

O-30: SOUTH AFRICAN TRADITIONAL ROOIBOS EXTRACT CONQUERED THE NORTHERN HEMISPHERE. DEVELOPMENT OF *ASPALATHUS LINEARIS* EXTRACTS AS FUNCTIONAL FOOD INGREDIENTS

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Functional food can be defined as food consumed as part of the normal diet that provides additional health benefits beyond the traditional nutrients it contains; that has demonstrated physiological benefits; and/or that reduces the risk of nutrition-related diseases. This idea that food can be health-promoting beyond its traditional nutritional value is gaining acceptance among consumers and health professionals who see functional foods as an attractive, convenient and tasty way of receiving health benefits via whole food. Within this new trend, herbal extracts are attracting increasing interest as ingredients which can confer functionality to traditional foods and beverages. This new use of traditional herbal extracts has created the need for product development so that products are able to satisfy the various requirements of the food industry. This presentation outlines the proceeding followed in developing a functional food ingredient based on an extract of the plant *Aspalathus linearis* (Rooibos), a South African plant traditionally associated with health benefits and appreciated for its mild, sweet taste and lack of caffeine.