

# Healthy Indulgence

Key suppliers offer their thoughts on trends to look out for in confectionery applications. Sugar reduction and the naturality trends are driving innovations in the space.

**GWYNNIE HAGEN, TAURA (IFF)**  
SALES & CATEGORY MANAGER  
CONFECTIONERY & CHOCOLATE

## On hitting the sweet spot of sugar reduction...

“Indulgent sweetness perceptions can be maintained while reformulating an ingredient list to contain lower sugars. A consumer panel test has shown that our fruit-based inclusions or “sweet spots” help manufacturers of sweet baked goods to improve the perceived sweetness while lowering the overall sugar content of their product.

In the search for sugar reduction, we see an emergence of savory and spicy notes – such as cherry-chili, masala and red curry – as these immediately will put the consumer in a non-sweet mindset



from the initial purchase onwards.

Another benefit of our “sweet spots” is they contain only naturally occurring sugars from the fruit, and they have a low glycemic index (GI). As these sugars are slowly digested and absorbed, they cause a slower and smaller rise in blood sugar levels.

Texture is also an emergent cornerstone of new product development. Texture claims are displayed on pack, and they range from soft, chewy, “al dente” to crunchy. We notice that food manufacturers are using our fruit, savory and brown inclusions as a taste spot and also to create a specific texture to better distinguish their product.

Influences from desserts and the beverage industry are translated into lovely concepts like caramel latte, apricot-rosemary, strawberry-pink pepper and coffee pumpkin spice.

Storytelling is very important when we co-create new food concepts with our customers. Just think about how a simple strawberry can easily turn into dreams of summer delight and laughter when mentally linked to a strawberry and whipped cream concept for a chocolate bar. Or how the use of perfect balanced fruit ingredient can ensure that the crunchiness of the biscuit avoids the childhood nightmare trap of a soggy cookie.

The sweeter categories of food are the ones often craved by consumers as a “mood food” – to bring a bit of joy to the day or to take a break from a stressful office. Storytelling is key to get the mood set right. Consumers make deliberate choices in regards to what they eat and why. That connection can be made through a better understanding of the ingredients or with an emotional link to the brand.” ■



**KAY SCHUMACHER, BÖSCH BODEN SPIES,**  
HEAD OF PRODUCT APPLICATION &  
DEVELOPMENT

## On trending flavors and functional confectionery...

“Fruit and nut pieces, seeds, herbs, grains – anything that reflects nature in a product – will help build more credibility for manufacturers.

Herbal notes are on-trend, not because they are novel or exotic, but because they convey a hint of home, childhood and safety. Cardamom seeds, nutmeg, cinnamon and ginger are examples. No other flavor is more essential than vanilla.

Our R&D is testing some interesting hybrid products, such as putting salad in cereal bars, olives in sweet bakery, meat in fruit and nut mixes, etc. Everything is possible, although not everything will be accepted by consumers.

In hybrid food confectionery snacks, the incorporation of healthy ingredients is a strategy toward achieving healthy connotations for a product.

However, in classic sugar or chocolate confectionery products, the inclusions of an avoidable amount of sugar makes it difficult to keep credibility.

Health ingredients with remarkable health properties, even in low quantities – such as natural vitamins, caffeine or antioxidants – have potential in product applications, since you can achieve a result by consuming only a few bites.

Products like fiber or protein shouldn't be consumed by eating sweets. CBD can be seen as a trend whose path was cleared by start-ups with their reputation of being somehow anarchic.” ■



**LAURA GERHARD, BLUE DIAMOND,**  
DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY & MARKETING

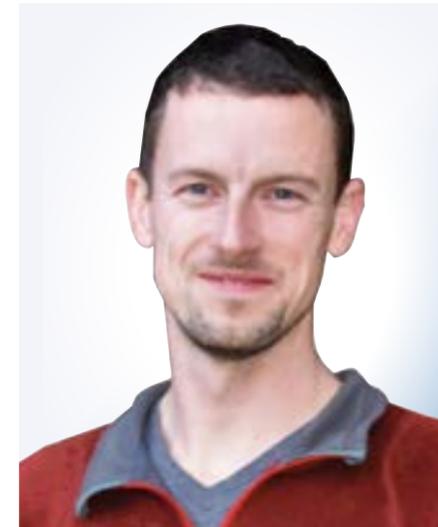
## On naturally dairy-free and gluten-free solutions...

