

Going for gold: The Product Makers uses sugarcane extract to create gold-coloured chocolate

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Australian flavour and ingredient company The Product Makers (TPM) has used its sugarcane extract (*Saccharum officinarum*) to create a gold coloured chocolate product, citing potential for its use as a colouring agent and as an ingredient for healthier confectionery.



TPM manufactures a range of sugarcane extracts with different health functions including managing blood glucose, anti-inflammatory, and cognitive benefits. Typically, the sugarcane extracts are a dark coloured liquid.

The company has studied the properties and found that hidden within the dark liquid is a yellow/gold colour, which can be used to naturally colour foods and beverages.

The extract used is called Phytolin Plus, and is made up of Modulex (a patented ingredient by TPM), with added fibres and protein.

Modulex is a natural golden or bright yellow liquid that has been fractionalised from Phytolin (dark coloured sugarcane liquid).

Go for gold

Dr Barry Kitchen, head of TPM's Bioactives Division told *FoodNavigator-Asia*, gold-coloured food and beverages were thought of as novel, unique and premium, especially among Asian consumers.

In order to make the gold coloured chocolate, TPM first made a standard white chocolate formulation which was void of cocoa liquor, the substance that give chocolate the dark colour.

The Phytolin Plus ingredient was then added into the formulation, yielding a gold coloured chocolate with reduced sugar, and higher levels of fibre and protein.

Beyond its colouring properties, Modulex is also taste modulator and natural sweetener. It contains natural sugars such as sucrose, glucose and fructose from the sugarcane plant, as well as minerals, salts, amino and organic acids, and selected polyphenols and flavonoids.

According to Kitchen, the initial formulation yielded 13% in protein compared to 10% in the standard white chocolate recipe. In addition, it contained about 12 to 14% in soluble fibre, where usually there is none.

"We were excited when we created a yellow chocolate that looks like gold," Kitchen expressed.

He believes this is the first such gold coloured application from a sugarcane ingredient and the firm is hoping to licence the technology and formulation to a food ingredient manufacturer who would then supply it to a chocolate manufacturer.

Other confectionery companies have also played with the idea of gold coloured chocolate, such as Barry Callebaut (BC). However, what was different was that BC's gold colour came from the added caramel and toffee. TPM's gold colour was naturally extracted from sugarcane.

Sugarcane is a tropical crop grown in Australia for sugar exports. Modulex is made in TPM's factory in Melbourne.

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