

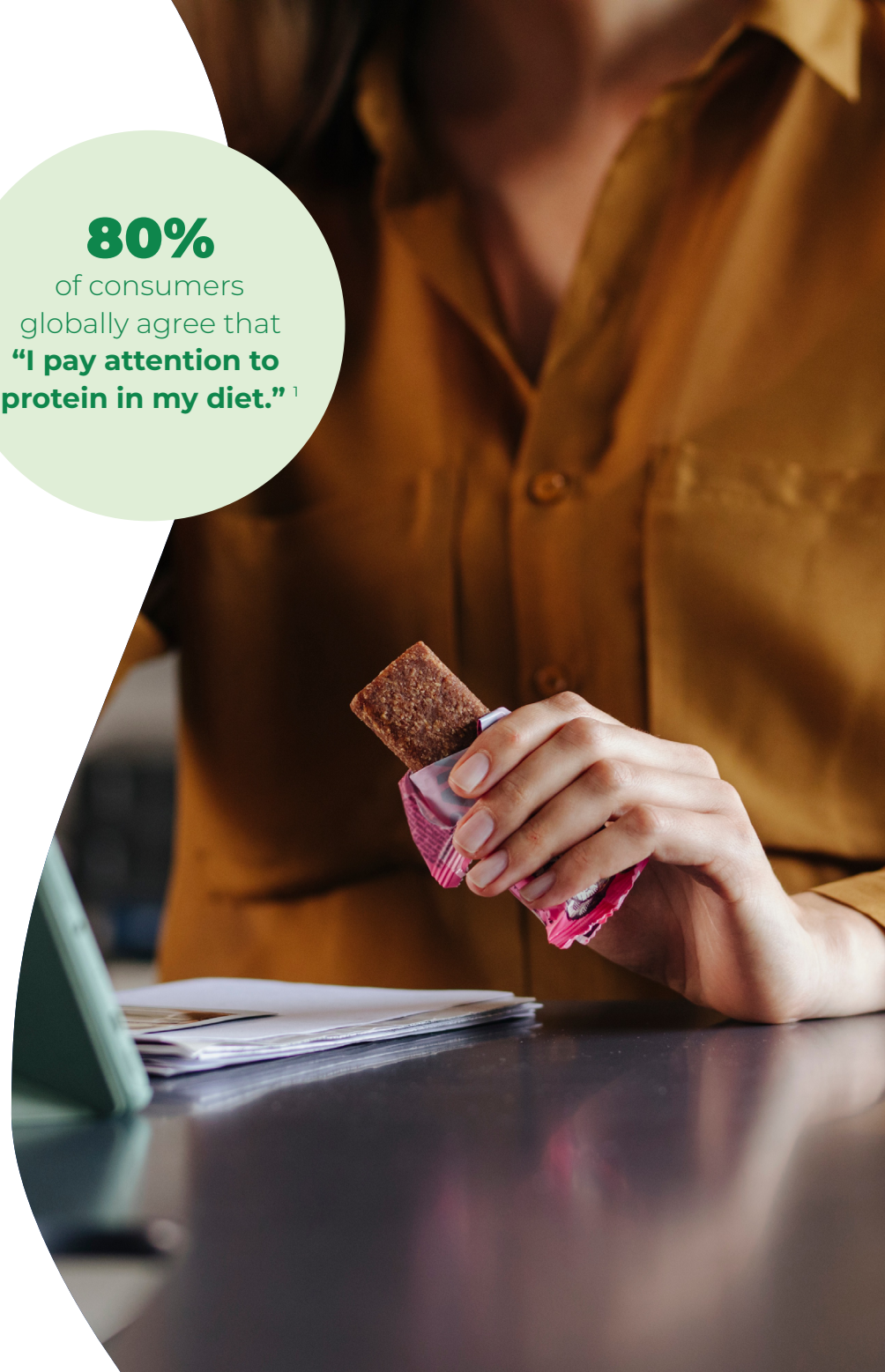


Protein: What to know

The push for protein continues as consumers seek out protein-rich foods and drinks made with both plant-based and animal-based ingredients. While once primarily sought after by athletes, a broader range of consumers are looking at protein as a part of a larger, more long-term part of a healthy lifestyle. These in-demand ingredients are being incorporated into a variety of savory and sweet products that extend well beyond the traditional meat case and snack aisle, into categories like bakery, beverages, pasta and more.

