

Voice of the Expert

Extracts for Taste and Transparency

Thomas Kountz, Clean Flavor Chemist



As consumer expectations evolve, product developers are under increasing pressure to deliver cleaner labels without compromising taste. Thomas Kountz, Clean Flavor Chemist, shares how extracts can help brands meet modern demands for transparency, regulatory compliance, and authentic flavor.

Q: Why are cleaner labels such a priority today?

A: Consumers are increasingly looking for cleaner labels—products made with familiar ingredients and shorter lists that often convey simplicity and quality.

At the same time, regulatory requirements continue to evolve, often requiring companies to reformulate products to meet updated guidelines. For product developers, the challenge is balancing these expectations while maintaining the great taste consumers expect from their favorite brands. Extracts can serve as a solution because they are created with transparency and green chemistry principles in mind.

Q: What exactly is an extract?

A: An extract is a concentrated flavor derived from a natural source. Extracts are behind many of the foods and beverages we love—like the vanilla in cookies or the hint of lime in sparkling water. Extracts come in multiple formats, including water-soluble, concentrated, oil-soluble, and encapsulated forms, and can be used across virtually any application.

Time, temperature, and the solvent used all play a critical role in achieving the best flavor through extraction. It's about striking the right balance to capture the authentic flavor characteristics of the source material while maintaining quality and consistency.

 **Flavorsolutions**



83% of U.S. consumers read food labels before making a purchase decision. **64%** pay more attention to labels compared to five years ago.

NSF, 2025



“Extracts are all about transparency and authenticity.”

Q: Why should product developers consider using extracts?

A: Extracts are all about transparency and authenticity—obtaining genuine flavors directly from their original sources. By applying green chemistry principles and modern extraction techniques, extract can be used to meet clean label and regulatory goals.

These approaches are especially valuable when complying with standards such as organic certification and Non-GMO Project Verified (NGPV).

Extracts can also enable developers to create the diverse taste experiences today’s consumers expect. In addition to traditional spices and herbs, our extracts include sweet browns, botanical and floral profiles, fruit and citrus flavors, and heat sources such as chilies.

Q: How do you ensure flavor consistency when working with extracts?

A: Consistency starts with high-quality raw materials. However, that can be challenging due to sourcing variability and growing cycles. That’s why strong supply chain partnerships are essential. By establishing reliable relationships and leveraging our global footprint, we can access high-quality ingredients year-round and offer a wide range of profiles.

We also work with sourcing partners who use advanced technologies to obtain true-to-fresh starting materials. This allows us to create “from the named” extracts—such as a Fuji apple profile—that deliver authentic, regional fruit character for innovation projects.

Q: What advice do you have for product developers navigating clean label reformulation?

A: First, understand your consumers’ priorities and what they value most about your brand. It’s also critical to engage with regulatory partners to understand how the latest regulations may impact your labels. Then collaborate closely with flavor partners to meet those needs without sacrificing taste.

At McCormick Flavor Solutions, we are committed to partnering on clean label initiatives to ensure products deliver exceptional taste while meeting transparency and regulatory expectations. We continue to expand our extraction and advance our technologies to stay ahead of evolving consumer preferences worldwide. Our expertise is rooted in a long history of extraction leadership—more than 135 years ago, our first product was a root beer extract—demonstrating a legacy of innovation that continues to shape our approach today.