

Trend Watch

TOP TAKEAWAYS



Pig Belly with Brussels Sprouts

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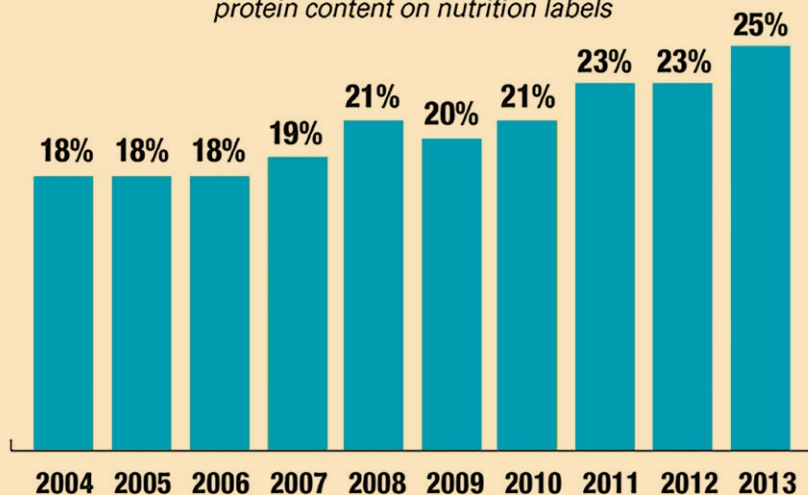
Demand for Protein on the Rise: Pork Stars as High-Protein Option During Every Daypart

According to recent research by The NPD Group, more and more consumers are demanding protein in their diets. One-quarter of adults are looking for protein on nutrition labels, up from 18 percent in 2004, and most everything else on nutrition labels is declining in viewership, such as calories, whole grains and dietary fiber.¹

There are a variety of reasons more consumers are looking to fill their diets with more protein. Some use protein for muscle building and energy. Some use protein for satiety and weight-loss management. Protein is also used as a healthy alternative to other foods with “bad” ingredients.

More consumers make protein a priority

Percent of adults saying they look for protein content on nutrition labels



SOURCE: THE NPD GROUP/DIETING MONITOR; ANNUAL AVERAGE

Demand for protein goes beyond the nutrition label on packaged products. Restaurant operators are getting involved, too. As a result of the protein craze, operators are finding ways to make their offerings stand out. Menu dishes featuring pork as the main ingredient will capture consumers interested in a high-protein diet. As such a versatile product, pork can be the protein star during just about any daypart, capturing a wide variety of customers. What’s more, operators can use creative marketing messages to further promote menu dishes featuring pork as high in protein.