Taste, of course, remains crucial to acceptance, whether in new forms of favorite proteins or in products made with plant-based proteins that may require some flavor assistance. It's the common denominator and the main purchase and re-purchase driver. Pump up the protein without sacrificing taste. Let's take a look at how flavor is being used in these protein packed products.

80%
of consumers
globally agree that
**"I pay attention to
protein in my diet."**¹



Protein Drivers

Today's consumers are looking for more and different types of products made with – and often fortified with – animal and plant-based proteins. What's driving their quest for protein? A desire for holistic health, interest in foods and drinks that deliver on energy, cravings across dayparts and interest in offerings rooted in nature are just a few. Interest is coming from many demographics but is especially strong among younger consumers, boding well for the staying power of protein ingredients.



There has been a **57%** increase in unit sales for products with protein between 2024 to 2025 and products that have more than **20 grams of protein have grown by 4%.**

FMI & Spins 2025, U.S.

44% of U.S. respondents said they want to increase their protein intake, up from 34% from the same period in 2024.

2025 Bain & Company survey

46% of GLP-1 drug users reported high-protein content makes them more likely to purchase a frozen food product.

The National Frozen & Refrigerated Foods Association

Consumers placed the highest importance on the **amount of protein** followed by protein type in protein beverages.

Journal of Dairy Science "Consumer acceptance of protein

Households with kids younger than 18 are **1.6x more likely** to be influenced by attribute claims.

FMI & SPINS Joint Survey June 2025 (n=1,544)

Dairy Derived Proteins

Dairy proteins come from dairy processing and are valued for functionality, texture-building ability, and digestibility. This is one of the most commonly used protein sources. Dairy proteins are often used when building flavor profiles that would naturally have a dairy component to them as the off-notes can blend in with the natural milky taste of the flavor.

Off-notes: Sour dairy, cardboard, starch, cheesy, baby formula, butyric acid, soapy, bitter

Benefits: Fast & slow digesting proteins, complete amino acid profile, contributes to satiety

26%

of new products launched in 2025 with a protein claim used a form of dairy based protein.

Innova (excluding meat & meat alt)

Protein Type	Source	Protein %	Lactose Level	Digestion Speed	Texture Impact	Typical Use Cases	Cost Tier
Whey Protein Concentrate (WPC)	Whey (cheese byproduct)	70–80%	Moderate	Fast	Creamy, soft	Bars, cereal, baked goods, shakes	\$
Whey Protein Isolate (WPI)	Further filtered whey	90%+	Very low	Fast	Lighter, less creamy	RTDs, powders, high-protein cereal, bars	\$\$
Clear Whey	Acid-stable whey isolate	90%+	Very low	Fast	Thin, juice-like, clear	Protein waters, sports drinks	\$\$\$
Micellar Casein	Casein from milk	80–85%	Low	Slow	Thick, creamy, dense	Satiety bars, meal replacements	\$\$
Milk Protein Concentrate (MPC)	Whole milk (20% whey / 80% casein)	40–85%	Moderate	Medium (balanced)	Creamy, can firm over time	Bars, baked goods, cereals	\$
Milk Protein Isolate (MPI)	Refined milk protein	90%+	Very low	Medium (balanced)	Creamy, stable	Premium bars, RTDs	\$\$\$

Oats Overnight
Strawberries & Cream | 20g of protein per serving
Overnight oats with a whey protein boost that compliments the addition of milk consumers will add to create the product.



Genius Gourmet
Buffalo | 15g of protein per serving
A protein snack relying on a blend of milk proteins (acid casein and whey protein isolate) to deliver 15g of protein in a classic format and flavor for salty snacking.



