

# Food Flavors and Ingredients Outlook 2012, 9th Edition

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## **Abstracts**

As in previous editions of this publication, the goal of Food Flavors and Ingredients Outlook 2012 is to identify and discuss the flavor and ingredient trends expected to have a major impact in the near future on food consumed both at home and away.

The economic picture for 2012 appears muted at best. Feeling the squeeze, both the employed and out-of-work will continue to practice the frugal behaviors adopted during the Great Recession of 2008, while also attempting to incorporate healthy food choices into their daily routines. Seeking to overcome the boredom of extended frugality, consumers will especially value creative attempts by manufacturers, retailers, and foodservice operators to affordably introduce variety, comfort and indulgence to their taste experiences.

#### **Key Drivers**

The unemployment rate, expected to remain high or approach double digits if the country slips back into recession, will be the biggest factor affecting the economy and consumer confidence in 2012. Wage stagnation, high gas prices, higher food prices, continued decline in home values and European financial woes contributed to eroding consumer confidence that encouraged honing frugal purchasing habits in the second half of 2011.

For the foodservice sector in particular, consumer confidence will be crucial in 2012. As Baby Boomers worry more about retirement and cut back on eating out, some foodservice operators will increasingly focus on the preferences of Millennials and Next Generations for driving trends.



When it comes to food at home and away, consumer frugality continues to manifest itself in ever more ways that include shopping from a list, buying less, trading down, using coupons, delaying and combining trips to cut back on gasoline usage, forgoing impulse buying and even small discretionary purchases, and doing more shopping at bulk food stores and dollar stores. In addition, 2012 is likely to see continued paycheck-cycle shopping, whereby consumers buy large quantities right after getting paid, and then switch to buying smaller package sizes as money starts to run out.

The protracted economic doldrums of the last few years have resulted in more ways for consumers to trade down. In addition to switching to private label brands, smaller, cheaper packages of favorite branded items are increasingly available. And consumers will continue to seek out deals and new value offerings.

As consumer budgets shrink further, products that were once considered essentials are now luxury items.

Spending on kids, typically resilient during recessions, has been showing signs of declining. The data suggest that consumers are both reducing purchases and trading down to less expensive private label brands.

The coming year will see more food manufacturers and retailers targeting the growing numbers of high and low end consumers instead of focusing on the shrinking middle class. Much of this is the result of shrinking budgets of the former middle class, now planting them squarely in the group of low income consumers.



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