



SHOPPERS UNDERSTANDING OF HIGH FRUCTOSE CORN SYRUP AND HIGH FRUCTOSE CORN SYRUP-FREE MARKETING NOVEMBER 2009

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SUMMARY FINDINGS

Survey Methodology:

A nationally representative and customized telephone survey of 1,012 consumers, 18+ years old, self-identified primary or secondary grocery shoppers, +/- 3.08 at 95% confidence level was conducted October 2-7, 2009 by The MSR Group, with question design input and review from Chris Rosenbloom, Ph.D., R.D., Georgia State University, Atlanta, and contributing nutrition columnist to the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.

The survey screened out those affiliated with marketing/advertising/research employment, food or beverage processing employees, as well as those with diabetes or diabetes in their household. Comparative attitude and knowledge information of high fructose corn syrup drawn from identical questions asked of 1,000+ households in telephone survey for Corn Refiners Association in May 2008, also by The MSR Group.

Awareness of high fructose corn syrup-free marketing efforts:

- 44.3% of all shoppers were aware of high fructose corn syrup-free labeling or promotions
- That number increases to 51.6%, for those self-identified as their household's primary grocery shopper

Knowledge and understanding of high fructose corn syrup:

When asked how knowledgeable they were of high fructose corn syrup:

- 13.9% of shoppers said they're very knowledgeable
- 49.7% somewhat knowledgeable
- College-educated shoppers were more likely to claim to be very knowledgeable (18.7 % very, 53.8% somewhat), compared to those without college educations (7.8% very, 46.5% somewhat).

What shoppers look for on food labels?

	2008	2009
Fat	70.2%	59.3%
Calories	31.8%	52.3%
Sugar	34.3%	36.8%
Salt/Sodium	30.7%	30.9%
Carbohydrates	11.7%	23.1%
Cholesterol	10.6%	9.0%
Protein	7.1%	5.5%
Vitamins/Minerals	5.8%	4.9%
High Fructose Corn Syrup	8.3%	3.6%

After learning the facts about high fructose corn syrup, shoppers were asked how they feel about food companies touting products as high fructose corn syrup-free:

- 46.9% of shoppers feel misled by food companies making high fructose corn syrup-free claims
- Parents (34.2) and women (29.2%) are more likely to feel strongly misled by food companies making high fructose corn syrup-free claims

Analysis of “High Fructose Corn Syrup-Free” Marketing

The Corn Refiners Association (CRA), Washington, D.C., reviewed publicly available news releases and/or Web sites of nearly 175 food products and companies from February 2007 through October 1, 2009. CRA’s analysis examined claims or statements regarding foods being “high fructose corn syrup-free” for factual content. The companies and products reviewed ranged from multi-national food companies to regional food products available in the United States.

CRA’s analysis showed the while nearly half (44%) made simple statements without health judgments in calling out products as “high fructose corn syrup free,” a significant number mischaracterized this caloric sweetener in their materials, including:

- 33% used negative language to characterize high fructose corn syrup, including nearly 4% which made extreme and blatantly false misrepresentations about the sweetener;
- 5% touted sugar as “healthier”;
- 18% claimed high fructose corn syrup wasn’t natural; and,
- 19.5% used qualifiers to imply that their products are more healthful without high fructose corn syrup.