DRINKS & SMOOTHIES

Innovative Bubbly Blue Soda: Free of Food Coloring & Catches CO_2

By bestfolkmedicine · 23/02/2022 · 3 min read



This turquoise soda drink is boosted with vitamin C and calcium and an ingredient without a carbon footprint. It's also free of food coloring.

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Made by the startup Ful, this drink's star is spirulina, a blue-green alga that enriches the soda with nutrients, which isn't the usual case with standard carbonated beverages.

The company hopes that this product will popularize algae and ultimately help reduce the carbon footprint that's caused by the food and beverage system.

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The Exploration Brought the Inventors to Blue-Green Microalgae

The creators of this beverage who met while studying at the INSEAD business school in Singapore dedicated months of research to fasten up the shift to zero emissions before deciding they're going to use blue-green microalgae.

According to one of the three co-founders of Ful, Julia Streuli, what attracted them the most was the efficiency of this algae to transform CO2 into oxygen and nutrients.

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Unfortunately, per a kilo of protein that's produced, beef leaves a carbon footprint of around 500 kilos.

For comparison, that of soy is around 20 kilos. On the other hand, algae take up CO2 as they grow and this startup calculated that in their own production process that includes the CO2 caught by the industry that the spirulina takes in more carbon than it releases.

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It gives a carbon footprint of negative 1.5 kilos. Algae don't require arable land and pesticide use or any fertilizers or freshwater that are necessary for most other foods.

This Drink Supplies Consumers with Pivotal Nutrients

In addition to proteins, spirulina is abundant in other nutrients such as vitamin C, magnesium, iron, and antioxidants such as chlorophyll.

All of these are also present in the soda drink and the company is hopeful that it will be a must-drink for the clients who're focused on a healthy lifestyle.

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Prior to their graduation, the founders won a business plan competition for their spirulina-based drink concept. They had sufficient funds to turn down their corporate jobs.

They moved to The Netherlands and worked with food scientists to resolve the challenges that held the ingredient back. They developed a new way for the processing of the algae to extract its best-

tasting parts.

This new ingredient is a bit salty, yet it doesn't have any of the unpleasant fishy off-taste that spirulina tends to have. It's actually pleasant and combines well with other flavors. The extraction process made the drink's bright shade of turquoise coming from the chlorophyll of the algae.

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They decided to leave the unusual color instead of hiding it. The first batches in flavors like ginger lemon and peach were made in a Dutch brewery. Interestingly, since breweries produce food-grade CO2, the bioreactors that grew the algae could catch that CO2 that feeds the algae.

This system can be localized, but it's also possible globally and the existing infrastructure can be used. Currently, most algae are growing using bicarbonate instead of captured CO2, but the company is hopeful to use the lowest emission process possible.

Where Can You Purchase & Try Out the Turquoise Soda?

This drink is currently available in the UK and Europe, but they hope to expand in the US soon.

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Sources:

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