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FUN FOODS THAT WORK LIKE HEALTH SUPPLEMENTS

Three Local Companies to Develop Functional Foods

It could be every kid's or adult's dream come true – popping chocolate to get your daily calcium intake, and sucking lollipops to relieve sore throat. And if you don't like carrots or broccoli, you can enjoy nutrient-enriched ice-cream with the same health benefits.

1. With functional foods like these, which provide health benefits, it won't be long before popping pills as health supplements become a thing of the past. Getting ready to tap the market potential of these new super-value foods are three local companies. They signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) today with Republic Polytechnic’s School of Applied Science at their “Functional Foods – The New Frontier” Forum.

2. The three companies are Papitto Gelato, a maker of gourmet Italian ice-cream; Foodedge Gourmet, which produces innovative and creative desserts; and Top Taste, which specialises in premium Chinese herbal beverages. They will tap Republic Polytechnic’s expertise to develop the new products. These new functional foods are enriched with nutraceutical ingredients – naturally occurring compounds found in plants and other natural biological sources which impart health benefits or desirable physiological effects.
3. The projects are supported by SPRING Singapore, which encourages local enterprises to work with institutes of higher learning to create new products to grow their markets. The global functional food market is estimated to be worth $114.6 billion in 2005. It is still growing, driven by a growing consumer understanding of the link between diet and health and the need to take personal responsibility for disease prevention and treatment amidst rising health care costs.

4. Republic Polytechnic expects to work with at least 100 companies to develop such foods by the end of 2011. Products from the first projects are expected to be ready for commercial sale in two years.

5. While Singapore food manufacturers have been producing high quality food products that are tasty and safe, there is vast growth potential in increasing the value-add of food products. SPRING Singapore Deputy Chief Executive, Mr Png Cheong Boon said, "Singapore food manufacturers can build on their good reputation to venture into a new area in which consumer confidence is a pre-requisite for success. Our strong infrastructure in intellectual property and sophisticated consumer market make Singapore a good location to anchor efforts in product development and marketing."

6. Republic Polytechnic’s Director for the School of Applied Science, Dr Terence Chong, said, "Competing against the lower cost structure of companies operating in emerging economies is no longer the way to go. Companies should exploit technology to develop higher value products that are unique to the company. Only then can they establish themselves as market leaders in their chosen niche. Republic Polytechnic is keen to support their efforts through collaborative research and application."

7. Mr Teo Sheng Chee, CEO and Managing Director of Top Taste, has big plans for his company. He said: "We aim to grow our business in the health market by expanding our range of Chinese herbal drinks. With the assistance of SPRING Singapore and Republic Polytechnic, we will be able to tap the latest technology and innovations to help us keep up with the tastes of consumers and stay one step ahead of our competitors."

8. SPRING’s vision for food manufacturing SMEs is for them to become competitive and resilient companies capable of offering a wide range of innovative and exportable products. The Singapore Premium Food Gifts is one of the many innovative foodstuffs that have resulted from SPRING’s close collaboration with industry associations, business chambers and other government agencies to sustain the strategic advantage of the industry and enhance its competitive edge in Singapore and overseas. Top Taste is one of the local manufacturers marketing under the Singapore Premium Food Gift brand at the Singapore Changi Airport Terminal 1.

9. Republic Polytechnic also showcased its capabilities and projects in alternative medicine applications and cosmeceuticals, the use of natural ingredients in skincare products and cosmetics.

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About SPRING (Standards, Productivity and Innovation Board) Singapore
SPRING Singapore's mission is to enhance the competitiveness of enterprises for a vibrant Singapore economy. We work to nurture a pro-business environment that encourages enterprise formation and growth; facilitate the growth of industries; enhance productivity and innovation and capabilities of enterprises; and help increase access to markets and business opportunities.

Please visit www.spring.gov.sg for more information and news about SPRING Singapore.

About Republic Polytechnic

The first educational institution in Singapore to adopt the Problem-Based Learning approach for all its diploma programmes, Republic Polytechnic has five schools offering 19 diploma courses in Information & Communications Technology, Engineering, Applied Science, Technology for the Arts, and Sports, Health & Leisure.

Republic Polytechnic is committed to nurturing innovation and entrepreneurial learning in an environment that develops problem-solving process skills and a life-long learning attitude. Its holistic, broad-based curriculum, covering culture, enterprise development and cognitive processes, prepares students for an active and meaningful role in society. Republic Polytechnic strives for excellence by achieving various national and international accreditations, including People Developer Standards, ISO9001, ISO14001, OHSAS 18001, Singapore Quality Class, Singapore Innovation Class, and the Singapore Health Awards (Gold). For more information, visit http://www.rp.sg.

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