



**International Sugar Organization**

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**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**Press Release(24)30  
(English only)**

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**Various sugar related articles**

The Executive Director would like to draw your attention to the articles below all of which are relevant to the sugar sector.

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**Sugaronline Ebriefing**

**SOUTH AFRICA: Canegrowers say sugar tax is holding back investments**

The South African sugarcane growers association SA Canegrowers has called on the government to eliminate the country's sugar tax, which it claims is holding back investments in the transformation of the sugar industry, reports Sugaronline.

The sugar tax was supposed to be reviewed under phase one of the Sugarcane Value Chain Masterplan, but SA Canegrowers said no meaningful engagement has been undertaken with the industry.

The sugar tax has suppressed the market for locally produced sugar and cost the industry more than 16,000 jobs, according to the association.

"We need the industry to do more than survive; we need it to thrive. The more we grow and expand, the more we can invest into supporting small-scale growers. To advance transformation, we need to recognise the barriers to sustainability and growth. We need to eliminate the Health Promotion Levy," said the newly elected board chair of SA Canegrowers, Higgins Mdluli, in a statement.

SA Canegrowers has also called on the government to fast-track the value chain diversification project through the second phase of the Masterplan, with support for diversification into strategic aviation fuel.

**PHILIPPINES: SRA detects increased acidity in cane fields after volcano eruption**

The Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) said in a report on June 5 that testing had detected increased acidity in sugarcane fields in Negros Occidental, following an eruption of Mt. Kanlaon, according to the Philippine News Agency (PNA).

SRA chief Pablo Luis Azcona said in a statement that it was too early to tell whether the volcanic ash would cause much damage to crops. He said he hoped the acidity would be diluted since it had been raining in the affected places.

**FRANCE: Cristal Union plans to double sugar exports next season**

Cristal Union's deputy director general Stanislas Bouchard has said the firm plans to double sugar exports in 2024/25 to maintain balance in the EU internal market, according to Reuters.

Beet output is expected to increase in the EU because farmers were attracted by high sugar prices, according to the news report. Cristal Union expects the total sugarbeet area planted by its members to grow by 5% this year.

**INDONESIA: VP supports development of sugar production in South Papua**

Indonesia's vice president, Ma'ruf Amin, has expressed support for the development of sugar production in the South Papua province, adding that he hopes the sugar content of cane crops in Merauke will be higher than the ones recorded in East Java, according to Antara News.

Totok Lestyo, project leader of PT Global Papua Abadi (GPA), said that the Merauke region is relatively new to sugarcane cultivation and needs superior stems from East Java and Australia suitable for the area.

**MEXICO: Sugar imports set record of US\$448 million in 2023 – report**

Data from Mexico's Ministry of Economy shows that the country's sugar imports totaled US\$448 million in 2023, a record and more than the total volume imported in the last seven years, according to El Economista.

Mexico imported US\$18 million in sugar in 2022. In the first quarter of 2024, Mexico's sugar imports totaled US\$229 million, compared to US\$ 6 million in the same period last year.

**CHINA: Direct imports of white sugar may decline in 2024 – Czarnikow**

China may reduce direct imports of white sugar in 2024 due to changes to import regulations, according to Czarnikow.

Analyst Rosa Li estimated in [a report](#) that China's white sugar imports in 2024 may fall by 200,000 tonnes from last year to around 400,000 tonnes.

Imports of liquid sugar and premix powder, in contrast, hit a new high from January to April this year, at 510,000 tonnes. In 2023, China imported 1.8 million tonnes of liquid sugar and premix powder, which Li said have become the most popular way to satisfy China's white sugar demand.

China's total white sugar import demand in 2024 is estimated at 1.74 million tonnes, 200,000 tonnes less than in 2023.

**BRAZIL: Raízen plans to start SAF production in 3 years**

Raízen plans to start producing sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) in Brazil in the next three years, from 2027, said the company's VP of Trading Paulo Côte-Real Neves, according to Czarnikow.

Raízen intends to take the lead in SAF production and is working with international partners interested in developing ethanol conversion to aviation fuel. The executive said the aviation industry aims to reach more than 25 million cubic meters of SAF by 2030, with 25% of this volume expected to come from ethanol.

**FAO Sugar Price Index falls 7.5% in May**

The FAO Sugar Price Index averaged 117.1 points in May, down 7.5% from April and the third consecutive monthly decline, reports Sugaronline.

