

Advertorial Spotlight on Ajinomoto

For over a century, Ajinomoto Health & Nutrition, a North American affiliate of the global Ajinomoto Group, has had a rich history helping food manufacturers of all sizes deliver the highest quality taste enhancements. They offer the highest quality high-potency sweeteners, flavor enhancement ingredients, and specialty ingredients. Ajinomoto Health & Nutrition focuses highly on delivering umami and kokumi in combination with sodium reduction. This initiative is derived from the company's commitment to providing solutions to consumers who desire both healthy and tasty products.

Tell us about the company, its mission, and its history. How does the company's mission contribute to cereal and food science?

Ajinomoto Co. (AJICO) is a global food company whose story began with the discovery of umami in 1908. In 1909, Ajinomoto launched the world's first umami seasoning "AJI-NO-MOTO," meaning "essence of taste." Since that point, the company has expanded its offerings and global footprint, while maintaining a focus on great-tasting products based on amino science. Today, the company has business affiliates in over 35 countries and sells products in over 140 countries. Looking ahead, the company will strive to become a genuine global specialty company "GGSC" that can grow sustainably and contribute to a healthy future for humanity and the earth through its Food and Amino Science businesses. This focus on high-quality, science-based solutions has benefitted the cereal industry through its emphasis on reducing sugar and sodium, while never sacrificing great taste.

What is the focus of the organization's work? In what ways does the work bring innovation to the industry?

The Ajinomoto Group contributes to three 21st-century challenges: "health and well-being," "food resources," and "global sustainability." Committing to coexisting and developing with society, each department within the Ajinomoto Group plans to address these issues using unique technology and product development expertise and value-chain influence. Due to this passion and commitment to health and accessible taste, the company has been able to contribute solutions to the cereal foods industry. The solutions range from sodium reduction to umami- and kokumi-enhancement ingredients that allow for cereal food manufacturers to achieve the greatest tasting products imaginable, while also maintaining a healthy label.

What are the core capabilities of the organization? How many and what types of scientists does the organization employ to do this work?

The Group's core strength is its belief that science is at the heart of creating the highest quality food technologies possible. With a team of more than 1,700 R&D scientists globally, the Group consistently aspires to develop ingredients for and with food and beverage manufacturers who are looking to bring science-based innovation to their product portfolio.

On a global level, how is AJICO contributing to the sustainability of the global food system? How does Ajinomoto's work shed light on the challenges and opportunities in the global food system?

The Ajinomoto Group business is built on a healthy global environment and rich ecosystems. In order to continue being an integral part of society, the Group needs to conduct business activities that help transform society into an environmentally friendly, low-carbon, circular economy. The Group will continue contributing to global sustainability by determining the environmental impact across the entire life cycle and initiatives to reduce negative impacts.

Together with communities and customers, the Ajinomoto Group contributes to the global environment through initiatives that are ahead of international targets, from manufacturing to consumption. The medium- to long-term environmental targets encompass the overall product life cycle to become carbon neutral, to create an environment where water resources are sustained, and to produce zero emissions of waste materials.

Ajinomoto's sustainability commitment sheds light on the challenges in the global food system through its acknowledgment of important issues and strong public proclamations to make a change.

How does Ajinomoto support the North American market in terms of a balance of taste and health?

Ajinomoto Health & Nutrition, a North American affiliate of the global Ajinomoto Group, focuses highly on delivering umami and kokumi in combination with sodium reduction. This initiative is derived from the company's commitment to providing solutions to consumers who desire both healthy and tasty products. The Savorboost™ Yeast and Yeast Extract portfolio was designed specifically for companies looking to achieve that balance of health and great taste. With an emphasis on delivering umami taste and kokumi flavor sensations, the solutions available to cereal food manufacturers are endless.

How does umami and kokumi benefit cereal food manufacturers?

Umami, generally accepted by the global scientific community as the fifth taste, is critical for the success of savory foods. The core concept of this fifth taste is glutamate, which is an amino acid commonly found in the human body. When added as a yeast or yeast extract to a cereal food, you can achieve a rich savory taste and reduce the level of sodium needed to achieve the same or better taste. Additionally, many cereal foods include "yeast" on their ingredient label declaration, meaning that the Savorboost™ Yeast portfolio would require no label change.

Kokumi is a tri-peptide that can be described as a flavor sensation that delivers complexity, fermented flavor, and mouthfeel to a multitude of applications. Manufacturers can benefit immensely from this sensation, as it creates aged, robust, and balanced flavor characteristics that are desired by many consumers. As it is a relatively new concept to many people, it creates a unique opportunity for manufacturers to bring innovative flavor and deliciousness to their products like never before.