

As President of the World Stevia Organization (WSO), I am glad that the 10th World Congress on Stevia, which was held on June 2-3, 2022 in Lisbon & Online was a huge success.

Stevia as a Preventive Factor

Stevia is considered as the "green gold", as natural sweetener used to reduce sugar and synthetic sweeteners as aspartame or sucralose. Moreover, Stevia as a natural and antioxidant ingredient can be used for the prevention of chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, cancer and cardiovascular diseases.

Why a specific Conference dedicated to Food and Beverages Formulated with Stevia?

In recent years, the production and use of natural sweeteners has been moving forward on the way to provide alternatives for saccharose which are non-caloric, non-carcinogenic and healthy. Sugar kills worldwide more people than smoking, alcohol and drug addiction. Sugar consumption, especially soft drinks, is the single largest and preventable contributor to the global epidemic of diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, bad cholesterol and unhealthy weight gain. Sugar is linked to Trillions in healthcare spending globally. On national level, the intake of free sugar (mono- and disaccharides) causes the highest disease burden in India followed by China, US Brazil and Mexico. This might be also due to the liberalization of the sugar market that results in the abundance of cheap sugar that will steadily increase sugar-induced diseases and comorbidities like oral diseases, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and obesity-mediated cancers which may gain a new and unprecedented momentum. We urgently need a new generation of sustainably produced and biologically active natural products for improved formulations of food and beverages. This is intended to contribute to the improvement of nutrition, health and human wellbeing.

The current WHO (2015) recommendations are to reduce the sugar content to 10% can be used as a guide. The largest share of the economic burden was, as it was predicted, in OECD countries, however emerging economies should address this challenge properly early on in national policies if they wish to avoid diseases and the prospect of increased cost burdens. Nowadays, non-communicable diseases have outgone infectious/communicable diseases in many African countries placing an immense financial burden at these emerging economies.

In order to prevent this aberration in those countries, efforts in education of children and adults

to use traditional diets over highly processed foods and drinks must have parallel strong activity of policy makers and health professionals to promote public regulation and market intervention such as taxation, pricing, ban and restriction of advertising sugar-rich foodstuffs. Stevia cultivation will prevent later cost-expenditures of their healthcare system through farmers in developing countries. The efforts made in Ruanda to promote Stevia farming should be highlighted at this place.

Since the approval of steviol glycosides in the EU in 2011, some products have come on the market, but the number is still very manageable. A remarkable breakthrough of the sweetener in the food market has not yet achieved. However, recent investigations showed that steviosides in addition to its sweetness have antioxidant activity, antibacterial, anticancer, neuroprotective and immune-modulatory activity. Thus, new scientific data support the assumption that steviol glycosides may have important health promoting activities.

Overview on Stevia Tasteful 2022

- The conference highlighted recent advances and scientific researches on Stevia and Stevia related products
- It discussed about the impact of formulation on Stevia taste and after-taste
- International industries showcased new innovations to reduce Stevia After Taste in finish products
- The latest regulations were presented
- The latest marketing tools, used to present Stevia and persuade consumers to use it, were highlighted

Discussion: Stevia Tasteful 2022 dedicated a session to **Medical effects of Stevia glycosides apart from its Zero-calorie properties**

. The session covered many interesting publications that appeared within the last two years displaying important signaling pathways modulated by Steviol glycosides, which are involved in neuroprotection, ageing, diabetes, cancer...

Stevia Tasteful Award 2022

At the end of the conference, Green Sugar won the best stevia taste award 2022. [Learn more](#) .



Prof. Gerd Birkenmeier

President of the World Stevia Organization
University of Leipzig, Germany