

## Palm fruit ingredient smooths flavor notes, adds nutrition in coffee pairing

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### A new functional food offering shows how an ingredient can do double duty as a food additive as well as a dietary ingredient packing a powerful phytochemical punch.

The new ingredient, called Palm Fruit Bioactives Complex, or PFBc, is sourced from a palm oil plantation in Chiapas, the most southerly province of Mexico. The ingredient is being offered by Phenolaeis, a company based in Cambridge, MA, in partnership with Grupo AIE, a large Mexican CPG firm.

#### Awards finalist

The ingredient was a **finalist in the recent 2019 NutraIngredients-USA awards in the Healthy Aging category**. It is an example of a 'debut' that was many years in the making.

Phenolaeis was established in 2011 and was granted a worldwide license by the Malaysian Palm Oil Board (MPOB) to a portfolio of patents related to the isolation, formulation and methods of use of a water-soluble material produced from the fruit of the oil palm tree. Kevin Ohashi, PhD, CEO of Phenolaeis, said the water-soluble Palm Fruit Bioactives Complex (PFBc) produced from the fruit of the oil palm tree has been subjected to extensive scientific study over the past 15 years. The fundamental technology development was led by MPOB which worked in collaboration with scientists from world-renowned universities and institutions such as MIT (Cambridge, MA), Brigham and Women's Hospital (Boston, MA), Brandeis University (Boston, MA), Wayne State University (Detroit, MI), and CSIRO in Australia.

In December 2017, Phenolaeis completed a Joint Venture Partnership with Entorno Agroforestral and Evergreen Health to form Phenolaeis Mexico S.A.P.I. de C.V.

Ohashi said the palm oil plantation was established on land in Chiapas that had been cleared decades ago for pasture, so no rainforest was lost to grow the raw material.

#### Company: Ingredient performance profile makes it a natural for coffee pairing

PFBc is a water-soluble, non-GMO plant complex derived from the oil palm fruit that is composed of at least five natural polyphenols, fibers, carbohydrates and protein. Its soluble fiber is a carrier of various bioactive components. Ohashi said the ingredient has shown some cognitive performance benefits both in terms of quelling oxidative stress as well as up regulating dopamine levels.

But Ohashi said it has another attractive property in that it can easily round out bitter, acidic notes in foodstuffs like coffee while adding a nutritional punch with its antioxidant potential as well as dietary fiber content. This is the basis of a new product development partnership the company has announced with a Mexican coffee partner.

*"If you add PFBc you can improve the taste by minimizing the astringency and improving the mouthfeel there is a very noticeable flavor improvement. At the end of the day it doesn't matter how healthy it is if it doesn't taste good consumers won't buy it,"* Ohashi said.

The new freeze dried coffee incorporates PFBc within the crystals themselves, Ohashi said. The flavor profile improvement with the addition of the PFBc is akin to taking the coffee up a number of notches in terms of its product quality grade, he said. The product is available for white label partnerships, Ohashi added.