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Consumer Research Reveals Improved Understanding of the Benefits of Low Glycaemic Nutrition

Qualitative consumer research commissioned by functional ingredients manufacturer BENEEO, reveals that consumers are increasingly aware of the benefits of low glycaemic nutrition.

Carried out in the UK, Germany and Spain¹ the research sought to gauge consumer knowledge and attitudes towards carbohydrates, sugars and low glycaemic foods, as well as their role in blood sugar management.

'Good' vs 'bad' carbohydrates

The results show that consumers are aware that carbohydrates provide essential fuel for the body. They are beginning to differentiate between 'good' and 'bad' carbohydrates and understand that these carbohydrates have different effects on the body and blood glucose levels: with wholegrain, fibre, complex carbohydrates as well as slowly digestible and slow-release carbohydrates seen as 'good'. The findings also show that consumers consider carbohydrates with a lower blood glucose response to be healthier.

Respondents confirmed their growing understanding of the differences amongst carbohydrates, with replies such as: "I think there are healthy and unhealthy carbohydrates... similar to saturated and unsaturated fats." Others said: "Good carbs are burnt more slowly in the body and take more time to be turned into glucose" and "I know that there are slow-releasing carbohydrates, which keep energy levels up for longer." BENEEO's qualitative findings support one of the key trend predictions for 2015 referring to 'Good carbs' and 'bad carbs'².

¹ Qualitative Survey carried out online with at least 30 participants per country over 2.5 week period during September – November 2014.

² Source: <http://www.new-nutrition.com/report/showReport/1235>

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Lower blood sugar levels are regarded as beneficial

As well as gauging consumer understanding and attitudes towards carbohydrates, BENEEO's qualitative survey assessed consumer opinion on low glycaemic foods and blood sugar management. The results show that consumers link a variety of long- and short-term benefits to lower rises in blood sugar levels. Participants commented on the fact that low blood sugar levels "make you feel nourished and satisfied for longer". Also benefits, such as "good for weight management", "disease prevention", or "fewer cravings" were relevant for consumers.

Here is some of the respondent feedback on the benefits of balanced blood sugar levels:

- "Low glycaemic foods would keep you going for longer." (UK participant)
- "If a person's blood sugar levels don't rise that much, then there are probably fewer cravings when their blood sugar level falls." (UK participant)
- "I think low glycaemic nutrition is healthier because then the person will not store as much fat." (German participant)
- "I think that the best thing is to start the day with a low GI breakfast. Having a healthy diet, with less sugar, is the best way to prevent future health issues." (Spanish participant)

BENEEO's ingredients help to modify the glycaemic response of food and drink. Choosing ingredients such as the slow release carbohydrate Palatinose™ (isomaltulose) and the dietary fibres Orafiti® Inulin and Oligofructose, or the sugar replacer ISOMALT, can help manufacturers to meet consumer demand for low glycaemic alternatives. These functional ingredients, naturally derived from sugar beet and chicory root, have a mild sweet taste and provide further nutritional benefits. They support balanced blood sugar levels as well as weight management, while maintaining taste and texture of the final product. In addition, BENEEO has received positive EFSA opinions for the blood glucose lowering properties of its dietary fibres oligofructose and inulin, as well as for the unique slow release carbohydrate Palatinose™ and the sugar replacer ISOMALT with corresponding health claim approvals in the Annex of the Regulation 432/2012.

Myriam Snaet, Manager Market Intelligence & Consumer Insights at BENEEO: "These results clearly show that shoppers are starting to understand the benefits of balanced blood sugar levels. Manufacturers need to begin to think about how they can make the most of this

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growing understanding through the development of consumer-relevant, low glycaemic food and drink products.”

For further details and insights on the consumer research Myriam Snaet is available for comment.

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For further information on BENEEO and its ingredients, please visit: www.beneo.com and www.beneonews.com

BENEEO offers functional ingredients derived from chicory roots, beet sugar, rice and wheat. BENEEO is the ideal partner to help improve a product in its nutritional and technological characteristics. Key nutritional benefits are ‘less fat’, ‘less sugar’, ‘less calories’, ‘added fibre’, ‘gluten-free’ and dairy alternatives as well as energy management, digestive, bone and dental health. Key technological benefits focus on taste and texture improvements. Through a unique chain of expertise, including the BENEEO-Institute that provides decisive insights into nutrition science and legislation, and the BENEEO-Technology Center that consults in application technology, BENEEO actively supports customers in the development of more balanced and healthy food products.

BENEEO is a division of the Südzucker Group, employs almost 900 people and has production units in Belgium, Chile, Germany and Italy.

www.BENEEO.com

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