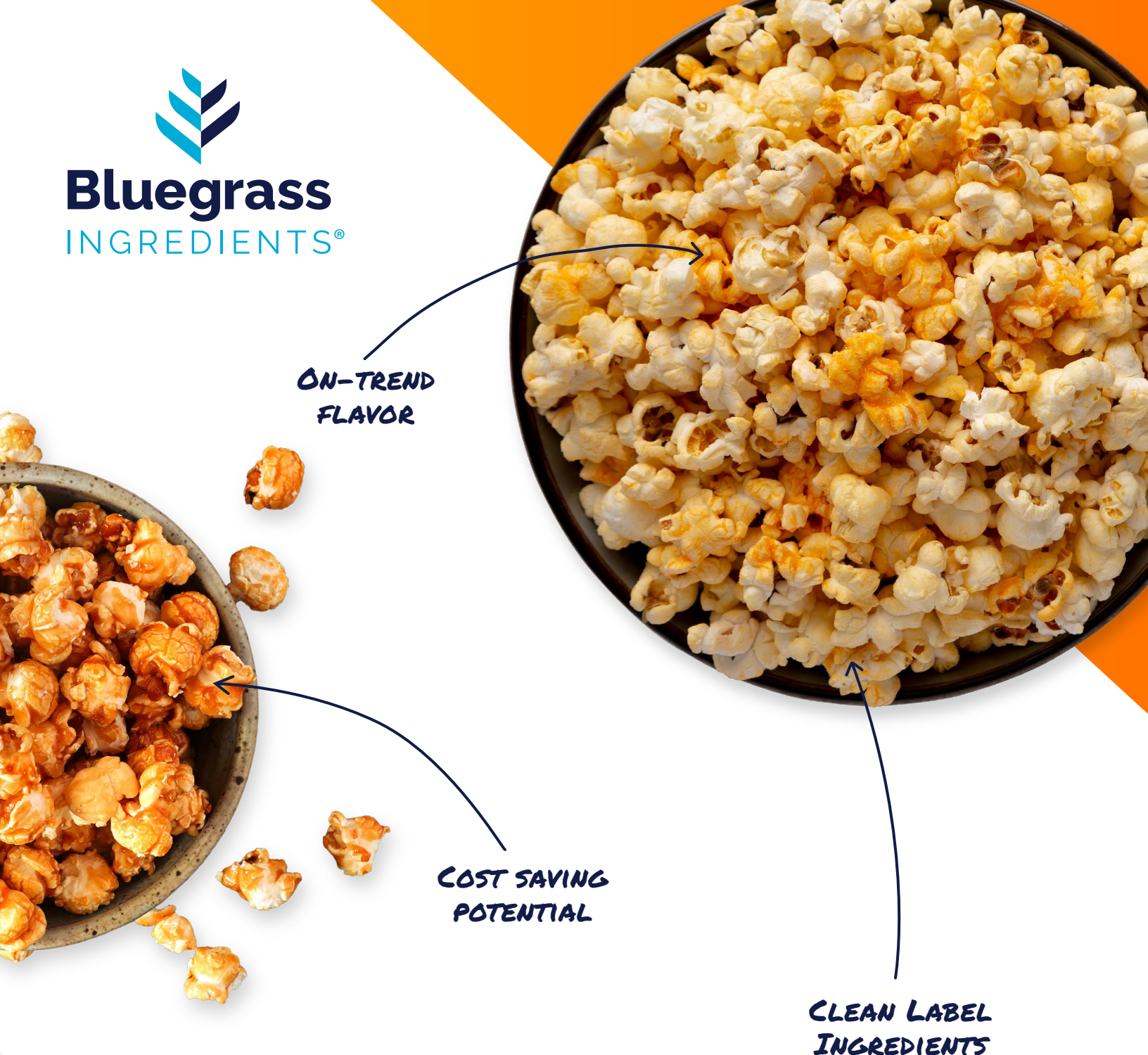




**Bluegrass**  
INGREDIENTS®



**ON-TREND  
FLAVOR**

**COST SAVING  
POTENTIAL**

**CLEAN LABEL  
INGREDIENTS**

## Popcorn Continues to Perform in Snacking Category

For a food that dates back to 3600 BCE in Mexico, there sure is an incredible amount of innovation in the popcorn category. What's changed? Definitely not the process. Kernel + heat = popcorn. Instead, innovation has thrived in positioning and flavors. Both have evolved in ways that make one of North America's oldest snacks as popular as ever.

