

# 'Green' foods make mark in mainstream

*By David Ward*



The combination of widespread obesity concerns and rising "green" consciousness is driving a surge of interest in various types of health foods that has mainstream press scrambling to catch up.

What may be surprising is that the increase in health-food coverage isn't only taking place on food pages. Some stories target readers who are more casual toward healthy eating.

However, health foods are gaining traction in unconventional media sections, such as the parenting and lifestyle newspaper pages, says Jen Beltz, principal with Portland, ME-based Front Burner PR, whose clients include the Good Clean Food line of all-natural simmer sauces.

"Coverage of things like the recent meat recall in California is really opening people's eyes and getting them to try healthy foods," she adds.

Health foods still face the lingering press bias that every nutritious food has to be bland and tasteless, so it's important to stress other aspects. ...With so many people interested in healthy eating, even fast-food restaurants now tout the benefits of more balanced offerings, which can make it hard for journalists to sort through healthy labels and claims.

## **Pitching...health foods**

There is still the perception that many health foods are bland and tasteless. The only way to combat that is with an aggressive sampling program with new product press releases.

With many people, especially parents, looking to the Web for health information, make sure to broaden media outreach to include the growing number of influential health-food blogs.

Besides the Food Network, there are also plenty of local and regional programs on radio that welcome health-food executives to talk about trends and products.

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