

Organic Products Retailer®

News & Information For Retailers of Organic & Earth-Friendly Food & Products

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BRAVING THE BEVERAGE AISLE

ORGANIC JUICE AND
SODA MANUFACTURERS SHOW SHOPPERS
HEALTHY ALTERNATIVES

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Don't Skip That Dip

As downright delicious a snack as chips, pretzels and all their varieties can be on their own, sometimes it takes a little extra to fully satisfy that snack food craving. And that extra, of course, is dip. Though the first thought many people have when the word "dip" comes along is anything but natural, it doesn't need to be.



And the word is beginning to spread to consumers.

Organic refrigerated dips experienced significant growth in the natural supermarket channel during the 52 weeks ending August 8, 2009, topping out at just over \$3.75 million, a 10 percent hike over the prior year, according to market researcher SPINS.

One of the dip category leaders, and an almost inseparable addition to tortilla chips, is salsa. While this connection does make pairing the two an easy choice, it can still be quite a challenge to distinguish one salsa from another. In order to separate from the natural pack, Organicville's (Emeryville, CA) Organic Salsa makes an important addition and exclusion.

"Organicville is the first salsa line to use agave nectar as a main ingredient. In addition, Organicville salsas are gluten-free," said Rachel Kruse, company president and founder, who stressed that conventional salsas often contain sugar and large quantities of salt.

Not to be outdone as a dip for tortilla chips is its green companion guacamole. To deliver that fresh guacamole

taste, Melissa's has created its Organic Guacamole Kit. Each clamshell package creates two cups of fresh guacamole and has everything needed to create the dip, including two avocados, one roma tomato, one shallot, two garlic cloves, one lime and one jalapeno pepper. The end result is guacamole that can be made in only 10 minutes and paired with chips, vegetable sticks or used as a garnish.



"As far as we understand, there is no competition for this item since it is merchandised in the produce department," said Schueller.

For more make-it-at-home options, Simply Organic (Norway, IA) has a line of several USDA certified dips including French Onion Dip, Creamy Dill Dip and Spinach Dip.

"Our dry dips continue to post robust double-digit gains, even during tough economic times," said Kory Kazimour, senior brand manager with the company. "Consumers are entertaining at home more and our dips provide an easy, affordable way to do so. Additionally, the dips are versatile and can be used as an ingredient in preparing a number of different recipes, which also adds to their appeal."



presents an ideal time to merchandise, as students will have a variety of food needs, not the least of which will be their snacks.

"During back-to-school in January we definitely see an increase in sales," said John Kay, category manager with Marlene's Market and Deli in Tacoma, WA, who stressed that single-serving snacks are an ideal size for this time. "They're good not only for kids going back to school, but for adults who are calorie-conscious and want to control their portions. Because, with chips, you can't have just one."

Added Robert Schueller, director of public relations for Melissa's (Los Angeles, CA), popular sales times for its dip kits include later in the year

festivities like Cinco de Mayo, Memorial Day, 4th of July and Labor Day.

Tips to Sell Those Chips (and Other Salty Snacks)

While the Super Bowl and other sporting occasions often result in a mad rush for the snack food aisle, for natural product retailers and manufacturers the rush is often far less noticeable than at grocery stores and for mainstream snack suppliers. Much of this can be explained as the result of millions of dollars worth of promotions.

"When was the last time you saw a natural food manufacturer sponsor a big game?" questioned Newman's Own Organic's Meehan. "[Sales] don't revolve

as much around the big game for natural snacking products."

Retailer Kay agreed. "It would be nice if there were more advertising for healthy snacks during game season," he said. "Right now, it's just not as big of a time for sales."

To counter this lull, retailers have a number of tactics at their disposal that could potentially draw some of the sales from these large-scale snack purveyors and into their own stores. Whether it's simply offering a discount in lieu of the big game(s), or providing a game-themed event, such as Super Bowl Saturday, where snack food items are given the spotlight and promotions offered, there is no reason why organic products can't enter the game day mix.

To keep the salty snack sales coming in his store, Kay recommended a few merchandising tactics that have worked well for him. "End caps always help," he said, "as well as areas where customers can grab and go at registers or special displays. If you have something priced nice, people are more likely to grab. Also, make sure your entire staff has tried the snacks, so they know how they taste and can talk about them. Demos are an easy sale, too."

Demos, as well as other in-store gatherings, offer a great opportunity to not only boost product specific sales but also educate those less familiar with the industry and dispel certain misconceptions, like the difference between organic and natural. Without this distinction, consumers may opt for natural to save money and believe they're getting a snack with the same quality of ingredients.

Yet, thanks to the hard work of the thousands of natural product retailers across the country, more people are aware of this distinction than ever before—a point that manufacturers are not soon to forget. "In getting consumers to understand what we have to offer, we have the retailers to thank," said Dawes. "They are our biggest allies." ●

For More Information:

- Late July Organic Snacks, (508) 362-5859
- Mary's Gone Crackers, (888) 258-1250
- Melissa's, (800) 448-6517
- Newman's Own Organics, (831) 685-2866
- Organicville, (510) 655-1755
- Simply Organic, (800) 437-3301
- Waymouth Farms, (800) 527-0094

