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Why fibre is next frontier in food reformulation, according to Tereos

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As fibre enrichment and sugar reduction move to the forefront of food reformulation, ingredient innovation is playing a decisive role in helping brands meet both consumer health expectations and evolving regulatory demands. In this interview with NUFFOODS Spectrum, Thibault Davoine, Marketing Manager for Nutrition & Health at Tereos, shares insights into the launch of Actifiber, the companyâ??s latest soluble corn fibre solution. He discusses the consumer and market drivers behind its development, the science enabling fibre enrichment without sensory compromise, its impact on Nutri-Score improvement, and how Actifiber aligns with Tereosâ?? broader sustainability and innovation roadmap.

Actifiber represents Tereosâ?? latest step toward nutrition-forward innovation. What key consumer insights or market trends motivated its development, and why was fibre enrichment chosen as the focus?

Actifiber was developed in response to strong consumer demand for healthier food options. Yet fibre consumption is around 18g per day for an adult, which remains far below recommended levels by the EFSA . At the same time, regulatory frameworks such as Nutri-Score and HFSS guidelines are pushing brands to reformulate their products. Fibre enrichment was chosen because it addresses these nutritional gaps while allowing manufacturers to improve product health profiles without compromising taste or texture.

You have highlighted that Actifiber improves nutritional profiles without compromising taste or texture. Could you walk us through the science or technology behind achieving this balance in a corn-based ingredient?

Actifiber is a soluble corn fibre produced through a unique enzymatic process that ensures sensory neutrality. It offers a neutral taste, and transparency in solution, making it ideal for many food and beverage applications. Its excellent stability under heat and acidic conditions and high solubility means it can be incorporated into a wide range of recipes without altering appearance or mouthfeel. Even at high concentrations, Actifiber does not create off flavours, ensuring that taste and texture remain intact.

With one-third of European consumers now using Nutri-Score to guide healthier choices, how does Actifiber help food and beverage brands meaningfully enhance their Nutri-Score ratings?

Actifiber enables manufacturers to significantly increase fibre content while reducing sugar by up to 30 per cent and lowering calories. These changes have a direct impact on Nutri-Score ratings. For example, adding 5 per cent Actifiber to a cake recipe can improve its Nutri-Score from D to C, while an ice cream formulation with 9 per cent Actifiber can move from C to A. This makes Actifiber a powerful tool for brands seeking to offer healthier products and comply with nutritional labelling standards.

Versatility is a major advantage of Actifiber, spanning beverages, bakery, confectionery, dairy, and vegan products. Which categories do you anticipate adopting it the fastest, and why?

Beverages are expected to adopt Actifiber quickly because its transparency and solubility make it ideal for drinks without affecting appearance or taste. Bakery and cereal products are also strong candidates, as they benefit from fibre enrichment and sugar reduction without compromising texture. Dairy and plant-based products will follow closely, as Actifiber enhances mouthfeel. These categories face strong consumer and regulatory pressure to improve nutritional profiles, which accelerates adoption.

Sustainability and clean-label expectations are shaping product development. How does Actifiber, produced from non-GMO corn starch in France, align with Tereosâ?? broader commitments to responsible sourcing and manufacturing?

Actifiber is produced in France from non-GMO corn starch using a unique enzymatic process. This local sourcing reduces transport-related emissions and supports regional agriculture, reinforcing Tereosâ?? commitment to responsible supply chains.

Beyond product attributes, Actifiber is fully aligned with Tereosâ?? CSR roadmap, which is built around three pillars: cultivating our connection with nature and territories, meeting essential needs for sustainable daily life, and cultivating a shared future for the Earth and people. These commitments translate into concrete actions such as promoting biodiversity, reducing water consumption, and advancing circular economy principles. Tereos has set ambitious climate targets validated by the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi), aiming to reduce industrial greenhouse gas emissions by 50 per cent and agricultural emissions by 36 per cent by 2033, and to achieve Net-Zero by 2050. By combining nutritional innovation with sustainable production, Actifiber helps our customers meet consumer expectations for healthier products while contributing to climate and resource efficiency goals.

Looking ahead, how does Tereos plan to expand its fibre-based ingredient portfolio, and what new areas of innovation can customers expect from the Customer Innovation Centre?

Looking ahead, Tereos plans to broaden its fibre solutions beyond Actifiber, complementing existing products like Actilight, our prebiotic fibre with scientifically proven effects on health, perfectly suited for specialised nutrition. The Customer Innovation Centre will play a key role by supporting our customer reformulation projects and developing new ingredients for calorie and sugar reduction. Customers can expect continued innovation focused on improving nutritional profiles without compromising taste or functionality.

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