

‘Edible insects’ boost food sustainability, but will consumers eat BBQ-flavored bugs?

There is an increasing range of insect-based products, such as whole/flour, snacks, health bars, pasta, pasta sauce and burgers. Edible insects are promoted as a sustainable food alternative. It is also claimed there are numerous health benefits from eating bugs and insects.

In November [2018], Sainsbury’s became the first UK supermarket to stock edible bugs. It sells Eat Grubs Smoky BBQ Crunchy Roasted Crickets in 250 stores across the country — a savory snack that can eaten alone or used to garnish dishes such as tacos, noodles or salads.

The identity crisis bugging the industry

But this small but fledgling industry is struggling to some extent with its identity. Does it present itself as food that can mimic what the consumer already knows, such as pasta and burgers or a savory snack? Is it, like sushi, a new thing altogether offering completely new recipes?

“There is this dilemma about whether you try to create something that is familiar that incorporates insects, like bug burgers, or do you move into something that’s completely new,” agrees Nick Rousseau, managing director of the Woven Network, the UK-based network for insects as food and feed....

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