

Half of elderly people are more than happy to consume new foods

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Elderly people are regarded as traditional consumers, but the AZTI study reveals that there are more and more elderly people who are happy to accept new foods. However, these consumers insist that the new proposals should be similar to or evoke traditional products and flavours and, at the same time, be health-enhancing, have the right nutrient profile for their age, and be flavoursome.

To come up with new foods adapted to the needs of the population over 65, AZTI –in collaboration with the ADIMEN group of [sociologists](#) and with the support of [chefs](#) in the R&D AZTI and Mugaritz team– is working to produce various food prototypes. The research is also being expanded in the quest for new foods designed for people between 40 and 50, known as pre-seniors or young seniors.

One of the key aspects in the quest for new foods is that the moment of eating should become a moment of pleasure. The technicians and chefs in the R&D AZTI-Mugaritz team are exploring combinations of aromas, flavours and textures that evoke pleasurable memories linked to food. So it boils down to relating food with moments of happiness.

The results, the outcome of the interaction between methodologies of the sensory sciences and the consumer together with other more classical ones to do with sociological behaviour, have provided clear proof that 50% of the seniors consulted readily accept new foods.

The AZTI research to get to know senior consumers also reflects the

significant degree of concern about health matters among people between 50 and 70. This group is seeking a solution in foods to prevent the problems that emerge with the passing years. Among the disorders identified in the study as the ones giving cause for concern are cardiovascular disease, cancer and those relating to digestive health.

The R&D centre believes that [elderly people](#) are a group of great interest for the [food](#) industry, as they constitute a target group with purchasing capacity and prepared to try new things. To come up with fresh initiatives for this sector, AZTI is working on the design of new foods that do not forgo taste and tradition and which are accompanied by labelling that incorporates clear messages and which details all the benefits that can result from consuming them. In this respect, the AZTI study has revealed that the senior consumer does not feel identified with the products currently available on the market. Specifically, the study reveals that the messages on the labels neither address their needs nor coincide with the perception they have about their own health.

Seniors: A Growing Market

As the population ages, the over-sixties are becoming an increasingly important segment for many industries, including the [food industry](#). Coming up with the foods and ingredients that address the needs of this new market will be crucial in the near future, and this is the challenge that the second edition of the symposium Growing Young will be endeavouring to address. The symposium is being organised by AZTI and is due to take place in Bilbao on 26-27 May, 2015.

Provided by Elhuyar Fundazioa

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