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Gat Foods fruit-based ingredient to shape a brighter future for breakfast cereals

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Since the advent of the modern hectic lifestyle decades ago, breakfast cereals have presented both adults and children around the world with a convenient, fast, and tasty means of fueling up in the morning. Recently, however, RTE cereal has come under fire as a commodity that is perceived as overly high in sugar, artificial stabilizers, and other less-desired ingredients, and is increasingly being rebuffed by health-concerned consumers.

Food companies are aware that they can no longer “sugar coat” the fact that many cereals are heavily laden with refined sugars. This is especially pronounced regarding children — the key target market for this sector. While the industry is harnessing efforts to bridge the “sugar gap” and make cereals more nutritive, simple sugar reduction is a tall order that incurs costs and carries technological challenges.

“The cereals market has been stagnant for some time,” says Michal Katzir Emek, International Marketing Director for Gat Foods. “Refined sugars can make up anywhere from 15% to a whopping 40% of a typical box of cereals. We decided to face the challenge head-on and give manufacturers the option of offering consumers the next generation of cereals — cereals that are more nutritious, with cleaner labels, and infused with more natural ingredients, yet without sacrificing the organoleptic qualities. And, most importantly, attaining a delicate sweetness with zero refined sugar.”

“Consumers reluctant to give up the convenience of RTE breakfast cereals are voicing a desire to see more healthful attributes attached to these products to fit their busy lifestyles,” says Hila Bentman, International Brand Manager for Gat Foods. “There are numerous cereals on the market with a fruit coating, however they still contain relatively high amounts of refined sugar. Our fruit base is designed to permeate the entire expanded cereal as a complete substitute for the refined sugars that have historically been an inseparable part of RTE cereals.”

Fruitlift is composed of 90% fruit components in a liquid base that can be injected into any flour mixture in the extrusion line, or applied via the coating drum in the production of cereals. The fruit base delivers a mild sweetness, with or without a fruity flavor.

Gat Foods’ patent-pending technology overcomes the challenge of integrating a wet solution into a dry product, ensuring flavor and sweetness without losing any of a cereal’s crispy texture. Moreover, anti-caking agents are not necessary. Gat Foods applies a built-to-fit approach, allowing the fruit base to be customized to fit any type of manufacturing or extrusion procedure. The right solution can also be formulated to fit any type of flour mixture.

Fruitlift offers food companies a wide choice of fruits to choose from, including apple, banana, mango, citrus fruits, and pineapple. In addition, sweetness levels can be adjusted to anywhere from just a hint of sweetness up to a more full robust flavor, in line with the desires of the client. (Gat Foods recommends adding the fruit base at 15% volume to endow a pleasantly mild sweetness.) The base already has undergone a successful round of initial trials in a UK extrusion pilot lab.