



# Bridging the Nutrition Gap in Confectionery with Protein

***Adding protein in confectionery provides nutritional boost and expands consumer choices. Manufacturers must decide what type and how much protein to add to control cost, taste and textural attributes.***

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Diet and health go hand in hand. A balanced diet, along with regular physical activity, goes a long way in maintaining good health and consumers are increasingly considering health while making food purchase decisions. What constitutes healthful food is certainly a matter of debate and the metrics surrounding this topic continue to evolve. In the past, levels of fat, sodium or cholesterol alone sufficed to indicate health credentials of food. Increasingly, consumers are looking for whole grain, fiber, protein or micronutrients as positive cues for health.

Protein continues to grow in popularity and has almost achieved a venerated status when it comes to lending an instant health halo to food. The protein-forward trend has merit as benefits of consuming protein have been well documented for years, i.e., satiety, weight management, muscle development, etc. What has essentially tipped the scale in the last decade is the shift in protein's positioning. Protein is no longer recognized as a mere muscle-building tool. Its appeal has

grown with the general population looking to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle.

From ready-to-drink beverages to snacks, Greek yogurts to meal kits and smoothies, protein is omnipresent. As the added protein trend continues to transcend categories, it raises the question: Are proteins a good fit for confectionery? Confectionery is not a category a consumer would intuitively associate with protein. However, proteins have a long and established history in confectionery. For instance, milk chocolate has been consumed since 1876. According to the Code of Federal Regulations—21CFR163.130, the formulation for milk chocolate must include a minimum of 12 percent milk solids. In addition to providing creamy-milky notes, milk solids also contribute to nutrition via protein content.

In general, proteins have been relied upon for more of a functional role in confectionery, namely, development of texture, color and flavor. For example, gelatin is used as an aerating agent in marshmallows and ➤



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