

## MSU Product Center

*For Agriculture and Natural Resources*

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### **Vegetable-containing side dishes – Many opportunities**

#### **Market drivers that provide many opportunities**

- **Convenience** is the only market driver that provides many opportunities to raise sales from these products.

#### **Specific opportunities**

- Suppliers looking for broad opportunities in selling vegetable-containing side dishes must primarily consider convenience that includes factors such as ease of making, packaging convenience, portion size control, storage, and speed of making. Given the downward trend in the U.S. household size and the current food consumption trend, manufacturers can increase gains from sales of small size side dishes designed for one- or two-person households. In addition, benefits will be high from side dishes that may be eaten informally more like snacks or as a standalone meal without the main course. These products will make the product more competitive with other meals.
- Super markets are the main retail outlets for side dishes. Recent trends show that sales in mass merchandise stores and specialty retail stores have been declining. Mass merchandisers tend to devote less shelf space for side dishes. Super markets will continue to provide broad market opportunities for vegetable-containing side dishes, while mass merchandise retail stores will provide selective opportunities for low-profile side dishes that are available at low prices.
- Suppliers who can tie their side dishes with other food items will also have some opportunities to raise sales from these products. However, since there are other more fresh and convenient products that can be used as side dishes, market opportunities through this channel would remain limited.
- With limited shelf spaces and very small offering of side dishes, convenience stores and drug stores will provide limited market opportunities for vegetable-containing side dish manufacturers. In addition, specialty retail food stores may not be interested in expanding space for these products, which can normally be categorized as lower-profile items.

#### **New product examples**

- Birds Eye Foods – Microwaveable vegetable side dishes (Cauliflower and garlic sauce, and spring mix in cheese sauce), 19 oz. plastic container.
- Wakodo in Japan launched a soybean and vegetable mix side dish designed for older people. The food can be chewed without teeth.

#### **Special issues**

- The vegetable-containing side dish category would continue to face high competition from other side dishes and complete meal offerings.

#### **Key to success**

- Packaging innovations that make the product more convenient and product innovations that focus on flavor and variety are key to success in this product line.

#### **Source**

Mintel, Global New Product Database. <http://www.gnpd.com>

\_\_\_\_, Side dishes, 2003.