

DISPATCHES FROM IFT

Superfruit success spawns Blue Pacific berry flavors

By Caroline Scott-Thomas, 16-Jun-2009

Blue Pacific Flavors has said it is focusing on traditional, authentic berry flavors as consumers have become more aware of 'superfruits' and their associated health benefits.

The company showcased its new berry flavor range at last week's IFT trade show in Anaheim, California, which it developed in partnership with the New Zealand Institute for Plant and Food Research (formerly HortResearch) for use in beverages, as well as yogurt, ice cream and confectionery.

CEO of Blue Pacific Flavors Donald Wilkes told FoodNavigator-USA.com: *"Berries are so hot right now...so we carried out an assessment to make these already successful flavors even better."*

Although some flavor companies have released flavors that play on consumer perception of superfruits' 'healthy halo' without delivering any nutritional advantages, Wilkes said that this is not Blue Pacific's intention. He said that despite not containing any health benefits in themselves, the natural, organic-compliant flavors are designed primarily to be added to fruit juices – already sought out by consumers for their nutritional value – to intensify their flavor. The fruit flavor range includes pomegranate, blackcurrant, blackberry, strawberry, raspberry and blueberry flavors.

Fruit database

Blue Pacific has an exclusive license agreement with Plant and Food Research, allowing the company access to its large collection of germplasm from fruits worldwide, as well as a database of genetic fruit material. Plant and Food Research uses this database to find out which genes are involved in producing flavor enzymes. When the enzymes are put into bacteria or yeast, the flavors are produced in the same way as when beer is brewed: they are emitted into the air above the bacteria and are pulled off and condensed into a liquid flavor form.

Wilkes said that this process produces flavors that are as true to fresh fruit as possible.

"It gives formulators the ability to make products that taste more like whole fruit," he said. "...We want to understand what the acids and starches deliver to get close to what you taste when you bite into the actual fruit."

The partnership has previously produced South Pacific Gold Kiwifruit and Oceania Pacifica Apple flavors, which were unveiled at last year's IFT trade show.

Alongside the new berry flavors, Blue Pacific also released A-liminate, a flavor modifier for use with the natural stevia-derived sweetener Reb A. Interest in the sweetener has skyrocketed since Cargill and Merisant earned FDA letters of non-objection that their Reb A is generally recognized as safe (GRAS) in December last year.

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