

Pink Blue Yellow Green

One Man's Fight To Bring Stevia To America's Table

Film Synopsis

PINK, BLUE, YELLOW, GREEN: One Man's Fight To Bring Stevia To America's Table is a 40-minute documentary that tells the tale of the naturally sweet herb Stevia and its turbulent path to America's table tops.

Used as a sweetener and sugar substitute for decades in other countries with no ill effects, when one man tries to bring the benefits of this zero calorie, zero carb, health-improving alternative, he finds himself in head-on combat with giant drug companies, the sugar industry, multinational food companies and the US government itself. Narrated by Ed Begley, Jr., the film combines interviews, graphics and humorous animation to shed light on how powerful interests put profits ahead of Americans' long-term health.

Exhibition & Credits

Exhibition Format:	HDCAM, TRT 41 minutes
Sound Format:	Dolby Digital Professional 2.0
Production Format:	Red One in 23.98p at 2k and Panasonic HVS-200 at 1280 x 720
Domestic Premiere:	New York International Independent Film Festival, September 2008
International Premiere:	TBD
Theatrical Premiere:	TBD
Broadcast Premiere:	TBD

A Production of.....After Hours Entertainment
Produced by.....Russ Haan
Co-Produced by.....Rodolfo Madero and Gerardo Umaña
Directed by.....David Diaz, Russ Haan & Annie Perkins
Narrated By.....Ed Begley, Jr.
Edited by.....Roberto Duarte, David Diaz, Russ Haan & Robert Beadle
Original Music by.....Rodolfo Madero

Contacts:

Press, Theatrical or Screening Contact:
Russ Haan
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Directors' Statement

We were introduced to Jim May by a friend of ours. She said he had a story we might find interesting.

We didn't really believe what we heard when Jim first shared his tale.

He described an herb that was 30X sweeter than sugar. An herb with no calories, no carbs and no effect on blood sugar. An herb that has been used for centuries, and used as a sweetener in countries other than the USA, without a single consumer complaint. An herb that could radically improve America's diet and overall health. The herb was Stevia.

He also described a series of 'coincidences' that kept this miracle herb out of the US. There were issues with the FDA. The giant drug companies that make artificial sweeteners were implicated. Governmental interference and prejudice at the highest level was at work. Huge multinationals were strategizing to get a stranglehold on the herb for their own exploitation.

If Jim's claims were even partly true, it would be an incredible story. So, we agreed to do a film about Stevia.

The project took us to Paraguay, home of the Stevia plant. We went to Japan, where Stevia has been an alternative to sugar since the 70s. We went across the USA. We read research, interviewed doctors, lawyers, scientists and policy makers. And eventually, a story did indeed emerge from all we learned.

PINK, BLUE, YELLOW, GREEN is that story.

As directors, we feel we need to say something else about this film. Jim's company offered to partially fund the production costs. This put us in an awkward situation. Would we have to pander to his company's wishes? Would the film really just be an infomercial for his brand, SweetLeaf?

Fortunately, Jim and his company were hands off. They were not present at the interviews (except for their own, of course). They were not involved in the editing. In fact, no one from his company saw the film until it was nearly completed. Their only input was the correction of a few facts and insistence that graphics and names could be easily read.

Jim just wanted the story of Stevia's remarkable history to be told, and that by doing so, people will learn of a healthy option to sugar and artificial sweeteners. He hopes folks will choose his option, SweetLeaf, but as long as Stevia makes its way to America's tables, his dream, and our reason for making the film, will be achieved.

David Diaz, Russ Haan and Annie Perkins

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Film Summary

Stevia is an herb that is native to Paraguay. The leaves of the plant are nearly 30X sweeter than sugar. In addition, the herb has no carbohydrates, no calories and does not affect blood sugar levels, making it a healthy, natural alternative for diabetics and those who wish to reduce their sugar intake.

At one point during WWII, sugar scarcity caused by the unsafe seas prompted the US government to seriously consider cultivation of Stevia as a safe alternative. The end of the war dashed these plans.

Instead, Americans became sugar junkies, and the advent of TV advertising only fueled the addiction. Eventually, Americans paid the price – hundreds of billions of \$ spent annually to treat obesity, diabetes and dental problems.

Ironically, as America binged on sugar, Japan embraced Stevia and the plant became the marketplace leader for alternatives to sugar.

Then, in the early 1980s, a man named Jim May was introduced to the sweet herb by a peace-corp worker. Jim was so enthralled with the plant's possibilities, he quit his job, leveraged his entire life savings (to the great concern of his wife) and went to Paraguay to find a way to bring the herb to market in America.

