



# News Release

## **Spices & Herbs are flavourful ingredients which may help meet public health recommendations**

*McCormick Science Institute was present at the 12<sup>th</sup> European Nutrition Conference (Fens 2015)  
with a symposium led by internationally-renown scientists and health professionals  
who presented the latest research in this area*

**London: October 28th 2015.** On October 22<sup>nd</sup> 2015, McCormick Science Institute (MSI) took part in the FENS 2015 conference in Berlin by hosting a symposium entitled « Spices and Herbs: improving public health through flavourful eating ». It was a unique opportunity to enhance awareness about the latest scientific information on how spices and herbs could improve public health by making healthier foods more acceptable to consumers and about their potential physiological health benefits.

### **A practical approach facilitating compliance with nutritional recommendations**

Public Health England (PHE) recommends eating a healthy, balanced diet that is high in fruit, vegetables and fibre, but low in sugars, salt and saturated fats, which in excess can lead to the onset of chronic diseases – such as obesity and diabetes – or hypertension and consequently cardiovascular disease. Although consumers understand these recommendations, they are proving difficult to adopt.

The challenge today lies in exploring other ways of following these recommendations, capable of changing our long-term eating habits for new simple, practical, natural and tasty alternatives.

**Can spices & herbs play a role?** Several scientific studies have recently suggested that these ingredients can help consumers accept healthy products by improving both visual appeal and flavour.

### **Using spices & herbs can help change eating habits**

When we think of a balanced diet, many consumers think of tasteless meals, but several studies have shown that spices and herbs can play a valuable role in helping them accept healthier eating habits.

For example, Professor Ian Rowland<sup>1</sup> and his team from the University of Reading in England looked at how we can use different spices and herbs mixes – such as oregano, garlic and black pepper – to compensate for salt reduction in a common dish, in this case tomato soup. Their study, involving 148 subjects, shows that including spices and herbs can impact the acceptability of lower sodium tomato soup: “*People were reticent at first, but with this herbs and spices mix, the soup containing 50% less salt had a salty flavour equivalent to the normal soup,*” says Ian Rowland. Not only that, but after eating the soup containing spices and herbs three times, the subjects’ overall opinion significantly improved as did their liking of the soup taste, texture and aftertaste, unlike the other soups after several servings. “*These results indicate that using carefully-selected spices and herbs can be useful in reducing the salt content in food,*” he says.

Professor James Hill<sup>1</sup> from the University of Colorado in Denver, USA, reached the same conclusion in his study involving the same number of subjects with lower fat and calorie foods. “*When we changed just the fat content in the meals tested, appreciation dropped significantly. On the other hand, when we combined this fat reduction with the addition of spices and herbs, the meals were often just as popular as the full-fat meals,*” says Hill.

### **Spices & Herbs can improve health and food quality**

*“Used for centuries around the world for culinary and medical purposes, spices & herbs may also contain a large variety of active phytochemicals, such as polyphenols. According to recent clinical studies, they also may have a positive effect on health, by helping reduce salt consumption, making low-fat food more appetising and by increasing vegetables intake. Spices & Herbs therefore hold great potential in helping us meet nutritional recommendations and become generally healthier.”*

**Excerpts from the speech given by Anne-Marie Roussel<sup>1</sup>, Emeritus Professor at Joseph Fourier University in Grenoble, France.**

<sup>1</sup> Professor Anne-Marie Roussel, Professor Ian Rowland and Professor James Hill are also members of McCormick Science Institute Scientific Advisory Council



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These results all show that adding spices and herbs can have beneficial effects. Spices and herbs provide a wide range of flavours to make meals tastier and they are a great everyday solution for reducing salt and fat consumption and eating a more balanced diet. Their rich flavours can encourage new eating habits by making healthy cuisine more attractive and enjoyable.

Therefore, to keep on helping consumers to find new ways to improve diet quality, a new study sponsored by MSI is studying the potential effects of spices and herbs to increase the acceptability of foods with less added sugars.

## **About The McCormick Science Institute**

The McCormick Science Institute is an organization with a mission to support independent scientific research and disseminate information on the potential health benefits of culinary herbs and spices to all stakeholders including consumers and health professionals. The Institute is led by a panel of independent nutrition scientists and guided by a [Scientific Advisory Council](#) consisting of internationally-renown scientists and health professionals from leading research institutions. Learn more at [www.mccormickscienceinstitute.com](http://www.mccormickscienceinstitute.com).

**McCormick** is a global leader in flavour present in more than 135 countries and territories.

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