



Label-friendly stevia
sweeteners offer advantages
in beverage formulations.

This zero-calorie sweetener is still trending big with formulators and consumers.

Reducing sugar is at the heart of new product development and brand reformulations across the beverage industry. Cargill continues to be at the forefront of innovation to address this groundswell of demand for label-friendly solutions. Through sensory-focused expansion of its ViaTech® stevia sweetener portfolio, as well as ongoing consumer primary market research, Cargill is ensuring that its solutions continue to be on-point with what Americans will buy for themselves and their families.

FDA's new food labeling rules may lead to a dramatic beverage sweetener overhaul

Not since the days of “low-fat” over 25 years ago has the food and beverage industry witnessed such a major shift in consumer attitudes as the recent demand for reducing sugar in their diet. This will rise to a crescendo with the upcoming changes to the nutrition facts panel. By 2018, packaged food products will not only have “Added Sugars” and a corresponding recommended daily value on the label, but also more realistic portion sizes. If a product is meant to be consumed in one sitting, it must be labeled as one serving. This change will have a dramatic impact on numerous beverages, which are currently marketed in multi-serve cans or bottles. When serving sizes are adjusted accordingly, added sugars on the label will be two to three times higher than currently seen by consumers. Beverage reformulation targeting sugar reduction is quickly accelerating in the industry, but just as important is identifying the right sweetener system for your brand.

Consumers have a positive perception of stevia sweeteners

Cargill's primary consumer research reveals a very strong correlation (r-value of 0.95) between what consumers perceive as healthy and their purchase interest. Numerous consumer focus groups connect “natural” with “health”. People like knowing where their food comes from.

Stevia leaf extract continues to be perceived strongly as more natural than other sweeteners. Consumers understand what it is and where it comes from. They are also more likely to believe products are good for them when they see stevia on the label.

ViaTech® Stevia Sweetener: Superior taste and function

Beverages with stevia leaf extracts have been available in market for many years, resulting in its growing awareness and positive perception to consumers. Early beverage introductions following its approval as a sweetener in the U.S. left some with preconceived notions about its sweetness and flavor limitations. If you haven't tasted stevia in the last five years, it's time to taste it again!

Cargill's ViaTech® stevia sweeteners have superior sweetness characteristics to traditional stevia leaf extracts, enabling formulators to achieve greater levels of sugar reduction than ever before. Whereas in the past, sugar reductions of only 15 to 20 percent were feasible using stevia leaf extract, ViaTech® stevia sweeteners can deliver 50 percent or more across a wide array of beverages. For instance, Cargill has formulated a 50 percent reduced sugar sweet tea using only ViaTech®, which consumers could not tell apart from a corresponding full-sugar version. Formulating with no sugar added is also within the realm of possibility. A great-tasting chocolate milk with no sugar added has been developed to keep both mom and her kids happy.

You must deliver on taste

It's clear that the FDA label changes will impact consumer perception of full-sugar products. There will be high demand for no sugar added and sugar reduction in beverages from milk to flavored waters. The proprietary taste prediction model behind ViaTech® stevia sweeteners help deliver on great taste.