The index fell 25.5% from May 2023 to the lowest level since January 2023.

"The drop in international sugar price quotations in May was mainly driven by the good start of the new harvest season in Brazil, which was bolstered by conducive weather conditions contributing to an improved global supply outlook," FAO said in [a statement](#) on June 7.

An increase in export availability from Brazil and lower international crude oil prices exerted further downward pressure on sugar prices.

**FoodNavigator.com**

### How is Ferrero balancing M&A growth with packaging sustainability?



A strong acquisition strategy is fuelling growth at Ferrero. But inevitably, with that growth comes more packaging. How is the confectionery major working to decouple the two?

<https://www.foodnavigator.com/article/2024/06/06/how-does-ferrero-s-acquisition-strategy-impact-packaging-sustainability>

### What's hot in confectionery? New product development from Skittles to Reese's



From Skittles supporting Pride to a supersized Reese's Cup, these are the latest products launching around the globe

<https://www.foodnavigator.com/article/2024/06/06/latest-confectionery-product-trends-in-2024>

### Turn up the heat (but make it sweet): How new technology is exciting the senses with sweet heat flavors



#### Sweet heat flavors are everywhere lately.

This unexpected blend of sweet and spicy (or 'swicy') is the latest buzz within the culinary world, delighting the taste buds of foodies around the globe and growing 'insta-famous' on social media platforms across North America. From hot honey drizzled over pizza and breads to compelling sauces made of habanero, serrano and other chilis mixed with mango and other fruit flavors, the fusion of sweet and heat is unlocking endless flavor possibilities in a wide range of food categories.

Sweet heat flavors have grown from a niche flavor pairing, with origins in international cuisine to being a mainstream part of the US culinary landscape in recent years. In fact, this unique combination of flavors has mass appeal: according to a 2023 Mintel survey, 53% of US consumers have tried and liked sweet and spicy combinations or are interested in trying this flavor.<sup>1</sup>

It's hardly surprising that the trend toward sweet heat flavors is largely driven by younger Millennial and Gen Z consumers – a demographic that is shown to have a keen interest in both high heat flavors and enjoying new, exciting food and beverage experiences. According to Mintel research, almost one third of US consumers between the ages of 13-24 are continually looking for new foods and flavors to try, followed closely by 27% of consumers aged 25-34.<sup>1</sup>

Since this study showed that 51% of US restaurant consumers are interested in spicy menu items and 48% are interested in sweet options, all signs indicate a major opportunity for food brands to explore sweet heat flavors that will resonate with consumers well into the future.<sup>1</sup>

### **Adding heat to sweet... Or sweet to heat?**

The sweet heat trend was kickstarted in the US by adding spicy heat to traditionally sweet products such as adding chili into chocolate, or hot honey. The inclusion of hot honey on restaurant menus has grown by over 111% since 2019, frequently served as a drizzle for pizza or as a complementary dipping sauce for chicken.<sup>2</sup> Despite the initial trend of adding heat to sweet, research indicates there is greater purchase intent for sweet flavors that are added to categories where consumers already expect to find heat.

According to research, purchase intent for sweet heat flavors equaled or exceeded intent for all other flavors in traditionally spicy categories, such as sauces and seasonings or processed fish, meat and egg products.<sup>1</sup> The same report indicated that consumer interest in sweet heat formulations within confectionary categories lagged behind interest in all other flavors by as much as 20%.<sup>1</sup>

### **International cuisine: The origins of sweet and spicy**

The combination of sweet and spicy is deeply rooted in global flavors, particularly from Latin American and Asian cuisine. For example, Korean dishes like buldak (spicy chicken) often incorporate sweet ingredients like honey or sugar to balance the intense heat of ingredients like gochujang (a red chili-based fermented sauce) or sriracha sauce, made famous by Vietnamese, Thai and Korean restaurants in the US. Similarly, Indian cuisine frequently pairs sweet fruits like mangoes with spicy chutneys to enhance the overall flavor profile of meats.

Chili varieties originating from Latin American cuisine, such as habanero, jalapeno and serrano, continue to grow prominently in product development and on restaurant menus across North America where the market for high heat foods continues to grow year-over-year. In fact, the US and Canada account for more than 40% of the global chili hot sauce market, showing impressive demand and future growth for this category.<sup>3</sup> As consumer tastes shift toward increasingly hotter foods and menu items, brands are seeking creative ingredients and flavors sourced from global cuisines to deliver on the demand for high heat, and even broaden the appeal of fiery foods by adding sweetness.

