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Gluten-Free Foods and Beverages Become Mainstream Sensations as Part of a Healthy Lifestyle Choice

NEW YORK, NY--(Marketwire - February 2, 2011) - Once regarded as a niche product that was only of interest to people who couldn't tolerate wheat, gluten-free foods and beverages have quickly transformed into a mainstream sensation, embraced by consumers both out of necessity and as a personal choice toward achieving a healthier way to live, according to **"Gluten-Free Foods and Beverages in the U.S., 3rd Edition"** by market research publisher Packaged Facts.

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"People with celiac disease have been the natural drivers of the gluten free market," says Don Montuori, publisher of Packaged Facts.

"However, there is evidence suggested that eliminating gluten from the diet may relieve autism in children and adult rheumatoid arthritis. Add to that the healthy 'aura' some consumers have attached to gluten-free products, and you create a demand for these foods and beverages that mainstream food manufacturers and retailers are increasingly happy to satisfy."

According to the report, in 2010, the U.S. gluten-free foods and beverages market reached an estimated \$2.6 billion in retail sales. The market enjoyed a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 30% over the 2006-2010 period. Packaged Facts predicts that growth will continue over the next five years, as the market approaches \$6 billion in 2015.

General Mills' transformation of its popular Rice Chex cereal into a gluten-free product without changing the taste -- molasses was substituted for barely-based sweetener -- stands as a milestone indicator of the breadth of impact gluten-free products are having on mainstream consciousness. As of November 2010, General Mills -- which has acquired the Larabar brand of gluten free nutrition bars -- claims to offer 250 gluten-free products, including five varieties of Chex and numerous products under the venerable Betty Crocker and Bisquick brands.

Another striking indication of the mainstreaming trend is the notable shift in the retail distribution of gluten-free products from specialty stores to chains. The surge in the sales and number of dedicated gluten-free products carried by the supermarkets and mass merchandisers demonstrates that gluten-free is becoming, as one marketer interviewed by Packaged Facts in the report states, "just a regular grocery item."

"Gluten-Free Foods and Beverages in the U.S., 3rd Edition" analyzes the U.S. market in detail, and provides valuable insights and recommendations regarding emerging consumer trends, the products gluten- and allergy-sensitive consumers seek, and how companies can participate in this market on a global scale. No other market research report provides both the comprehensive analysis and extensive data offered in this industry study. Easy-to-read and practical charts, tables, graphs, and illustrations make this report exceptionally user-friendly. For further information, please visit: <http://www.packagedfacts.com/Gluten-Free-Foods-2710664/>.

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