

MSU Product Center

For Agriculture and Natural Resources

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Vegetable-containing side dishes – Selective opportunities

Market drivers that provide selective opportunities

- **Wellness, indulgence, convenience, ethnicity, and demographics** are key market drivers that provide broad opportunities to raise sales from these products.

Specific opportunities

- Many traditional side dishes are perceived by consumers as old fashioned and unattractive. New products are currently coming using different mixes of vegetables, herbs and spices that are appealing to the tastes of the present consumer. Suppliers of vegetable-containing side dishes with different flavors, mixes and ingredients will have better product development opportunities in the wellness and indulgence market segment.
- The ethnic market is another segment that provides selective opportunities for vegetable-containing side dish manufacturers. Growth in this market segment will depend on the development of side dishes that meet the distinct food and flavor preferences of the different ethnic groups. One significant area manufacturers need to consider is the eating habits of the young consumer groups in each ethnic group. Since food habits tend to be developed early and follow people as they age, side dishes that appeal successfully to these groups may have broader opportunities of growth in the future.
- There are also selective opportunities for manufacturers in the demographic market segment. Due to their established experience with the food, older consumers may have a higher preference to use vegetable side dishes than younger consumers. Some side dishes may also appeal to young consumers, if they are convenient and require little time for preparation. Larger households that cook food at home may also tend to buy more side dishes than their smaller counterparts. But the acceptance of these products by a specific consumer group will depend on the type of flavor, ingredients and mixes manufacturers use in developing the product.
- Side dishes are lower-profile food products that are sold at lower prices. But, this may not be the same for vegetable-containing side dishes. These products will probably have more access to high-income households who like the taste and who can afford to buy premium varieties, but who are not bulk buyers. Therefore, value would provide selective opportunities to raise sales from these products.

New product examples

- California & Washington - C&W's premium vegetable side dishes in four varieties: creamed spinach, almond beans, creamed broccoli, and salsa Corn, microwaveable, 20 oz. flexible container.
- Green Giant – Extended line of frozen veggie side dishes: Asparagus cuts, cauliflower & low fat cheese, sugar snap peas, and green beans with almonds in a flavor fresh pouch that can be microwaved or cooked on the stovetop, 9 oz carton.

Special issues

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

Keys 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.

Sources

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

____, Side dishes, 2003.