Collagen Protein

A byproduct of the bone, skin and muscle of cattle, this protein-rich ingredient is available in a cooked gelatin form and broken down into smaller proteins in a hydrolyzed form. Functionally, beef collagen protein gelatinizes when heated and acts as a binder or filler in some processed meats. Hydrolyzed beef collagen tends to be unflavored, so it can be combined with other flavors across different product types.

Off-notes: slightly savory, mild bone broth

Benefits: Linked to beauty claims, aids in gut health, contributes to satiety

Bovine collagen provides **18 amino acids, and 8 of the 9 essential amino acids**. It can be found in bone broth, supplements, protein bars and powders and more. Totally derma



Stars+Honey Collagen Protein Bar
Peanut Butter Blackberry | 15g of protein per serving

This protein bar uses Type I and III hydrolyzed collagen peptides from grass-fed bovine and less than 2g of sugar.



Lumen
Strawberry Dragonfruit Lemonade | 16g of protein per serving

A ready to drink reverse osmosis water infused with hydrolyzed collagen to help rehydrate, rebuild, and recover.

Egg White Protein

Egg albumin is a type of protein derived from egg whites and is rich in protein as well as riboflavin, niacin, potassium and magnesium, among other nutrients. Often available as a powder, egg albumin is a water-soluble ingredient that is easily absorbed. This ingredient is low in cholesterol and offers functional benefits as well, serving as an effective binder in baked goods and meat alternatives, a stabilizer in custards and a thickener in sauces and soups.

Off-notes: slightly salty, subtly eggy taste

Benefits: complete proteins, easily digested, rich in amino acids, vitamins, & minerals

The egg protein market is estimated to grow from USD 10.09 billion in 2026 to reach **USD 13.05 billion by 2031**, at a **CAGR of 5.26%** during the forecast period (2026-2031). Grand View Research



Legendary Protein Donut
Pink Sprinkle | 20g of protein per serving
Protein blend of milk protein isolate, dried egg whites, and whey protein isolate.



Egg-Cellent Egg White Protein Powder
Chocolate Marshmallow | 23.5g of protein per serving
A 100% egg white protein powder made from instant dried egg whites with high leucine content

Plant Protein: **Pea**

Pea protein is derived from yellow split peas and contains all nine essential amino acids, making it a technically complete protein. Functionally, pea protein offers strong emulsification and gelation capabilities, helping improve texture and stability across a range of applications. In addition to its amino acid profile, peas are a natural source of iron and certain B vitamins, though levels may vary depending on processing.

Off-notes: Sour, Earthy, Soapy, vegetative

Benefits: No allergens, Acid profile, Vegan & plant- based sustainability

Plant Protein: **Soy**

Soy protein is derived from defatted soybean meal, the material remaining after soybeans are dehulled and the oil is extracted. It is classified as a complete protein, containing all nine essential amino acids in proportions comparable to many animal proteins. Depending on processing, soy protein can be produced as concentrates, isolates, or textured forms, offering flexibility across applications. However, soy is one of the nine major food allergens in the U.S. and requires proper allergen labeling.

Off-notes: Beany, Green, Bitter

Benefits: Lactose-free, Heart health claim, Promotes satiety because it takes longer to digest

New, in-market pea protein RTD and powdered beverage product launches grew **64%** from Dec. 2024–Dec. 2025 vs. Dec. 2023–2024. Innova



Koia Plant-Based Protein Chocolate | 20g protein per serving

A creamy, decadent pea protein powder with 6g of fiber and 21 vitamins in every serving. It can be blended into shakes, beverages, or used in baking.



Huel Ready-to-Drink Meal Strawberry Banana | 35g of protein per serving

A pea and fava bean protein ready-to-drink meal featuring 27 vitamins and 6 g of fiber.

The global soy protein market size is expected to reach **\$10.89B USD by 2031**; expanding at a **CAGR of 4.83% from 2026 to 2031**. This is fueled by continued interest in plant-based protein products and clean-label reach. Mordor Intelligence



Soylent Plant-Protein Ready-to Drink Meal Mint Chocolate | 20g of protein per serving

Made with soy as its primary protein source, this product delivers 39 essential nutrients that support heart health, muscle recovery, immunity, and metabolism.



