

University student successfully innovates sweet potato flour and makes company to commercialize it

November 4 2015



After noting that the sweet potato is not fully exploited in Mexico and that its nutritional properties can help reverse nutritional deficiencies during childhood, old age and pregnancy, a student of the Institute of

Biotechnology (IBT) at the National University (UNAM) formulated and developed powdered products made from this root.

Hearing of a program in Africa called VITA A, in which several countries were fed with a variety of orange sweet potatoes to combat undernutrition, science teacher Laura Grecia Fuentes Ponce and her team began developing a [product line](#) of nutraceuticals.

"We formed a multidisciplinary group to take charge of production as a pilot project, and less than a year ago, we created the company ALNUBIO, which, under the brand Camorina, hosts a special line of flours—Smart, Camorina, multiplex and Diabetics," she says.

For the younger population, they have begun formulating a smoothie and nutritional snacks, but still need more research.

Camorina brand products, she adds, are made with 100 percent natural ingredients, contain no preservatives, have a unique flavor and are ready to bake. Smart and multiplex flours are aimed at people with celiac disease and nutritional problems.



This is because none of the products contain gluten; moreover, its main ingredient, sweet potato, is effective in the fight against malnutrition for its energizing power and its high content of pro-vitamin A, essential for children's development.

Fuentes Ponce and her team add minerals, protein and enhance the flavor of the formula. "If we can process it without raising the price for the consumer, why not add other natural components that the root lacks?" she says.

While this is an innovative product, the scientist reports that demand is

still not strong.

This may be due to a poor marketing strategy, and because she divides her time between the company and work on her doctorate; her team is also engaged in academic study. "Therefore, we don't have a strong presence in social networks or points of sale," she says.

"Although we have not yet been able to validate impact in children with nutritional problems, there are studies that confirm the benefits of [sweet potato](#)," she says.

Through contests and programs of social entrepreneurship and business, the entrepreneurial team aims to promote and seek financial support to consolidate Camorina products, which, although they are targeted at the most vulnerable segments, can be consumed by the entire population.

Finally, Fuentes Ponce said that it is a priority to promote the efficient use of the food and economic potential of local crops such as roots and tubers, especially yams.

Provided by Investigación y Desarrollo

Citation: University student successfully innovates sweet potato flour and makes company to commercialize it (2015, November 4) retrieved 18 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-11-university-student-successfully-sweet-potato.html>

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