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DATE: July 23, 2008

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Topics:

- Growth of probiotic supplement category
- Challenges of making probiotic products
- Company's 20 years' of expertise meets challenges

DIETARY SUPPLEMENT COMPANY USES 20 YEARS EXPERIENCE TO KEEP TIGHT TABS ON PROBIOTIC PRODUCTS

Cottonwood, AZ—The Sedona Labs® company located in the high, dry desert of Northern Arizona near the famous red rocks of Sedona, has been producing probiotic products since 1987. Although probiotics are becoming much more familiar to consumers and scientists, that was not always the case.

“Even in 2001, when I started with the company, it was a big deal to see an article on probiotics in a consumer health magazine,” says Mairi R. Ross, one of the company's product developers. “And the scientific journal articles on probiotics have just exploded. It seems like there's a new one every week. Even five years ago, they were pretty scarce.”

Growth of Probiotics

The probiotics market is a growing category in nutritional supplements.

Probiotics used in the manufacture of supplements are projected to reach \$291.4 million in 2010, representing an annual average growth rate (AAGR) of 6.7% [BCCresearch.com]

Company Does All Its Own Sourcing—No Middlemen

The Sedona Labs® company is in an excellent position to take advantage of this growth. Unlike most supplement manufacturers, who use contract manufacturers or “middlemen,” the Sedona Labs® product team researches, formulates, sources and produces all of their probiotic products.

“Good products must have good sources,” says Michael Lee, manager of product development. “We do not use middle men to source for us. We are not looking for the cheapest raw materials—only the best.”

Mr. Lee explains the sourcing procedure used by the Sedona Labs® quality control team. “We personally examine every vendor’s quality control and quality assurance certifications. Then we visit the plant. We interview the executives, managers and, if we can, the workers on the floor. We examine the company’s history and check out their reputation in the industry. We also look for expertise in the type of ingredient: herbs, vitamins, amino acids, probiotics.”

Lee states that that due to quality control issues in some countries that made the headlines, they moved to alternative sources—even paying up to four times as much to ensure purity and quality for their products.

“It’s definitely not an economic advantage to source our own products,” says Lee. “We don’t get the economies of scale that a contract manufacturer provides. However, we can be confident that the ingredients meet our standards.”

Clinically Relevant Dosages

“We emphasize making products based on scientific research with clinically relevant dosages,” says Tracy King, president. “Our primary goal is to give value to customers—and that means products that work.”

The Sedona Labs® brand is a market leader in probiotics with multiple strains and high numbers of probiotic bacteria, counted in number of bacterial cells or colony forming units (CFU). Their lead product, iFlora® Multi-Probiotic® Formula, contains 16 strains and 16 billion cells per capsule (at time of manufacture).

Keep Your Probiotics Dry

The Sedona Labs® team uses its 20 years of expertise in probiotics to formulate innovative products. Its most recent line features condition-specific formulas, such as iFlora® Nasal Health.

“Formulating products with probiotics is challenging because they contain live cells,” says Lee. He emphasizes that great care must be taken to choose fillers and additional ingredients that will not degrade the probiotics.

“There may be very healthy ingredients, such as fruit extracts, that at first glance sound look great for a probiotic formula. It might be good marketing, but bad science,” says Lee. “Any ingredient combined with a probiotic must have extremely low water activity. Probiotics have to be kept very dry to survive.”

Lee states that Sedona Labs®™ probiotic formulas only contain ingredients that meet stringent water-activity levels. There are only three filler options, for example, that meet those standards.

Formulating in house also allows the company to utilize the latest research in developing products.

Meeting the Production Challenges of Probiotics

The Sedona Labs® manufacturing section division blends, encapsulates, bottles, and ships all probiotic products from their facilities in Cottonwood, Arizona.

By producing in house, the Sedona Labs® production team is able to keep tight quality control over proper blending procedures, formulation, and optimal humidity, and temperature, and storage in order to maintain high quality products.

“After 20 years of doing this, we’re confident in our expertise,” says Lee.