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Food marketers go on a berry fruity-licious kick

With 240 new products this year, rollouts are on pace to set a record

By Bruce Horovitz
USA TODAY

Got fruit?

Savvy marketers, keenly aware of consumer demand for anything with a hint of fruit, are on pace to roll out this year a record number of products that make claims about fruit content, Datamonitor reports.

Some 240 fruit-infused products — from ice cream to chips — appeared in the first half of 2007, compared with 124 in all of 2000.

Kraft will roll out nine fruit-touting products in 27 varieties this year. It's taking fruit so seriously that the Fig Newtons slogan now says, in part, "the cookie that thinks it's a fruit."

The fruit frenzy comes two years after the government bumped up the Food Pyramid's recommended daily fruit and veggie consumption, which has increased demand.

Some marketers also may be looking for ways to get banned products back in schools, says Tom Vierhile director of Datamonitor's ProductsCan Online. "Fruit gives a positive that marketers can talk up."

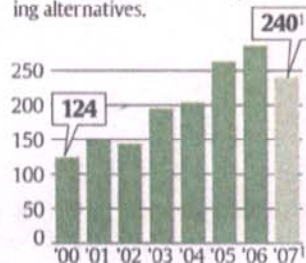
It can be more talk than fruit. "Marketers will find all kinds of products to squish fruit into," warns ad psychologist Renee Fraser. "You need to read the label."

Rainbow punch: Penguin Swirl is a mixed-berry blend that turns tongues black.

Baskin-Robbins

Touting fruit

Rollouts of new packaged foods claiming to be high in fruit — made with real fruit or made with 100% fruit — have climbed since 2000 as consumers seek better-for-you eating alternatives.



1 - through June 24
Source: Datamonitor's ProductsCan Online

By Adrienne Lewis, USA TODAY

Some fruity rollouts in 2007:

► **Fruity chips.** Frito-Lay recently introduced Flat Earth Baked Fruit Crisps — with a half-serving of fruit per ounce.



In August, Kraft rolls out Nabisco Garden Harvest Toasted Chips with fruit. Fruit pieces are baked into the chips selling for \$2.99 for a 6-ounce bag, says Haiyan Wang, senior brand manager.

► **Fruity Jell-O.** Kraft is selling its first ready-to-eat Jell-O with fruit pieces in it — dubbed Jell-O Fruit Passions. The no-sugar-added snack has 60 to 80 calories. "It helps Mom feel full but doesn't have a lot of calories," says Sherina Smith, brand manager.

► **Organic fruit chews.** In a better-for-you twist to the world of fruit snacks, there's FruitaBü Organic Smoooshed Fruit Splooshers — a kind of real fruit in a tube. "We'd never say eat this instead of (fresh) fruit, but only when fruit is not convenient," says John Henry Siedlecki, brand manager.

► **Fruit salads.** T.G.I. Friday's brought back its seasonal Strawberry Fields Salad with balsamic marinated strawberries. It's a summer best-seller, when customers want lighter food, President Mike Archer says.

► **Antioxidant sherbet.** ¡Hola Fruta! is a new line of antioxidant-rich fruit sherbets in seven flavors, including pomegranate. It's the first national product for Cleveland-based Pierre's Ice Cream, says John Pimpo, brand chief.

► **Fruity fun.** Baskin-Robbins' Penguin Swirl is a kid-friendly mixed-berry blend that turns tongues black. Brand officer Ken Kimmel promises: "It washes out of clothes — and out of tongues."