

Column for Soap, Perfumery and Cosmetics

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Introduction

A very happy and prosperous New Year to everybody and all good wishes for 2001.

Formulate 2000.

Once again the Society of Cosmetic Scientists in combination with Step Exhibitions have pulled off another masterpiece. It was an exhibition that was packed with new ideas and most of our favourite suppliers as well as a lecture hall that was busting at the seams with delegates. Many of us veterans were there in force, talking about the good old days and cluttering the aisles so that nobody could get past. More importantly, there was an army of cosmetic scientists who had left their secret bunkers to come to the show, presumably released after months/years of internment.

The new naturals

Olive

There was plenty of scope for seeing new ideas at this show. The big story seemed to be olive and its derivatives, with Sophim showing a nice selection of esters. There was a lovely flaked ester that just melted at body temperature with a lubriciously soft skin feel called Phytowax.

Echium or Blue Cat's Tail

This is a new material grown by John K. Kings with the oil from the seed being distributed by Paroxite. It has a fascinating profile of fatty acids and has great skin substantivity. The level of GLA is also quite impressive and if you feel that it is time to move on from Evening Primrose and Starflower oils, then this is a good alternative. Incidentally, I caught sight of five pages crowded with raw materials of organic origin and endorsed by the Soil Association with King's name on the top – looked tempting!

Konjac mannan & Xanthan gum

At Chesham Chemicals there was a fascinating gellant that was powerful enough to suspend a pencil point first as a rigid structure, or could be processed to a more carbomer-like consistency. The solution alone had good skin feel and had excellent clarity. This exciting new technology is the result of an interdisciplinary team pooling ideas and knowledge to target new applications and concepts. There promises to be more natural polymers and new ideas coming in 2001 – this is going to be very good for creativity.

Propolis

Honeywill & Stein were showing propolis, and I never understood why this supposedly antibiotic material never really caught on, since it is part of the honey, beeswax, royal jelly suite of bee products. There is a wealth of fascinating data and hopefully more to come. They emailed me to let me know that they were looking at the antibacterial properties in greater detail and that there would be some results in the new year (all being well).

Eclipta alba or Bhringa

I have been searching for this material for ages now, because it has been used in India for the treatment of grey hair and is said to restore a natural darkness. I was extremely interested to see this material on the Gemro stand and surprised to note that it was sourced from the Amazonian plants in Brazil – never too late to learn something new and useful information for the data base I suppose!

Hymenacea courbaril or Locust Bean Nut

Until I stopped at the Gemro stand, I had not seen this material before (though I think it might also appear in the Campo Research portfolio). Under the name of Jatoba, this material was cited for improving skin elasticity and is traditionally used for the protection and care of damaged skin. The properties of this plant are attributed to “a peculiar salicylic acid complex that has been shown to improve and increase the resistance of the skin and improve elasticity”. Could be worth a special look.

Portula oleracea

This plant from Bioland (through Paroxite) might become my plant of 2001, because the more I dig up from the reference books the more that emerges on the usefulness of this plant (called Green Purslane). Words like vulnerary, anti-inflammatory, antioedema and soothing come from every reference.

Rose water, Elderflower water, Neroli (Orange flower) water

These may not be the state of the art as ingredients go, but the Gemro Neroli water had a tremendous punch in terms of odour (bearing in mind I had a cold) and was extremely well priced.

Leptospermum petersonii

While on the subject of beautiful smells, I have to mention that Honeywill & Stein had a lovely Lemon-scented tea tree oil, which was totally without the characteristic Tea Tree odour often present in these oils. Another oil that is closely related is the Manuka oil or *Leptospermum scoparium*. The properties are not quite as strong as the regular Tea Tree oil (*Melaleuca alternifolia*), but the lovely odour more than compensates for this shortfall.

Fruit waters

These were also extremely refreshing and a wide choice were available, namely orange, apple,

lemon, kiwi, raspberry, grape and grapefruit. These mouth-watering offers from Gattefossé would make a great suite of products with the floral waters as part of a natural series of toners or spritzers. Great for a hydrotherapy concept these materials.

*Apple seed extract or *Pyrus malus semen**

It is amazing how bits of plant unwanted by other industries can provide new and exciting materials for the skin care industry. Who would have thought that something as dreary as apple pips could produce a material as interesting as Ederline. Containing phytohormone-type molecules (similar to oestrogen), phytosterols and traces of various other actives, the data showed quite an impressive effect on deep wrinkles. The smooth Seporga sales pitch ran something like this: “Adam ate of the tree of knowledge and having consumed the apple, lost eternal youth - now we have found how to get it back”.

