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REAL Eggs: The Perfect Protein for Functionality, Flavor and Familiarity

Park Ridge, IL (June 22, 2014)—Protein used to occupy its quiet slot on the Nutrition Facts panel with little notice from the average consumer. Today it's muscled its way to the package front and is no longer the sole province of weight lifters and professional athletes. Multiple studies confirm consumers are sold on protein-fortified foods and the benefits protein supplies to a healthy diet.

However, formulators are left with the puzzle of fitting extra protein into foods that still need to achieve target goals for structure, taste, appearance and texture. Eggs already are considered a perfect protein against which all other proteins are measured. Equally as important egg ingredients supply critical functional properties, an agreeable flavor profile and also enjoy a high degree of familiarity and acceptance among consumers.

The perfect complement to fortification is functionality, but it's a rare protein that can supply both. Egg ingredients provide more than 20 functional benefits to food applications, among them foaming and aeration, coagulation, gelation and shelf life extension. The protein component bears responsibility for many of these functional attributes.

As one example, egg white protein can take credit for its ability to form a foam six to eight times larger than the original volume of liquid. No other natural ingredient can create foam equal to that from egg whites. Egg white protein is particularly useful helping bind breading to frozen appetizers, with a protein level of 10 to 15 percent recommended as the most effective level to ensure proper adhesion in this type of application.

Egg yolk is well known for the emulsification properties supplied by lecithin, but its proteins are active in formulation as well. They aid in coagulation and help form gels. Protein functionality in egg white and egg yolk help create structure that also aids in extending shelf life due to entrapped moisture.

According to Elisa Maloberti, Director of Egg Product Marketing, American Egg Board, “No other single protein ingredient can supply the multiple functions formulators can rely upon from egg proteins, not to mention the benefits derived from the wealth of vitamins and minerals contained in a whole egg.”

REAL eggs might possess one of the best reputations among proteins as well, when it comes to consumer sentiment.

A recent NPD study* indicates 78 percent of consumers agree with the statement that protein contributes to a healthy diet. And within the protein category, consumers are looking for affordable alternatives to expensive protein choices. One of the top three picks is the egg. When asked which protein they are consuming more today than in the past, 55 percent of respondents said they are eating more eggs.

Maloberti says this increased egg consumption bodes well for food formulators’ use of eggs when it comes to label concerns. “A consumer increasing their at-home consumption of eggs will be comfortable with eggs on a product label,” she says.

As a final note, the protein contained in REAL eggs is easily digestible and readily available. This helps create nutritious foods consumers will find filling, tasty and satisfying. “When formulators choose REAL eggs to use in food products, they’re choosing the whole protein package – functionality, flavor, familiarity, and depending on usage levels, fortification.”

*“Protein Perception and Needs,” The NPD Group, 2014.

About Incredible Edible Eggs

Available in liquid, frozen or dried forms, as whole eggs, yolks, whites or tailored to meet preparation or processing specifications, there’s an egg ingredient to suit any requirement. For more information about including eggs in foodservice recipes or to find a supplier of REAL egg ingredients, visit American Egg Board’s website at www.aeb.org.

About the American Egg Board

American Egg Board (AEB) is the U.S. egg producers’ communications link to food processors. AEB works to educate manufacturers and developers of new food products about the functionality and nutritional benefits of REAL eggs. To assist food formulators, AEB develops resource materials and makes egg product experts available to answer technical questions. Visit www.aeb.org for more information, formulation tips and assistance and functional egg background.