

Customized biotech yeast could make more plant-based proteins and replace artificial food additives

A Brazilian biotech start-up is custom-designing novel, natural yeast strains that can be used to make plant proteins, replace artificial additives and boost the bioavailability of minerals.

BioInFood, located in Campinas in Brazil's Sao Paulo state, does not produce yeast itself but uses biotechnology to “custom-design” the microorganism according to manufacturers’ specific needs.

Founded by three entrepreneurs with extensive experience in the food industry – including Gabriel Galembeck who led Brazilian brewery Ambev’s innovation and R&D center for 10 years – the early stage start-up is already working with manufacturers from diverse sectors including biofuels and bakery, and is talks with clients producing animal feed, coffee, and fermented drinks.

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According to Galembeck, yeast’s functional ability to express heterologous proteins, such as collagen and albumins, allowing manufacturers to produce plant-based proteins offers the most potential to change the food industry. However, the microorganism has a range of functionalities and can be used as an ingredient or processing aid to make products healthier or more clean label.

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