

Functional Ingredients, Encapsulation and Innovative Organizations: Highlights From the 12th Annual West Coast Flavor Industry Forum

Innovation from three distinct perspectives

Bone and heart health and mood and energy boosters were the focus of Rodger Jonas' (PL Thomas) talk during the annual West Coast Flavor Industry Forum, which took place this spring at the Crowne Plaza in Garden Grove (Anaheim), California. Presenting Zembrin, a material used by indigenous peoples in South Africa as a mood enhancer, Jonas highlighted the desirability of mood enhancers, stress reducers and overall calming active materials in formulations. The material, which is 80% soluble in water and can be added to flavor systems, reportedly helps promote weight loss and maintenance, while also promoting mood and energy stability—perhaps even in pets. Similarly, the saffron extract satierial may help with serotonin reuptake inhibitors and weight management.

Meanwhile, vitamin K2 offers the hope of promoting heart health and fixing/slowing/preventing the effects of osteoporosis, said Jonas. Vitamin K2 can deliver calcium to key areas for stronger, more flexible bones, while also allowing the blood to accept more oxygen. The material can be applied in supplements, sports bars and drinks, dairy, bakery applications and more.

Microencapsulation

"Flavor is like artwork, and the encapsulator is like the framer—putting a frame around that artwork to make it last," said Bob Sobel (Fona) during his presentation.



Attendees learned about the variations in flavor chemical concentrations possible in encapsulations.



From left, Alpa Roman (Flavor & Fragrance Specialties), Karen Alexander (IFF) and Lisa Ramraj (Horner International)



Speaker Bob Sobel (Fona), right, during a demonstration



Dale Streit (IP Callison & Sons), left, and Kevin Johnson (Futarom)



Karyna Flood (Gold Coast Ingredients), left, and Steve Davis (Sethness Products Co.)



From left, Gary Raab (Wild Flavors) and Jim Kavanaugh (Bedoukian)

Melt extrusion, melt injection, spray chilling, complex coacervation, fat encapsulation and more can present economical solutions in spray drying, he explained. Theoretical flavor chemical concentration can occur at 5%, 10%, 20% and 30%, he continued. Of course a model will need to be used to understand which carriers will perform best by predicting shell/active interactions. Possible carriers include polysaccharides such as gum acacia (which is ideal for spray dry encapsulations), starches, modified emulsifiers, etc.

The “integrity of the flavor profile must remain consistent” throughout the processing and post-processing stages, Sobel continued, adding, “The smaller your emulsification, the better it will be.”

Creativity Doesn't Equal Innovation

Finally Mariano Gascon (Wixon) discussed the relationship and distinctions between creativity and innovation. Innovation, he said is “creativity reduced to practice with

real products in the marketplace.” While new ideas come and go, the difficult part is the application of ideas to “things customers will pay for.”

Here he spoke not only of new products, but also of the reinvention of existing processes, services, management, etc. The true drivers of innovation, said Gascon, are technological advances, changing customer needs, shortened product life cycles and increased competition. He warned that innovation cannot be delegated and that incentivized efficiencies discourage “disruptive innovations.”

To ensure an organization remains innovative, traditional walls must come down between departments. Outside resources and expertise must be leveraged. Finally, companies must understand that creativity does not equal innovation.

As Gascon concluded, “The best flavor is the one that sells.”

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