

# The Argentinean Who Created an Organic Cosmetics Firm and Conquered the US and China

Raise the flag to eliminate wheat, oats, barley and rye, otherwise known as tacc or gluten - the protein found in some cereals and their derivatives. Distanced from genetically modified organisms is a cosmetic brand that claims to be food for the skin, because of the nutritional benefits of its products. "Skin cells are fed just like the stomach," says Graciela Ceballos, creator of the beauty firm Anamé Vio, which in the last two years managed to grow by 50% with 80% of its production going to United States and China. Since 2010 Anamé Vio is one of the few brands of Argentinian origin that is certified organic under international and national standards.



Prior to starting Anamé Vio, Graciela Ceballos studied law and foreign trade and worked at a cosmetics firm for over 10 years. She then decided to take another path, a more personal one, because of the tremendous stress in her life. Fifteen years ago at Cosmoprof in Italy, one of the most important cosmetics fairs in the world, Graciela was struck by a sign that said organic. "I came across a different cosmetic world, one I hadn't known about. I studied it and prepared to build my own brand."

At that time organic was growing by leaps and bounds, especially in European countries and the United States. Graciela decided to create an organic brand for the world from Argentina. It took four years to certify the formula, "We do not use chemicals or preservatives, in fact our products can vary in fragrance and color, because everything is natural". Endorsed by the Anmat (National Administration of Medicines, Food and Medical Technology), the OIA (International Agricultural Organization) and the NOP (National Organic Program) of the United States, Graciela believes there is growing demand in the country for organic. Last August, Anamé Vio opened a laboratory for the separation of organic raw materials in Parque Chacabuco, the first of its kind in Argentina.

## What does Anamé Vio mean?

"It emerged from a mistake. The initial name was Andme of the English "And I", but they registered it incorrectly and then I added Vio which means integral organic vision."

## How does an organic skin care product affect the skin as opposed to one that is not organic?

"The difference is substantial because all creams that have petroleum derivatives or parabens are known to cause cell aging. When you put on a cream that has silicones, for example, it clogs your pores and does not let them breathe. This is the effect of chemicals on your skin. Skin cells are fed just like your stomach, so if you put something on



them that blocks nutrient absorption, they can not be fed and will become dehydrated. When you use organic creams, for the first week you will feel like your skin is tight. This happens because your skin is being nourished and wants more. In fact, you may have to apply the product up to four or five times a day in the beginning. After a month, your skin is nourished and no longer needs as much product. You will notice it is hydrated and luminous."

### **Is it the same with food?**

"If you consume organic food, why would you give something else to your skin? The organic trend began with food, and when you eat organic, you understand how nourishing it can be. The skin is also in need of nourishment. If you do not want to eat herbicides then you do not want to put them on your skin. The Ayurvedics say the skin is the biggest tongue that our body has. If there is something we shouldn't put in our mouth then we should not put it on our skin. This is why Anamé Vio products carry the tagline, skin-food. We support the concept that our products are nutritious for your skin. All of our products are made with the same standards that apply to organic food."

### **Which standards?**

"Since 2010 we've continually been certified by the organic standard of the United States, which is called NOP. While they do not have a cosmetic law, they've determined that if you can meet the organic standards for food to make a cream, they will give you the seal."



### **Where are your products distributed?**

"To all the world. The brand is registered in 42 countries, throughout the European community, in China and in the United States."

### **How is the demand for organic outside Argentina?**

"In the last 25 years, the organic segment grew between 15 and 20% annually around the world by consumer demand."

### **And in Argentina?**

"The brand is more known and has a greater footprint outside Argentina than within, because the brand emerged out of the need for organic cosmetics abroad. It's crazy that we receive requests asking if we will ship to Argentina ... In terms of organic beauty, Argentina as a country has a very good reputation."

## Why?

"Because we have a large amount of certified organic cultivated land, but 99% of what is produced in the land is exported."

## Because the Argentinians are not interested in organic or because they can not access it?

"Yes, the Argentinians are becoming more and more interested. When I started with this 15 years ago, I talked about organic and very few people knew what it was about. Today there are fairs, stores, and many people are more interested in looking for organic and non-toxic products. In 2010 we did roughly one consultation per month and now they are daily. This is why we decided to create a laboratory for the separation of organic raw materials. There are people who can not develop a totally organic cosmetic line but they can improve the products they make using organic ingredients."

## What is done in the laboratory?

"We buy all the organic raw materials of Argentinian origin that are available, certified and traceable in the country.

What we do not have in Argentina we import, like the shea butter that comes from the Ivory Coast or the argan oil that comes from Morocco. The suppliers require us to buy large quantities, and our creams do not carry a significant amount of these components so we established the laboratory to divide and market the raw materials we are importing."

## For whom?

"The idea is to sell to anyone who produces finished product and requires raw material with organic traceability. This is the first laboratory for the separation of organic raw materials from Argentina. The idea is to reach the estheticians because there are many women who seek to beautify themselves, and the equipment they use works very well with organic raw materials which enhance their effects. We want to motivate dermatologists and cosmetologists, to use organic raw materials and prevent the use of toxic products for skincare. We offer the raw materials and usage instructions, since it is known that cosmetologists work creatively and alternate products and personalize treatments."



## How do we know if a container or product has toxic ingredients?

"You always have to read the labels, if there are any doubts, you can consult the website [ewg.org](http://ewg.org). Enter the ingredients for any product and it will indicate its toxicity. Sometimes, the label of a product appears not to have parabens, but when analyzed, these toxic ingredients are present. We must carefully analyze and investigate to know what we are eating and using. We are the result of what we consume."

By: Silvina Vitale