



Changing consumer perceptions of fats and oils

Conflicted is the best way to describe how many consumers feel about fats and oils in their diets. Social media, food bloggers, and even traditional media networks tout scientific studies and ideas about nutrition that often run counter to the guidance of the USDA, AHA and ADA. These contradictions may confuse consumers and possibly even lead them to cherry pick what they want to believe and follow.

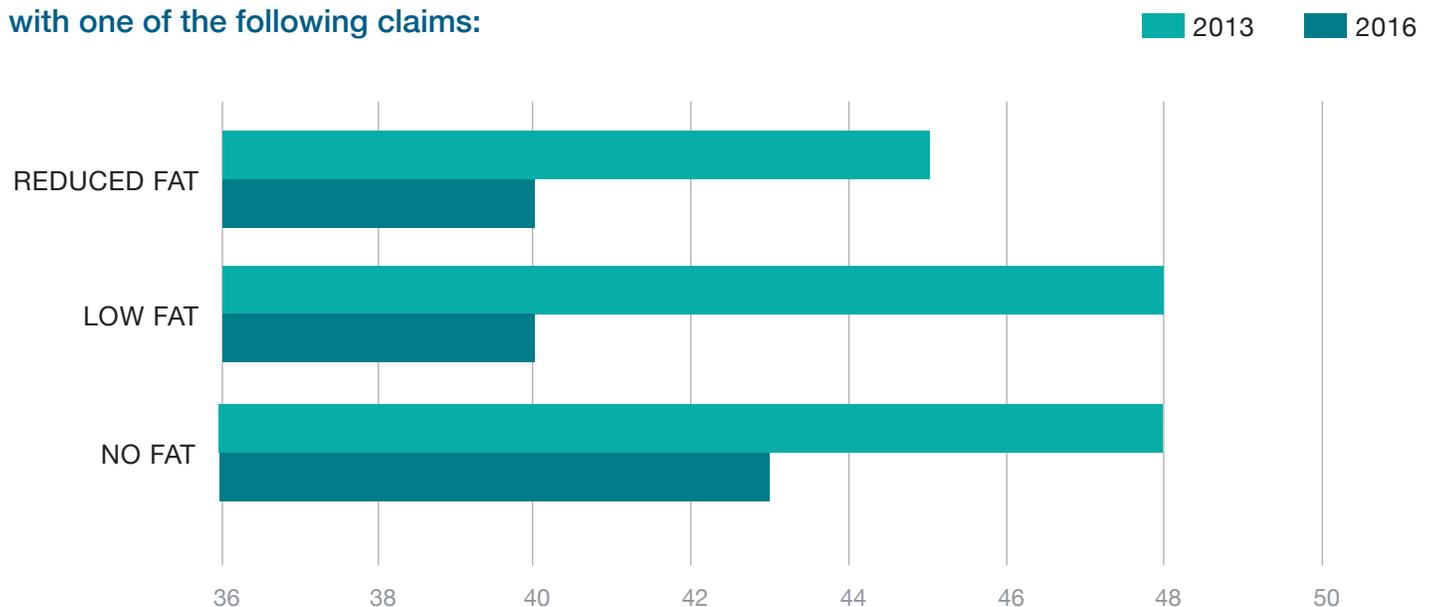
Since 2013, Cargill has been tracking consumers' perceptions, awareness and stated behaviors related to fats and oils. This proprietary study, called FATitudes™, provides insight into how consumers are changing the way they think about fats and oils in the packaged foods that they buy. Findings from the 2016 report show that 53 percent of consumers are closely monitoring the fats and oils in the food that they buy. In general, fats and oils are very important to their purchasing decisions, but why they are important is shifting away from standard conventions.

The low-fat craze may be declining but it's not dead yet.

Baby Boomers and Gen Xers seem to be holding on to some of the dietary conventions of the '80s and '90s. According to FATitudes™, at least 40 percent of consumers say that no-fat, low-fat or reduced-fat claims positively impact their purchasing intent. However that is down significantly from 2013, when 48 percent of consumers indicated that a no-fat or low-fat claim was influential to their purchasing decisions.

