

# How Aenova develops vegan softgel capsules

**Michael Ammann, Managing Director Site Cornu (Romania) and Senior Vice President Business Unit Softgel Capsules, has gained a huge knowledge for solid dosage forms and packaging, that he accepts to share with Actif's Mag.**

**Actif's Mag : Consumers are more and more looking for vegetal and/or animal-free solutions and formulations. How do you respond to this trend?**

**Michael Ammann:** We developed our vegetarian VegaGels® years ago and produced them on a scalable commercial level. In fact, Aenova was the very first supplier on the worldwide market with their vegetarian VegaGels® and a technology leader at that time.

With our VegaGels® we have already been producing vegan softgel capsules based on red seaweed extract and starch for some time. Now the VegaGels® on a purely vegetable basis are being expanded to include a chewable variant and a pharmaceutical grade version. The new composition targets the needs of consumers who follow a vegetarian or vegan diet or prefer products without animal testing and are suitable for special religious food requirements, such as kosher or halal. VegaGels® are free of genetically modified organisms, animal

## LE GROUPE AENOVA EN BREF

Le groupe Aenova, l'un des principaux fabricants mondiaux sous contrat et fournisseur de services de développement pour l'industrie pharmaceutique et des soins de santé, développe, produit et conditionne toutes les formes de dosage, de d'ingrédients actifs courants, des produits pharmaceutiques aux compléments alimentaires pour la santé humaine et animale : solides, semi-solides et liquides, stériles et non stériles... Le groupe emploie 4 300 personnes réparties sur 16 sites en Europe et aux États-Unis.

## AENOVA GROUP IN SHORT

The Aenova Group, a leading global contract manufacturer and development service provider for the pharmaceutical and health-care industry, develops, produces and packages all common dosage forms, product groups and active ingredient classes from pharmaceuticals to dietary supplements for human and animal health: solid, semi-solid and liquid, sterile and non-sterile. The group has 4,300 employees at 16 sites in Europe and the U.S.

materials, gluten and preservatives. The new softgel capsules are compliant with the regulations for the American, European and Chinese markets.

**Actif's Mag : In the softgel capsules what are the solutions to replace gelatin?**

**Michael Ammann:** The shell material is a composition of a jellification agent and a softener. The gelatin is the jellification agent in the traditional soft gel capsule. To replace it, it needs another jellification agent, which is the red seaweed extract and starch in our actual VegaGels®. As softener, we use mainly glycerol for both shell materials, gelatin and VegaGels®. There are other jellification agents on the market, but we made the best experience in our production with the red seaweed extract and starch composition. This formulation is also coming very close to the gelatin behavior. It has even an interesting benefit and this is the temperature resistance, which gave us the possibility to make a "hot fill". That means, we have encapsulated 70°C hot medicine into the VegaGels® capsule. This temperature resistance characteristic opens also markets in warmer climate zones like middle America.

**Actif's Mag : Are softgel capsules an important business at Aenova ? How do you develop this activity - through an internal development or by acquisitions?**

**Michael Ammann:** Aenova has over 35 years of experience in the production and development of softgel capsules, for the pharmaceutical industry with highly potent APIs, but also dietary supplements and OTCs. In this area, the market is developing significantly and Aenova can also score with innovative products, such as VegaGels®.

Aenova was built between 2008 and 2014 through the merger of strong companies with a huge experience in their own specialties. This included the Swiss Caps as soft gelatin capsule developer and manufacturer. As Aenova Group we are a very strong player in the global market, for example in softgel capsules, number 2 worldwide with around 15 billions capacity and around 30 certifications and approvals. •



Comments collected by Philippe Millet