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Chinese plant-based yoghurt firm Jooma has launched a new coconut yoghurt range and revamped its almond yoghurt recipe, in addition to colour-coding its various products to enhance its consumer appeal in the market.

When we spoke with Jooma last year, the firm had just launched its [first plant-based almond yoghurt range](#), but its market research has since uncovered that almond is what has been described as a 'polarising' flavour in the market.



"By polarising, it basically means that there are consumers who absolutely love the almond yoghurt and the strong almond taste because we don't use almond milk but instead a whole handful of actual almonds – but also that there are consumers who don't like the almond taste and smell at all," Jooma's parent company NOIX AG's Founder and CEO Dr Stefan Schmale told FoodNavigator-Asia.

"But that's one of our unique selling points, to have a high content of almonds to ensure the nutritional value is there, so in order to accommodate the varying tastes of Chinese consumers, what we have done is to revamp our almond yoghurt recipe, such that it has a bit less of that 'almondy' taste, but more of whatever fruit they choose.

"At the end of the day, almond is a superfood and the benefits are clear, so we just made sure to have a high content of these in the yoghurts but also ensure it is attractive enough to the consumers to ensure that it can appeal to everybody."

In addition, Jooma has also launched an additional new coconut yoghurt range in order to bring in more consumers, especially those that absolutely do not wish to have any contact with almonds at all.

"Coconut is far less polarising and more accepted in China, it is a flavour that is really for everybody which is why we opted to launch a whole new range focused on this as a base ingredient," said Dr Schmale.

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"Similar to the almond yoghurt, we avoid using the coconut water or milk to make these, but instead focus on using coconut cream to give that even better taste and texture, as well as have a higher content of the natural ingredient of focus.

"For this range, we opted to introduce some pretty unique flavours: In addition to the more common and original Coconut flavour, we also created Calamansi, Strawberry and Kiwi-Avocado variants of this yoghurt. I'd say for Kiwi-Avocado and Strawberry Coconut, we are likely the first in the history of yoghurt to offer these."

To further appeal to consumers, Jooma has also decided to implement 'colour-coding' for its product packaging – similar to what premium chocolate brand Ritter Sport does, where each flavour has a uniquely coloured packaging.

"We have changed the design of our yoghurt cups to move away from the typical standard dairy product in China, so that we can show very clearly that what we are selling is very different," he added.

"The cap defines the base ingredient - coconut or almond (via images of the ingredient), and the colour around the lid as well as the ribbon at the base defines the flavour so that consumers can identify this from either the top of the side – just like Ritter chocolate, which consumers often buy solely by colour without even reading the text.

"And this is this is what we also want to do, to enable consumers to buy our products by colour and define them by colour [for both convenience] and also aesthetic reasons as now we have seen that Chinese consumers are identifying with this as a more fashionable, trendy product which we definitely want to be associated as."

Expansion challenges

Jooma's main target market is to expand in Asia after starting with China, but the COVID-19 pandemic has thrown a bit of a wrench into expansion plans for the moment, especially as the firm is bent on self-producing its products.

"For expansion, to us first travelling must be possible again and we are waiting for the for the end of all the restrictions, and second we are also doing the required financing rounds - these are the only limiting factors," Dr Schmale said.

"Our focus remains the Asian market as we want to bring protein to consumers here, and we started with China as the biggest market, but definitely we are looking at more markets like Malaysia and South Korea.

"But the reason we need to be able to travel is that we need to be present on site to build production facilities in whatever markets we enter, as we are not willing to share our proprietary technology at this point. This is because we differ very much from other firms in this sense, as

and JOOMA has the additional challenge of not using any chemicals for this – and the secret of our technology lies in the combination of recipe, production-processes and the machines we use to do this. So sharing with others how we connect the machines and do our heating and cooling would not be something we are open to right now.”

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