Kelp

If this is not to your liking and you are looking to the marine environment for your solution, then perhaps a material like Kelpadellie from Secma (through Adina) is what you are looking for.

Ascorbic Acid or Vitamin C

B2 Specialities had a source of ascorbic acid called Jeeplex C-10, which is also cited as reducing the visible signs of aging. This material claimed that it could tolerate 5% of water and more without discolouration or loss of activity even at 50°C for two weeks. It sounded quite tempting and may be worth a look.

Sitosterol sulfate

This powerful plant sterol from Seporga still fascinates me and has to be the direction in which natural ingredients will be progressing. The need for new plant actives was on the minds of many suppliers, none more so than Chesham Chemicals who have formed a collaboration with a pharmaceutical company to isolate and extract pure phytochemical actives.

Walnut

Who would have thought that the humble walnut (*Juglans regia*) source of lawsone, hair colourant and other useful materials should also be useful for defence against skin aging. It contains phytic acid (also found in *Oryza sativa* or rice you may remember) and is a powerful chelating agent, polyphenols (or tannins if you prefer), which are powerful free radical scavengers. It also contains peptide and protein type materials as well as some of their amino acid building blocks, as well as sugars and other trace materials. Gattefossé produced some nice data for their Gatuline Age Defense, which forms part of a series of useful actives. While on the subject of walnut, it would be very useful if somebody would extract the lawsone and sell it to the industry.

Melanin

Dragoco were disappointed that this material was not quite ready for the show, but melanin from plant sources is coming. The promised uses include the prevention of free radical damage, a natural shield against UV rays, supports self-tanning products with a more naturally looking skin color (with no artificial orange tan), protection against premature aging and wrinkles, and a camouflage for age spots, moles, and freckles. The name of this material MelaneZe (and no, I am not sure why the Z is a capital either!).

Trehalose

I was distracted from getting a coffee by the Optima stand and stopped for a chat. Though it is not natural, I have to say that the System 3 kit was impressive, where you can bang together an emulsion of your dreams in the privacy of your kitchen. Take the base gel, blend together the oil phase in your own preferred ration from the choice of bottled emulsions and mix. You can even add sunscreens and other goodies from premade solutions.

However, trehalose was discussed and though it is responsible for binding water and protecting cells, I had seen nothing to date that really could be defined as useful in skin care. I was told to have a look at the New Scientist web site, where I read that trehalose and perfluorocarbon are used to preserve cells and maybe human organs. Not many people know this, but Arctic brine use trehalose to stop to stop their cells from freezing solid. I am still not convinced, but I am sure that if we look hard enough we will find a use for this fascinating material. Hopefully before it is used to cryoscopically freeze and preserve me for posterity.

They have a number of projects for the future and I can reveal that they will be looking at Vitamin E in great detail to see what it can really achieve on the skin. They will also be looking at inulin, another natural starch-like material (which is contained in plants like Elecampane or *Inula helenium*, Dandelion or *Taraxacum officinale* and Burdock or *Arctium lappa*). It could promise great skin benefits, because it is one of the mucopolysaccharide-type materials present in plant mucilage that have such soothing and emollient properties.

Yogurt

I have seen a lot of milk based products die on the retailer's shelf, but perhaps the image of yoghurt may be better, in as much as it is less rancid, less Unigate, less doorstep in its image. Not brand new, Yogurtene from the stables of Quest and supplied through Adina shows great benefit in hair care and moisture retention in skin care. The presence of lactose (50%), proteins (25%) and other minerals and trace elements explain the properties of this free-flowing spray-dried powder.

Rhassoul Mud

Years ago I can remember seeing this material recommended for hair care products, especially for use in hair packs. It then disappeared, presumably back to Northern Africa, where it is used by the locals for its excellent effect on their hair from where it slipped into obscurity. The demand for new materials for face packs, body packs and hair packs made the need for clays (especially new ones) very interesting. I am pleased to announce that Paroxite have relaunched Rhassoul mud. It has a lovely deep chocolate brown colour.

Conclusions

If you missed Formulate 2000, then you missed a real treat. The event was attended by over 600 people, over the two days, and the lectures attracted over 150 people per session.