

FREE-FROM AND RICH-IN PRODUCTS: THE NEW TRENDS AT MARCAbyBolognaFiere IN THE FREE FROM HUB

Bologna, 30 June 2020 - **MarcabyBolognaFiere**, the international event for Private Label products, has always kept a close eye on the evolution of market trends in order to intercept the latest tendencies and emerging markets in order to represent them at the event.

For this reason, the **Free From Hub**, the new project created thanks to the know-how and experience of BolognaFiere and Bos, will also be making an appearance at the 17th edition of MarcabyBolognaFiere, which is set to take place on 13 and 14 **January 2021**.

The Free From Hub, with its innovative format, was presented at MarcabyBolognaFiere 2020. The initiative is structured into a series of appointments dedicated to the business of **free-from** products and will be incorporated into some of BolognaFiere's leading international fair platforms, including MarcabyBolognaFiere, SANA and Cosmofarma.

Within the context of the next edition of MarcabyBolognaFiere, the **Free From Hub** is intended to represent every facet of the Italian and international free-from market and to do so it has commissioned a series of studies to monitor the sector.

The market analysis has revealed that an emerging trend is linked to the theme of **healthy food** in its broadest possible sense: healthy food that is considered good for the body both due to the beneficial properties that have been added, in the case of **rich-in** foods, or ingredients that have been deliberately removed in the case of **free-from** products. Confirming this trend is the data from the 2019 Coop Report that underlines that *"products in the health and wellbeing compartment have experienced growth of 2.9%"*.

The attention being paid to what we serve on our plates – or place in our shopping baskets – has become even more pronounced during the Covid-19 lockdown, demonstrating that consumers are becoming increasingly interested in healthy food. A healthy diet, in fact, is perceived as the first "medicine" not only in the case of food intolerances, where the first and often only cure is through dietary changes, but also to prevent illness and maintain one's body in good health and working order.

This interest gives a further boost to the functional or "rich-in" products, organic and free-from foods that represent the macro-categories of trends worth monitoring. We can see in greater detail the products that have performed the best in the Grocery Retail sector thanks to the *Osservatorio Immagino* that each year analyses the selection of products present in the shopping trolleys of Italian consumers.

Among the **free-from** products, those that stand out in particular are those that are **gluten-free** and **lactose-free**, which appear to have performed the best. According to the latest edition of the *Osservatorio Immagino*, *"in 2019 Italians spent 3.6 billion euros in supermarkets on gluten-free and lactose-free products, confirming the trend observed in 2018"*. This growth is highlighted also in the packaging and communications choices made by companies, *"12.8% of packaged mass consumption products present on supermarket shelves include on their labels the claim "gluten-free" or "lactose-free"."*

Among free-from products, an emerging trend concerns **sugar-free** products that contain **lower quantities of sugar or no added sugar**.

Driving the growth of these products are motivations relating to health as well as the sugar tax, the introduction of which has been postponed until 2021.

The World Health Organisation, in fact, has recommended a reduction in our daily intake of sugar following the results of scientific studies that demonstrate a correlation between excessive sugar consumption and the rise of diabetes, increases in body weight, obesity, high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

The Osservatorio Immagino has found, moreover, an increase in popularity of products in which sugars have been reduced or eliminated. *“The products that contain the label ‘low sugar’ have reached a level of 3.1% of total sales and 2.8% of product range, in one year, while sales have increased by 7%. Products labelled “no added sugar” represent 1.4% of total sales and 1.6% of product range.”*

The need to reduce sugar intake, highlighted by consumers, has also been taken on board by companies, which have chosen to extend their ranges of sugar-free or reduced sugar products. Proof of this can be seen in the growth of numerous categories of mass consumption products that use this claim on the labels of products including fruit-based drinks, snacks, milk, milk substitutes and cereal.

Many companies, moreover, are focusing on maximising the direct use of ingredients with a low glycaemic index (GI), a trend that ties in with the evidence that foods with a low GI have notable effects on cardiovascular risk, reducing postprandial hyperinsulinemia and encouraging the increase of so-called good cholesterol (HDL). It has also been noted that the ingestion of foodstuffs with a low GI prior to competitions, has a positive effect on the performance of sportspeople.

Another emerging trend concerns the **functional or rich-in products**, those that are rich in characteristics that are beneficial for the human body. According to the Osservatorio Immagino, *“the business volume for these products has exceeded 2.5 billion euros, reaching almost 10% of the share of the total foodstuffs surveyed and makes up 9.3% of packaged food product ranges”*.

The food ingredients perceived as beneficial and preferred by the market are: almonds (in first place since last year), oats, ginger, turmeric, sesame, blueberry, coconut, pumpkin seeds, chia seeds, flax seeds, barley, kamut, quinoa and wheat germ. New entries include coconut water and matcha tea.

Following the trends of the market MarcabyBolognaFiere, flanked and assisted by the Free From Hub, will shine a spotlight on the year’s hottest issues, such as sugar free products, with bespoke content and representatives from some of the market’s key companies and actors.

Furthermore, in view of the huge interest from the market and companies in rich-in products, BolognaFiere is set to launch the **Functional Food Hub**, which will be inserted into the events set to begin in October 2020 as part of SANA RESTART and also on the occasion of the 17th edition of MarcabyBolognaFiere 2021 flanking and reinforcing the debut of the Free From Hub where, thanks to the participation of players from the sector and dedicated conventions, it will be possible to take an in-depth look at the most pertinent issues, and follow their evolution and growth within the private label compartment.



A project by *BolognaFiere* and BOS

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