

What is the outlook for the CBD consumables market in the US?

CBD and consumers

There's also uncertainty and confusion among US consumers when it comes to CBD consumables. For example, a new survey by Chicago-based research firm **Culinary Visions** found **trust and traceability are among the most important issues consumers have related to food and beverage products made with CBD.**

Forty-five per cent of those surveyed said they would trust products that are commercially made to be safe. But, despite having trust in commercial cannabis products, **42%** said they would prefer to buy from a small batch producer.

Only **29%** of consumers would trust the quality of CBD products bought online, and half of those surveyed said they would feel more comfortable buying CBD consumables if they had the opportunity to speak directly with a knowledgeable sales representative.

This data points to the big job food-and-beverage companies have in educating consumers and gaining their trust when it comes to offering branded CBD consumables.

"I think the number one thing that needs to occur with packaged goods companies and brands is educating the public about their products in a responsible but entertaining way," Weisberg says. "This could include sponsoring various tasting events and get-togethers on-site at legalised recreational CBD locations. They could have well-known celebrities and sports figures endorse their products. Companies could also pledge to have a percentage of their profits donated to medical CBD research. They could also have chefs demonstrate how to cook and bake using CBD products and serve CBD beverages at the events."

Sharon Olson, executive director of **Culinary Visions**, says the CBD food-and-drink product concepts that appealed to the consumers the firm surveyed are those that find appeal and acceptance in gourmet retail and restaurant venues, such as small-batch production, knowledgeable staff, culinary attributes and great taste.

According to the survey, consumers said the top four CBD food-and-drink products consumers are interested in are: baked goods (**48%**); **candy/gummies (45%)**; **snacks (44%)**; and **non-alcoholic beverages (41%)**.

These categories are representative of the categories that comprise most of the CBD consumables products on the market.

Weisberg, who's created private-label food-and-beverage products for retailers Tesco, Smart & Final and Cost-Plus World Market among others, says the following categories have high potential: candy (gummies, hard candy, mints and chocolate); baked goods like cookies, brownies and cakes; and beverages, including flavoured water, wine and beer.

Mario Martin, founder of M2Farms in Sacramento, which has recently launched a line of CBD consumables and health and body care products to compliment its existing line of CBD oils and related products, says he sees CBD in everything from baked goods, to "grass-fed" animal products, sauces, emulsions, and even purées.

Martin, who is a pioneer and expert in the cannabis industry, is building a café in Sacramento's hip Midtown neighbourhood where he plans to eventually offer CBD-infused meals and drinks, along with conducting educational events focused on CBD and cannabis.

He insists there are misconceptions about the ingredient that need to be addressed to better inform and educate consumers. "It has become common knowledge in recent years that marijuana has numerous health benefits. However, after using traditional marijuana products, the tetrahydrocannabinol causes a 'high', or a feeling of euphoria for a time after consumption, which could be an unwanted effect. Many health benefits from marijuana are contained in cannabidiol. So, when CBD is extracted from the cannabis plant and isolated from THC, the benefits of cannabis can be gained without the high. Products in the M2 Farms shop labelled 'CBD' are there to provide people with the option to reap the benefits without the high. However, since most establishments and governmental agencies don't know this concept, not many products make it on the grocery shelf."

M2 Farms is focusing on food-and-drink consumables containing CBD, as well as health, body and beauty products in its initial launch, Martin says, "because we believe these are very desirable products with consumers".