

Layn Corp stocks up on biomass to stay ahead

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Despite the current challenges of being based in China, the outlook for the company best known for making botanical sweeteners still looks pretty sweet.

China-based Layn Corp. is a vertically-integrated producer of botanical sweeteners, flavors and natural extracts. Like many others, Layn was slated to attend Expo West which was postponed over Covid-19 concerns.

"We are the lucky ones. We manage our own supply chain and the production. We are located in the southern part of China, so it is not a highly affected area. We were able to resume production after February 10th," Layn USA president Elaine Yu told *NutraIngredients-USA*.

Yu said there were few disruptions because 70% of their labor force is made up of locals, so their employees don't have to travel far to come to work. Right now, the most challenging part of being based in China is shipping. Yu said shipments that once took five days now take 15.

Fortunately, timing is on their side. *"We are a botanical extract business, so the seasonality determines that we always purchase a new year of biomass. That means the production for 2020 and all the raw materials were secured in 2019. We have enough stock to continue production."*

Yu told us the supply chain is based on safety stock, with their Europe and USA offices stocking up on three months worth and looking to add more.

With a facility the size of 42 football fields, they certainly have the means to do so.

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Green coffee bean is another significant functional botanical. Yu said it is popular in beverages, as well as *“other exciting applications.”*

CBD

Layn took their botanical extraction knowhow and applied it to a new line of business — to the tune of \$60 million. The company made the significant investment in the CBD market in 2019. Layn built a processing factory for the ingredient in Indiana, making it their first factory in the US and fourth overall.

Layn’s sister company, HempRise, operates as a wholly-owned subsidiary of the global botanical extracts and plant-based ingredients company. It will assume responsibility for Layn’s investment in the research and production of CBD and hemp extracts, and will oversee the production of its full spectrum oil, broad spectrum oil, and water soluble CBD.

“CBD is very big in the sports recovery category with muscle and pain relief and we have certain botanical ingredients to go with CBD in those areas.”

Yu added that they look forward to using the ingredient in a broad range of applications and in various formulations. HempRise is slated to supply CBD ingredients by mid 2020.

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The company is no stranger to shake-ups. In 2019 Layn announced it was restructuring the business into four segments. One of those segments is Plantae, their functional botanicals division.

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"Plantae is a functional botanical platform. It covers food, beverage, flavor, fragrance, personal care, nutraceuticals, sports nutrition — all areas where there is a need for natural ingredients to play a certain function in different applications," Yu explained.

Formulation subcategories

The functional botanicals division includes three subcategories that tackle specific needs.

Plantae Antioxidant is two lines of natural antioxidants that target personal health applications and the preservation of flavors and shelf life in food and beverage products.

"The trend we see is customers are definitely moving away from those artificial, synthetic antioxidants and using more clean label ingredients," said Yu.

Plantae Performance is a sports nutrition line that offers plant-based systems across staple categories such as weight management, natural energy, sports recovery, healthy aging and improved cognitive function.

"When consumers are looking at sports nutrition supplements, they definitely read the label and want to stay away from artificial ingredients."

Yu said *Plantae Sense* uses flavor modulation technology to address demands for sugar and salt reduction. The ingredients enhance sweetness, mask bitterness and increase salt, sour or savory flavors.

"Overall, our plan is to continue to introduce more function platforms moving forward, these are the three areas we tackled first. These platforms are all starting from our 20-plus years of extraction technology, based on active, functional compounds from fruit or plant-based sources. We use the best ingredients targeted at certain functions and then make formulas."

Single ingredients

For their single ingredient approach, Yu said Layn has about 30 plants that are targeted ingredients and functional botanical extracts.

Rhodiola is one of their most popular ingredients. *"It is in tight supply, but we secured biomass and can offer an excellent*

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