What Jim didn't expect was the harsh reaction he would encounter when the artificial sweetener and sugar industries, each with billions of dollars in sales, learned of his goals.

These giant companies leveraged their resources and influence to get the FDA to stop Jim, and any other companies they could find, from bringing Stevia and its health benefits into the country.

Jim and his peers continually react to the preemptive challenges forced upon them. Eventually, it takes an act of Congress to break the FDA's and drug companies' stranglehold on Stevia. However, the new rules restrict Jim from using language that lets him describe the product. He can't call it sweet. He can't say it is a legitimate replacement for sugar. He can't call it a sugar substitute.

By this time, however, the world's largest food companies (including Coke, Pepsi and Cargill) see Stevia as a potential way to end their reliance on the now-unpopular artificial sweeteners.

These giant food companies announce plans to get the FDA to approve their versions of Stevia. This approval is called GRAS and whoever gets it first can sell Stevia as a sweetener. Jim must find a way to outmaneuver the multinationals, but time is not on his side.

When Jim does succeed, and actually gets two GRAS affirmations, his life dream is nearly fulfilled.

Even so, the FDA detains his products, and lets those of his giant competitors into the country. Jim's battle continues.

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Production Notes

Pink, Blue, Yellow, Green was shot from March through August of 2008. The film chronicles the story of Jim May and other early Stevia enthusiasts as they try to get the plant accepted in the US. The story is told via interviews with the entrepreneurs, doctors, scientists, lawyers, plant experts and marketing people involved along the way.

The crew traveled to Paraguay (home of the Stevia plant), Japan (where the plant became the #1 alternative to sugar while artificial sweeteners were banned) and cities throughout America. These interviews are combined with graphics and animation to make the facts clear. Ed Begley, Jr. narrates.

The film was shot primarily on the new Red One camera, in 23.98p at 2K and the Panasonic HVX-200 at 1280 x 720, and edited in Phoenix, Arizona on FinalCut Pro.

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About The Directors

David Diaz

David launched his career in advertising and quickly became a go-to resource for multi-cultural marketing. He eventually co-founded his own agency and as Creative Director, successfully grew it into the largest multi-cultural agency in the Southwest, serving clients including Coke, Fanta, Arizona Lottery, California Recycling, casinos and many others. After he sold his agency, he pursued filmmaking full time. He has completed multiple shorts, written several scripts and is now working on television and feature film projects.

Russ Haan

Russ abandoned a career in biology to found his own advertising agency and has pursued his own creative interests ever since. His agency, After Hours Creative has served many clients, including GE, COX, Turner Broadcasting, Cartoon Network, Intel, AT&T, Lucent, IBM the US Olympic Committee and others and has won every major advertising and design award in North America. Russ recently refocused his creative talents on writing, film and television. He has since authored nine books, written and optioned an original script for a feature film, co-authored more and has television and film projects in development.

Annie Perkins

Annie began life when she moved to Amsterdam in 1975 at the age of 25 years and is a successful creative with business credentials. She has extensive experience as a director in Theatre and ran her own international consulting firm that specialized in developing the creative potential of the leadership in some of the world's largest corporations and organizations. Annie then returned to her creative roots and made filmmaking her full-time career. She has completed several shorts and documentaries, served as a judge for film festivals, received accolades for her work in Rutger Hauer's director workshops, and successfully optioned her original feature film scripts.

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Cast & Crew

Narrated by Ed Begley Jr.

South America

Director, David Diaz
Principal Photography, Alex Mitchell & Christian Holler
2nd Camera, Ben Scharffbillig
Asst. to Director, Michele Bene
Coordination, Margarita Duarte & Steve Weinberger

Special Thanks To
Peter Gibert
Javier Sainz

Japan

Director, Annie Perkins
Principal Photography, Kevin Augello
Coordination, Mai Nishiyama

Special Thanks To
Koichi Onda
Tei Matsuki
Shintaro Kimura
Masaji Yamamoto
Tadashi Hirakawa
Noboru Sanaka
Tetsuya Sumida
Shingo Yano,

Japan Food Additives Association, Tokyo.
Maruzen Pharmaceuticals Company Limited, Tokyo
B&L Corporation
JBB Stevia Laboratory Ltd
Proteios Limited
Ohta Vegetable Market

