

Flavors Target Gold Standard Replication

In a growing industry trend, food technologists are trying to fight product development frustrations by honing their culinary abilities, while chefs are sharpening their food technology skills to battle the aggravation of seeing gold standards drastically changed during processing. Flavor Dynamic's Chef-Assist™ flavor line, aimed at this area of overlap between food technologists and chefs, facilitates the creation and replication of gold-standard products.

Utilizing its Dynamic Flavor Profile Method, plus extensive collaboration between in-house chefs and flavor chemists, the company is converting a large portion of its oil-soluble savory line into equivalent dry flavors. "What's great about a powder system is that it easily disperses in many different types of food systems," says Anthony Rella, research chef. "For example, we've used our dry Cajun Mirepoix Flavor in both a dirty rice, which is a solid-food application, and in a liquid-based gumbo. The diversification of this line into powders greatly expands the ability to translate a chef's creation into a successful product in the supermarket."

Dried Chef-Assist products, which supply flavor nuances typically lost in processing, replicate many of the basic textbook flavors and sauces, such as sub-bases, mother sauces, compound sauces and savory profiles. In addition, the ingredients offer functional solutions to many of the challenges that arise with difficult systems, such as low-fat and microwaveable foods. Typically oil-soluble, these stable fla-

vors withstand heat and other stressful processing conditions.

The line's attention to culinary detail is exemplified by a selection of roux flavors that impart buttery to browned nuances. "In creating a roux, chefs cook butter and flour, resulting in a distinctive Maillard reaction that delivers a toasted, nutty, buttery flavor," explains Rella. "Roux is generally not used in manufactured foods, however, and is replaced with modified food starch, which lacks the unique flavor profile of a roux." Adding the food science perspective, Ken Kraut, lab manager, says, "A roux is not shelf-stable and will become rancid either on the shelf or through harsh production methods. By using starch for viscosity and processing stability, plus a roux flavor, end products can be designed

with the distinctive taste and mouthfeel imparted by traditional culinary thickening methods."

Flavor ingredients are available with functionalities that compensate for attributes lost or changed during manufacture. Including a Chef-Assist acid reducer in a low-fat salad dressing, for instance, minimizes the often-excessive acid overtones. Lipid-enhancing flavors supply fatty mouthfeel and flavor to reduced-fat formulations. ■

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