Myprotein Soy Protein Isolate Powder Mocha | 26g of protein per serving

A lactose-free soy protein powder that contains 90% protein content and 1g of carbs.

Plant Protein: **Rice**

A nutritious, allergen-friendly, hypoallergenic protein source containing all nine essential amino acids, with higher levels of methionine and cysteine, typically derived from brown rice. It naturally has a grainy texture, which can be a hurdle to consumer acceptability; however, it offers a neutral flavor and good digestibility.

Off-notes: Earthy, Bland, Stale

Benefits: Easily digested, Neutral flavor profile, Allergen-free

The global rice protein market size is expected to reach **\$468.4M USD** by 2031; expanding at a **CAGR of 4.65%** from 2026 to 2031. Mordor Intelligence



KOS Hydration + Protein Drink Mix

Berry | 12g of protein per serving

A drink mix formulated with 1,000mg of electrolytes to support hydration, featuring barley rice protein and zero sugar.



Sunwarrior Clear Protein Refresh Powder

Peach Mango | 10g of protein per serving
A rice protein-based vegan clear protein powder with only 2 g of carbohydrates and 50 calories.

Plant Protein: **Other**

Pumpkin Seed

Traditionally valued for heart-supportive nutrients, pumpkin seeds are gaining attention as a sustainable plant protein source.

Benefits: Allergen-free, Sustainable, Fiber-rich



Remedy Organics Plant Protein Powder

Chocolate Chip | 24g of protein per serving
Formulated with Remedy's organic protein blend of pea and pumpkin seed protein, delivering 4g of fiber and 1g of sugar per serving.

Hemp

Hemp protein is derived from hemp seeds and provides all essential amino acids along with fiber, vitamins, and minerals. Though sometimes misunderstood due to its association with cannabis, hemp protein is safe, non-psychoactive, and nutritionally dense.¹

Benefits: Minimally processed, Complete protein, Sustainable



Premium Jane Plant Based Protein with Collagen

Banana Caramel | 22.5g of protein per serving
A hemp-forward protein powder blended with pea and rice proteins, with added marine collagen for a collagen boost.

Fava Bean

Fava bean protein is derived from large legumes known for its mild, slightly buttery flavor. This plant-based protein is nutrient-dense, providing folate, iron, and manganese, and supports plant-forward protein innovation.

Benefits: Neutral taste and color, Complete protein, Low fat



Nutralle Superfood Plant-based Protein

Vanilla | 25g of protein per serving
A proprietary blend of fava bean, mung bean, pea, and rice proteins formulated to support muscle growth and recovery, with only 120 calories per serving.

Plant Protein: **Rice**

A nutritious, allergen-friendly, hypoallergenic protein source containing all nine essential amino acids, with higher levels of methionine and cysteine, typically derived from brown rice. It naturally has a grainy texture, which can be a hurdle to consumer acceptability; however, it offers a neutral flavor and good digestibility.

Off-notes: Earthy, Bland, Stale

Benefits: Easily digested, Neutral flavor profile, Allergen-free

The global rice protein market size is expected to reach **\$468.4M USD** by 2031; expanding at a **CAGR of 4.65%** from 2026 to 2031. [Mordor Intelligence](#)



KOS Hydration + Protein Drink Mix
Berry | 12g of protein per serving
A drink mix formulated with 1,000mg of electrolytes to support hydration, featuring barley rice protein and zero sugar.



Sunwarrior Clear Protein Refresh Powder
Peach Mango | 10g of protein per serving
A rice protein-based vegan clear protein powder with only 2 g of carbohydrates and 50 calories.

Plant Protein: **Other**

Pumpkin Seed

Traditionally valued for heart-supportive nutrients, pumpkin seeds are gaining attention as a sustainable plant protein source.

