**Nature Vibes**

**Manuka Honey Frosting**

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**BRIEF**
The Ministry of Primary Industries provided us with a brief that stated an export product had to be created for an international market that showcased one of their produce. This includes: meat, dairy, fish, honey and horticulture.

**AIM**
Nature Vibes will develop ‘me too’ product that is a healthier version of buttercream frosting for the American market. This product is aimed at meeting the nutritional deficiencies existing in the American market. The aim is for the development of a product that includes ‘all natural’ ingredients. Finally, the team is aiming at the development of a product with minimal ingredients and natural flavouring.

**RESEARCH**
Our final concept was derived from research based on America’s dietary needs and food trends. The aim was to create a ‘me too’ product that will satisfy the needs of health conscious people, especially as obesity is a rising cause of concern for the country. Initial research was conducted regarding statistics and facts around obesity and ways to combat this issue. Yogurt was the ingredient that had health advantages that included a high calcium value and claims about it preventing weight gain and maintaining weight loss. The fact that it also appeared on the 2014 food trend list made it the most obvious product for us to work with.

Research showing the love that Americans hold for baking inspired our labna based frosting concept. The idea of developing a healthy version of instant frosting came to mind. The absence of healthy instant frosting on the market revealed a gap in the market that was not to be missed. Compared to current ‘ready to use frostings that include a range of additives and artificial colourings in the ingredient list, our manuka honey cheese frosting can be proud as there is a limited - ‘all natural ingredients’ list.

**Concept Development**

**First concept Idea - Gingerbread Men Why?**

**Pros:**
- Recyclable waste dairy produce: high in nutrients that Americans love in
- A substitute for sugar filled fizzy drinks, which are a major cause of obesity rates in America

**Cons:**
- Expensive dairy affects cost of exporting because of water weight

Would you buy the icing?

**Second concept idea - Frozen Pizza with Whey Ketchup and labna Cheese**

**Pros:**
- Healthier versions of frozen Pizza’s
- Provide nutrients
- Convenient for students
- Recyclable waste dairy produce: Whey

**Cons:**
- Competitive target market with a lot of competition

On a scale of 1-5 how much did you like the Pizza?

**Key Decision - NO GO**
This concept was NOT to be developed any further.

**Third concept Idea - Labna Frosting - Lemon vs Vanilla**

**Pros:**
- Healthier substitute to existing products
- Gap in the market
- Original
- Competitive
- Limited for when exporting

These graphs indicated to the team that the concept idea of icing is acceptable, as 83% said they would buy it.

**Final concept idea**

**Final decision:** To create a Manuka Honey frosting.

**Pros:**
- New Zealand Flavour
- Healthy substitute to butter cream frosting
- Ready to use from the freezer
- Boost for exportation
- Ideal consistency and flavour
- Convincing

**Shelf Life**
As the product consists of a high risk ingredient - dairy, the product has a short shelf life. This issue arose when deciding on ways of packaging and exportation of the product. After research, contacting microbiologists, consulting mentors and teachers, many procedures were discussed that could help investigate ways of extending the shelf life or finding a suitable way of exporting the frosting. These were: investigating the pH levels, moisture content, water activity and freezing. Trials were undertaken to test the following:
- Labna had a suitable pH level, therefore this was not an issue.
- Experiments were conducted to test the moisture content of the frosting in a food dehydrator. A sample of the frosting was also frozen to see if this had a valid result. Freezing the product had a positive outcome, because when the frosting was removed from the freezer it still retained its original consistency, and was almost instantly soft and pliable and ready for use.

The conclusion was that the Nature Vibes have developed a ‘ready to use’ instant frosting straight from the freezer. The reason being that honey has the same effect as sugar when used in a frozen product. The sugar molecules slow down the freezing process, therefore resulting in the frosting remaining in its original state.

**Initial Sensory Evaluation conducted with the New Zealand market.**

On a scale of 1-5 how much did you like Manuka Honey icing?

**Sensory testing - identifying preferred sweetener between Manuka Honey, Stevia and Sugar**

Overall 85% of consumers liked the product, which justified our reasoning to use Manuka Honey as the sweetener.