



Breaking News on Cosmetics Formulation & Packaging in Asia-Pacific

Sugarcane ingredient of choice to replace shark-derived squalene

By [Lucy Whitehouse](#) +, 28-Apr-2016

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Popular personal care ingredient squalene is an organic compound often derived from sharks' livers - in response to consumer demand for cruelty-free and renewable ingredients, manufacturers are now looking elsewhere to source it.

Squalene from shark liver oil had been used as one of the most common moisturizers in cosmetics before sourcing began endangering the species and plant-based versions became viable for products.

Olive oil has lately been the primary source of plant-derived alternative, but due to the stability of the crop, some researchers suggest sugarcane may now offer a more attractive prospect.

Sugarcane stability

Speaking recently to [PSFK](#), Caroline Hadfield, SVP of personal care at Amyris and also its subsidiary Biossance (leading players in the squalene segment), said that sugarcane comes out on top for its more reliable quality.

"Olives are a more volatile and climate-dependent crop, therefore, less sustainable than sugarcane," she explained.

"The sugarcane squalene is also more pure, higher quality and a better ingredient for the consumer. It is easy to formulate with, readily biodegradable and has a very stable supply."

Shark-centric

Despite consumer enthusiasm for cruelty-free beauty and rising demand for sustainability, moving away from shark-derived squalene is proving a slow process for the beauty and personal care industry.

A study last year by NGO Bloom Association found that despite company pledges to use plant-based squalene alternatives, one in five of 72 products tested from across European, Asian and US brands still contained shark liver oil.

"Either brands buy animal squalane, cheaper than vegetable squalane, to achieve a higher margin, or they are deceived by their suppliers who sell the mixed squalane by passing for pure vegetable squalane," Laure Ducos, lead author of the study, explained.

Key difficulties in raw material availability are reportedly due to regulations and competition from other industries, minimal governmental support, and western cultural impact.

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