

IFF Unveils Life-Stage Guide to Drive Next Wave of Dairy Innovation

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IFF has released Dear Dairy: The Life Stages Guide, a strategic resource highlighting how dairy manufacturers can align product innovation with consumers' evolving nutritional, lifestyle and sensory needs across different stages of life.

The guide, developed using insights from IFF's proprietary Panoptic trend and foresight platform, identifies four distinct life stages — Taste of Nourishment, Taste of Growth, Taste of Balance and Taste of Comfort — and outlines opportunities for dairy brands to develop products that respond to changing consumer expectations.

"Dairy is one of the few categories that evolves alongside consumers throughout their lives," said Rogerio de Almeida Prado, Vice President, Global Dairy & BBC (Bakery, Bars and Confectionery), IFF Taste. "The next wave of dairy innovation will be defined not by a single trend, ingredient or claim, but by an understanding of what consumers need at different times of their lives — and why."

The Taste of Nourishment stage focuses on children, where taste, texture and enjoyment need to be balanced with caregivers' expectations around nutrition. IFF highlights opportunities such as reduced-sugar dairy products that retain creamy texture and appealing taste.

During the Taste of Growth stage, covering adolescence and young adulthood, consumers increasingly choose dairy products based on identity, lifestyle and personal values. Protein, energy, gut health and better-for-you benefits can influence purchasing decisions, provided these are combined with an appealing product experience.

The Taste of Balance stage reflects consumers managing growing personal and professional responsibilities. Here, dairy products that combine convenience, functionality and enjoyable sensory experiences can help simplify healthier choices.

For the Taste of Comfort stage, IFF identifies opportunities linked to healthy ageing, with dairy products positioned around nutrition, vitality, mobility and quality of life while maintaining an enjoyable, non-clinical experience.

The guide also showcases four concept innovations developed using IFF's capabilities in flavours, cultures, probiotics, fermentation and formulation. These include Yogipop, a reduced-sugar spoonable strawberry yoghurt designed for children; Sunrise Protein, a high-protein beverage formulated to address bitterness; Strawbana, a convenient protein-rich powdered smoothie; and a High-protein Vanilla Shake combining protein with an indulgent vanilla flavour.

According to IFF, these concepts demonstrate how manufacturers can translate changing consumer needs into differentiated dairy products by combining nutritional functionality with taste, texture and convenience.