

New, All-Natural Sweetener to Hit Market

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Imagine baking your favorite dessert or sweetening your favorite beverage with that same cane sugar taste you enjoy but with two-thirds less calories. Consumers will have a chance to do just that with the fall launch of the new all-natural sweetener steviacane™ by Natural Sweet Ventures, a collaboration between Imperial Sugar Company (ISC) and [PureCircle](#).

The easy-to-use, granulated sweetener uniquely combines high-purity stevia – a natural sweetener derived from the leaves of the Stevia plant – with pure cane sugar in a patented, proprietary process.

“Our objective was threefold,” says John Sheptor, Imperial Sugar Company President and CEO. Produce an all natural sweetener that could be substituted for sugar in baking and beverages that: (1) gave the consumer cane sugar taste and equal sweetness with less added sugar, (2) contributed less calories and (3) provided a great tasting stevia option. Steviacane™ meets all three. This is a significant advancement in sweetener technology. It is an all-purpose, healthier, all-natural alternative with a great taste.”

Darrell L. Gerdes, Ph.D. and manager of research and new product development for ISC , led the development of the all-natural sweetener. He explained that steviacane™ tastes and performs like sugar but with two-thirds fewer calories.

“Basically, we’ve taken two natural sweeteners and combined them in such a way as to produce the sweetness and great taste of sugar using less product,” says Gerdes.

“A half cup of steviacane™ has the sweetening strength of a full cup of sugar, and one stick of steviacane™ (or a half-teaspoon) is equivalent to one teaspoon of sugar,” says Gerdes.

Capitalizing on the popularity of natural based products, steviacane™ was placed on an accelerated product development cycle that began earlier this year. More than 100,000 pounds of steviacane™ were produced recently at ISC’s sugar refinery in Port Wentworth, Ga.

According to Thomas Rathke, senior director for ISC heading up research, engineering and specialty products at the Georgia plant, the first production run went smoothly. “We actually ‘de-bottlenecked’ the plant during our initial production campaign,” he says.

The product will be shipped off in 40-pound bags and 2,000-pound totes for retail packaging later in September.

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