



EYE ON THE LABEL:

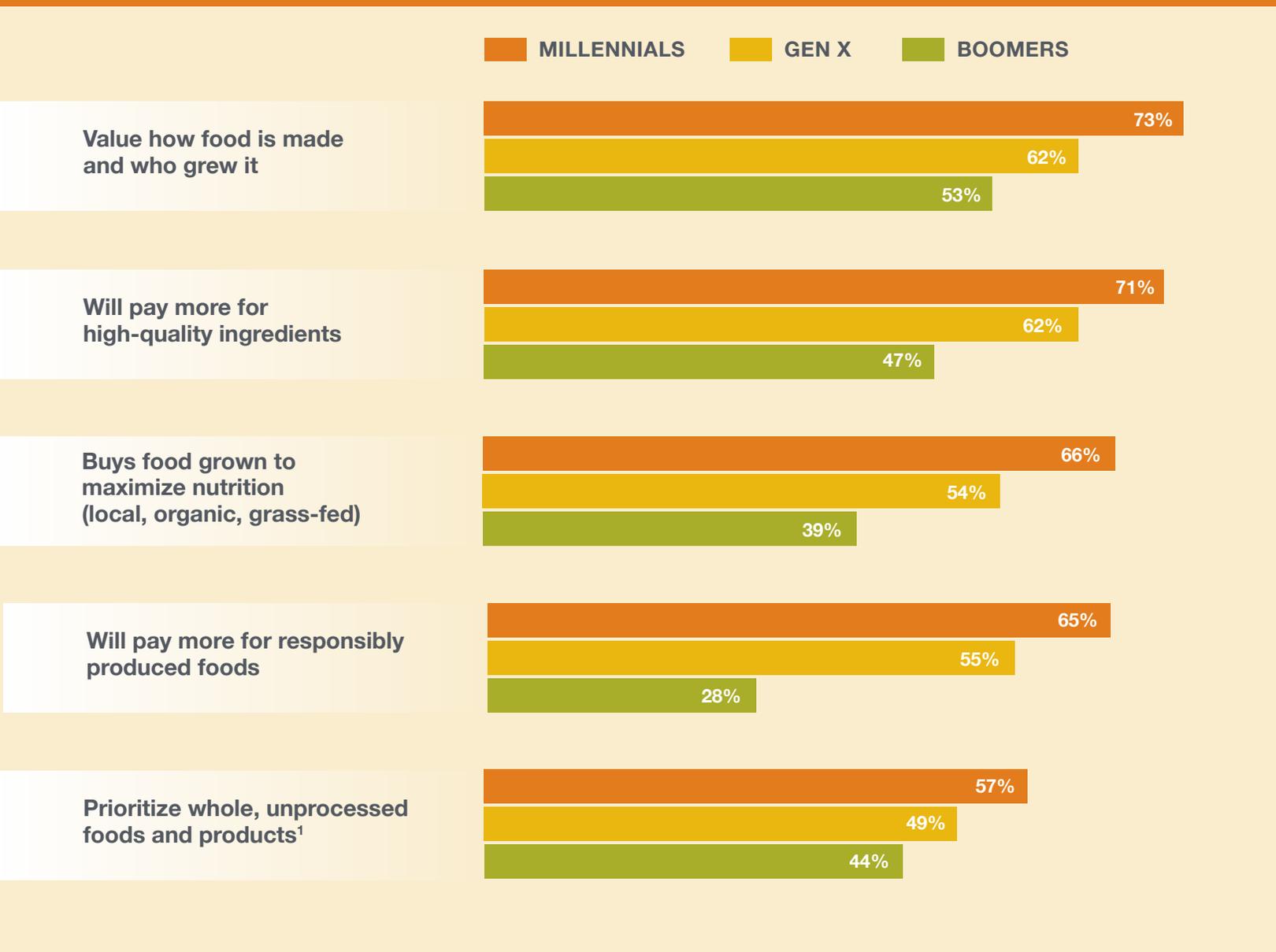
“Clean label” trends and
label-friendly texturizing options

Today’s consumers are looking at food labels more closely than ever before, especially the youngest shoppers.

