

A photograph of a light-colored ceramic bowl filled with bright yellow chickpea flour. The bowl sits on a teal-colored cloth. Scattered around the bowl and in the background are several whole, light-brown chickpeas. In the upper left, a glass bowl is partially visible, also containing chickpeas. The background is a light grey surface.

Ingredient Hot List

WHAT'S NEXT IN PROTEIN

If you're looking to see the next chapter of protein, look no further. The space is primed for new and innovative products, and we're tracking some protein sources ready to grab some attention. As many consumers continue to seek plant-based alternatives to whey protein, soy and pea protein are quickly becoming well-explored. With that in mind, let's take a look at what's popping in next-gen protein. Let's dive in to some innovative and perhaps unexpected proteins that are on the horizon.

ABOUT PROTEIN CONSUMERS

In 2019, Mintel conducted a nationwide survey with 2000 protein consumers, it found that there is a rise of plant-based protein consumption with no signs of slowing down. One reason for plant-based protein growth is due to many consumers' specialized diets and the avoidance of soy, gluten and whey. According to this survey, 10% of consumers follow a gluten-free diet and 38% of consumers are trying to add more plant-based foods into their diet.



“Vegan and vegetarian diets have historically been the most loyal consumers of plant-based proteins. Younger consumers are more likely than older adults to eschew meat altogether, and this trend is likely to grow, albeit slowly. Additionally, formulations that fit into diets such as paleo and keto will open brands to a wider audience.”

-Mintel



DUCKWEED

Duckweed, also known as water lentils or lemna, is an aquatic plant that is naturally high in protein. An Israeli startup company Hinoman, designed a strain, Mankai duckweed, that is said to control the glycemic effects after consuming carbohydrates. A company in Florida, Parabel, intends to launch an allergen-free and non-GMO duckweed protein. According to Food Dive, duckweed contains “45% protein and has a complete protein profile similar to eggs — with all nine essential amino acids and six conditional ones.”

With the rise of plant-based food, duckweed is considered an excellent option for a plant-based protein source. We are also seeing duckweed being introduced in meat-alternative products like plant-based burgers, bars, and snacks. Duckweed is said to be a tasteless and odorless plant that can be introduced in a number of different food applications.

SOCIAL STATUS

Social mentions of duckweed protein has 91% positive sentiment and has seen 50% growth in the number of posts in the past 12 months. We’re spotting 1.6 mentions per day, and 589 posts total. Lentein Complete calls duckweed/ water lentils “a sustainable and convenient source of protein for everyone!” – Lentein Complete, Instagram

DUCKWEED, CONTINUED



Image Credit: Amazon.com

PRODUCTS OF NOTE



NUTRIFY LENTEIN is a Brazilian product that is 100% raw vegetable protein. This supplement is made from aquatic lentils or duckweed and is free from lactose, gluten and soy. It is sold in 200g packages and just released in December 2019.



REAL SOURCE 100% WATER LENTIL SUPERFOOD is a non-GMO Florida grown supplement that is meant to be added to smoothies, drinks, teas or other recipes. This multi-vitamin, vegan product contains 4 grams of protein per serving at 30 calories. The product states that it is more nutrient dense than Moringa, said to be the most sustainable supergreen superfood.

“Who wants to be first to try this one? It’s the bane of pond-owners everywhere, but duckweed – the green cress-like plant which grows like a carpet across still water – looks set to become the next ‘superfood’, high protein and vitamins.”

- All Pond Solutions, Twitter





AIR-BASED PROTEIN

What may seem like a food found in a futuristic Sci-fi movie, air-based protein is a real meat alternative that multiple companies across the world are working with. According to Mintel, the process takes elements obtained in air, specifically carbon dioxide, and converts them into nutrients like protein. The resulting protein product is flavorless and colorless but is said to still contain the same amino acid profiles that an animal protein would have. Looking into the future, air-based protein may be the innovative solution for clean and sustainable food production.

