

PRESS RELEASE

Collagen's sales surge shows consumers want animal protein as well as plant-based

Rapidly-rising demand for collagen is a reminder that consumers don't want only plant-based products, according to Julian Mellentin, director of food & nutrition consultancy New Nutrition Business.

"People are also very much open to innovation in animal-based products," says Mellentin. "Collagen is an excellent example, with its image as a 'protein plus' ingredient with benefits for skin, nails, hair and joints. The evidence from growing sales of supplements is that consumers find these benefits credible and compelling."

Mellentin is the author of the highly-respected annual trends report *10 Key Trends in Food, Nutrition & Health*. Its 2022 edition, just published, identifies collagen as one of the ways companies can connect to the powerful key trend of Animal Protein.

"Collagen is a protein that makes up about a third of all the protein in the human body," he explains. "It has the whole 'nutrient that can do no wrong' protein health halo, plus delivering the benefit that people want most – to look good. And when you look good, you feel good."

The profile of collagen buyers skews strongly towards Gen Z and younger Millennial women – many of whom describe their diets as plant-based, or at least flexitarian, yet have eagerly embraced bovine collagen. Collagen has become a must-have in the routine of a growing percentage of young women, who add collagen powder to their morning smoothies; older age-groups (men as well as women) add collagen powder to their first coffee of the day. Other consumers have embraced collagen-rich bone broth.

Collagen has become hugely popular on social media. Research from *New Nutrition Business* shows that during 2020, collagen was one of the fastest-growing health ingredients on Instagram, with posts using the hashtag #collagen growing by 29%.

Most of these posts relate to personal care products which use collagen topically, but what happens in skincare often migrates to foods and supplements. Mintel GNPD data shows a 70% jump in launches of food & beverage products containing collagen between 2015-2020.

And scientific studies looking at collagen's effects on human health have doubled since 2000, with bone health, skin/aging, muscle and joint health the most commonly-studied benefits.

"These factors combined present food and beverage companies with a unique opportunity to innovate with collagen," says Mellentin. "Major companies are already embracing – and seeing success with – the collagen opportunity and we will likely continue to see this for the next few years."

NewNutrition Business

Nestlé entered the collagen business with its acquisition in 2020 of the number 1 collagen brand in the US, Vital Proteins, for \$200m (€173m). Sales of its drinks, snack bars and supplements, which use collagen from grass-fed cattle in Brazil, are growing strongly. It's available in multiple outlets in North America and Europe, including Whole Foods, Costco, Target, Walgreens and Kroger, and also sells D2C. Nestlé now markets the brand in Europe and has opened a store on Tmall (China's biggest online retailer) for Vital Proteins.

“Food industry executives tend to fall into the trap of thinking that it is in plant-based where most of the trendy innovations happen that take off with younger consumers,” says Mellentin.

“But animal protein still has significant competitive advantages, including taste, texture, versatility and nutritional quality. And now that livestock farmers are increasingly focused on sustainability and becoming carbon-neutral, this will create a ‘permission to indulge’ halo for animal proteins.”

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. Data used here is taken from the newly-published report *10 Key Trends in Food, Nutrition & Health 2022*, authored by Julian Mellentin. It is the food industry's only analysis of the key trends which also shows the strategies that companies are using to succeed with the trends. More information here: <https://www.new-nutrition.com/keytrend?id=226>
2. Editors can request comment or arrange an interview by contacting:
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3. Julian Mellentin is a consultant specialising in the international business of food, nutrition and health. He is director of New Nutrition Business, which provides expert consultancy services to agriculture, ingredient and branded product companies on all aspects of nutrition and health, focusing on concrete, implementable strategies. New Nutrition Business' monthly publication provides case studies and analysis of success and failure in the global nutrition business and is used by companies in 42 countries. Find out more at www.new-nutrition.com.