

Pop-Bugs: focus on alternative protein sources

Micarna will be appearing in the Swiss Pavilion at this year's Anuga with its Pop-Bugs-Products, with two top innovations as part of the "Taste 19" special exhibition. The long-established Swiss company will also be demonstrating the possibilities now offered by alternative protein sources in our culinary diversity, and why insects represent a sustainable alternative to traditional meat products.

Between steak lovers and vegetarians, between varied moments of culinary pleasure and the demand for a sustainable nutritional philosophy for a growing global population – the world's largest specialist fair in the food economy and food industry, Anuga, is not only about the latest products, but also the sociopolitical question of our dietary habits. The fact that our culinary habits are changing is not new. Globalisation as well as technical and agronomic developments now offer us diverse moments of culinary pleasure which would have been unthinkable for previous generations. However, they also present us with unprecedented challenges: Climate change, food waste, packaging waste and an increasingly hungry global population.

PROCESSED INSECTS AS FLAVOUR COMPONENTS

Food production in general and the meat industry in particular are experiencing change. New approaches must be found in the production, the manufacture and also in the development of alternative protein sources. In the course of this year's Anuga, Micarna will be presenting answers to these developments with its Pop-Bugs-Products, showing what enjoyable culinary options there are in alternative protein sources, as part of the "Taste 19" special innovation exhibition. "It's not about show and shock, it is about the variety alternative protein sources offer us," explains Ralph Langholz. For the head of alternative protein sources at Micarna, it is not primarily about European customers starting to eat whole insects instead of a juicy steak: "For us it is more about the processing of insects. We use insects as protein suppliers and interesting flavour components in the manufacture of meat-free products. For us the processing of insects is not competition for meat, but rather an exciting addition to our menu." The Pop-Bugs-Products are manufactured from mealworm larvae as protein suppliers. As well as insects as protein suppliers, the Pop-Bugs-Products also contain natural ingredients such as carrots, leeks or chickpeas. "All our ingredients are 100 percent natural, GMO-free, with no flavour enhancers or other chemical ingredients," explains the 46-year-old.

SUSTAINABLE, RESOURCE-EFFICIENT PROTEIN SOURCE

Insects as alternative protein sources not only offer an addition to our varied nutritional plan, they can also make a contribution to a healthy diet for a growing global population. "Insects represent a promising, sustainably produced animal protein source for humans. They not only have good protein values, but also unsaturated fatty acids, and in terms of sustainability, they are very efficient feed converters," explains Ralph Langholz. And particularly in a time shaped by climate change and resource consumption, insects have a major advantage: "For example, insects can produce a kilogram of protein from two kilograms of feed, whereas cattle require up to ten kilograms of feed for the same result. Insects are very efficient feed converters. They require less agricultural space in comparison with conventional livestock, are more environmentally friendly than pigs or cattle, produce fewer greenhouse gases and require significantly less water."

IMPRESSIVE PRODUCTS AND LOTS OF EDUCATIONAL WORK

Despite good protein values and important minerals such as iron and zinc, or healthy, unsaturated fatty acids, many of us have a hard time eating insects. And yet for many cultures insects have been an integral part of their diet. "Current studies suggest that there are up to 2,000 edible insect species. There are currently over two billion people who regularly consume insects or products that are made of insect larvae," explains Ralph Langholz. And for the product manager there is no reason why we in Europe should shy away from these alternative protein sources. Ultimately edible insects have the major advantage that in comparison with meat products, they have a much higher utilisation value. The mealworms that are used in the Pop-Bugs-Products can be used 100 percent. In comparison with beef, only about 40 percent of the animal makes it to our plates as food, and for chicken the figure is 60 percent. Educating consumers and the fact that the Pop-Bugs-Products are made of processed insects are particularly important factors for success in the Western market. "Insect products are not equally appealing to all consumers as a new kind of food and some people are quite disgusted by the thought of eating insects. For this reason it is crucial to introduce people to the subject with familiar, tasty products, such as falafel or burgers. There must be no visible whole insects in the final product. It is also important for interested consumers to be able to taste the products. This will replace the creepy mental image with a positive taste experience."

SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS MUST BE SUSTAINABLY PACKAGED

Of course, it would also be necessary to tell the public about the fact, for instance, that the processed insect species come from special edible insect breeding facilities, where the animals are reared under controlled food regulation-compliant conditions, or the fact that the insects eat purely vegetarian food, such as mainly bran or carrots. And as the sustainability aspect plays a particularly important role for alternative protein sources, like insects, emphasis has been placed on the packaging for the Pop-Bugs-Products. Pop-Bugs-Products are enclosed in an innovative skin packaging with a cardboard sleeve and the classic PET wrapper has been replaced with FSC-certified cardboard. "This means we need 70 percent less plastic than with conventional packaging," explains Ralph Langholz. With their Pop-Bugs-Products, Micarna will be appearing at this year's Anuga with an all-round package in terms of innovative, sustainable food production, based on alternative protein sources. The innovative Pop-Bugs-Products can be seen at the "Swiss Pavilion" in hall 3.1 on stand D067. As part of the "Taste 19" special exhibition, fair visitors can also expect to see two top innovations.

Pictures and further information at <https://rebrand.ly/pop-bugs>



Pop-Bugs-Products from Micarna at Anuga 2019

www.anuga.de

Anuga is the world's largest trade fair for food and beverages. Every year around 170,000 visitors flock to Cologne and are taken on a culinary journey by over 7,500 exhibitors. With its Pop-Bugs-Products, Micarna presents its range of alternative protein sources and makes two surprising contributions to the «Taste 19» special innovation exhibition. Anuga takes place from 5 to 8 October 2019 in Cologne. The Pop-Bugs-Products from Micarna will be on show at the «Swiss Pavilion»: Hall 3.1 / Stand D067

Brief profile of Micarna

www.micarna.ch

The companies in segment 1 of M-Industry produce high-quality meat, poultry, fish and egg products. Founded by Gottlieb Duttweiler in 1958 in Courtepin in Friborg as a Migros meat processing plant, the group of companies now includes the Switzerland-based companies Favorit Geflügel, Fleury, Lüchinger + Schmid, Maurer Speck, Mérat & Cie., Micarna, Natura Bündner Fleischrocknerei, Optisol, Rudolf Schär and Tipesca. In addition, the Germany-based companies Oberschwäbische Geflügel GmbH and KM Seafood are also part of the Group. Thanks to state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities and the highest standards in the areas of hygiene, product safety and occupational safety, the companies achieve top quality. The companies consistently advocate species-appropriate husbandry and low-stress transport of the animals and ensure that the origin of each individual product is completely traceable. In 2018, segment 1 of M-Industry achieved a turnover of 1.7 billion francs with over 3,000 employees.

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