

Adding Spice to Lunches: Latest Trend Delivers Important Results

Reducing waste, saving money and encouraging healthy choices

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The federal government now enforces strict nutrition standards for school meals with new meal pattern requirements and other regulations from the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, but actually appealing to kids' fickle palates has proven a challenge.

In a national study, School Food Authorities in 48 states reported high food waste as the main challenge created by the new nutrition standards. Further, over one million fewer students are participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) than five years ago, according to the USDA FNS Key Program Data Report. In fact, the School Nutrition Association states that 70 percent of school meal programs have taken a significant financial hit since the new mandates went into effect.

While new lunch guidelines deliver reduced fat, lower sodium, and more whole grains onto the lunch tray, now seasonings within the The Flavor Lab® Flavor Station are motivating students to consume more of that healthier meal.

The Flavor Lab Flavor Station invites students to customize their lunch by shaking on a variety of highly flavorful, low-to-no sodium options, thereby appealing to their individual palates and adding a little fun to mealtime. The proven reduction in waste is an important indicator of satisfaction and sets the stage for long-term health through greater consumption of fruits, vegetables and low-fat meals.

The Flavor Lab Flavor Station is a self-serve display that allow students to experiment with new tastes and flavors without adding a lot of sodium. This low-cost solution allows students to have a choice in how they flavor their food and actively encourages students to eat a well-balanced meal. In fact, the USDA has promoted and supported the flavor station concept as an option for reducing sodium while increasing acceptance in school meals through their "What's Shaking?" campaign.

"Customization is in demand, and students enjoy the flexibility and creativity of topping food with their favorite flavors," says Renate Durham, K-12 Specialist at Kent Precision Foods Group. "By being able to customize their meals and intensify the flavors, there is a reduction in waste and an increase in consumption." The Flavor Lab Flavor Station features Mrs. Dash and Foothill Farms brands of seasonings and includes flavors such as Smokey Chipotle, Ranch, Spicy Jalapeno, Buffalo Wings, Caribbean and Chili Cheese, among others.

Schools can either order flavor station products as needed from their foodservice distributor and create their own concept, or they can participate in The Flavor Lab Flavor Station program. When schools sign up for the program, they receive a starter kit that contains a display base and board with colorful graphics, six stainless steel shakers and flavor labels, and marketing materials. Schools can request a starter kit online or by mail after they order at least three qualifying Mrs. Dash and Foothill Farms products from their foodservice distributor.



For more information, visit getyourflavoron.com or contact Kent Precision Foods Group Customer Care Center at 800-442-5242.

About Kent Precision Foods Group

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