DATA TO NOTE



Bacon-Wrapped Corn on the Cob

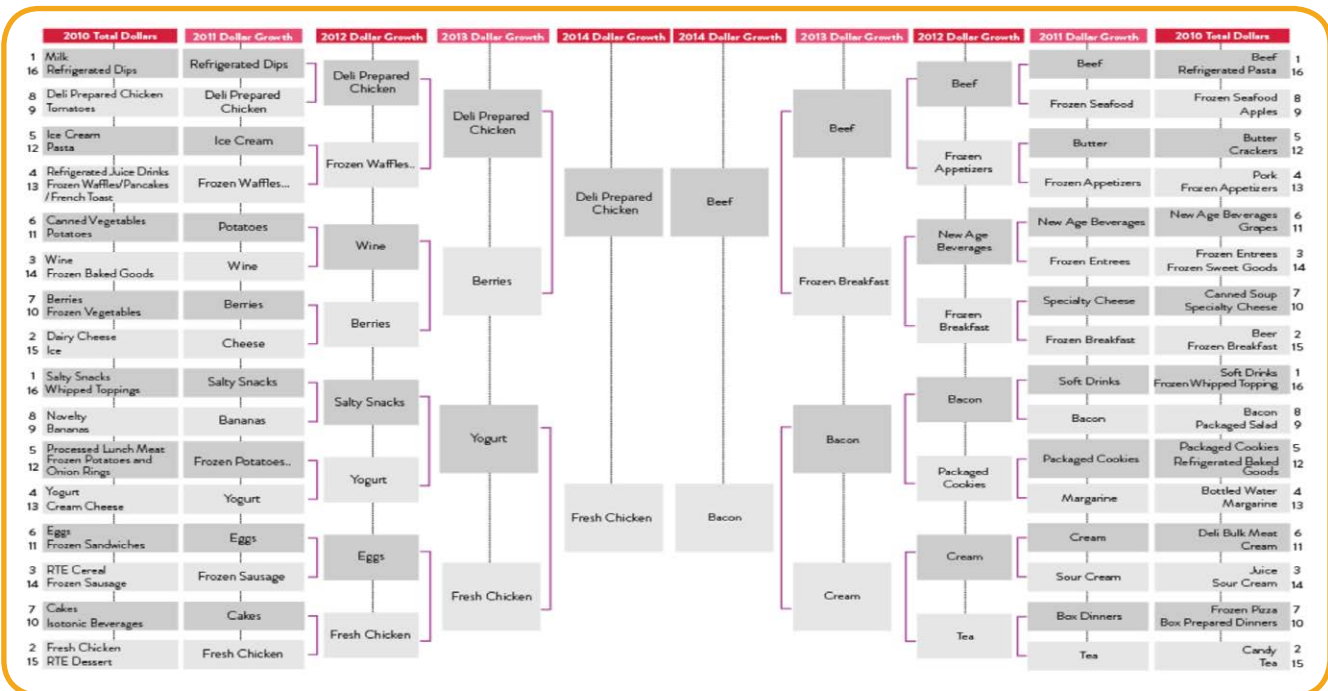
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Bacon Is a Strong Contender in Nielsen's Final Four

In the spirit of the NCAA's basketball tournament, March Madness, Nielsen got creative with a bracket of its own. The global information and measurement company ranked the top 16 consumable categories from key areas of the grocery store (perishable, grocery, dairy and frozen, and select liquor categories) according to total 2010 dollar sales. Each category proceeded to advance based on year-over-year dollar growth through 2014, and bacon landed in the final four.

This aligns with the increase in consumer demand for bacon that we've been seeing. In last month's newsletter, we took a look at the bacon category and found that despite a rise in prices, consumers were still buying bacon in large quantities.

Chicago-based market researcher IRI reports that consumers purchased more than 864 million pounds of bacon at American supermarkets, retailers, convenience stores, drugstores, military commissaries and dollar stores last year.² With bacon still at prime demand, operators can use this traditional pork cut to entice a variety of customers with, innovative menu items featured at any daypart, from breakfast to late-night bites.



