

Claims

1. A method for preparing a beverage with improved stability comprising at least one texture component selected from the group consisting of unhomogenised vegetable puree, unhomogenised fruit pulp and unhomogenised fruit puree; optionally unhomogenised vegetable juice and/or fruit juice; optionally homogenised vegetable material and/or fruit material; and a plant sterol ester and/or plant stanol ester in an amount of from 0.2 to 25% by weight of the beverage, said method comprising;

mixing an aqueous emulsion containing plant sterol ester and/or plant stanol ester with at least one texture component selected from the group consisting of unhomogenised vegetable puree, unhomogenised fruit pulp and unhomogenised fruit puree to produce the beverage;

wherein the step of mixing does not substantially reduce the particle size of ingredients of the beverage.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said aqueous emulsion containing plant sterol ester and/or plant stanol ester is mixed with said texture component and additionally mixed with vegetable material and/or fruit material in the form of a juice to produce the beverage.

3. The method of claim 1 ~~or 2~~ wherein said texture component is first mixed with vegetable material and/or fruit material in the form of a juice, and subsequently thus obtained mixture is mixed with said aqueous emulsion containing plant sterol ester and/or plant stanol ester to produce the beverage.

4. The method of ~~any of claims 1 or 3~~ wherein the aqueous emulsion is prepared by forming an aqueous mixture comprising an aqueous medium, the plant sterol ester and/or plant stanol ester and an emulsifier and homogenising the mixture.

5. The method of claim 4 wherein the plant sterol ester and/or plant stanol ester is heated to a temperature between 30°C_± and 90°C_± where the plant sterol ester and/or plant stanol ester is in liquid state and mixed with the emulsifier to form a mixture, and the mixture is mixed with the aqueous medium heated to a temperature between 30 and 90°C_± to form the aqueous mixture and the aqueous mixture is homogenised.

6. The method of claim 4 ~~or 5~~ wherein the aqueous medium consists essentially of water.

7. The method of claim 4 ~~or 5~~ wherein the aqueous medium comprises water and fruit material and/or vegetable material in the form of a juice.
- 5 8. The method of ~~any of~~ claims 1 ~~or 3~~ wherein the aqueous emulsion is prepared by forming an aqueous mixture comprising an aqueous medium containing protein and the plant sterol ester and/or plant stanol ester and homogenising the mixture.
9. The method of ~~any of~~ claims 1 ~~to 8~~ wherein the vegetable comprises carrot, tomato,
10 maize, celery, beets, parsley, cabbage, lettuce, spinach, cucumber, wheat grasspea, pumpkin, sauerkraut or a mixture of two or more of these.
10. The method of ~~any of~~ claims 1 ~~to 9~~ wherein the fruit comprises orange, apple, pomegranate, go goji, grapefruit, lemon, lime, pineapple, mango, banana, peach, grape,
15 pear, kiwi, cherry, acerola, watermelon, cantaloupe, strawberry, raspberry, cranberry, blueberry, blackcurrant, plum, papaya, guava or a mixture of two or more of these.
11. A beverage with improved stability obtained by a method of ~~any of~~ claims 1 ~~to 10~~.
- 20 12. A beverage with improved stability comprising:
at least one texture component selected from the group consisting of unhomogenised vegetable puree, unhomogenised fruit pulp and unhomogenised fruit puree;
optionally unhomogenised vegetable juice and/or fruit juice;
optionally homogenised vegetable material and/or fruit material; and
25 a plant sterol ester and/or plant stanol ester in an amount of from 0.2 to 25% by weight of the beverage.
13. The beverage of claim 11 ~~or 12~~ wherein the amount of the texture component is from 10 to 100% by weight, ~~preferably from 30 to 98% by weight and most preferably from 50 to~~
30 ~~95% by weight~~ of the total amount of vegetable material and fruit material.
14. The beverage of ~~any of~~ claims 11 ~~or 13~~ wherein the amount of the texture component is from 15 to 80% by weight, ~~preferably from 20 to 60% by weight and most preferably from~~
~~25 to 50% by weight~~ of the beverage.

15. The beverage of ~~any of claims 11 to 14~~ wherein the amount of vegetable material is from 0 to 100% by weight, ~~preferably from 2 to 100% by weight, more preferably from 5 to 100% by weight, still more preferably from 10 to 100% by weight, even more preferably from 20 to 90% by weight, still even more preferably from 30 to 85% by weight, further more~~ preferably from 40 to 80% by weight, and most preferably from 45 to 75% by weight of the total amount of the vegetable material and the fruit material.

16. The beverage of ~~any of claims 11 to 15~~ wherein the amount of fruit material is from 0 to 100% by weight, ~~preferably from 0 to 98% by weight, more preferably from 0 to 95% by weight, still more preferably from 0 to 90% by weight, even more preferably from 10 to 80% by weight, still even more preferably from 15 to 70% by weight, further more preferably from 20 to 60% by weight, and most preferably from 25 to 55% by weight~~ of the total amount of the vegetable material and the fruit material.

17. The beverage of ~~any of claims 11 to 16~~ wherein the amount of the plant sterol ester and/or plant stanol ester is from 1.4 to 7.5% by weight, ~~preferably from 1.4 to 6.8% by weight, and more preferably from 1.4 to 5.2% by weight~~ of the beverage.

18. The beverage of ~~any of claims 11 to 17~~ wherein the beverage additionally comprises an emulsifier, the amount thereof being from 1 to 10% by weight of the plant sterol ester and/or plant stanol ester.

19. The beverage of ~~any of claims 11 to 17~~ wherein the beverage additionally comprises a protein.

20. The beverage of ~~any of claims 11 to 19~~ wherein the vegetable comprises carrot, tomato, maize, celery, beets, parsley, cabbage, lettuce, spinach, cucumber, wheat grass, pea, pumpkin, sauerkraut or a mixture of two or more of these.

21. The beverage of ~~any of claims 11 to 20~~ wherein the fruit comprises orange, apple, pomegranate, goji, grapefruit, lemon, lime, pineapple, mango, banana, peach, grape, pear, kiwi, cherry, acerola, watermelon, cantaloupe, strawberry, raspberry, cranberry, blueberry, blackcurrant, plum, papaya, guava or a mixture of two or more of these.

22. The beverage of ~~any of claims 11 to 21~~ wherein the beverage additionally comprises green tea extract, aloe vera juice, agave nectar, ginseng, added vitamins, added minerals or a mixture of two or more of these.

- 5 23. The beverage of ~~any of claims 11 to 22~~ wherein the viscosity of the beverage is in the range from 500 to 2000 mPas, ~~preferably from 600 to 1700 mPas and most preferably from 700 to 1500 mPas.~~