



'1.6 billion people suffer from anemia. That is 25 per cent of the world's population!'

Anemia, the lack of red blood cells, is one of the world's biggest - and least visible - health threats, currently affecting almost one out of four human beings on the planet. Sera Scandia has a solution.

You cannot see it, and you might not even feel it. Nevertheless, anemia has a major impact on human health and well-being. In its light form, the condition may cause fatigue and inability to concentrate. In serious cases, it may inhibit an individual's cognitive development, or it could be fatal. Fortunately, we are in a position to end anemia, but only if poor populations across the world gain access to essential nutrients. This is where Sera Scandia comes into play, explains CEO Stefan Bødtker Michelsen:

'There is hardly any health condition that is more prevalent globally than anemia, and yet we rarely talk about it. In developing countries, anemia is a huge problem because the low-fat diet contains insufficient amounts of iron derived from haemoglobin, the so-called heme iron. This makes children dull and unable to learn efficiently at school. In fact, the entire cognitive development is jeopardised for someone whose blood lacks red blood cells, which work to distribute oxygen to the cells of the body.'

Although Sera Scandia is headquartered in Denmark, the Sera Scandia Group was started in Venezuela in 1975 as a supplier of pig pancreas for a Novo Nordisk research project. Today, the company's main activity is producing blood proteins and serum collected from slaughterhouses around the world. These proteins are part of many different value chains in industries such as biotechnology and pharma. They can also be used in food production, says Stefan Bødtker Michelsen:

Sustainable Development Goals at play

SDG 2: Zero hunger

Target 2.2: By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons.



'The advantage of the blood proteins is that they contain haemoglobin, which is absorbed in the body about 20-40 percent more efficiently than non-heme iron and therefore a very effective way of fighting anemia. By enriching food with aseptically treated blood, we can ensure that people in developing countries get the nutrition they so desperately need and give these communities an opportunity to break the vicious cycle of underdevelopment that has been inherited across generations.'

Sera Scandia has already entered into partnerships with several food and ingredient manufacturers that can add heme iron to their products and ingredients in addition to replacing expensive egg albumin with plasma albumin. One of them is a Peruvian company that produces biscuits and soups; another one is a Guatemalan manufacturer of peanut butter with added haemoglobin. Recently, a strategic partnership has been set in motion with a Danish company that has a global reach in ingredients and nutrition as well.



However, as Stefan Bødtker Michelsen points out, the huge breakthrough and impact for heme iron-enriched products require partnerships with global NGO's. This is precisely why Sera Scandia's participation in the SDG Accelerator programme has given the company an important boost.

'If anything, the SDG Accelerator programme is about entering into partnerships and opening doors for each other, which is also a prerequisite for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. If we are to fight anemia, we need to partner with the United Nations World Food Programme or UNICEF or get support from one of the other major food assistance organisations. At the same time, we need to spread knowledge about anemia. Both local and global players need to understand that simply adding vitamins and minerals to the diet is not enough to tackle malnutrition in the broadest sense of the word.'

At the same time, there is a need for more data collection and more communication, says Stefan Bødtker Michelsen:

'We are already working with academic institutions to increase awareness of the value of heme iron, which is why we have created the 'Global Initiative for a World Without Anemia', also called GIWWA. In this forum, we bring together all stakeholders, commercial and non-commercial, so that we can unite initiatives and speak with one voice to reach our goal: a world without anemia.'

The will to cooperate and the global movement against malnutrition have made Stefan Bødtker Michelsen optimistic about the future.

'The Sustainable Development Goals perfectly match our own philosophy and also the recommendation of FAO to take a waste product from slaughterhouses, refine it and use it to fight malnutrition. It also means that we can make money from something that is otherwise environmentally harmful if flushed down the drain, which is often the case in developing countries. Remember that the blood in a cow represents 6-8 per cent of the total protein yield of the animal. We are convinced that we can make a crucial difference for the well-being of the world, and we are excited to see where it will all take us.'

This is how Sera Scandia contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals

- Sera Scandia produces heme iron from blood collected from slaughterhouses.
- Heme iron is a crucial dietary supplement for the 1.6 billion people in the world, who lack red blood cells in their blood.

Facts about Sera Scandia

- Founded in Venezuela in 1975
- Specialised in developing products for the food and biotech industries based on blood
- Has manufacturing facilities throughout South America, USA, South Africa and France
- Head office in Hellebæk, Denmark
- Approximately 450 employees



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CEO, Sera Scandia