

Wild unveils malt drinks ideas and lo-cal concepts at Gulfood

BY NEIL MURRAY

WILD, the German beverage and ingredients development company, has announced its latest trend-oriented concepts for the Middle East market. The new products were showcased at the recent Gulfood exhibition.

In the Middle East, non-alcoholic soft drinks are hugely popular and influential, due mainly to the fact that many Middle Eastern companies ban alcohol. The non-alcoholic malt beverages segment is growing steadily throughout this region, says Wild. "Malt drinks are an excellent non-alcoholic alternative to beer and traditional soft drinks," it claims. Wild has shown new concepts for premium malt beverages: from plain to flavoured with fruit or blended with juices.

The top global growth category is energy drinks. Besides classic flavours, new flavours are gaining momentum and are

bringing about further growth. In Dubai, Wild presented energy drinks with juice adapted to the taste preferences of consumers in the Middle East such as a blend of orange, passion fruit and mango juice.

Wild's latest energy drink innovation is 'Energy plus Coconut', a concept that combines coconut water (becoming ever more popular) with the growth market energy drinks. For the premium carbonated soft drinks (CSDs) segment, Wild has developed versions with fruit pulp and fruit cells that provide a round mouthfeel. Cloudy variants are particularly in demand. They are available with classic citrus flavours as well as with innovative flavours and can be combined with juice.

Wild also showed new concepts for still drinks, like cocktail still drinks with red fruit mixes such as grapefruit, orange and raspberry. A further innovation is the 'Super Fruit Duo' concept: all-natural

juice basis packs with superfruits. They can be used as a basis for beverages and combined with other juices to give manufacturers a flexible juice content ranging from 20-100%, depending on market requirements and customer wishes.

New natural mint-based products were also showcased in Dubai, the result of Wild's recent acquisition of A.M. Todd Group, a worldwide leader in natural mint flavours and mint-derived ingredients. Mixed fruit and mint flavours for the confectionery industry are just one example. Beyond food and candy, the acquisition also creates new opportunities for unique mint flavour systems within the oral care and beverage markets. Wild provides comprehensive consultation services to manufacturers and offers customised natural solutions for a whole range of applications.

Wild has also been showcasing its broad portfolio of natural

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sweeteners, with the main focus on the calorie-free sweetener stevia. The Sunwin Stevia brand offers food and beverage manufacturers turnkey solutions. Elsewhere, manufacturers are being offered the natural fruit sweetener, Fruit Up, which is also available as a tabletop sweetener. EU approval of stevia was granted in November 2011 and is expected to have new implications and opportunities for the Middle East market. Wild claims that its technology eliminates the characteristic licorice nuance and partly bitter aftertaste of stevia, and that it can now offer calorie-reduced, low calorie as well as calorie-free varieties.

Italian citrus company welcomes organics deal

BY EMMA SLAWINSKI

THE NEW deal between the EU and US on equivalence of organic standards could open up significant new opportunities for a fledgling Italian citrus products supplier, its founder has told FOODNEWS.

The agreement between the two regions to accept each other's organic certification was struck at the BioFach organic trade fair in Germany, and will come into force on 1 June ([FOODNEWS 24 February](#)).

"The removal of this barrier will open a big market for us," said Walter Ansoerge, of SunProd Srl, Products of the Sun, based in Catania, Sicily. The company already has strong connections to the US market and is ready to leap into action on business in organic products as soon as the deal goes through, he added.

Established in March last year, Sunprod is a supplier of juices, concentrates and essential oils of a

wide range of citrus fruits, as well as their by-products such as cells, pulps and peels. It is also one of few providers of PDO prickly pears from Etna, in juice and concentrated puree form.

Ansoerge, who already has 25 years' experience in citrus derivatives, explained that a significant part of SunProd's business is in organic products. This is particularly important as part of a value-added offering in the context of a difficult economic climate.

Speaking to *FOODNEWS* shortly after attending BioFach, Ansoerge said: "Approximately 15% of our production is organic, we're counting on new contacts gained in this sector.

"[Organic] is still in growth, despite the crisis, it's growing slowly but surely. There are always more people exhibiting [at Biofach]."

Italy is currently suffering from stiff competition from Spain in the lemon juice market, as the latter country is benefiting from much lower raw material costs. But

there are plenty of other products for Italian suppliers like SunProd around on which to base a varied offering, not least blood orange and its derivatives, which are unique to Italy.

"We have to work on adding value," Ansoerge agreed. "Blood orange, yes, but there is also interest in other products: essential oils, grapefruit products; mandarin is going very well, demand is high. Diversification is important."

As well as offering a wide range of products, SunProd hopes that its careful management of the

supply chain will be a draw for customers. The company has signed co-operation agreements with several processors and grower associations in order to have direct control of quality and complete traceability of raw materials supplied to its network of factories.

The company will become a member of the German organisation, SGF (Schutzgemeinschaft der Fruchtsaftindustrie), participating in their Voluntary Self-Control scheme.

For more information contact Walter Ansoerge walter.ansorge@sunprod.it Tel 0039 33811 32020

Phthalate checks lifted

MALAYSIA has lifted its border controls on some Taiwanese foods, including fruit drinks, in advance of the scheduled date. Malaysia imposed the controls after it was discovered that some Taiwanese products contained phthalates (a plasticiser), in place of more expensive emulsifiers (FOODNEWS 3 June 2011). Malaysia follows China, Hong Kong, South Korea and Singapore in announcing that it no longer requires Taiwanese food exporters to provide official certification proving their products are free of phthalates.