

# Back Talk



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**Question:** What's the state of the market for plant proteins?

**Answer:** The plant protein is growing industry like crazy; everyone wants it. It can be found in everything from food products to nutrition supplements, even skincare products. The top cereal and snack companies in the U.S. are furiously reformulating their products to take out wheat because of gluten issues and corn due to GMO (genetically modified organism) infestation. We are in talks with them to provide rice protein for their new products. The fact that wheat and corn (the two largest world crops, respectively), are falling from favor is big global news. So, truly, rice is becoming the new meat. CNBC even did a story about this recently. The fact that rice is the third biggest crop grown in the world and has the highest percentage of protein (more than any other plant), portends great things for this grain. Pea pro-

## THIS MONTH:

David Janow, CEO and president of Axiom Foods, Inc. and owner of 4 and 1 Nutrition, Growing Naturals, LLC and Simply Rice, is an expert in plant ingredient manufacturing, and is best known for developing Oryzatein, the industry standard for hexane-free whole grain brown rice protein. He is a global expert on the subject of plant-based protein whose opinion has been sought by the FDA (U.S. Food and Drug Administration), USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture) and in international forums such as Health Ingredients Europe and the American Food Technology & Innovation Summit. He is on the cutting edge of the world's third crop, rice, becoming the "new wheat."



tein is another plant protein that is gaining favor quickly. Hemp protein is very trendy and has a lot of interesting nutritional functions, but has the least amount of protein available. It's also very expensive to extract.

**Question:** What are the benefits of plant proteins?

**Answer:** The biggest consideration to use plant proteins is the allergen issue—intolerances to dairy and soy rule out casein and soy protein. Dairy and soy are two of the largest allergens of the top eight listed by FARE (Food Allergy Research & Education). Food allergies are a massive problem, and according to a study released in 2013 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, food allergies among children alone increased approximately 50 percent between 1997 and 2011. There are those concerned about added estrogen who will avoid soy protein, and of course, people who don't want to ingest animal products don't want animal-based whey protein (made of animal milk). There are lifestyle choices; vegetarianism and veganism is growing exponentially. Google Trends stated that vegetarians have doubled in the past three years alone.

**Question:** What should retailers look for when purchasing plant protein products?

**Answer:** Always ask where the product comes from and make sure you have a qualified source. It's important to buy from reputable companies and manufacturers. For example, rice protein, though it's sold as a natural product, is often "fractioned" apart using a petroleum product called

hexane. When we got into the business in 2005, we created a proprietary fractioning method that instead uses enzymes. That's important information to ask about.

Heavy metals are the elements on the periodic chart, which, in the case of plants exist naturally in the Earth's crust. The soil is different throughout the planet. This is why in Red Rock Canyon you see a heavy redness in the soil—it may have a lot of iron in it, etc. So, any plant that grows in soil has traces of the constituents from which it grows. This is normal for any plant we have ingested since the dawn of time. There is a consumer fear about heavy metals being added to plant proteins, which is a grave misunderstanding.

GRAS (generally recognized as safe) approval is something buyers should also look for. The GRAS approval is a standard set forth by the FDA. The achievement of GRAS status represents a gold-standard affirmation of an ingredient's safety.

**Question:** What should retailers know about plant proteins for fitness and muscle building?

**Answer:** For the first time in history, rice protein works the same way as whey protein. Clinical trials have shown this and you can find the abstract in the *Nutrition Journal* 6/19/13. For bodybuilders, they'll be very interested to know that rice protein not only will help them build and keep mass, but it doesn't trigger allergies—and they won't have to deal with the typical bloats and upset stomach that comes with whey protein. Everyone in the gym will appreciate that!

# Vitamin Retailer®

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