

Mars Strengthens Natural Mint Supply Chain Through Shubh Mint Programme

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Mars is integrating menthol sourced through its Shubh Mint programme into its European chewing gum supply chain, supplying factories in the UK and Poland



Mars is bringing natural menthol sourced through its Shubh Mint programme into its European chewing gum supply chain, as the company begins integrating the sustainably sourced ingredient into its manufacturing operations in the UK and Poland.

Mint is a critical ingredient for many of Mars, Incorporated's global brands, yet its supply chain presented significant business risk. Approximately 80 per cent of the world's natural menthol originates from a single region: Uttar Pradesh, India, creating a highly concentrated supply chain vulnerable to climate impacts, declining yields and rising production costs. While synthetic menthol is readily available and widely used in the industry, Mars chose to invest in the future of natural mint, recognising that building a more resilient agricultural system could deliver long-term benefits for both the business and the thousands of farmers who depend on the crop.

In 2017, Mars launched the Shubh Mint programme in partnership with implementation expert Tanager. Designed as a long-term initiative, the programme aims to strengthen natural mint production by improving farming practices, increasing resilience to climate change and supporting more sustainable livelihoods across mint-growing communities.

The programme began with a two-year research and pilot phase to better understand the root causes affecting productivity and farmer incomes. Climate-smart agricultural practices and improved planting materials were trialled on quarter-acre demonstration plots with volunteer farmers, enabling peer-to-peer learning, reducing the risks associated with adopting new techniques and building confidence before expanding the programme at scale.

"Before the programme started, many mint farming households were struggling to remain profitable. Through Mars' investment, farmers now have access to the knowledge, practices and inputs that have significantly improved their profitability. You can really see the difference in how the programme has impacted these mint farming communities," says Joseph Boulter, Managing Director, Food Systems, Tanager.