

2010: Vegetarian Foods are the Star of Menu

gardein™ is a meat-free food loved by consumers and easy for chefs to prepare

No one can deny that plant-based diets are the new rage, as 2010 comes to an end.

Would you have ever guessed that former US President Bill Clinton would be enjoying a meat-free and dairy-free diet, and become a national spokesperson for promoting all of its associated health benefits? Or that personal trainer Bob Harper on NBC's Biggest Loser would be advocating vegan diets to all of his weight-loss contestants on primetime television?

Change is happening. Americans are becoming more mindful about what we eat.

For years, it has been widely cited that going meat-free once a week is a significant action an individual can take to protect our planet. Even the great Albert Einstein said, "Nothing will benefit human health and increase chances for survival of life on Earth as much as the evolution to a vegetarian diet."

Einstein knew what he was talking about. Consumers' awareness about the proven health and environmental benefits of vegetarian diets continues to rise and is being driven by global campaigns like Meat Free Monday, designed to raise awareness of the climate-changing impact of meat production and consumption and backed by celebrities such as Chris Martin, Gwyneth Paltrow, Sheryl Crow and Paul McCartney.

Studies promoting the health benefits of a plant-based diet also continue to make news and are endorsed by non-profit organizations like The Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, who actively support healthy school meals. And, college students were big drivers of change this fall – requesting sustainable, and often compassionate, food choices in campus cafeterias.

According to a 2006 Aramark survey*, one of every four *college students* in the U.S. is seeking *vegetarian* options on campus. This shift in the "way we eat" and "what we eat" is also being driven by schools with an overall commitment to environmental issues and ones that want to prepare their students for a sustainable future.

2010 was also an important year for food manufacturer Garden Protein International, the maker of gardein™ (garden + protein), a line of meat-free foods that is tasty and healthy alternative to animal-protein. Garden Protein saw its food service business grow substantially this year and its forecasting even greater growth in 2011.



Adding vegetarian foods to menus supports the needs of America's pro-veg population.

This year alone, more than 80 colleges and universities in North America including the likes of Harvard, Stanford, U.C. Berkeley, and Michigan State University served gardein™ on their cafeteria menus.

“Change is happening fast on college and university campuses including what types of foods are being served in the cafeteria,” says Yves Potvin, president of Garden Protein International. “It should be no surprise to see a focus on plant-based diets at higher-learning institutions since today’s sustainability-minded youth are tomorrow’s leaders.”

Additionally, nearly 40 restaurants including several national chains have taken notice of consumers demand for more vegetarian fare and added gardein™ to the menu.

Yard House, the award-winning restaurant known for its American fusion cuisine, classic rock, and selection of 100-250 taps of beer, partnered with Garden Protein this past summer and is now offering 25 menu items with gardein™ at all of its locations in the US. These items are vegetarian versions of some of the restaurant’s most popular dishes.

“We have wanted to enhance our menu selection to include vegetarian dishes for quite some time,” said Carlito Jocson, executive chef and partner of Yard House. “We first needed to find a meat alternative that didn’t compromise taste or quality and gardein™ passed every taste test with flying colors. The taste and texture of gardein™ is very similar to beef or chicken, and no matter what dish we tried to emulate, it was a challenge for our culinary team to differentiate the one made with gardein™.”

While, Chipotle Mexican Grill is currently serving a new Garden Blend “all vegan” burrito made with gardein™ and testing it in four important market areas including California, New York, Washington D.C and Colorado before rolling it out to all 1,000 locations. Through its vision of Food with Integrity, Chipotle seeks better food not only from using fresh ingredients, but ingredients that are sustainably grown and naturally raised with respect for the animals, the land, and the farmers who produce the food.

Garden Protein makes it easy to add meat-free options to the menu.

With gardein™, it is easy to satisfy the taste-buds of meat-eater and vegetarian customers alike. Made from a blend of vegetables and grains, gardein™ contains no animal or dairy ingredients and is low-fat, cholesterol-free, and a complete protein. With a meaty texture, it tastes great and is a high-protein plant-based food that can be prepared in place of meat in a variety of dishes from traditional entrees to soups, stews, stir-frys, pastas and pizzas.

gardein™ has helped move the meat-free category from being ‘stuck between the bun’ with veggie dogs to a ‘center of the plate’ protein ideal for any meal.



If your business is looking for a product that chefs and culinary teams can creatively use to prepare healthy dishes, consider gardein™. It's easy to introduce and is a great-tasting, new staple to the menu.

To learn more, please visit http://www.gardein.com/food_service.php or contact Thaddeus R. Thorne, director of food service sales at Garden Protein, via email at thaddeus@gardenprotein.com or via phone at 1-858-246-6744.

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