

**MonkFruit**  
CORP.

The World's Leading Monk Fruit Company



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## **Kiwi Sugar Alternative Key in New Product Innovation**

**GUILIN, China (November 27, 2015)** – A Kiwi-Chinese joint venture which has developed a low-calorie sugar alternative made entirely from fruit will now see its ingredient added into an innovative new beverage.

FMCG manufacturer Hansells Food Group is using the product in a newly-launched shelf-stable beverage that utilises monk fruit juice to meet the growing local demand for low sugar drinks.

The new fruit drink, Vitafresh Made for Kids, a 98% sugar-free beverage with no artificial flavours or sweeteners, will use monk fruit juice supplied by Waikato based Guilin GFS Monk Fruit Corporation to dramatically reduce sugar and calories.

Monk fruit juice is a natural fruit juice made from a small Chinese melon called monk fruit. A natural low-calorie alternative to sugar and artificial sweeteners, monk fruit juice offers a new way to combat the growing obesity epidemic by reducing sugar and calories in everyday foods and beverages.

Hansells marketing manager Jane Bennett says monk fruit juice has many advantages over existing low-calorie sweeteners and was ideal to support their first move into the competitive category.

Unlike other sugar alternatives, monk fruit juice is completely natural and has a neutral taste profile which makes it easier to blend, she says.

“Earlier this year we began developing a fruit drink under the Vitafresh brand that parents could give to their children without feeling guilty. With this in mind we were looking at a low sugar (2.5% or less) option with no artificial flavours and more importantly no artificial sweeteners.

“The use of Monk Fruit juice along with Stevia has allowed us to create a product that has ticked all the boxes; 98% Sugar Free, no no-no’s and great tasting, and so far the reception from trade and consumers has been very positive,” she says.

Bennett estimates that for every million litres of traditional fruit drink sold, Kiwi families are consuming up to 10,000kg of sugar.



The fruit drink category is worth \$54 million in the New Zealand market, but Kiwis are becoming more aware of the impact of sugar and are now looking for alternatives, she says.

“Kiwi consumers are not only looking for reduced sugar options, they are becoming more discerning when it comes to understanding what these substitutes are made from, and are seeking out reduced sugar products that also taste good,” she says.

Monk Fruit Corporation’s general manager for sales and marketing, David Thorrold, says along with beverages monk fruit juice can be used to reduce the sugar content in many other foods like yoghurt and breakfast cereal products.

The company has supplied Smartfoods NZ who have developed a reduced sugar cereal for a major Australian supermarket chain, and several Australian chocolate manufacturers to create low-sugar options.

“The Australian market is very developed when it comes to the wellness category. Because many Australian consumers look for low sugar products, food manufacturers are constantly seeking alternative ingredients which have similar taste profiles to sugar,” he says.

Thorrold says the company was recently approached by a contract manufacturer who had a brief to create an all-natural chocolate which had no added sugar, dairy, soy or artificial sweeteners, was made from a gluten free recipe, but was also a good source of protein and fibre.

After six months in development, the manufacturer selected monk fruit juice concentrate as a key component of the sweetener system. In addition to having reduced sugar and carbohydrate the product is also able to be manufactured on the same line as traditional chocolate - offering a comparable texture and viscosity during the production process.

Thorrold says the finished product was released this week under the ‘The Chocolate Counter’ brand throughout Coles supermarkets nationwide. Monk fruit juice concentrate has also been used in the low sugar ‘Pumpy Jackson’ chocolate brand in Australia.

He says global interest in the monk fruit juice is increasing as other manufacturers see the ingredient successfully integrated into new product releases.

“We are forecasting that within the next three years we will have regulatory approval for our products to reach more than 5 billion consumers globally,” he says.

### **About Monk Fruit Corp**

Monk Fruit Corp. has offices in China, New Zealand and the USA and is the world’s leading monk fruit company. For more information visit [www.monkfruitcorp.com](http://www.monkfruitcorp.com) and [www.monkfruit.org](http://www.monkfruit.org).

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