Many want foods that are responsibly produced by trusted brands and maximize their health. They’re demonstrating their beliefs and values with their dollars, as well.

Despite many shoppers prioritizing whole, unprocessed foods and products, there is still a strong need for ready-to-eat and convenience products. Formulators who produce foods responsibly with label-friendly ingredients may earn the loyalty of today’s label-conscious consumer.

Generation matters when it comes to values regarding food¹



¹ NEXT Data & Insights Values Generational Health Survey; Gen Pop Samples of N=1,000 each

There’s no regulatory definition for “clean label”

While there is no regulatory definition for “clean label,” there are certain trends that stand out. Cargill conducted primary consumer research on this topic to offer fresh insights to customers.

According to Cargill Senior Technical Account Manager Erin Radermacher, “Some texturizing ingredients are perceived as label-friendly simply because they offer an alternative to an unfamiliar ingredient, or one with a more chemical-sounding name. That is definitely the case with starch. ‘Potato starch’ is perceived much better by a consumer than ‘modified food starch.’ ‘Lecithin’ has a better perception to a consumer than ‘mono and diglycerides,’ while ‘chicory root fiber’ is better received than ‘inulin.’” Radermacher says that pectin and pea protein are two additional familiar-sounding ingredients that fall under the “label-friendly” halo.

She adds, “Some label-friendly ingredients are not as robust as their chemical counterparts, so you may require multiple ingredients or a higher usage level to do the job of some of the traditional ingredients.”

The Cargill label-friendly texturizers portfolio

Starch: Starch offers several functions beyond viscosity-building. Starch can be used across the board to enhance mouthfeel and prevent syneresis, or weeping. It’s also helpful in specific applications, such as providing crumb elasticity in gluten-free applications. “There have been many advancements in label-friendly functional starches over the years,” says Radermacher. “They can replace modified food starch in a lot of applications. They can also replace some of the functionality of chemically modified gums.”

Pectin: The ingredient many people equate with homemade jam has a wide variety of label-friendly uses. In addition to functioning as a gelling agent, pectin enhances creaminess/mouthfeel in dairy

products (helpful in reduced-fat products), protects proteins during processing and can function as a suspension aid.

Recent advancements in pectin help it fully or partially replace the functionality of modified food starch and chemically modified gums in several applications, including dairy, convenience foods and bakery.

Lecithin: “Lecithin is a unique ingredient because it does play quite a few different roles that at first don’t seem related,” shares Radermacher. “In addition to acting as an emulsifier, lecithin can act as a releasing agent, help ingredients disperse and can act as an anti-caking agent.”

Cargill offers canola and sunflower lecithin, in addition to traditional soy lecithin. These alternative lecithins can assist in replacing major allergen sources in a product formulation. Lecithins are often used to replace mono- and diglycerides and DATEM.

Pea protein: “Consumers love purchasing food with this ingredient on its label,” says Radermacher. It has a variety of uses, including protein fortification, viscosity and mouthfeel enhancement, and can serve as a bulking agent. It can also help extend shelf life and increase yield.

It’s widely used in plant protein applications as a key ingredient in the fast-growing meat analogue space. It’s also an ideal option for those looking to replace soy protein or wheat gluten to create a more label-friendly product.

Chicory root fiber: This ingredient is ideal for fiber fortification, but also plays additional roles in product development. “It can mimic fat, which can result in a healthier finished product,” explains Radermacher, “and it also works fantastically as a label-friendly bulking agent in reduced sugar applications.”

Because of its slight sweetness, chicory root fiber can help meet sugar-reduction goals. The liquid version is ideal for many application categories, including beverages.

Claims: The labeling, substantiation and decision making of all claims for your products is your responsibility. We recommend you consult regulatory and legal advisors familiar with all applicable laws, rules and regulations prior to making labeling and claims decisions.