

R&D: Halal Reaches Growing Market -- May 2010

The U.S. halal food market is estimated at \$17.6 billion per year by the Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America (IFANCA). This growing market demand increases the importance for ingredient suppliers to become halal-certified and help food manufacturers reach this growing demographic.

Adding halal certification can help food manufacturers both reach the halal food consumer and differentiate their existing products, in a time when new product introductions are low. One ingredient supplier, ICL Performance Products LP, became halal-certified in February 2009.

What is Halal?

Halal is an Arabic word meaning lawful or permitted, and it applies to all areas of Islamic life, including food and meat products, food ingredients and food contact materials. Muslim consumers search for foods that are certified halal, because it helps them easily identify the acceptability of the production of these foods for consumption.

Food guidelines for religious groups are not new, but a growing population leads to a new market for some conventional foods. Some foods may always have been halal, but, due to the time it would take to research each ingredient to determine if it met halal standards, people may have passed on purchasing a particular product. Certification removes that barrier and increases the range of food items available to this growing market.

The market extends beyond the Muslim population. Some general consumers try halal-certified food for the added evaluation of the food manufacturing process. This demand will continue, and ingredient suppliers, like ICL, will help food manufacturers reach this market. ICL invested in the halal-certification process, in order to ensure its food-grade products could be used by food manufacturers looking to reach this large segment of the U.S. and world population.

Available Products

“Halal certification of ICL products ensures that production of these food-grade ingredients is carried out in accordance with the standards of the IFANCA and provides another important aspect of quality assurance for our customers,” says Lori Klopff, Ph.D., ICL Regulatory Affairs.

All food-grade phosphate salts and blends, as well as phosphoric acid and adipic acid available from ICL, are halal-certified, including the new Cal-Sistent™ micronized tricalcium phosphate and the Levona® family of leavening acids.

Manufacturers can use ICL’s halal-certified phosphates in several types of products, including meat and poultry, dairy-based foods and beverages, and prepared foods and meals. ICL’s food phosphate specialists work directly with food manufacturers to find the best formulations to help them meet consumer demands, whether in the category of “better-for-you” foods, or new markets through religious food requirements.