While sweet heat flavors may have origins in international cuisine, the overall globalization of food is accelerating the trend. Increased post-pandemic travel in the last few years is expanding North American palates as travelers discover diverse cuisines abroad and seek new and exciting flavor combinations back home. The influence of social media and food blogging has also played a crucial role in popularizing sweet heat flavors, with platforms like Instagram and TikTok filled with viral recipes and food challenges that showcase creative ways to combine sweet and spicy ingredients.

### **Optimizing through flavor science**

While blending sweet and spicy profiles can unlock a world of flavor possibilities, it can also pose several challenges and complications for food and beverage brands looking to apply sweet heat formulations in new product development. As demand grows for these foods, the flavor and fragrance industry is responding with technological innovations that improve the taste experience of sweet heat formulations. California-based flavor manufacturer [T. Hasegawa USA](#) is advancing the field of flavor science to perfect the blending of high heat and sweet.

“The key to flavor development is finding a balance between ingredients and our taste buds, which can be a challenge when combining drastically different sensations like sweet and heat,” explains Austin Luft, senior flavor chemist at T. Hasegawa USA.

“We continually explore and develop new technologies that help us achieve the right balance of flavor, compounding the desired taste of ingredients, while masking unwanted notes to arrive at an optimal formula.”

One of T. Hasegawa’s latest innovations, [BOOSTRACT®](#), plays a large role in developing enjoyable sweet heat flavors. In addition to enriching the flavor profile, this technology improves the overall taste experience by amplifying kokumi (Japanese for ‘rich taste’), which provides a full-bodied, lasting mouthfeel.

Specific varieties of BOOSTRACT for flavors like honey and maple help infuse sweetness into foods that are naturally high-heat, while also maintaining the distinct taste of honey or maple that are lost in the pasteurization process. This technology results in unique sweet heat flavor pairings like spicy honey and maple BBQ sauce, or even alcoholic beverage applications like cinnamon honey whiskey.

Recently, new technological advancements have emerged in flavor compounding – isolating and concentrating characteristics of food ingredients to maximize the taste. [HASEAROMA™](#) was recently introduced by T. Hasegawa to the North American market. This proprietary research and enhancement technology reproduces the ‘first bite’ sensation of experiencing a food for the first time, packed with intricacy and nuances of flavor.

Within sweet heat flavor development, HASEAROMA can help amplify the best taste characteristics of natural ingredients and ensure that distinct flavor is not lost in the process of combining high-heat chili with honey, fruit and other sweet ingredients. Uniquely, HASEAROMA can help delicate fruit notes stand out in a formulation with strong chili spice flavors, resulting in pairings like spicy mango pepper jelly and mango buffalo wing dipping sauce or in beverage applications such as pineapple jalapeno iced green tea.

“Much of the robust natural flavor of food is lost in the production process, which is even more challenging once we begin combining sweet profiles with spicy chili-based ingredients,” adds Luft.

“Our emerging technologies make it possible to isolate specific aromatic compounds and flavor molecules in the original ingredients and restore the intricate taste of the original foods.”

### **Flavor forecasting: The future outlook for sweet heat**

The growth of sweet heat flavors over the past several years is a testament to the evolving tastes and preferences of North American consumers, especially those in younger demographics that crave complex and adventurous food experiences. With the growing public appetite for spicy foods, incorporating sweet ingredients will make high-heat flavors more approachable and unlock new possibilities in product development. As technological advancements in the field of flavor science continually improve and perfect the taste of sweet heat foods, this category is poised to become a lasting and influential part of the food landscape in North America.

Food and beverage brands who are looking to take their [sweet heat](#) products to the next level of flavor can explore the possibilities by contacting [T. Hasegawa USA](#) or by calling (866) 965-0502.

### **References**

1. Mintel. Bring on the heat, as long as it’s sweet. 23 June, 2023.
2. Datassential, [Hot Honey the SNAP™ Food Profile](#). 12 Jan, 2024
3. Fortune Business Insights, [Hot Sauce Market Size](#). 6 May, 2024

Content provided by T. Hasegawa USA and not written by the FoodNavigator-usa.com editorial team. For more information on this article, please contact [T. Hasegawa USA](#).