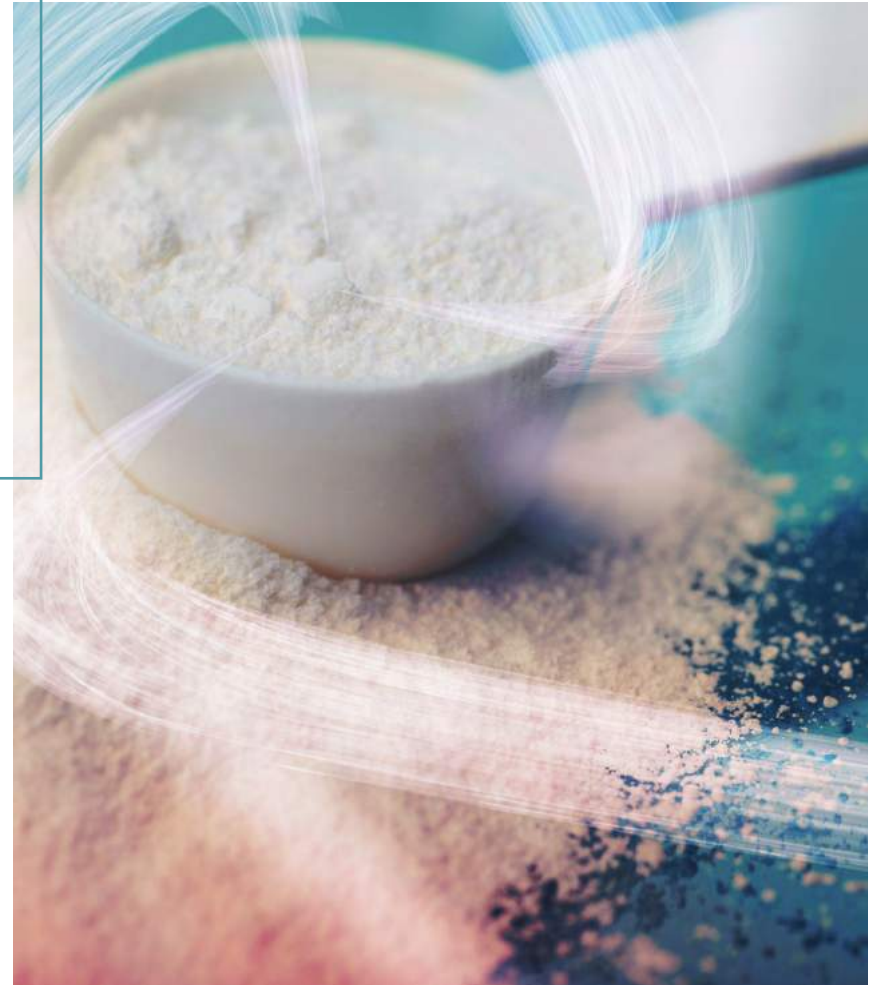
According to Business Insider, the conversion process was discovered by NASA in the 1960s, as part of an attempt to grow food for astronauts. One justification for air-based protein being exceedingly sustainable: The CEO of a San Francisco company, Air Protein, stated that their protein-making process uses 1,000 times less water and land than the average soybean production process.

AIR-BASED PROTEIN, CONTINUED

SOCIAL STATUS

Air Protein has 60% positive sentiment and has seen 818% growth in the number of posts in the past 6 months. We're spotting 1.9 mentions per hour, and just over 8,329 posts total.

- **47%** Female Voice
- **53%** Male Voice



“Air Protein, a startup in the San Francisco Bay area, has introduced its plan to extract protein from the air and turn it into food for people to eat. The company claims that the proteins it extracts from the air have the same amino acid profile as that found in beef and chicken.”

-RetailWire Via Facebook

GARBANZO BEANS

According to Food Navigator, Berkeley researchers identified garbanzo beans as one of the “game changing” proteins on the horizon. There is a large boom in eating plant-based food and these beans have a surplus in supply and are highly favorable in taste and color. Garbanzo beans are water soluble which makes them flexible and effective in food applications. They are said to have a nutty flavor that can go great with some products but may need some work with others.

“[Garbanzo beans are] high in fiber, amino acids, and selenium – a trace mineral that plays an important role in immune system health” – Food Navigator

SOCIAL STATUS

Garbanzo Bean Protein has 99% positive sentiment and has seen 759% growth in the number of posts in the past 2 years. We’re spotting 5.3 mentions per hour, and over 92 thousand posts total.



GARBANZO BEANS, CONTINUED



PRODUCTS OF NOTE



GNC PUREEDGE NATURAL VANILLA COMPLETE VEGAN PLANT-BASED PERFORMANCE PROTEIN is one of the only supplements that contains 20 grams of plant-based proteins. This product's function is to build and repair lean muscle and boost metabolism with amino acids and vegan protein blends, including garbanzo beans. This product is sold in 38 oz containers.



RULE BREAKER GLUTEN-FREE & VEGAN DEEP CHOCOLATE BROWNIE is made with more than 40% beans and is high in protein and fiber. This kosher and vegan product retails in 2.2-ounce packs and is sold in the USA only.

Consumer Sentiment: 45% of consumers polled responded that they likely or definitely would try this product.

“Dried chickpeas, also known as garbanzo beans, are a great source of vegetarian protein. In just one quarter cup serving you get 6.44 grams of plant-based protein. Use dried garbanzo beans to make tasty vegetarian burgers, spicy masala, falafel, and add to chili, soups, and salads, for a satisfying nutty flavor.”

-Harmony House Foods, Pinterest

THE TAKEAWAYS

The future of the protein industry is constantly shifting and changing. Consumers are always seeking the next best thing when it comes to protein, especially in today's clean, sustainable and plant-based space. Whether it's a tasteless ingredient like air-based protein and water lentils or a nuttier flavored protein like garbanzo beans, we are seeing heightened discussion around these ingredients. Seeing that taste is the #1 factor for consumers, many of these ingredients have a bright future. No matter where your product plays in the protein space -- if you need help making the right taste solutions, we can help you deliver.

SOURCES

- Food Navigator
- Infegy Atlas
- Food Dive
- Iconoculture
- Natural Product Insider
- Mintel
- GNPD
- Instagram
- Pinterest
- www.amazon.com
- www.facebook.com/RetailWire



YOU DESERVE MORE. LET'S GET STARTED.

What does true partnership look like? You deserve a flavor partner ready to turn these trends into the tangible.

Let FONA's market insight and research experts get to work for you. Translate these trends into bold new ideas for your brand. Increase market share and get to your "what's next." Our technical flavor and product development experts are also at your service to help meet the labeling and flavor profile needs for your products to capitalize on this consumer trend. Let's mesh the complexities of flavor with your brand development, technical requirements and regulatory needs to deliver a complete taste solution.

From concept to manufacturing, we're here for you — every step of the way. Contact our sales service department at [630.578.8600](tel:630.578.8600) to request a flavor sample or [chat us up at www.fona.com/contact-fona/](http://www.fona.com/contact-fona/)