

\ CASE STUDY

Reformulating a custard into a cleaner label version for extra value for money

Consumer need

European consumers are scrutinising the ingredients and processing methods of dairy products more than ever, with a strong focus on naturalness and minimal processing. Dairy alternative brands are actively working to 'clean' their ingredient lists to address concerns about highly processed ingredients. The concept of 'clean indulgence' is gaining traction. Encouraging brands to create less processed, better-for-you versions of indulgent products like dairy desserts and ice creams. Recent launches of fruity yoghurts in Europe with "natural" and "free from additives" claims highlight a preference for products with corn starch (43%) over modified starches (25%)¹.



Clara Mombeshora
Sr Manager
Consumer Insights

Industry opportunity/ customer challenge

Since early 2022, inflation has placed significant pressure on the dairy industry. To prove value, brands must avoid being perceived as 'low cost, low quality' by focusing on price alone. Brands that fail to prove their value risk losing out to lower tiered products. Instead, a more effective strategy is to package price with aspirational benefits like convenience, nutrition, and taste. With European consumers increasingly valuing simpler, cleaner labels, reformulating into clean-label versions offers a clear route for increased value perception. The challenge is ensuring critical attributes like formulation performance, shelf life and taste remain protected in the process.



Linn Peterse
Sr Manager Category
Development DBF

¹ Source: Mintel GNPD

Formulating with value in mind, and performance in check

Drawing on these insights, we partnered with a dairy alternative manufacturer to formulate a new custard recipe for one of their premium brands. Our customer had been using a modified starch with good performance, so the reformulation needed to maintain functionality, shelf life and most importantly, the taste and mouthfeel customers already loved.

A key requirement included shifting from modified food starch to a clean-label alternative that could withstand mild pasteurisation, and allow for a short shelf life (3-4 weeks) while maintaining an elastic yet pourable texture.

To save time upfront, our team of formulators shortlisted suitable ingredients in line with the customer's guidance and recommended CLARIA® Essential. With its low process resistance, it was ideal for the custard's formulation, especially alongside carrageenan, where only limited shelf stability was needed. CLARIA® Essential also ensured the custard dessert met the required texture and shelf life.



Griet Herregods,
Technical Services Director,
DBF, Europe

Protecting the essential elements: Great taste and mouthfeel

To make sure that the end product still appealed to consumers, it was critical to study the taste and mouthfeel profile of the original custard. Our experts identified the key sensorial attributes to retain, such as pourability and creaminess, and the ones to avoid, such as chalkiness.

By applying sensory science and mouthfeel expertise, we ensured the final formulation delivered a smooth, pourable texture, a cleaner label and a fantastic taste with a relatively low process viscosity.



Heba Shendy
Sensory Manager



Reformulation success

CLARIA® Essential became the starch of choice, enabling our customer to market a cleaner-label custard dessert that appeals to consumers seeking **indulgence with a clean profile**. This result maintained performance and shelf life and strengthened the brand's position in **offering more value for money**.

CLARIA®
Functional Clean-Label Starch

Our success was driven by consistent service, open communication, and insights into the customer's needs. We provided end-to-end support in product formulation and process optimisation, achieving the desired functionality with CLARIA®. Our technical expertise and understanding of ingredient capabilities delivered first-class solutions, resulting in a cleaner-label custard dessert that met consumer expectations for taste, texture, and value, enhancing the brand's market position.