

# PATENT INSIGHTS: FLAVOUR ENHANCERS

Patent activity shows an emerging trend for natural flavour enhancers in food and drink. Flavour-enhancing, health-functional ingredients have potential to grow.



Neha Srivastava, Senior Patent Analyst - Food & Drink and Beauty & Personal Care





# Report Content



- At a glance
- Mintel's perspective

## WHAT CONSUMERS WANT AND WHY

- Consumers have a preference for naturalness
- Ingredient transparency can help brands to develop consumers' trust
- Majority of European consumers are interested in natural flavours
  - Graph 1: % of consumers who would be interested in products with natural flavours (ie non-artificial), Nov 2018

## PRODUCT INNOVATION TRENDS

- North America has the highest percentage of natural claims
  - Graph 2: percentage of food and drink launches that have a natural\* claim, by region, May 2015-Apr 2020
- A decline in the use of MSG provides an opportunity for natural flavour enhancers
  - Graph 3: percentage of food and drink launches that contain selected flavour enhancers, May 2015-Apr 2020
- MSG-free, naturally flavoured products for health-conscious consumers

## THE PATENT LANDSCAPE

- Patent activity related to flavour-enhancing ingredients in food and drink
  - Graph 4: flavour-enhancing ingredients in food and drink patent families, published each year, 2010-19
- Granted patent activity by country (including China)
- Ajinomoto is the leading patent holder in the flavour-enhancing ingredient category
  - Graph 5: top 10 organisations with currently active\* patent families for flavour enhancing ingredients in food and drink, March 2020

## Rising interest in natural flavour enhancers

- Consumers demand food flavours free from artificial ingredients
- Use of natural flavouring ingredients continues to grow in Europe
  - Graph 6: percentage of food and drink launches containing flavouring ingredients, by selected flavouring ingredient groups, May 2015-Apr 2020
- Natural ingredients can be used to develop premium ranges
- Companies are using a biotech approach to produce natural flavour enhancers
- Leverage fruits and botanicals to enhance flavours
- Natural flavour enhancers derived from plants

## Patent insights: flavour enhancers

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- Replace or reduce the use of MSG with natural flavour enhancers

### Flavours for salt and sugar reduction

- Consumers are interested in reducing salt content in food products
- Taking a sensory approach to reduce salt intake
- Products reducing salt content by boosting umami sensation
- Consumers associate low sugar content with healthiness
- Sugar reduction claims continues to show rapid growth in juices, carbonated soft drink and breakfast cereal category
  - Graph 7: percentage of selected food and drink subcategory launches that claims sugar reduction\*, by year, 2017-2019
- Reducing sugar content using flavour enhancers

### Linking flavour profiles and health

- Health and flavour can be intertwined when making food and drink choices
- Consumers are interested in dual functionality ingredients
  - Graph 8: % of consumers who would be interested in ingredients that provide both flavour and health benefits, Nov 2018
- Leverage probiotic strains to enhance flavour and aroma
- Prebiotics can enhance the flavour of food
- Incorporate algae to enhance the flavour
- Mushroom as a nutritional flavour booster
- Evolving flavour-enhancer space offers opportunity for ingredient manufacturers to invest in research to produce natural flavour enhancers

## APPENDIX

- Research methodology
- Key flavour enhancer patent examples
- Key flavour enhancer patent examples
- Shape your future with Mintel bespoke patent analysis

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Singapore	+65 (0)6 818 9850