PORK IN THE NEWS



Pulled Pork Slider Topped with Coleslaw

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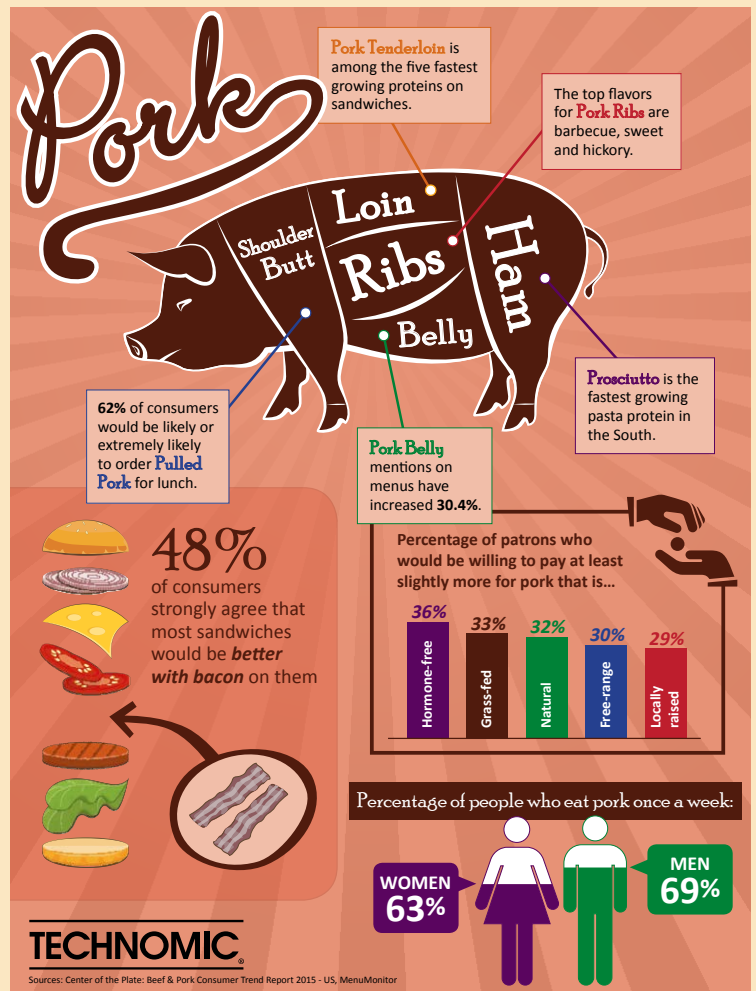
Consumer Demand for Pork on the Upswing

Technomic recently took a close look at the pork landscape, publishing findings that strongly support the growth of pork. The infographic calls out menu or consumer trends Technomic is seeing in pulled pork, tenderloin, pork belly, ribs, prosciutto and also demonstrates what menu claims consumers are more likely to pay premiums for.

Among the findings, 62 percent of consumers were found to be likely or extremely likely to order pulled pork for lunch. Pulled pork has remained a strong contender on the menu for some time and has evolved from a sauced covered sandwich to something more adaptable that can be served a variety of ways during all dayparts.

Technomic also found that pork belly mentions on menus have increased 30.4 percent. As consumer palates mature, diners seek out more sophisticated menu items, and pork belly fits the bill. Pork belly has a rich, salty flavor profile and pairs well with a variety of cuisines. Chefs are using pork belly to present refined menu items for those seeking more exotic culinary experiences.

Also presented in the findings, 48 percent of consumers agree that most sandwiches would be better with bacon on them – further proof that the bacon craze has yet to dissipate.



OUT-OF-THE-BOX THINKING



Pork Displayed in Many Ways

With a variety of pork products on the upswing, including pulled pork, pork tenderloin and pork belly, chefs are getting creative in the kitchen and producing innovative menu items to attract diverse crowds. These cuts of pork can be menued in a variety of ways and implemented in all dayparts. Take a look at some of the creative ways these operations are menuing pork.

Pulled pork gets featured on the breakfast menu and rolled up Cuban style.



Pulled Pork Pancake with bourbon maple syrup, fried egg, butternut squash.

Scott's Restaurant & Bar
Costa Mesa, CA



Enchiladas Cubanas with stewed pulled pork rolled into tortillas topped with zesty tomatillo and cilantro cream over black beans and rice.

Baja Bean Co.
Staunton, VA

Pork tenderloin gets featured sandwich style.



Roasted Pork Tenderloin Sandwich with jack cheese and sweet red cabbage on house ciabatta.

Brooklyn Café
Sandy Springs, GA



Porchetta Sandwich with house-made pork loin wrapped in pork belly with asiago, arugula, apricot marmalade and tomato.

Chop Shop
Chicago, IL

Chefs use pork belly to present exotic menu items.



Pork Belly Fries topped with crispy pork belly, blue cheese crumbles, lemon pepper aioli and parsley.

Pork Belly Grub Shack
Sacramento, CA



DUroC Pork Belly Confit with corn puree, roasted brussels sprouts, butterscotch miso.

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