

# New taste *sensations*

Big and bold tastes drive flavor innovation

**W**ith 21% of all “meals” being considered snacks and snacking predicted to grow in the years ahead, food manufacturers and food service operators are considering how to expand flavor through snacking, according to the NPD Group, Port Washington, N.Y.

Snacking in the morning is on the rise as snack foods are replacing

ents and workers multitask at mealtime and must eat at their desk or in the car. In addition, many restaurants are trying to promote late-night menus as the “fourth meal.”

The emphasis on healthy snacking will continue as whole grain reformulations bring fiber and nutrients to popular snacks. In addition, increased interest has grown in al-

more people are looking to snacks as a way of spending less money on food while still eating healthy.

“Health and wellness continues to play a large role in new product development and product reformulation as consumers look to manage health conditions with their diet,” said Sheri White, marketing manager for Cargill’s sweet food category. “Cargill’s flavor development team has created solutions to improve flavor using a host of technologies, including enhancing sweetness perception using high intensity sweeteners, and masking off-notes that are inherent in many functional ingredients used in ‘healthier’ foods.”

Wraps have emerged as a more healthful option on food service menus. With McDonald’s Chipotle BBQ Snack Wrap, Jack in the Box’s Sirloin Steak Pita Snack, Wendy’s Grilled Chicken Go Wrap, Sonic’s Fritos Chili Cheese Wrap, Chick-Fil-A’s Spicy Chicken Cool Wrap and KFC Oven Roasted Twister, snack wraps on the menu clearly are becoming a popular category for creating flavor innovation.

“Snack wraps are a dynamic category that takes the hugely popular traditional large wrap and shrinks it down to a grab-and-go size,” said Sean Craig, senior executive chef with Gilroy Foods and Flavors. “The upshot of this savvy differentiation? You get a more portable — and just as important, more affordable — menu offering. With value and ‘good-for-you’ topping consumers’



breakfast more than other meals, according to Gilroy Foods and Flavors, a portfolio of food ingredient brands of ConAgra Foods, Inc., Omaha. In addition, after-school snacking is still prime for classics such as pizza rolls and bagel bites, and many par-

lergen and gluten sensitivity in the snack aisle. Baking, oven-roasting and air-drying are replacing deep-fat frying as preferred cooking methods, according to Gilroy Food and Flavor’s “Food and FlavorCast.”

In addition, as prices increase