



## Fare Thee Well

If there was one overriding theme at the latest version of the Institute of Food Technology show, held this year in New Orleans, it was one of wellness. I know I have been criticized in the past as harping a little too much on this one theme. And as my kids can tell you, I am certainly capable of going on a rant. But I don't think wellness is a fad – it's a huge shift in the food sector paradigm, and it's not going to go away.

Trans fats, salt, sugar and white flours are the most recent “guilty” culprits in our food supply. Don't feel too smug if you are ingredient free on that particular front. I'm sure there will be others under the microscope in the future that are currently flying under the media radar. Can you reduce the salt and/or sugar in your formulation? I know that reformulation is not an easy process. It's not as simple as reducing A, adding B and voilà – it's done. But consumers are label reading at an unprecedented pace. Recent consumer research done by a major biscuit manufacturer showed that in an 18 month period, awareness of trans fats skyrocketed by 80 per cent from knowing nothing at all about the subject to knowing what specific ingredient to look for and avoid.

But back to New Orleans. Nearly every press conference I attended referenced diet or disease as top of mind for the North American consumer. So I was impressed by research coming out of Europe by DSM Food Specialties. They have patent protection on a combination of palm and oat oil, called Fabuleus, that's been clinically proven in Europe to maintain a feeling of satiety. The ingredient slowly dissolves in the intestine, which suppresses hunger signals, so consumers eat less. The first product with Fabuleus has been launched in Italy in a drinkable yogurt. Fabuleus is now available in North America and has GRAS approval.

Another intriguing prototype technology was on display at the Kerry Ingredients booth. I could have happily eaten my way through at least eight pounds of chicken thighs there



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– so much for satiety. Kerry created a battinade (not quite a batter, but more than a marinade), a mixture carrying the flavours of chipotle peppers and a hint of chocolate. In one fell swoop, Kerry displayed its flair for technology (the battinade reduces a frying step), its research capabilities, and showcased a way for manufacturers to sell inexpensive dark chicken meat at a higher price point. Now that's what I'd call innovation.

Another interesting idea at the Cargill Incorporated booth was the concept of life stages. Based on 12 different stages of life from kids to empty nesters and beyond, the company showcased how it can help processors successfully target

specific health concerns at every age. I know that suppliers are always talking about their R&D capabilities and their expertise but these concrete examples backed up the rhetoric.

The point is that we're all in this together. Health, but let's not forget about taste, will be the motivating factor for consumers going forward. From my viewpoint, there's no reason for healthy food to taste poor. We have the know-how and the technology. Let's just do it.

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On a personal note, this will be my last issue as editor of *Food in Canada*. After 13 years, the time has come for me to spread my wings and fly to a new perch within the Rogers Media Inc. organization. To all of the wonderful friends and colleagues I have met in my travels on this book, I bid you a fond farewell. I leave with many fine memories. Until my replacement is announced, please direct editorial inquiries to the assistant editor, Deanna Rosolen. Her telephone is: (416) 764 1533. Email: Deanna.rosolen@food.rogers.com