



Press Release

Variants on this healthy beverage are becoming increasingly diverse

Nutty, fruity or savoury: soy drinks are a real taste sensation

November 2007. Soy has been a staple of daily diet in Asia for centuries. Soy products have now become a global hit, and are highly valued by health-conscious consumers. But many people still find the beany taste strange and displeasing. Food manufacturers are addressing this issue, creating an ever-increasing range of new flavours.

The cultivation of soy plants in China can be traced back to the year 2838 BC. Soy is packed with healthy proteins, and scientists confirm that regular consumption of soy products can prevent the onset of illnesses such as osteoporosis. The contents of soy may also have a beneficial effect on coronary artery disease.

Healthy prospects

The U.S. Food and Drugs Administration confirmed the healthy properties of soy products in 1999, and since then food manufacturers the world over have been working to come up with soy-based product ideas. The biggest growth in soy products has been in drinks, yoghurt products and ice cream.

In the future, says Diana Bechtold, Market Segment Manager at SIG Combibloc, the greatest expansion will be in soy products in which the characteristic beany soy taste has been masked: "In Western markets, too, demand for ready-to-eat soy products is growing steadily, ever since manufacturers started developing product concepts that promise consumers new taste experiences. But it is not just in the West that nutty, fruity and more piquant soy products are becoming increasingly popular. The new, di-

verse flavour variations are also tickling Asian taste buds, which traditionally are used to the beany soy taste and like it. One example of this is Japan: in the soy products market, which traditionally is huge there, soy drinks were relatively poorly represented in the 80s and early 90s. In the past few years, however, consumption has increased massively thanks to the availability of new flavour varieties”.

A colourful array of flavours

Soy drinks are already available in a huge range of flavours, from the classics such as Vanilla and Chocolate to unusual variations like Macadamia, Black Tea, Banana, Oatmeal and Malt. Berry flavours are also popular with consumers, and the spread of varieties such as Passionfruit, Guava and Coconut is showing that these flavours, traditionally associated with South America and Asia, are growing in popularity.

Friesland Foods Foremost Thailand is one leading dairy products manufacturer that is catering to these new customer demands. The company's Hi-5 soy drink, for example, is available in Thailand in 'Mixed Berries & Carrot' flavour. The new variety combines the benefits of the soy drink with the odour and the distinctive flavours of carrots and berries.

And Hi-5 'Red Beans & Barley' is also proving a hit with consumers. The launch of this healthy blend in Thailand quickly attracted a lot of attention – although red beans and barley can be bought from virtually every Thai street hawker as additives in soy drinks, no manufacturer has offered the combination as a ready-to-drink product before.

Another Thai provider is Lactasoy. The company has been running for more than 50 years, making its breakthrough with its Lactasoy soy drink 22 years ago. New to the company's product range is a light soy drink with collagen – a health and wellness drink for more radiant skin. 'Lactasoy Light plus Collagen' has reduced sugar and fat content, so it appeals particularly to young, health-conscious women who want to eat a low-calorie diet while still getting the full flavour of the soy drink.

In Korea, Korean Sahmyook Foods has produced soy drinks and vegetarian foods since 1975, and is now the country's second-biggest soy drinks manufacturer. As well as the usual Banana, Chocolate and Strawberry flavours, exotic variants such as Black Bean and Tropical have been added to the range. The newest product in the

company's range is a chestnut-flavoured soy drink. The chestnut is rich in proteins, minerals, calcium and Vitamins A, B and C, and in Korea it is the symbol for the Full Moon Festival, one of the country's most important national holidays.

Hanmi Whole Soymilk has also launched a range of new soy products, such as a soy drink with Red Ginseng, on the Korean market. Red Ginseng has been known in Korea for centuries for its health-giving effect on body and mind. As well as its exotic taste, ginseng is thought to protect against senility and benefit concentration and mental performance. Ginseng is generally believed to have a powerful role in fighting fatigue and debilitation, and helping with stress. Founded in 1988, Hanmi is now one of Korea's leading soy drinks producers, with turnover of around 40 million USD. Hanmi is an expert producer of soy drinks, tofu and other drinks.

Picture captions:

Hanmi:

Hanmi Whole Soymilk sells a variety of premium soy products in Corn, Chocolate and Red Ginseng flavours on the Korean market.

Photo: SIG Combibloc

Foremost:

Friesland Foods Foremost Thailand promises wonderful taste experiences with its Hi-5 soy drink in 'Mixed Berries & Carrot' and 'Red Beans & Barley' flavours.

Photo: SIG Combibloc

Sahmyook:

Korean Sahmyook Foods offers the perfect flavour for every member of the family: Banana, Chocolate, Strawberry, Black Bean, Tropical, High Calcium and Chestnut.

Photo: SIG Combibloc

Lactasoy:

Low in calories and enriched with collagen, Vitamin E, calcium and iron, Lactasoy's 'Lactasoy Light plus Collagen' drink is aimed at women who want an added value in the foods they eat.

Photo: SIG Combibloc

SIG Combibloc is one of the world's leading systems suppliers of carton packaging and filling machines for beverages and food. Employing approx. 3,890 people, the company recorded sales of EUR 1,210 million in 2006. SIG Combibloc is a division of SIG Holding AG, Switzerland. Since May 2007, SIG Holding AG is owned by the Rank Group, New Zealand.

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