

MSU Product Center

For Agriculture and Natural Resources

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Edamame – Selective opportunities

Market drivers that provide many opportunities

- There are **selective** opportunities for edamame products that appeal to the demand drivers of **wellness** and **value**.

Specific opportunities

- Soybeans are considered to be a healthy product. Efforts to develop products that appeal to this demand driver may find a market.
- Edamame is a popular snack food in Asia. This may create opportunities in the export market.
- The U.S. is an importer of edamame, given the ability to produce soybeans in the U.S., domestic producers should be able to meet this market and perhaps become exporters.

New product examples

- From April of 2000 through August of 2005, there were 39 new product introductions in the U.S. edamame market. Product introductions focused on snack products, vegetable products and edamame as an ingredient in prepared foods.
- Whole Foods Market, 365 Organic Edamame, blanched soybeans in a natural shell, is available in health foods stores.
- Sysco MoonRose, edamame vegetarian appetizers, is available to food service operators.
- Inter-American Products, Private Selection, frozen edamame, available in supermarkets.

Special issues

- In order to produce for this market, alternative varieties need to be cultivated and alternative, methods of harvesting need to be used.
- This is a small market. It has been estimated that only 32,000 acres of edamame production would satisfy the entire U.S. market. The potential for over production leading to a price collapse exists.
- Alternative marketing channels likely need to be pursued. This includes health food stores and Asian markets.

Key to success

- Consider whether or not it would be possible to combine products attributes such a new flavors and attributes that appeal to wellness. Alternative distribution channels such as ethnic markets and gourmet food stores, and health food stores may provide some opportunities.
- Attempt to find a guaranteed buyer of edamame production before investing in the industry.

Sources

Knudson. The Edamame Market.

Mintel. Soy-Based Food and Drink.

_____. Global New Products Database.