

CMD 521

521 – Canadian Consumer Attitudes and Purchasing Behaviours of Omega-3 Products

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Research Summary

The development of value-added functional food and natural health products (FFNHPs) is important for the growth of Alberta's agri-food industry. To successfully develop and commercialize new products, it is essential to understand consumer needs and factors impacting their acceptance of FFNHPs.

“Consumers today are very empowered about what they eat. The food system needs to become more responsive if it wants to become consumer driven” (David E. Bell, Harvard Business School). The Consumer Research Team of the Market and Consumer Analysis Unit, AAFRD conducts research and helps Alberta's agri-food industry increase their awareness and knowledge of major consumer trends impacting the sectors.

One food trend that gained momentum in the last few years was heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids. According to Datamonitor, worldwide, launches of new foods & beverages containing omega-3 have more than doubled since 2002. Big name food companies have jumped on the wagon and Omega-3 has penetrated a variety of product categories. The objective of this research is to collect, analyze and report on the latest Alberta and Canadian consumer purchasing behaviors of omega-3 foods and supplements. Alberta Agriculture has purchased proprietary AC Nielsen Homescan data for this study. The data is a combination of the disaggregate, Canadian total panel household purchase data for the Omega-3 categories, and PanelTrack data tracking total panel responses to survey questions specifically designed for this research. This information will be used to develop profiles of the Omega-3 consumers in Alberta and Canada. Furthermore, the study will provide insight into eating habits, purchase motivators and future intents of Canadian households, and the impacts of consumer attitudes, socio-demographics, lifestyles and lifestyles on purchasing behaviors of functional foods and wellness food products.

Significance of Research

This information can be used by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD) in policy development to ensure that policies are developed that will help Alberta's agri-food industry respond to the rapidly changing trends and become consumer-driven.

The research to be developed will provide valuable consumer insights that will be shared with

Alberta and Canadian agri-food producers and companies. This information will help these companies effectively target their customer base in developing new products, brands and marketing strategies. Information on Alberta and Canadian consumers are especially valuable to small to medium size enterprises whose marketing territory is local or domestic and who lack the resources or expertise to conduct their own consumer research.

The development of value-added FFNHPs is important for Alberta's agri-food industry. This study will be fundamental for developing commercialization and marketing strategies for Alberta's FFNHP industry.