

Juice sales getting squeezed by healthier choices

By Vanessa Wong, Bloomberg

Americans may be trading in soda for healthier alternatives, but it seems like juice isn't one of them. Per-capita juice consumption in the U.S. dropped to 35.5 liters last year, from 39.9 liters in 2007, according to researcher Euromonitor International. It's a complication for beverage makers looking for ways to make up for slowing soda sales.

Juice has been something of a bright spot this year for Coca-Cola, the largest juice and juice drink producer in the U.S. The company reported Tuesday that juice sales by volume in North America were up 4 percent from July to September, including a 7 percent increase for its fast-growing brand, Simply. On Wednesday, No. 2 juice maker PepsiCo reported share gains in chilled juice and strong performance by its new Tropicana Farmstand fruit-and-veggie drinks.

Considering the larger trend, however, it's unclear how long this momentum can be sustained. Retail juice sales in the U.S. shrank 7.2 percent from 2007, to 9 billion liters last year, according to Euromonitor. Recent data show that sales of orange juice, the most popular, are now at their lowest level in 15 years.

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