



Dairy Concentrates - The Secret Ingredient in the Freezer Section

Ready-made freezer meals have experienced considerable growth in recent years, both in terms of sales and consumer expectations around flavor and convenience. In a post-pandemic world, the freezer section in grocery stores has evolved beyond last-minute convenience to a destination for high-quality meals. Today's consumers are seeking out established frozen food products like lasagna and burritos along with new takes on classic cuisines.

As the category settles into its new role as a culinary destination beyond convenience, consumer priorities are coming into focus.

Shoppers want food that delivers on value and quality. They want frozen food that tastes good and won't break the bank.

For food manufacturers to meet those expectations, they must focus on innovations that reduce cost and enhance flavor.

Enter dairy concentrates.

Dairy concentrates have proven a valuable solution for food manufacturers looking to optimize flavor, functionality and cost efficiency in their food formulations. Not all product developers are familiar with dairy concentrates and the ways they can spur innovations in flavor, form and function – especially in the freezer aisle.

DAIRY CONCENTRATES

THE BENEFITS OF DAIRY CONCENTRATES

- Reduced costs
- More intense dairy flavors
- Easier handling
- Reduced transportation and storage needs
- Clean-label formulation





What Food Manufacturers Need to Know About Dairy Concentrates

Dairy concentrates are specialized ingredients that deliver intensified and more targeted dairy flavor through enzyme modification and other specialized production processes. There's an art and a science to concentrate development -- different modifications will impact flavor differently. By removing moisture and standardizing components like fat, protein and flavor compounds, dairy concentrates are a cost-effective alternative to traditional dairy ingredients.

On average, concentrates can deliver food manufacturers a 10 to 25% reduction in cheese costs.

At Bluegrass Ingredients, our dairy concentrates begin with high-quality dairy ingredients. Our proprietary enzyme modification process, combined with our deep expertise in dairy flavor, allows us to deliver custom "black box" flavors that cannot be matched or replicated. We can process these concentrates into powder or paste formulation, depending on the end application.

Dairy concentrate powders are easy to store and have a long shelf life. They work well in dry ingredient applications including snack seasonings, baking mixes and instant soups. Paste concentrates also offer storage efficiencies and are purpose-built to provide more intense flavor. They work well in applications including cheese spreads, dips and sauces.

CONCENTRATES, FROZEN FOODS, AND FOOD- SERVICE

For experienced food manufacturers, it's not hard to see how the benefits concentrates offer in the freezer section translate to frozen ingredients and items in the foodservice sector.

Successfully minimizing the effect of the freeze-thaw cycle, minimizing flavor loss during flash-off and delivering more intense dairy flavors are all vital to delivering dishes diners expect.

Dairy concentrates, including cheese, butter and cream ingredients, help foodservice organizations achieve these benefits while prioritizing cost reduction and streamlined handling.





The Benefits of Concentrates in Ready-made Freezer Meals

Concentrates have emerged as innovative solutions with unique applications and benefits in the freezer aisle. They're particularly well-suited for frozen ready-made meals because of their ability to enhance flavor and mitigate the challenges that come with freezing and reheating food. Here's a closer look at some of the benefits concentrates can offer in frozen food applications.

TEMPERING THE FREEZE-THAW CYCLE – Concentrates can help minimize the effects of repeated freezing and thawing during production as well as transport before and after consumers purchase the item. In ready-made meals, this can help maintain the recognizable taste and texture of dishes like lasagna or burritos. With cream, butter and cheese concentrates, manufacturers can better control melt and flow and minimize separation after freezing and reheating.

MINIMIZING VOLATILIZATION – The other challenge food manufacturers navigate with frozen foods is the flavor flash-off (or volatilization) that comes with reheating. Different flavor components heat and boil at different rates, which can reduce overall flavor impact and alter the balance of flavors in the final product. Dairy concentrates help to reduce volatilization and can mask unwanted flavor notes by enhancing flavor and creaminess of sauces.

DELIVERING MORE INTENSE DAIRY FLAVORS –

Consumers want dishes that taste authentic. They want to taste the umami from the Parmesan and the Romano in their eggplant parmesan. They want to taste the bite of cheddar in their enchiladas. Developing rich, intense dairy flavors is easier with concentrates.

ACHIEVING CONSUMER-FRIENDLY LABELLING –

Consumers are more likely than ever to read ingredients and nutritional information on frozen foods. Concentrates are clean-label and can be used to enhance the expected flavor of most frozen dishes. Additionally, Bluegrass Ingredients has plant-based dairy concentrates for vegan formulations.

Collaborating on Innovative Ingredient Solutions

Even food manufacturers familiar with concentrates and enzyme-modified dairy products aren't always focused on the many benefits these innovative ingredients can provide.

Bluegrass Ingredients has a proven model for providing hands-on support in concepting and developing an application that harnesses these benefits and accounts for other product needs.



To see how much concentrates could save your organization, try our **Cheese Sauce Savings Calculator**.

DAIRY CONCENTRATES

PROPRIETARY CONCENTRATE SOLUTIONS ROOTED IN DAIRY EXPERTISE

At Bluegrass Ingredients, our longtime experience in dairy flavors, combined with advanced processing capabilities, allow us to craft innovative concentrate paste and powder ingredient solutions.

What sets Bluegrass Ingredients concentrates apart:

- Advanced technical capabilities
- Rapid flavor customization
- Unique “Black Box” formulations

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