

WHAT'S IN STORE

INTERNATIONAL DAIRY • D

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DELI DEPARTMENT

TRENDS

Chicken Anything Is Popular

Big Bird could also be the name for the dominance that chicken holds as a consumed meat protein in the deli prepared foods category.

The Perishables Group FreshFacts Data reports that chicken sales, in 2005, represent the largest portion of the deli prepared foods category at a 22.5% share. This is a 2.5% increase over 2004.⁶⁹ See TABLE 6.34, Top Five Prepared Foods Categories, by Share.

Heather Nelson, Olson Communications, a Chicago, IL, marketing research firm, told *Deli Business*, "Chicken anything is popular." She says chicken in salads, rotisserie chicken, and fast-food chicken products drives poultry interest.⁷⁰

The National Chicken Council, Washington, D.C., ranks consumers' top seven chicken dishes as reported in *The Shelby Report of the Southwest*:

- fresh salad with chicken (35% rate as favorite).
- chicken strips (30%).
- spicy or Buffalo-style chicken wings (26%).
- chicken nuggets (25%).
- fast-food chicken sandwich (25%).
- frozen chicken entrée or meal (24%).
- chicken breakfast biscuit (6%).⁷¹

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"While rotisserie programs have been around for a long time, I think the next generation is going to include fully-cooked prepared chicken items that go beyond just a whole rotisserie chicken," Jon Hauptman, vice president, Willard Bishop Consulting, Barrington, IL told *The Shelby Report of the Southwest*. He predicts we'll see fully prepared chicken breasts sold ready-to-eat. These will compete with meat departments value-added items—marinated and deboned products and shish kebabs among others he adds.⁷²

Other chicken program trends are chicken wings and pulled chicken. Many flavor varieties of chicken wings are now available—everything from hot to mild, lemon garlic to sweet and sour, barbeque honey Dijon to tropical Hawaiian, along with a wide variety of dipping sauces. Some stores have also added all natural, organic, and nonmeat based wings.⁷³

A country cousin to pulled pork is barbecued, pulled chicken—new on deli menus, particularly in the Midwest. And the barbeque sauces are as varied as there are regions of the country. New sauce flavors growing in popularity are honey-flavored, mandarin-orange, Jamaican-jerk and Asian-fusion.⁷⁴