

THE INDUSTRY VIEW: Ruedi Duss, CreaNutrition



Ruedi Duss at CreaNutrition describes the recent positive EFSA [European Food Safety Authority] opinion of products with oat beta-glucan for the reduction of cholesterol as a powerful benefit that can be added to a wide range of final products including cereals, bakery products and beverages and more products to become an integral part of the daily diet. “By consuming just three grams a day of oat beta-glucan, a reduction in LDL of up to ten percent can be achieved. This can be via either one daily dose of three grams or three doses of one gram per quantified serving. We expect the industry will be able to use this positive EFSA opinion of products by the start of 2012,” he says.

What was the process behind your successful application to EFSA?

We started the process in 2007 in order to achieve the EFSA positive opinion for oat beta-glucan. During the whole period we had a constructive dialog with EFSA. CreaNutrition had to submit a significant body of evidence to support the Article 14 health claim. Companies should be well prepared to present all of the clinical research that supports a health claim. Critical success factors: 1) Oat beta-glucan is a very well characterized bioactive component 2) Accepted biomarkers 3) Understanding the mechanism of action 4) The cause and effect relationship has to be established. Overall, a significant investment is crucial for the successful outcome. I would like to quote from the EFSA positive opinion: “*The evidence presented indicates that the cholesterol-lowering effect of oat beta-glucan may depend on the increased viscosity in the small intestine that reduces the reabsorption of bile acids, increases the synthesis of bile acids from cholesterol, and reduces circulating LDL-cholesterol concentrations.*”

What advice would you have for companies looking to achieve health claims success?

Most importantly, you have to follow the EFSA guidance. You can't take it for granted that your product is superior to others. It doesn't matter what you think. You must remember that the science behind the product becomes the driving engine of your product, not just for your company but also for your customers who might add it in their application. Today, more than ever, understanding and interpreting the current regulatory environment is essential.

How important is it for you as a company to achieve this claim?

The science behind the products supporting claims will always be a major key. Understanding and interpreting the current regulatory environment for oat beta-glucan and developing creative, imaginative and focused thinking on the regulatory-marketing landscape is part of our advanced solutions and it's reflected in CreaNutrition's strategy. We already see fundamental changes in how companies deal with their innovations on the health-communication side, leading to significant changes in their marketing strategies. Achieving EFSA Article 14 approval has positioned us as a jewel in the crown for the nutrition industry today. We get a lot of inquiries from food companies, including the leading multinational food companies that want to take part in our success and launch new products with proven claims.

Which other future health claims are you assessing?

Based on CreaNutrition's initiative, oat beta-glucan won two additional positive opinions from the EFSA for health claims. The first one is for lowering of post-prandial glycaemic response and the second one is for improvement of lower gastrointestinal tract function, which should be published in 2012. The reduction of post-prandial glycaemic response relates to “carbohydrate metabolism and insulin sensitivity,” which are critical to the management of impaired glucose-tolerance and common in obesity. The improvement of bowel function is a result of the unique combination of soluble and insoluble dietary fiber. The effect is “gut health” and refers to the improvement of bowel function which occurs with increasing faecal bulk. I predict the next stage for us will be an ongoing research phase with specific outcomes of weight control and weight loss through the inclusion of oat beta-glucan.

