

FINDING HEALTHIER SOLUTIONS



Few industries in the world face a more pronounced pressure to respond to changes instigated by the end consumers' growing focus on health and wellness. The Middle East Food and Beverage industry is no exception and with the recently levied sugar taxes across the region, local manufacturers have had to react fast due to these regulatory mandates which express the governments concern for their population's health in terms of cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and obesity.

Food Specialities Limited (FSL) has been at the forefront of the regional food and beverage manufacturing industry since 1986 and has responded to recent consumer and regulatory shifts by working with their key ingredient partners to develop solutions focused on the reduction of sodium salts, by introducing functional fibres into the mainstream manufacturing process and by decreasing the reliance on hydrogenated fats and replacing them with healthier alternatives.

As regional governments begin to legislate against sugars, FSL is working on great-tasting alternatives

Sodium Salts Reduction - A large body of scientific evidence indicates a clear connection between excessive sodium consumption and cardiovascular disease. In processed food, salts play a key role in terms of flavour, texture and shelf-life hence reducing or replacing salts without compromising on flavour is a challenge. FSL's has partnered with companies such as Van Hees, BK Giuliani, Aromatech, Deutche Back and Stern Vitamin to develop salt reduction solutions without compromising on the flavour profile.

Hydrogenated Fats Replacement - Trans fats or partially hydrogenated vegetable oil are created by a process called hydrogenation, which allows the oil to be used in products like margarine, vegetable shortening, compound chocolate and coffee creamers. Though they have a longer shelf life than other fats, they are also linked to an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, the heightening of bad LDL cholesterol levels and type II diabetes. With the World Health Organization launching an effort to ban trans fats globally by 2023, the drive to find healthier fat replacement alternatives is even more urgent today.

According to Vivek Upreti, GM of FSL's Bakery, Confectionery & Speciality Ingredients division, "We have partnered with AAK who are world renowned experts in vegetable oil and fat solutions

and have developed a wide range of healthier alternatives to hydrogenated fats. Depending on the application, AAK and FSL have been helping their regional customer base find healthier solutions in the production of dairy, confectionery and snack products, all of which rely heavily on the use of processed fats. AAK's non-hydrogenated fat solutions provide stability, are cost-effective and can be customized as per manufacturers' individual product needs."

Dietary fibre - A wide body of research suggests that dietary fibre helps maintain digestive health, lowers cholesterol levels and helps control blood sugar levels, among other benefits.

FSL's technical team have been developing fibre-enriched bakery products, dairy products, plant-based dairy alternatives and juice beverages by applying clean label ingredients and natural citrus fibres. These innovative products have great versatility in the application scope that includes, dairy, meat, bakery, beverages, sauces, dressings, prepared foods, soups and other applications.

FSL will be showcasing their innovative products and healthier solutions in a dedicated innovation room at the FSL stand located at the entrance to Sheikh Saeed Hall 1, S1-B36.