

## Seaweed extract promises polysaccharide immune benefits

By Shane Starling, 01-Apr-2009

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**Chinese supplier, Kangcare, has debuted a polysaccharide ingredient sourced from *Laminaria japonica* seaweed, it says is scientifically backed in animal testing to deliver immunity and liver benefits.**

Kangcare has branded its version of the active seaweed constituent, fucoidan, and is targeting the ingredient called FucoVin at the food supplements and functional foods markets.

*L. japonica*-derived fucoidan has been approved for use in medicines since it won Chinese State Food and Drug Administration (SFDA) validation in 2003, and has been used for centuries, commonly as a source of iodine, especially in China and Japan.

In the drug area it was used as a treatment of renal failure and uremia and had been shown to have a diuretic effect.

Kangcare sales manager, Joy Jin, said the ingredient was formulation neutral in most food matrices and was suitable for capsules, tablets and solutions.

The company employs a cascade filtration process to extract fucoidan from the seaweed, to decolourate the ingredient, and remove heavy metals. Seaweed is chosen with high levels of organic sulphate, one of the most active constituents of fucoidan, and which is guaranteed at a level of at least 25 per cent.

*"In all of these processes, no organic solvent is used and this technology helps us to keep away from the harmful residue,"* Jin said.

The company noted *L. japonica* had been linked with anti-radiation, anti-coagulation, anti-virus, anti-cancer and anti-oxidation and had kidney benefits.

*"In the on-selling health products, fucoidan usually plays its role as an immune-stimulator,"* the company said.

Kangcare's other offerings include vitamin E, lutein and a range of herbal extracts.

Australian firm, Marinova has for several years been working in the area of seaweed fucoidan extraction and it previously claimed to be the only company to have developed a coldwater, ethanol-free process to extract fucoidans, which unlike ethanol based extraction does not degrade the product.

In 2007, Marinova developed the method, called Maritech, along with New Zealand Pharmaceuticals to use the extract in an organic range of nutraceutical, cosmetic and pharmaceutical applications, also called Maritech

Sulphated polysaccharides are large sugar polymers made up primarily of the sugar fucose, and have a number of nutritional uses, including acting as a prebiotic, but they have been shown to act as viral attachment inhibitors, enzyme inhibitors and receptor blockers.

Maritech said the ingredient could be used against metabolic syndrome, deep vein thrombosis, irritable bowel syndrome and osteoarthritis.

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