


SODIUM REDUCTION


## Will proposals to mandate potassium labeling on the Nutrition Facts panel give potassium-chloride based sodium replacers a shot in the arm?



By Elaine Watson+ 

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Many food manufacturers are still "aggressively reducing sodium", says NuTek Salt, but they are not shouting about it from the rooftops anymore

Some food manufacturers still worry that using potassium chloride to replace salt in their recipes might compromise their clean label credentials. But the FDA's recent proposal to include potassium as one of the nutrients that must be listed on the Nutrition Facts panel is helping to change that mindset, says NuTek Salt.

"There are still some people who feel that potassium chloride looks bad on the label," NuTek Salt president Brian Boor told FoodNavigator-USA.

"But that dynamic has been changing pretty dramatically recently as people learn more about the health benefits of increasing potassium and lowering sodium, and the FDA proposal [click [HERE](#)] is already having a positive effect because it's started a dialogue."

He added: "Potassium consumption should be at least 4,700 mg per day whereas most people consume less than half that. Meanwhile, sodium consumption should be limited to 2,300 mg or less, but most people still eat way more than that, so replacing salt (sodium chloride) with potassium chloride is a good way of helping things get back in balance.

"Now potassium is something that people actually want on the label, so we're seeing a big shift in the manufacturer and the consumer mindset."

### **The biggest challenge is getting through the door**

Another thing that's shifting - gradually - is the perception that potassium chloride tastes grim, says NuTek, which has patented a wet chemistry process using label-friendly carriers (rice flour, maltodextrin or wheat flour) that suppresses its metallic taste without requiring companies to add expensive flavor masking ingredients.



Brian Boor: "Now potassium is something that people actually want on the label, so we're seeing a big shift in the manufacturer and the consumer mindset."

The challenge, however, is getting food manufacturers to see that things have changed dramatically since they tested the first generation of KCL-based salt replacers, says Boor.

"The biggest challenge is getting through the door. A lot of companies have negative feelings about potassium chloride because they tested the first generation of KCl-based salt replacers and they didn't like them. But if we can just get

them to try our products, they are convinced."

### **Stealth reductions: Companies are still reducing sodium, but they're not broadcasting it anymore**

But what about the motivation to reduce sodium? If consumers aren't that bothered, and the FDA is not going to set mandatory limits on sodium in foods, where's the business case for manufacturers to keep chipping away at it?

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While the focus of NuTek's business is supplying potassium chloride based salt replacers to food manufacturers and caterers on an industrial scale, it also has a retail business supplying 'Salt for Life', a blend of potassium salt and sea salt utilizing its patented technology that consumers can use as a one-to-one replacement for table salt with 75% less sodium.

"The cheapest ingredients in the world are water and salt," admits Boor, "but if you look at NuTek Salt from a cost-in-use perspective, it's much less expensive than competitive products, and you can achieve significant reductions in sodium - 35% to 50%."

And while other issues from GMOs to sugar may be competing for his customers' attention, many are still working "very aggressively" on sodium reduction, he claims.

The difference is that they are not issuing press releases about it anymore, not least because consumer research shows that shouting 'now with less sodium' on food labels does not win hearts and minds, whatever shoppers tell you in surveys, he says.

Meanwhile, if sodium reduction has lost momentum in the US from a food policy perspective, it's gained momentum in other parts of the world, and multinational manufacturers are approaching this from a global perspective, he says.

In other words, if they are reducing sodium in big brands, they are doing it across the board, he says: "They don't want 10 different formulas for 10 different markets."



As part of a proposed overhaul of the Nutrition Facts panel, the FDA has proposed to add potassium and vitamin D to the list of nutrients that manufacturers will have to list on their label along with calcium and iron (vitamins C and A will be voluntary)