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Consumers more likely to purchase a product with one of the following claims:

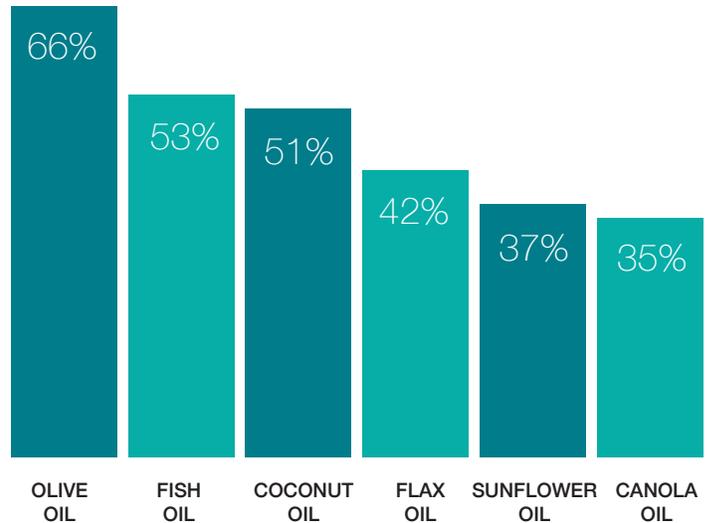


What's a healthy oil?

Time magazine pronounced “Eat Butter” on its June 2014 cover, but two years later only 17 percent of consumers think of butter as being healthful. When it comes to saturated fats, half of consumers say that a “no saturated fat” claim would impact their likelihood to purchase a product. This is greater than a no fat (43%), low fat (40%), reduced saturated fat (35%) or low saturated fat (38%) claim.

When you ask consumers which oils they perceive to be the most healthful, the three oils that they consider healthiest are olive oil (66%), fish oil (53%) and coconut oil (51%). Coconut oil contains 82 percent saturated fats (compared to 14 percent saturates in olive oil), but its healthy perception has increased significantly since 2013, overtaking flax oil, sunflower oil and canola oil to move into the number three spot.

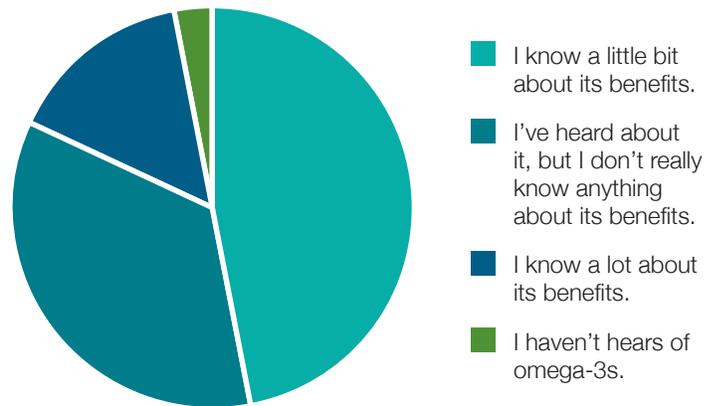
Most healthful oils, as ranked by consumers



(Almost) Everybody knows about omega-3s.

Omega-3s have extremely high awareness among consumers. Ninety-seven percent say they have some degree of awareness of omega-3s. Sixty-two percent state they know something about the health benefits of omega-3s. And 51 percent say they would be more willing to buy a product that came with an omega-3 claim.

Awareness of Omega-3s



Organic versus non-GMO

According to Packaged Facts and the Organic Trade Association, retail sales of organic and non-GMO products have been growing by double digits since 2012. FATitudes™ results show that impact of organic claims has been steady over the past four years at about 42-45 percent. Interest in non-GMO claims has grown from 27 percent in 2013 to 43 percent in 2016.

Consumers stating they are more likely to purchase a product with an organic or non-GMO claim

