



Guest Post: Naturex

Botanical supplements - Getting to the truth of the matter



Testing botanical identity

Identification

Confirmation of the exact botanical species

Purity

That there is no adulteration, and if there is, to what extent and origin

Potency

That there is no depletion; that it retains a complete range of active properties

Spiking

That there is no extra fortification, adding of actives that don't occur naturally

Substitution

That as it says, the botanical has not been substituted for another one

Contamination

That no banned pesticides, heavy metals or other pollutants are used or introduced.

About Naturex

Naturex sources, manufactures and markets natural specialty ingredients for the food, health and cosmetic industries. As the Natural Maker, the company actively supports the global shift to natural. Naturex's portfolio includes colors, antioxidants, specialty fruits & vegetables, phytoactives, and numerous other plantbased natural ingredients, designed to help its customers create healthy, authentic and effective products.

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Dietary supplementing is here to stay

Nature has developed and delivered medicinal compounds since the beginning of time, and that it is largely due to mankind's traditional knowledge and use of such natural remedies that many allopathic medicines now exist. As of 2012, some 35,000-70,000 plant species have been screened for their medicinal use¹ and many millions of consumers from the four corners of the world put their faith in natural supplements.

Naturally 'supplementing,' has always been around and allopathic medicine recognizes that nutrient needs change throughout a lifetime and is highly personalized.

Botanical ingredients are the stars of herbal supplements. In their drive to manage and personalize their health care, consumers need to be able to differentiate between natural and synthetic supplements, and their differing origins, potencies, actives and value for money. Google searches on botanicals and dietary supplements will pull up literally millions of references and the number of published scientific nutritional studies (which are sometimes contradictory) has almost tripled since 2000, according to what's available on Google Scholar.

Transparency is key

Increased transparency will help both medical professionals and consumers identify the very best products that the botanical supplement industry has to offer, building brand reputation and loyalty. Ensuring that the credentials of a supplement are top-notch is one of the most important parts of the entire process from seed to shelf.

Sourcing solutions that guarantee full traceability

A botanical ingredient is only as good as its origin and initial treatment: where and how it was grown, harvested, processed or extracted. Complete traceability entails adopting rigorous and consistent processes, keeping abreast of evolutions in regulations and technologies, and building long term relationships with ethical and rigorous partners. A flawless and efficient natural supplement demands the best ingredients that Mother Nature has to offer.

There is an ongoing debate around the world between watchdogs, industry associations and governments on the optimal level and scope of regulation. But none of it will take away from the supplement industry's own ongoing efforts to improve its processes, checks and trade group membership criteria; building trust with consumers and demonstrating responsible leadership to regulators. But today, consumers demand access to this information too. And it is gradually becoming a market differentiator – a trend that will only increase as transparency becomes more prevalent across other industries and services.

Testing botanical identity

There is an extensive suite of possible tests that can be carried out on botanical ingredients, some depending on the plant's own structure. A good number are generally applicable and have been in place and constantly evolving over decades. But not all tests work in the same way on every plant and so specific tests have and will continue to be devised for some plants, geographies or formulations.

Test results will include essential information on the botanical raw material, extract or ingredient.

But for a quality botanical ingredient supplier, 'testing' per se starts long before the ingredient gets anywhere near being ordered, purchased or perhaps even grown. Quality checks and controls start from the R&D phase when botanicals with potential are identified and the quest for an optimal source begins. Extensive procedures and checks will be undertaken to ensure GMP compliance (and possible improvements): compliance with local and national legislation, sustainability and benefit sharing protocols, verification of organic and GMO status and other relevant certifications, along with the setup of quality control mechanisms and performance monitoring and audit plans for the future.

Naturex's services:

Sustainable, traceable sourcing.

Our Sustainable Pathfinder Program is designed to illustrate the complete journey of Naturex's botanical ingredients: from fields and forests to today's trusted Nutrition & Health and Food & Beverage consumer brands.

Trusted botanical identity programs

Our ID PACK testing process in which our raw materials and ingredients for finished products undergo macroscopic, microscopic, TLC, HPTLC and when appropriate DNA identification verification.

Reference:

1/ C. Veeresham, Natural products derived from plants as a source of drugs; Journal of Advanced Pharmaceutical Technology & Research. 2012;3(4):200-201.
Available at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3560124/>