

## **Natural colours and natural extracts in food products**

*L. Carinelli, C. Acquati* - Biochim Srl, Milan, Italy

In the past the natural colours were mainly used in the textile products and also in the food products. The discovery of the artificial and synthetic colours greatly reduced the use of natural colours in the textile products. On the other hand in food sector, where the safety and toxicity aspect have a great importance, natural products survived and continue to be used.

In the years synthetic products reached a good level of safety respect the natural products that still have high cost and poor availability.

The natural colours are so became a niche-product.

Fortunately there are some signs for a new raise in the natural colours market:

- a new attention to more “friendly” ingredients and more “genuine” food.
- the recent European legislation on food additives allowed a major possibility to employ this kind of products.
- new scientific discoveries show also the possibility to employ some products, formerly used only as colours, also for their nutritional properties.
- natural extracts, whose colouring characteristic are associated with flavour and aromatic properties, are more and more extensively used in foods.

In this presentation are described the natural colours used in foods, the regulatory framework, and the technical and economic problems implied in their use.