“Almonds continue to be the leading nut used in global new product introductions, with growing popularity in the confectionery, snack and bakery categories, according to a 2018 report from Innova Market Insights. Sweet goods made with alternative flours – such as almond flour – are gaining popularity as consumers look for gluten-free versions of their favorite bakery goods, or those that align with specialty diets, such as the keto diet. Almond flour is a common alternative to traditional flour because it contains the same nutritional properties as whole almonds and is low on the glycemic index. Almond flour is also the perfect ingredient for keto baking recipes.

As a non-GMO, dairy-free, soy-free and gluten-free ingredient, almond protein powder appeals to consumers with a broad range of dietary needs and provides product developers with a clean-tasting and nutrient-dense protein choice for their confectionery applications.

We expect to see more savory flavors appear in sweet applications in 2020. Almonds lend themselves to sweet and savory combinations, as their nutty flavor provides an excellent contrast to chocolate, caramel or fruity flavors.

We also expect to see natural food flavors take center stage, as manufacturers strive for a simpler label. Whether used as a coating or within fillings almonds can enhance product flavor and provide important nutrition.” ■



**SCOTT SLATER, TRADIN ORGANIC,**  
COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

## On naturality in confectionery...

“Coconut sugar is in high demand, with many consumers looking for less refined sweeteners. Out of all our confection customers, products with the highest shelf velocity presently are the SKUs (shelf-keeping unit) sweetened with coconut sugar. For many applications, it is a simple 1:1 substitution for refined sugar. That makes formulation difficult since manufacturers are faced with huge challenges when reformulating with high intensity sweetening.

The ketogenic diet continues to grow in popularity and with the advent of better tasting non-nutritive sweeteners, ketogenic confections are now possible. Stevia-sweetened chocolates are category leaders while even better tasting sweetener alternatives such as monk fruit expand the possibilities. High quality oils like avocado and coconut also present opportunities for making more confectionery keto-friendly.

Chocolate is a great product for the inclusion of CBD and there is already a myriad of options. That said, CBD is not currently approved for use in food and beverages. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) lists it as an adulterant. It may still be a while before CBD chocolate and confections are “mainstream.” The available literature reviewing dosages for efficacy of CBD indicates much higher dosages than currently found in available CBD confections. It's interesting to see how CBD confections will evolve in the coming years.” ■



**GRAHAM KINGSTON, PECAN DELUXE CANDY,**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR

## On enhancing sensory experiences...

“This year, spiced products, such as spiced brownie and cookie dough, will possibly go mainstream. In addition, we're seeing demand for old favorites like salted caramel and chocolate, alongside a play on traditional flavors. Confectionery is seeing more play on senses and textural excitement, such as chili heat, popping candy, fizzy, sour, etc.

In the US, we see a rise in popularity of both international flavors and formats. Flavors inspired by churros and man-gonada or formats such as Indian Kulfi are notably trending. We have also seen the growing popularity of Thai-rolled ice cream throughout the country. Enhancing the sensory experience of eating ice cream is important to consumers. This can be achieved by adding mix-ins and inclusions for contrasting textures.

There's an interest in provenance and using key ingredients from a single source country of origin. We manufacture at our site in Yorkshire and that background info seems to be valuable to our customers, particularly with our artisanal fudge. We have also had requests for manufacturing-related provenance – in respect to our sites in Dallas, focusing on pecans, and also regarding our matcha operations in Thailand – from a number of big brands in the ice cream industry. Provenance engages consumers who want more authentic regional products.

We also see a consolidation of categories. Most shelf space now features ingredients catering to specific demands.” ■



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