy Greens



Dark Chocolate

New USDA

Guidelines Focus on Balance

Every bite counts! That's the new slogan for the USDA 2020 - 2025 guidelines released at the end of December, covering a whopping 164 pages. Spoiler Alert: Fruits and vegetables continue to reign strong.

The new guidelines, different from past guidelines, focus on dietary choices over a lifespan. That means there is less focus on daily, and even weekly, diets and a larger spotlight on achieving balance and nutrition in every stage of life to achieve a positive pattern of eating. The guidelines encourage exposing babies and toddlers to a more diverse array of foods including common allergens like eggs and peanut butter.

The USDA has compiled a complete guide to portion sizes and examples of a variety of nutrient-dense foods and beverages that are some of the highest sources of these dietary components on its website for quick reference.

Food for Mental Health

This year has certainly taken a toll on our society's mental health. According to Mental Health America, the number of people looking for help with anxiety and depression has skyrocketed. From Jan. to Sept. 2020, there was a 93 percent increase in people taking the anxiety screen over the total number of 2019 anxiety screens, and there was a 62 percent increase over the 2019 total number of

depression screens.

The term “food is medicine” is not a gimmick. There are recommended foods to add to your diet when faced with depression and anxiety. Foods, including many fruits and vegetables, that are high in antioxidants and anti-inflammatory properties can fight symptoms of anxiety. Magnesium has a calming effect and is found in many leafy greens. Call outs of the specific vitamin or nutrient content and what part of the body or mood it supports will go a long way when marketing or merchandising these items.

In a recent episode in our Food Rx video series, registered dietitian Julie Harrington outlines 9 Foods That Help Reduce Anxiety. In addition to the video, we have created graphics that are easy for families to digest when it comes to adding these items to their shopping list and plates.

Continue to Stretch the Dollar

Even as we wave goodbye to 2020, shoppers continue to face uncertainty in many areas of life, forcing them to be overly cautious of what they are spending in the grocery store. Marketers can focus on things like utilizing all parts of a particular fruit or vegetable to avoid waste. In a recent conversation in our Healthy Family Project Facebook group, us-ers discussed creative ways to use broccoli stalks like shaving into a salad, using for soups and even baking as chips. Making a grocery list and meal plan that will help survive an entire week or even longer is the new norm.

Virtual Cooking is Here to Stay

Facebook Live cooking classes and virtual options to learn new things in the kitchen will continue without a sign of slowing down. The popularity of sharing kitchen tips and tricks in this way with the ability to reach people around the world probably won't go away. In-store and live event food demonstrations will slowly make a safe comeback, but companies have seen the ROI on the virtual reach and will continue to capitalize.

2021 Declared Year of Fruits and Vegetables

The 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly has declared 2021 as the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables. The initiative's goal is to raise awareness on the nutritional and health benefits of fruit and vegetable consumption. While not widely known among consumers just yet, you can keep an eye out for messaging from the United Nations General Assembly throughout the year and capitalize on promotions and news.

2021 is a new year, but so much remains the same, and even when the dust of the pandemic settles, new life-style changes that work and have proved positive will live on.

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