

What We're Watching

05 - 2026

The long list of consumer wellness-benefit priorities can be summarized in an overall phrase:

nutrient density.

- ◆ Consumers are prioritizing wellness benefits in their food choices, stacking¹ them in fact. And while the specifics are as varied as the opportunities, the one shorthand path to connect with consumer interests runs through the delivery of favorable nutrient density.
- ◆ Food industry stakeholders appear to be elevating their commitment to delivering nutrition as well. New products are coming to market in 2026 at increased rates with claims/positionings around Fiber, Protein, Whole Grains and much more. And the focus on nutrition is paying off in increased consumer consideration.

Implications and Opportunities:

- Prioritize **positive** 'nutritional' profiles in product development, even in **taste-forward** products, to match rising consumer interest.
- Evaluate the role **fiber** can play in your food items, a benefit that has now surpassed protein in **growth potential** for 2026.²
- Leverage the nutritional **credit** that consumers award to **grains, pulses and seeds** – explore formulations that include **Chickpea, Flaxseed and Sorghum**.

¹ 1- Ardent Mills Proprietary Research, stacking is the behavior among consumers to prioritize, and participate in, multiple wellness eating behaviors at one time (7.8 on average); 2- Ardent Mills Proprietary Research based on primary consumer research and new product launch activity based on Innova Market Insights data



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Grains, Pulses and Seeds can help support the nutrient density consumers are seeking.

Prioritization of nutrient dense foods is already a top consumer behavior, and it is projected for significant growth.

Nutrient Dense/Rich Food Participation

38%

of consumers claim to currently participate within their daily food choices¹

Nutrient Dense/Rich Food Participation

+53%

projected growth in participation through 2026¹

CPG products with nutritional health claims are experiencing increased consumer consideration.

Products with Nutritional Health Claim (any)
Unit Change: 2026 (ytd) vs 2025²

Category*	% Change
Shelf Stable Main Course	+19%
Cereal and Granola Bars	+17%
Prepackaged Rolls and Buns	+15%
Tortilla Chip	+11%
Shelf Stable Pasta and Noodles	+9%

*non-exhaustive

Nutritional information is a top target for consumers who review on-package information.

76% of consumers who review on-package information check the **nutritional information**³

Nutritional information is the **#1** type of information checked by younger consumers (18-34 years of age)³

Consumer discussion about nutrient dense foods is on the rise, led by two in-demand benefits.

+14%

Year-over-year growth in social discussion about **nutrient dense foods**⁴

Protein, followed by **fiber**, are among the benefits most often included in social discussions about nutrient dense foods⁴

Looking for ingredients that consumers credit for supporting nutrition?
See these grains, pulses and seeds.

% Agree the Ingredient makes a Positive Contribution to Nutritional Profile of Finished Products⁵

Ingredient*	% Positive Contribution
Chickpea	61%
Flaxseed	60%
Lentils	60%
Millet	56%
Sorghum	53%

*non-exhaustive

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1- Ardent Mills Proprietary Research, U.S. Adults 18+, specifics of the behavior is defined by the consumer, projection takes into account 'continue,' 'stop,' 'start' behaviors;
2- Nielsen/Byzzer, Total FMCG + Convenience, year-to-date through June 13, 2026, includes products with Nutritional Health Claim (any) as classified by Nielsen; 3- Ardent Mills Proprietary Research, U.S. Adults 18+, among consumers who review on-package information; 4- Menu Data AI; 5- Ardent Mills Proprietary Research, U.S. Adults 18+, among consumers aware of the respective ingredients