

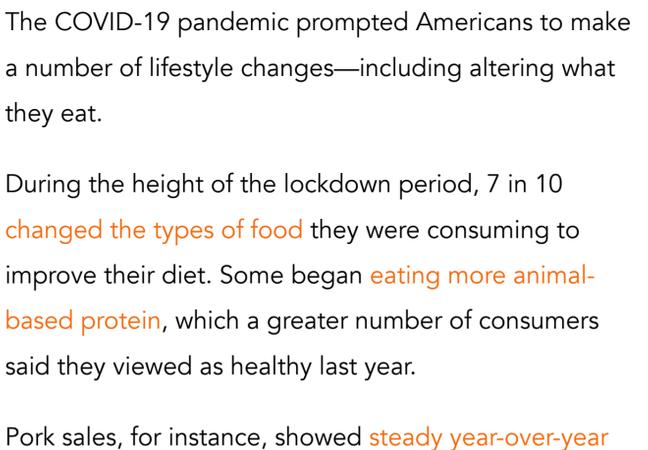


HOW WE SERVE

TRENDS

HELPING YOU TAKE ACTION

NAE AND OTHER PREMIUM CLAIMS MATTER NOW MORE THAN EVER: HERE'S WHY



The COVID-19 pandemic prompted Americans to make a number of lifestyle changes—including altering what they eat.

During the height of the lockdown period, 7 in 10 **changed the types of food** they were consuming to improve their diet. Some began **eating more animal-based protein**, which a greater number of consumers said they viewed as healthy last year.

Pork sales, for instance, showed **steady year-over-year gains** from March through August 2020, including specialty products such as antibiotic-free pork, which experienced a **29% sales increase** during the year—a trend foodservice operators may be able to tap into.

“The crossover between foodservice and retail is real,” says Chris DuBois, senior vice president of the protein practice at IRI. “In the last year, consumers have really increased their affinity towards meat from the health and wellness side. The impact of COVID on their personal health changed their viewpoint of diet.”

Consumers have become more interested in where their food comes from and how it is produced—and are now looking for pork and other products with premium quality and health-related elements, says Clemens Food Group Corporate Executive Chef Jenny Moyer Murphy.

“Consumers want to know what they are eating,” Murphy says. “Many of these attributes focus on the processing aspect, such as no artificial ingredients and all-natural, while others go all the way back to how pigs are raised on the farms.”

NURTURING PRODUCT PURITY

Including claims on a menu that indicate **no antibiotics have been administered to an animal** from its birth onward can resonate with consumers – 30% **view antibiotic resistance as a significant problem**.

With a focus beginning at the farms, the Clemens Food Group is able to ensure that their animals receive the highest veterinary care. The result is an environment that minimizes or completely eliminates the need for antibiotics. In fact, Farm Promise® products are designated as No Antibiotics Ever along with several other key animal handling attributes. “People have built entire menu offerings featuring this line of products,” Murphy says

A key tenant of the Clemens Food Group Farm Promise® program is individual care for the animal. By caring for and feeding the hogs in the program individually, the team is able to control the quality and quantity of the feed. The controlled quality means the feed in the program is a grain-based vegetarian diet – another area of interest for some consumers. The controlled quantity means chefs gain a benefit too, because consistent hog weights translate to consistent sizes for products like tenderloin, ribs, and loins.

“A lot of times, when our foodservice restaurants are developing their menus, operators will ask, ‘Can we call out no antibiotics ever?’” Murphy says. “I’ve seen more callouts on the menu in the past five years, whether it is all-natural, local, NAE, vegetarian-fed; once you highlight that on your menu, people are more likely to say, ‘I’m willing to pay more because I know that’s better for me.’”

MAXIMIZING NAE AND OTHER PRODUCT BENEFITS

Consumers are mostly likely aware of the numerous nutritional benefits that protein provides, such as amino acids that help build muscle and regulate immune system function and zinc, which fuels brain and immune system health—two nutrients that are abundant in pork.

Restaurants, as a result, may find menu items that feature pork resonate with consumers—a pulled pork primavera, for example, containing Farm Promise® All Natural Slow Smoked Pork, marinara sauce, sweet Vidalia onions and pepper chutney on a baked Italian roll, or bacon avocado toast made with thick-cut multigrain bread, fresh smashed avocado and Farm Promise® No Antibiotic Ever Bacon.

“Knowing what you ate was made with the best ingredients supports consumers’ desires for clean-label eating,” says Bryn Schauer, director, category management and NAE pork segment at Clemens.

“Incorporating antibiotic-free pork into menus offers consumers a clean-label-protein meal at an affordable price, with the flavor and craveability consumers desire.”

Pork, after all, isn’t just a healthy ingredient. Whether it’s offered as ribs, roasted or wrapped up in an egg roll, pork can also be a delicious dining option—and make any menu items it’s included in serve as an enticing reason for potential customers to choose your restaurant over the competition.

Find out more about Clemens Food Group’s **Farm Promise®** product line, which offers antibiotic-free pork from family farmers who take pride in their commitment to animal care—allowing you to offer your customers better options with fresh-from-the-farm taste.

Topics: **flavor, menu, Farm Promise, transparency, consumer, disease prevention, cuts, consumer trends and insights, premium attributes, Food Quality and Safety, Health and wellness, Environmental best practices, Sustainable, Care and feeding, Environmental stewardship, Responsible sourcing, No Antibiotics Ever, No growth promotants, Quality standards, Nutritional information, Health benefits of pork consumption, Importance of a balanced diet, Lifestyle and dietary, Food quality standards, Fresh Pork, Product attributes (i.e., what to look for)**

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Based in Hatfield, PA, Clemens Food Group is a sixth-generation, family owned company dedicated to providing service and brand solutions that help our customers grow their businesses. Clemens is a vertically coordinated company that includes hog farming, food production, and transportation. We are committed to building a foundation for future generations. It is what we call ‘doing business the right way.’ It is who we are.

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