Benefits: Allergen-free, Sustainable, Fiber-rich

Hemp

Hemp protein is derived from hemp seeds and provides all essential amino acids along with fiber, vitamins, and minerals. Though sometimes misunderstood due to its association with cannabis, hemp protein is safe, non-psychoactive, and nutritionally dense.¹

Benefits: Minimally processed, Complete protein, Sustainable

Fava Bean

Fava bean protein is derived from large legumes known for its mild, slightly buttery flavor. This plant-based protein is nutrient-dense, providing folate, iron, and manganese, and supports plant-forward protein innovation.

Benefits: Neutral taste and color, Complete protein, Low fat



Remedy Organics Plant Protein Powder
Chocolate Chip | 24g of protein per serving
Formulated with Remedy's organic protein blend of pea and pumpkin seed protein, delivering 4g of fiber and 1g of sugar per serving.



Premium Jane Plant Based Protein with Collagen
Banana Caramel | 22.5g of protein per serving
A hemp-forward protein powder blended with pea and rice proteins, with added marine collagen for a collagen boost.

Protein **Blends & Stacks**

Plant-based protein blends are formulated with intention—designed to create a more complete protein profile by combining sources with complementary amino acid profiles and nutritional strengths. Blending can also help create a smoother base, increase protein levels, and improve overall palatability.

As protein evolves beyond muscle support, added functional ingredients enable strategic benefit stacking; with gut health, sustained energy, and immune support emerging among the top benefits we're seeing.



Blends

Pea + Rice

Pea protein contains all nine essential amino acids and is rich in lysine but lower in methionine. It is often blended with rice protein, which is higher in methionine, to create a more balanced amino acid profile.

Soy + Other Sources

Soy is a complete protein; however, due to its low nutritional density and texture, it is often blended with other proteins such as rice, pea, or hemp to improve functionality and texture.

Pea + Chia + Rice

A well-rounded nutrient dense plant-based protein blend that offers added healthy fats and fiber

Protein +

Gut Health

High-protein diets can contribute to gastrointestinal discomfort. Added fiber, prebiotics, and digestive enzymes can help support digestion and reduce common side effects.

Energy

Consumers want more from functional beverages. Combining protein for muscle recovery with energy-support ingredients such as B vitamins and MCT Oil helps support sustained energy and wellness goals.

Immune Health

Vitamins, minerals, and functional mushrooms such as Reishi, Maitake, and Lion's Mane are incorporated to support immune health.

Proteins **with Potential**

Insect

Protein derived from insects such as crickets and mealworms. It is gaining traction as a sustainable alternative protein, with social media conversations and interest rising among younger consumers. ¹

Mycoprotein

A protein derived from fungi. Mycoprotein contains all nine essential amino acids, is rich in vitamins and minerals, low in saturated fat, and considered more environmentally-sustainable than traditional animal proteins.

Marine and algae-derived

A sustainable protein source derived from aquatic plants and microscopic photosynthetic organisms grown in freshwater or marine environments. Common microalgae include chlorella and spirulina. ²

Coconut

A soy- and dairy-free plant-based protein alternative gaining interest. It provides fiber and minerals and is highly digestible; however, it is often blended with other proteins to achieve a complete amino acid profile.

Potato

An allergen-friendly protein with a high-quality amino acid profile and strong digestibility. Potato protein is emerging as a sustainable alternative protein source. ³

Solein® (Air protein)

A novel sustainable protein produced from unmodified, single-cell microbial organisms through gentle fermentation. Just like plants, Solein® needs carbon dioxide, nutrients, and energy to grow except it gets the energy from hydrogen gas instead of sunlight. ⁴



Takeaways

Demand for protein-rich foods and beverages now extends far beyond athletes, with consumers embracing both plant- and animal-based options across diverse applications. This sustained growth is driven by interest in holistic health, lasting energy, and products rooted in nature—a shift that is here to stay.

Yet formulating with protein often introduces off-notes, undesirable aromas, and mouthfeel challenges. Through deep technical expertise, taste modification technologies, and a holistic “whole product” approach, we’ll partner with you to overcome these hurdles—so you can lead with taste while delivering desired protein amounts.

Ready to elevate your next protein innovation? Connect with your sales representative or [click here](#) to get started.

