

New Dietary Guidelines Prompt Mass Reformulation



The quinquennial release of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs) hasn't caused much of a stir since the first one was published in 1980. Every new edition was generally met with a yawn from consumers and food brands, with only dieticians debating the finer details of each edition.

Until now. The 2026 guidelines have been positioned as America's great nutrition reset, and the report's release has already triggered food brands across the United States to start reformulating products.

The main storyline: "processed food" vs. "real food."

Led by Super Bowl commercials featuring Mike Tyson, the new DGAs squarely place the blame on processed foods for rising chronic disease rates in America. This is quite the departure from past DGAs, which focused more on what percentage of your diet should come from each of the main food groups.

Needless to say, this stance has been quite controversial because there is no official definition of processed foods. Nor are there classifications for such foods, such as minimally processed, processed or highly processed. How do consumers know what to avoid and what to put in their shopping cart? It's a question that remains unanswered, for now.

However, there are answers to be found in the 2026 DGAs as it relates to new product development and reformulation. We read the report front to back and have outlined three key takeaways that every product developer, food scientist and brand manager should be thinking about.

TAKEAWAY 1

CLEAN LABEL REFORMULATION

Although there are countless unanswered questions about processed foods, it would be prudent of all food brands to take a closer look at their formulations for ingredients that may be troublesome. Artificial colors and flavors will definitely be on the processed list, as will synthetic preservatives. It's best to reformulate now and get ahead of the game.

HOW CAN BLUEGRASS INGREDIENTS HELP

Speed is the name of the game, and our [Agile Kitchen™](#) team was built to quickly reformulate and ensure your dairy and fruit ingredients come from real dairy and real fruit, and not synthetic flavors. We've also started reviewing our product line and removing any synthetic colors to ensure clean label standards.

Unfortunately, reformulation costs money. Bluegrass Ingredients can help here too. Our team approaches reformulation with cost optimization in mind. Many of our ingredients are shelf and price stable, allowing food companies to eliminate cold storage fees and price fluctuations for certain ingredients, all while maintaining quality and a clean label.



TAKEAWAY 2

PROTEIN IS A PRIORITY

The DGAs have sparked a protein craze that was fully manifested at Natural Products Expo West in March, where high protein claims were thrown on everything from waffles to canned coffee. This is to be expected when you consider the new guidelines recommend boosting a person's daily intake of protein by nearly double the previous minimums.

As any product developer will tell you, however, added protein creates significant sensory hurdles for food scientists. As food brands pack more pea, soy and whey protein isolates into formulations to meet these high protein targets, they also pack in more off-flavor notes, including bitterness, astringency and a chalky mouthfeel.

HOW CAN BLUEGRASS INGREDIENTS HELP

Bluegrass Ingredients does not provide bulk protein ingredients such as whey, pea or soy. However, we do provide the flavor architecture that makes these proteins palatable to the average consumer. Bluegrass Ingredients' **dairy seasoning blends** and **concentrates** modulate flavors and mask the earthy or metallic aftertastes of most added protein sources.

This is especially important as the new DGAs strongly discourage the use of added sugars for masking bad protein flavors. Sweetness has traditionally been the main tool to hide the taste of added protein ingredients, making it the perfect time to switch to more savory masking strategies that Bluegrass Ingredients offers.



DYNAMIC
TRENDING
INNOVATIVE
CREAMY
PROTEIN PACK



TAKEAWAY 3

DAIRY PLAYS A STARRING ROLE

The new DGAs place dairy at the base of a new inverted pyramid, signaling that it should be an inclusion in every meal. From a visual perspective, cheese, whole milk, yogurt and butter all have prominent positions in the graphic that represents the new pyramid.

What's interesting about dairy's focus in the DGA, is that the report highlights dairy not just for its calcium and Vitamin D, but also as a primary source of high-quality protein and "healthy fats" that aid in satiety and metabolic health. The guidelines also strongly encourage consumption of full-fat dairy products.

HOW CAN BLUEGRASS INGREDIENTS HELP

Bluegrass Ingredients supplies a complete line of dairy ingredients, from **dairy seasoning blends** to **dairy powders** and **dairy concentrates**. We understand dairy products, how to make them better and how to optimize costs to improve your bottom line.

Yes, there are quite a few unanswered questions regarding the new DGAs. However, that shouldn't stop food brands from reformulating products to remove synthetic ingredients and capitalize on the expected shift to clean label products with dairy flavors. Start your reformulations and new product developments with an experienced partner in Bluegrass Ingredients. **Contact us today!**