

Sweet Nothings

Barry Callebaut replaces the sugar in chocolate – but not the taste



There's no use sugar-coating it: there are some alarming statistics currently being thrown about in the media. According to recent data from WHO, 1 in 10 people around the world today qualify as obese while 1 in 4 are overweight. More than 347 million people suffer from diabetes worldwide. And if you thought such afflictions were akin only to the indulgent West, 80% of the latter are said to be found in low to middle-income countries. And if you add to all that, the already well documented phenomenon of population ageing and the picture for public health in the rapidly-approaching future is bleak to say the least.

In the face of this rather daunting prognosis, many people are quick to point the finger at sugar. The WHO (World Health Organisation) commissioned a review on sugar and obesity published in 2013 which concluded that "any link to body weight is due to

overconsumption of calories and is not specific to sugars".

Luckily there is a company not waiting around for it to surface. In fact, Barry Callebaut has invested heavily in developing a plethora of viable alternatives to sugar in its wide range of chocolate, cocoa and related products. And that, well before statistics like those quoted above ever made it into print.

As a result of that research, the window has been cast wide open upon a whole host of possibilities from sugar-reduced, without added sugar to sugarfree, fat reduced, reduced in saturated fat, calorie reduced and protein enriched and many other varieties of chocolate and chocolate applications. Sounds complicated? It needn't be! And to help food producers navigate this new and burgeoning landscape, we've decided to offer you an overview of the options available in this editorial. Before we get there, however, we'd like to reassure you of one, crucial thing: not one of the solutions developed by Barry Callebaut compromises on the celebrated and unrivalled taste, aroma and mouth feel of genuine, natural chocolate. Glad we got that straight from the start!

LESS SWEET?

The food industry is coming under increasing pressure from all quarters. Consumer groups, retailers, governments and various governmental and non-governmental bodies and organizations are calling on manufacturers to take responsibility for the current state of affairs. And as the healthcare costs related to the escalating prevalence of sugar-related illnesses such as obesity and diabetes continue their astronomical rise, governments are focusing on finding solutions.

Some awareness campaigns are predictably having a noticeable effect on consumer demand. Consumer interest in low or no-sugar alternatives to traditional sweet treats has been steadily growing for several years now.

TOO MUCH SUGAR FOR A DIME

In the midst of the hiatus around whether or not obesity can be linked to the use of sugar, and how to offer scientific proof given the diversity of contributing factors, Barry Callebaut, decided long ago to take matters into its own hands. Indeed, the company launched its first without added sugar chocolate around 20 years ago. And 8 years ago, it launched a comprehensive development program focusing on rebalancing the nutritional profile of chocolate to boost its general permissibility and authenticity.

Barry Callebaut has always maintained that chocolate is and should remain an indulgent ingredient. Together with cocoa, chocolate is an important flavor enhancer for many sweet products. And if consumed in moderation, there is no reason it cannot occupy a place in a well-balanced diet. With that in mind, it also becomes clear that sugar is just a small part of a much bigger picture and a more sweeping trend in the marketplace towards, for instance, more natural foods, certified organic products and origin ingredients. Foods and ingredients, in other words, with cleaner labels and without those dreaded e-numbers!

So what options are available to food producers looking to answer the ever-louder call for better balanced and sugar/calorie-reduced foods and beverages? Many of the solutions offered by Barry Callebaut involve replacing sugar with low-calorie or intense sweeteners such as polyols, fibres and Stevia extract. However, the end goal of reducing glycaemic load can also be achieved by rebalancing the nutritional profile. Whatever the solution, however, the real skill lies in preserving the taste, aroma and mouth feel of traditional chocolate. And that is where Barry Callebaut employs its many decades of chocolate-making experience.

THE PROOF OF THE PUDDING

Depending on the specific requirements or constraints of their products, Barry Callebaut offers a full range of solutions for its customers which either partially or completely replace the sugar content with alternatives from a natural source. Take the patented Sweet by Fruits™ range, for instance, the first chocolate with 100% natural sugars, straight from fruits such as apples and grapes, in which the sugar is replaced by up to 30% with natural, dietary fibres.

Barry Callebaut's reformulated solutions

- Sugar reduced products
- Products sweetened with fruit sugars (Sweet by Fruits™)
- Without added sugar products
- Sugarfree products
- Products with steviol glycosides (stevia extract)
- Fat reduced products
- Products reduced in saturated fat
- Products reduced in calories
- Protein- and fibre-enriched products
- Products with reduced glycaemic load
- Waterbased products

Then there are the so-called intense sweeteners like Steviol Glycosides (better known as Stevia extract), Barry Callebaut offers several special chocolate recipes containing this intense sweetener, resulting in chocolate that contains no added sugar and yet offer so much more. Great news too for consumers looking for an alternative to artificial intensive sweeteners such as aspartame, acesulfame-K and sucralose!

And because sugar is not the only thing that provides calories, Barry Callebaut also offers chocolate-based ingredients that are reduced in fat and/or saturated fat, subsequently, balancing/lowering the caloric content.

Whatever the chosen formula is, this extensive range of sweet solutions allows customers a great deal of flexibility when rebalancing their products for the health-conscious market of the future. However, the real competitive edge offered by the world's largest chocolate maker has as much to do with its knowhow as its "know what", so to speak. For Barry Callebaut also offers several value-added services which guide manufacturers throughout the process: from custom-developed recipes, full legal advice, full nutritional information as well as extensive R&D expertise, all aimed at helping customers reformulate their end products.

Most importantly, however, Barry Callebaut brings it all together in a way which preserves the unique taste of each and every product or ingredient. Extensive consumer research showed external acceptance of its sweet solutions. Proving that there is still a sweet future ahead for chocolate and all those who love to eat it.

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