United States of America

Directors, David Diaz & Russ Haan
Principal Photography, Alex Mitchell
2nd Camera, Ben Scharffbillig
Additional Cameras, Roberto Duarte, Gerardo Umaña
Red One Camera, Louis Bohorquez
Asst. to Directors, Michele Bene
Make-Up, Liliana Madero, Patty Umaña, Teri Hoyos
Editing, Roberto Duarte, David Diaz, Russ Haan
Sound, Gerardo Umaña
Music, Rodolfo Madero

Graphics & Animation

Oliver Scott
Roberto Duarte
Yanin Ponce Ledezma
Aaron Thompson
Trevor Hill
Bradley Smith

Voiceovers

Walt Smith
Eric Meyers
Barry
Toru
Teri Morris
Dawn Kemmer
Guarani Guy

Additional Research

Patty Madero

Legal Counsel

James Reed, Esq.
Baird, Williams & Greer LLP

Steven Weinberger

Special Thanks To

Mark Blumenthal
Daniel Mowrey
Marc Ullman
Julien Whitaker
Robert McQuate
Carlos Santo
Michele Bene
Jim & Carol May
Sherrie Natrass

Wisdom Natural Brands
Whitaker Wellness Institute
LSRO
GRAS & Associates
Ullman, Shapiro & Ullman
Basic Research
Cloud Manufacturing
American Botanical Council
First Studios
Copper Post Digital
Florida Nurseries
American Red Cross
The Venetian Hotel
Hilton Hotels
The W, Los Angeles

Stock Footage & Photos

TVDays.Com
Istockphotos.com
Buyoutfootage.com
Photodisk.com
Shutterstock.com

Shoot/Post

Edited all on tower terabyte AND shot on RED camera
About The Filmmakers
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Stevia Facts

What is Stevia?

Stevia Rebaudiana is an herb in the Compositae family that grows as a small shrub in parts of Paraguay and Brazil. The glycosides in its leaves make it incredibly sweet, a property that is unique among the nearly 300 species of stevia plants. Stevia has been used to sweeten beverages and medicines since Pre-Columbian times. A scientist named Antonio Bertoni first recorded its usage by native tribes in 1887.

Is Stevia safe?

Yes. Scientific research from around the world was exhaustively reviewed when the makers of SweetLeaf® Sweetener™ presented their case for GRAS status (a rigorous FDA designation of food safety). An independent group of outside scientists concluded that their highly purified product met or exceeded FDA standards for safety. A second set of scientists confirmed these results. The comprehensive reviews included studies on toxicity, cancer, reproductive health, long-term use, use at high-volumes, effects on blood-sugar levels and more. Furthermore, after more than 30 years of high volume use in Japan and other countries, as well as more than a decade of use in America as a dietary supplement, there have been no reported cases of ill-effects. Finally, recent scientific reviews by the World Health Organization (2003 and 2007) support these conclusions.

How sweet is Stevia?

High quality Stevia leaves are up to 30 times sweeter than table sugar. The purified extracts of Stevia (called Steviosides) can be 250–300 times sweeter than table sugar.

Can Stevia replace artificial sweeteners in the diet?

Yes. For the past 30 years other countries have approved the use of Stevia as a sweetener and their populations have integrated Stevia into their diet. Stevia-based sweeteners have a nearly 40% market share in some of these countries.

How many calories are in Stevia?

None. And it is also the only Stevia-based sweetener with no carbs and no glycemic index.

Will Stevia raise my blood sugar levels?

No. In fact, Stevia has been shown to help keep blood sugar levels balanced. However, since some stevia-based products contain fillers, you need to be sure the brand you select still offers a zero glycemic index.

Is Stevia safe for diabetics?

Yes. Stevia can be a part of a healthy diet for anyone with blood sugar problems since it does not raise blood sugar levels. Always ask your doctor for information about how any new food can affect your health.

Can Stevia be used in cooking and baking?

Absolutely! Research shows that Stevia and Stevioside extracts are extremely heat stable in a variety of everyday cooking and baking situations.

How are Stevia extracts prepared?

Extracts of Stevia leaves can be prepared by a number of methods. The most natural products use only purified water to extract the wonderful tasting, sweetening agents from the plant. Be aware that some companies use alcohols or other chemical means to attempt to obtain the sweet flavored extracts.

Where can I buy Stevia-based sweeteners?

Whole Foods, Fresh N Easy, Sprouts, Fry's and other national grocery chains carry some kind of stevia-base sweetener. If you can't find a stevia product at your grocer, it is available online at www.sweetleaf.com.