Innovation also has expanded the distribution footprint of popcorn. Menu mentions of "popcorn" in foodservice are exploding, and brands such as [AMC Theatres](#) are securing shelf space for its branded popcorn in supermarkets across the country.





Popcorn has momentum as a snack today and is expected to continue to grow as long as food manufacturers give consumers what they want. Here are five opportunities to take advantage of the popcorn category through new product development.

1

## Better-For-You Positioning

Many of the most popular popcorn brands on the market offer portions with less than 80 calories per serving. That's a boon for consumers who want indulgent snacks without all the calories. Even better, most popcorn, even those positioned as indulgent, have clean labels. Our [Agile Kitchen™](#) culinary team specializes in developing clean label seasonings that meet manufacturers' clean label requirements. In fact, we also produce [plant-based powders](#) that deliver dairy flavors like cheese and butter for vegetarian and vegan popcorn.

2

## Traditional Flavors...AMPLIFIED

The most popular popcorn flavors are pretty much what you would expect them to be: butter, white cheddar, cheddar, cheese and some combination of sweet and salty. However, recent new product development has focused on amplifying these traditional flavors with more heat and more cheese. For example:

- [Doc Popcorn's Flamin' Cheesy](#) adds an impressive amount of heat to its popular cheddar cheese popcorn
- The O-Ke-Doke brand has amplified the cheesiness and heat with its [Hot Cheese Popcorn](#).

3

## Pushing Non-traditional Flavor Boundaries

Fruit flavors are finding their way into the popcorn aisle, giving consumers a boundary-pushing taste that's unexpected in the category. [Popcornopolis' Jalapeno Lime popcorn](#) combines trending citrus flavors with heat in a clean label ingredient that touts no artificial ingredients on the label. We expect the use of citrus and heat in popcorn to continue its growth. Our culinary team has been innovating a variety of fruit plus dairy plus heat combinations, using our line of [citrus powders](#) and [dairy seasoning blends](#).

In addition to fruit flavors, popcorn manufacturers also are pushing boundaries with popular indulgent treats translated to the popcorn category. We loved [Smartfood's Chocolate Glazed Donut popcorn](#) for its flavor and ability to position popcorn in a new way.



4

## Brand Collaborations

Mashups of popular brands are thriving as social media's influence on snacking continues to grow. If it plays well on TikTok, it's most likely going to play well in online or supermarket sales. A few of our favorite collaborations in the past year include:

- [Angie's Boom Chicka Pop and Cinnabon](#)
- [AMC Theatres and Hidden Valley Ranch](#)
- [BjornQorn and Ruby beverage brand](#)

5

## Snacking, Snacking, Snacking

Americans' love of snacking has continued to drive the food industry, including the snacking category. Although it shows no sign of slowing, the category is evolving. When developing new popcorn products consider the following:

- **Serving Size:** Mindful snacking will grow in popularity and having a single serving package of less than 100 calories is a strong selling point.
- **Starring Ingredients:** Ingredients have become the star of the snack category, often overshadowing actual products. This hasn't happened in popcorn yet, where seasonings still rule. However, look to on-trend seasonings and functional ingredients such as mushrooms and seaweed as a way to attract new customers.
- **Social Curation:** Use social media as a marketing tool for innovation. Working on a boundary-pushing flavor that you're not sure will sell? Tease it on TikTok and see the response. Capitalize on the collaboration social media allows you to have with consumers.

The popcorn category is popping, and Bluegrass Ingredients is your partner in [dairy seasoning blends](#), [citrus powders](#) and [plant-based powders](#). [Contact us](#) today to start developing a new popcorn product.



**The Agile Kitchen at Bluegrass** is a creative space that blends innovation and insights to deliver formulations and products that align with pressing consumer trends. Bluegrass Ingredients food scientists and culinary experts partner with customers to use these powders and all our products to invent and improve the future of food.

### Delivering Great Taste

Bluegrass Ingredients operates at the cutting edge of taste and flavor trends. **The Bluegrass Agile Ingredient Innovation®** Model is custom built to help brands and flavor houses achieve the rapid food innovation they need to stay ahead of today's dynamic consumer taste and dietary demands.

### Contact Us

- 🌐 [Bluegrassingredients.com](https://bluegrassingredients.com)
- ✉ [info@bluegrassingredients.com](mailto:info@bluegrassingredients.com)
- ☎ Sales Inquiries: +1-270-297-7850
- 📍 801 State Street  
Bowling Green, KY 42101
- 🌐 [LinkedIn](#) 📧 [Newsletter](#)

