

Thoughts from the Industry



Campbell Barnum
D.D. Williamson

What colours are manufacturers looking for in new products? Are there particular colours that are attracting a lot of growth of late?

"Food and beverage manufacturers continue to search for natural colourants that have improved stability in heat, light, and pH ranges. The dominant natural colourant category requested, not including caramel colour, continues to be the reds. Yellow-reds are waning and blue-reds are 'in'. We think this results from the trend towards 'superfruits' and tropical ingredients. Within orange, light orange is waning and deeper, redder-oranges are "in". For example, we're receiving requests for pumpkin colour. Also, requests for green colourants have increased alongside the global environmental movement. More sauces and dressings are being formulated with green colourants to differentiate products on the shelf."

What business challenges is the food colours industry facing and how can they be overcome? Where do you see future growth opportunities for the colours industry?

"A continuing challenge is to source, process, or blend natural colourants that narrow the performance gap versus synthetic colourants. An increasing resource issue that is also becoming a point of differentiation is regulatory expertise. Not only is expertise required to track regulatory changes over time, but across borders and regions too. The sourcing supply chain is continually a challenge because most natural colourants are botanically-sourced. Supplier audits and relationships to source from the (mostly tropical) growing regions are critical for food safety. Standardisation across both suppliers and crop years requires analytical expertise. For future opportunities, we are beginning to see requests for replacing synthetic colourants with natural colourants as opposed to simply formulating natural colourants in new products. I foresee demand for natural colourants to continue outpacing the average global increase (3 to 5 percent) of food and beverage ingredients as a whole."

What is fueling the demand for 'natural'/'clean' label products and what role do natural colours have in addressing this?

"Consumers! Food and beverage processors are responding to changing consumer preferences. Specifically, mothers and athletes are two leading consumer segments here. Some consumer segments are concerned that some synthetic colourants are derived from petroleum. The organic and green movements will lead to further demand growth."

What are your upcoming innovations and how do they tackle industry demands?

"First, we recently launched a natural blue colourant - created by DDW's strategic partner, colorMaker - that exhibits a shelf-stable blue hue at pH 5.5 to 8.0; whereas, anthocyanins normally demonstrate a faded purple hue at pH 5.5. So this innovation improves the range of dairy beverages and food products that can formulate a natural blue colourant. By combining this blue with yellow colourants, we're broadening the possibilities for green. Second, we're exploring additional certified organic colourants to add to our portfolio. Third, we're focusing on the introduction of 'non-traditional' anthocyanin colourants. These would meet industry's demand for more hues across a broader range of stability conditions."