

*Business Opportunities*

# Oxford Nutrascience offers two new chews to industry

Oxford Nutrascience has two new chewy confectionery products available for licensing to brand owners worldwide. One is a cranberry supplement, and the other is a children's product containing prebiotic fibre, omega-3 and vitamins A, C, D and E.

Nigel Theobald, chief executive officer of Oxford Nutrascience, said the firm could offer exclusive licensing deals to brand owners.

Theobald added that the formulations of the 6g twist-wrap chews could be "tweaked" to meet the needs of brand owners. The cranberry supplement currently contained 250mg cranberry extract, he said, but this could be increased to 500mg. Similarly, the children's product incorporated 50mg omega-3, but this could be raised to 200mg.

According to Theobald, the company's proprietary fortified chewy confectionery system was a good format for unpleasant-to-take products, such as large calcium tablets or children's supplements. "The use of soluble fibres enables functional ingredients, such as vitamins and minerals, to be added without compromising taste, texture or stability," he said, adding that products were "high in fibre yet reduced in sugar and fat".

Brand owners can request samples of the products by contacting Theobald via e-mail ([n.theobald@nutrascience.co.uk](mailto:n.theobald@nutrascience.co.uk)).

Oxford Nutrascience said many ingredients, such as omega-3, had poor taste profiles and food supplements containing them were often rejected by consumers. However, the company added that functional foods fortified with these

ingredients often tended to have too low a dose to be effective.

Traditional confectionery chews were made soft, it noted, by balancing the use of crystallising sugars (sucrose) with reducing sugars (glucose syrup). Adding minerals to traditional confectionery chews could lead to a gritty texture, the company maintained.

The taste benefits of using traditional confectionery chews could also be outweighed by the high sugar content, the company said, but reducing the sugar and fat content of a traditional confectionery chew could compromise both its taste and texture.

Oxford Nutrascience said its system used a blend of prebiotic soluble fibres to reduce the sugars and fat traditionally used to make chews, and to provide favourable organoleptic properties. There was "no loss in taste profile" from the reduced sugar, it insisted.

As well as seeking brand owners to license the products, Oxford Nutrascience said the two chews would be launched under the company's own brand names during the second half of this year. The cranberry supplement will be part of the Ellactiva range, which is sold in the UK and the Middle East.

Oxford Nutrascience recently signed an exclusive manufacturing agreement with confectionery specialist Lamy Lutti. "The partnership with Lamy Lutti provides a scaleable production facility and allows the company to expand its chew development capability," said Oxford Nutrascience, noting that further chews should be brought to market in 2011.



Oxford Nutrascience has developed a cranberry supplement (pictured above) and a children's product containing omega-3 (below) using its fortified chewy confectionery technology



It is still early days for Oxford Nutrascience, which through the Ellactiva brand had sales of £54,293 (£65,000) in the year ended 31 December 2009. The company's operating loss increased from £120,038 in 2008 to £240,518 in 2009.

Oxford Nutrascience has just raised £1.1 million before expenses through an initial public offering (IPO) on London's Alternative Investment Market (AIM) (*OTC bulletin*, 26 February 2010, page 8).

The company has also just filed two international patent applications covering more than 130 countries. One involves the chewable oral delivery system of the company's Chewitab technology, while the other covers its gels, syrups and suspension systems. Oxford Nutrascience said both applications claimed priority from the delivery system patent application filed by the company in April 2009.

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