# Interview: Yvonne Huang – Vice President, Aquavan, Taiwan

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*Yvonne Huang, VP of Aquavan, a company developing the most sophisticated high-tech green biotechnology platform for the extraction of plants, discusses their innovative technology and business scope while contributing to the concept of improving the health of patients without harming the environment.*

**Can you introduce us to Aquavan?**

Aquavan is a company developing the most sophisticated high-tech green biotechnology platform for the extraction of plants. Aquavan's business scope includes functional herb collection, extraction, nutraceuticals, active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) and branding. The standard operation procedure we follow involves collecting herbs, functional material analysis, identifying and setting up the standard for active ingredient, trial production and purification, functional test and mass production. Our core competence is purifying; however, we decided to specialize in mass production in the botanical pharmaceutical industry due to a lack of technology in this field that can be as efficient. We pride ourselves in developing a technology platform that can overcome two main challenges that the pharmaceutical industry is facing: purifying and mass production. Additionally, we strive to develop products that are relevant to the health industry; aiming to provide customers with high quality products that are safe to consume.

**Can you introduce us to your core technology; what is so unique about it?**

We use a technique of increasing pressure to exchange the form of CO2 to supercritical fluid state followed by extraction of material and depressurizing. This type of procedure is free of risks – it has no toxic residue, it is beneficial to human body and it is environmentally friendly. Looking back historically, the vision to use environmentally friendly technology and apply it to botanical pharmaceuticals and the biotech industry has been present ever since the company was founded back in 2001. The environmental friendliness movement started in Europe and the industry in Europe is very eager to use this type of technology as the leading environment-promoting force. Asia and America are still prioritizing costs, often neglecting the environmental factor. However, we believe in the future everybody will follow this direction. Therefore, we are working on our platform that meets these requirements to become a leading company in this field in ten to 20 years.

**Can you introduce us to your product portfolio and tell us what the main specificities of your products are?**

We provide a product line called Axtract that includes Axtract K-H4, Axtract- LAC and Axtract-APT. Axtract K-H4 is an extract from an exclusive Taiwanese breed Kakarot. It contains a substance with anti-diabetic and anti-fatigue properties, while improving metabolic syndrome, preventing obesity and reducing waistline. Secondly, Axtract- LAC is the Astaxanthin extract with high level purification (up to 97 percent while products on the market feature two to four percent). Astaxanthin can inhibit the formation of Atherosclerosis and prevent cardiovascular diseases. Finally, Axtract- APT contents the purist Petunidin derivatives – it is up to 99 percent purified and effective in preventing cardiovascular diseases. It was proven that its efficiency rate exceeds the one showed by Ticlopidine – the anticoagulation drug currently present on the market.

**Can you describe your R&D strategy?**

We focus on two categories: nutraceutical active ingredients and APIs. Nutraceutical active ingredients feature some advantages such as simplified tests to prove efficacy. We focus on finding the material, developing health supplement and launching it to the market. Secondly, API category requires identification of active ingredient, further investigation and cell and animal test. After purification, we aim to sell it to the big pharmaceutical companies for distribution. As distribution is not our strength, our commitment will remain R&D and extraction.

**What are your strategic priorities to accelerate the growth of the company? Is your partnerships strategy local or international? What kind of partners are you looking to attract?**

We are partnering with several pharmaceutical equipment companies to promote our technical service worldwide. Additionally, we cooperate with R&D centers to gather more ingredients for one of the following markets: diabetes, cardiovascular and oncology. This year we are planning to distribute our materials in China and Taiwan. However, within recent two months we received collaboration opportunities from Germany, Switzerland, Egypt and South Africa.

**What sets you apart from your competitors? Why should potential partners choose to collaborate with you?**

Being the first company in the world to introduce the technology platform SF-SMB makes us unique. Currently, no competing companies are present on the market. Traditionally, botanical pharmaceutical companies are usually trying for more than five years to discover the active ingredient and failed. Our platform can discover active ingredient within three months. Additionally, we can identify quality and character. We possess the patent for the machine, and our platform is currently the biggest in the world. Not only we can produce raw material, but we can provide technical services to other botanical pharmaceutical companies.

**What value does Aquavan bring to the local innovative ecosystem of Taiwan?**

Our platform can introduce Taiwan as an innovative country featuring technology that nobody else in the world can develop. Taiwan already has a lot of experience in biotech industry. However, we are limited to contract manufacturers while we can do more in research and development in biochemical and biopharmaceutical industry. Additionally, our platform can also serve markets with a lot of plant resources to advance their biotech labels and become competitive on the global market.

**What are your strategic objectives for the upcoming years?**

Our main purpose is to provide APIs to big pharmaceutical companies. Our technology platform assists in new drug development that is not harmful for patients due to its lack of side effects. Botanical pharmaceuticals are the future of pharmaceutical industry and reflect our philosophy: do no harm. Finally, our long-term goal is to become a global leader in developing active pharmaceutical ingredient with focus on botanical pharmaceutical.

**What do you want our international readers to think when they hear the name Aquavan?**

Aqua stands for water which is a symbol of purifying. We are a company using technology platform following green extraction procedure while contributing to the concept of improving the health of

patients without harming the environment.

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