

**PRESS RELEASE**

## **Regulator's green light underscores fiber's promise for digestive health**

**London October 20th:** “This week’s decision by European health claims regulator EFSA to permit digestive health claims for fiber underscores the huge untapped opportunities that lie in products with fiber for digestive health,” says Julian Mellentin, author of a new report, *Fiber for Digestive Health*, published by New Nutrition Business this week to coincide with the EU’s ruling.

“Health claim regulators in Europe and elsewhere are becoming increasingly demanding in their requirements for scientific substantiation, and this effectively rules out a huge number of ingredients from making health claims,” continues Mellentin. “However, the scientific evidence supporting fiber’s digestive health benefits is good.”

New Nutrition Business’s industry-renowned annual report *10 Key Trends* has consistently named digestive health as the biggest trend and the biggest opportunity, and the EU’s decision reinforces this, says Mellentin.

“Coupled with this, we know that consumer demand for products that support digestive health is huge,” he adds. “This is what explains the massive success of probiotic dairy products over the last 15 years with brands such as Danone’s Activia proving themselves to be recession-proof, growing 20% per annum in many countries in the teeth of the economic downturn”.

Very few companies have exploited the potential of products based on fiber for digestive health. One of the few is General Mills’ Fiber One breakfast cereal brand, which has grown its sales from \$20 million to over \$260 million in the last five years, achieving 20% growth in the year to March 2010, despite a premium price point. What sets Fiber One apart is that it has a “feel the benefit” advantage, delivering a dose of at least 35% of the RDI for fiber per serve. This meaningful dose of fiber, coupled with its excellent communications to consumers, makes Fiber One an “expert brand” in fiber.

By contrast, most companies follow a fiber makeover strategy, argues Mellentin in *Fiber for Digestive Health*, providing 20% or less of the RDI for fiber per serve. This means that consumers don’t “feel the benefit”; it doesn’t give your product any point of difference, and as a result doesn’t do much to increase either your sales volumes or your profit margins.

The report points to huge untapped consumer demand for high fiber products. “Digestive health is consistently named among the top four health concerns that affect consumers, according to Health Focus research, and at any one time around 30% of people are troubled by constipation,” says Mellentin.

The biggest need is among women, who are three times more likely than men to suffer from constipation, and the over-40s. In fact, by their 60s, around half of people are struggling with constipation on a daily basis.

Luckily, huge advances in fiber ingredient technology mean that a wide array of product formats can be formulated with high doses of fiber without any of the taste or texture problems historically associated with fiber.

The biggest opportunity is in high-fiber fruit-based beverages, with the next tier of opportunities in cereals, bread and bakery and in ready-meals targeting seniors.

## **FIBER'S ADVANTAGES**

Fiber has five advantages for any company targeting digestive health:

1. New technologies mean better taste than in the past;
2. Consumers need more fiber;
3. It's an ingredient consumers accept and offers a benefit they understand;
4. The right fiber in the right dose offers a benefit consumers can easily feel;
5. Fiber and digestive health is one of the few areas in which it may be possible to create new products that deliver benefits based on science that is relatively non-controversial communicated by health claims which regulators approve.

Source: *Fiber for Digestive Health*, a New Nutrition Business report

## **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

1. Julian Mellentin is a food and beverage industry expert, and one of the world's very few global specialists in the business of food, nutrition and health. He is editor of *New Nutrition Business*, and co-author of *The Functional Foods Revolution: Healthy people, healthy profits?*, *The Food & Health Marketing Handbook*, *Successful Superfruit Strategy* and many more. Julian can be reached at [julian.mellentin@new-nutrition.com](mailto:julian.mellentin@new-nutrition.com).
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3. *Fiber for Digestive Health: Opportunities, strategies and case studies* is published by New Nutrition Business and is available for purchase from [www.new-nutrition.com](http://www.new-nutrition.com) priced at \$395/€300. It is available as a pdf report.