



Growing Demand for Clean Label Functional Foods and Supplements

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Received date: 25 November, 2024, Manuscript No. JFND-24-156718;

Editor assigned date: 27 November, 2024, PreQC No. JFND-24-156718 (PQ);

Reviewed date: 13 December, 2024, QC No. JFND-24-156718;

Revised date: 20 December, 2024, Manuscript No JFND-24-156718 (R);

Published date: 30 December, 2024, DOI: 10.4172/2324-9323.1000440.

Description

The growing demand for clean label functional foods and supplements in 2024 reflects a significant shift in consumer preferences towards health-oriented and transparent food choices. As the global focus on wellness and nutrition continues to escalate, consumers are increasingly seeking products that not only deliver health benefits but also align with their values surrounding food safety, sustainability, and ingredient transparency. At the core of this trend is the concept of "clean label," which refers to products containing easily recognizable ingredients with minimal processing. Today's consumers, armed with greater access to information, are more aware and concerned about what goes into their food. Reports indicate that a substantial percentage of consumers, approximately 65% in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa (EMEA), actively check ingredient lists, with many gravitating towards products that exclude artificial additives and contain familiar ingredients [citation:9]. This inclination aligns with a growing focus on health, as consumers aim to avoid chemicals and substances they do not understand.

Functional foods and supplements, which boast added health benefits beyond basic nutrition, are becoming increasingly popular. This movement is driven by a desire not just for taste but for functionality that supports specific health outcomes, such as enhanced mental well-being, improved gut health, and immune support. Consumers are now seeking foods that act as preventive measures against health issues an idea encapsulated in the phrase "food as medicine." For example, ingredients like probiotics, plant-based proteins, and botanicals such as ashwagandha and turmeric are

increasingly incorporated into mainstream products to support mental health, energy, and overall wellness. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has deeply influenced consumer behavior, leading many to adopt healthier lifestyles and rethink their dietary habits. A significant 74% of Americans now believe what they consume impacts their emotional and mental well-being, indicating a broader awareness of the connection between food choices and health [citation:8]. This awareness has catalyzed demand for functional foods that support emotional health and immunity, paving the way for innovative products designed to fulfill these needs.

Sustainability also plays a critical role in the clean label trend. More consumers are concerned about the environmental impact of food production, prompting interest in foods that are ethically sourced and sustainably produced. The rise of upcycled ingredients those repurposed from food waste highlights a shift towards more sustainable eating practices. This is complemented by advancements in food technology that enable brands to create clean and functional products without compromising on taste or quality.

Transparency in labeling is another pivotal aspect. Consumers increasingly expect clear, honest, and informative labels that allow them to make informed choices. This demand is influencing Food and Drug Administration (FDA) initiatives aimed at updating definitions of healthy foods, focusing on attributes such as freshness, low sugar content, and protein source. Brands that accept transparency and provide comprehensive information about their ingredients tend to foster greater consumer trust and brand loyalty.

As the food industry adapts to these shifting consumer preferences, businesses face both opportunities and challenges. Creating clean label functional foods demands innovation and creativity, as companies strive to meet the growing demand while maintaining profitability. The intersection of health consciousness, sustainability, and transparency signifies that the clean label movement is not merely a trend but a foundational change in how food is perceived and purchased. Overall, the increasing demand for clean label functional foods and supplements is a clear indicator of changing consumer values, where wellness, sustainability and transparency are paramount. This transformation in consumer behavior will undoubtedly shape the landscape of the food and beverage industry in 2024 and beyond, as more individuals seek not only nourishment but also products that contribute positively to their health and the environment. Brands that recognize and adapt to this evolving market will be well-positioned to lead in this new era of food consumption.

Citation: Stevens M (2024) Growing Demand for Clean Label Functional Foods and Supplements. *J Food Nutr Disor* 13:6.