

Added Sugar in Products for USA Market

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I've just been to Sweden and Denmark, visitng healthy products companies in the Copenhagen and Southern Sweden areas. I've learned a lot about some of the great expertise available in this part of the world, but also about some of the very big differences between these countries and the USA.

A major supplier that I was interviewing one morning at breakfast described his plan for a new product introduction in the States, by adding that the "taste would have to be modified for the American market." I have no problem with the taste of the product he already sells in his home market and other regions, and so I asked him what he had in mind, and why he would feel the necessity to modify it for Americans.

"It isn't sweet enough. You wouldn't like it over there -- it would sell much more if it were sweeter," he replied.

As we sat for a few minutes over our coffee, I reflected on that comment. Almost unconsciously, I began to scan the crowd around me in this busy airport hotel; people from all over Scandinavia, Europe and even a few Americans. The Scandinavians and most of the Europeans looked trim, healthy. Then a couple of very large-bottomed people walked by pushing a cart and, by their accent, I knew they were fellow Americans.

Sadly, my colleague that morning told me that he doesn't need to hear them talk to recognize their nationality. My guess is that a lot of the world labels Americans in this way.

As an example of the way that manufacturers deal with this "American taste requirement," try a Yoghurt in Sweden (or anywhere in Europe, really). Then taste the product that Dannon supplies us. Wow . . . there must be an extra tablespoon of sugar in every small cup. And it is totally unnecessary. Yoghurt flavors, and many other products, don't need to be syrupy sweet. The way they taste in Europe is so much more real, so much more flavorful.

Sugar and sweet, sweet flavors don't need to be added to our US diet. We can, and should, want to live without that.

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Dave

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