

International perspective

How you fortify a baked food or snack depends on where you sell it. Even for bread, there is no general international standard. "Customer requirements differ too much," said Lena Kempfehl, MSc, food, R&D, SternVitamin GmbH & Co. KG, Ahrensburg, Germany.

To handle health needs in developing countries, the World Health Organization recommended enriching flour with zinc and vitamin B12 as well as iron, folic acid and vitamin A, as is common in more economically advanced nations. Iodine, infrequently fortified in the US because of its availability in table salt, is another nutrient of interest in many countries, most recently being considered by New Zealand, according to Dave Pfefer, category manager, fortification, Caravan Ingredients, Lenexa, KS.

SternVitamin, an international nutrient supplier, reported notable trends in several regions:

Europe — Breakfast cereals are very often enriched, as are cookies for children. Some bakers add vitamins and minerals to their bread products. A few others fortify bread with omega-3s, but not enough to qualify as a trend.

Asia — Enriched breakfast cereals and children's cookies are widespread in this region. In Indonesia, the Philippines and Malaysia, bread and white sandwich bread are also enriched over and above the flour standard as with the region's multivitamin bread.

Latin America — Baked foods are enriched only in individual instances. Customers tend to buy on price, not because a product is enriched. Cookies and cereals intended for children may be nutritionally fortified.

Africa — Cereal-based baby food is often enriched with vitamins and minerals. Some manufacturers also fortify traditional or local grain varieties. With bread, however, price pressure is too great and doesn't allow enough margin to support adding vitamins to flour standards.



Nutrient requirements vary around the world.
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regulatory support staff, use of a consultant is prudent to help design claims or choose ingredients that are Generally Recognized As Safe for the intended use," Ms. Hnat said. She advised consulting with expert organizations such as AIB International not only for "guidance and support in labeling but also in use of ingredients including micronutrients and nutraceuticals."

Suppliers can assist with calculating overages to achieve the final label claim and advise about processing, handling and storing of the finished product as well as the premix. "No matter what, due diligence is required on the part of the manufacturer or marketer because they are ultimately responsible for achieving the final label claim until last day of purchase for their product," Ms. Hnat said.

With consumers wanting better nutritional choices, the baking and snack industries have great opportunities to profit from product improvements. "Producers of even the most iconic brands may want to consider health claims," Mr. Morris said. "Fortification for better health is where the action is." ●



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