

PRESS RELEASE

Boost for the Protein transition and Food Innovation: New Precision Fermentation Facility in The Netherlands

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The Netherlands strengthens its position as a global leader in sustainable food innovation through strategic investments from the Dutch National Growth Fund, ‘Perspectieffonds Gelderland’, and NIZO Food Research.

Entrepreneurs in the alternative protein sector often face significant challenges: How do you scale an innovative idea to large-scale production? To accelerate this process, the existing NIZO pilot plant in Ede – the largest food grade pilot plant in Europe - will be expanded with a new Upstream Processing facility: the Biotechnology Fermentation Factory (BFF). This project is supported by a €12.5 million grant provided by the Dutch National Growth Fund for Cellular Agriculture Netherlands, in-kind co-financing by NIZO, and investments from ‘Perspectieffonds Gelderland’ (fund manager Oost NL). Construction of the new large-scale facility is already underway, while smaller-scale production needs are being served by the existing facilities.

The BFF is a unique facility for companies research institutes utilizing precision fermentation, an innovative technique that uses microorganisms to produce ingredients, such as proteins - without involving animals. This facility enables companies to scale their ideas from the lab to larger production volumes, test and develop innovative ideas. In addition, companies benefit from NIZO’s expert guidance and advanced equipment, 75 years of experience in proteins, and over 30 years of expertise in alternative proteins. The facility aims to support sustainable food production for both national and international companies, while also attracting new business activity to the Food Valley region.

Accelerating Scaling of Food Innovations

The partnership between NIZO and BFF is set to accelerate the scaling of food innovations. *“Shared facilities like the BFF are essential for reducing the high costs associated with scaling up,”* explains Marcel Oogink, the newly appointed Managing Director of the facility. *“For startups, these costs are often simply too high. By collaborating with NIZO, companies will benefit from decades of knowledge and experience.”*

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Nikolaas Vles, CEO of NIZO Food Research, adds: *“This new facility on the NIZO premises fits seamlessly with our existing food-grade infrastructure and expertise in fermentation and proteins. By expanding to include larger-scale Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) processing, we are accelerating the protein transition and enabling a more sustainable food chain and a healthier future. This complements our existing services for scaling up plant-based alternatives and downstream processing.”*

Ede-Wageningen Region Expands Leadership Position in Food Innovation

The Ede-Wageningen region is already a global leader in agricultural and food innovation, with renowned institutions like NIZO Food Research, Wageningen University & Research (WUR), and Foodvalley. The expansion of NIZO’s current food-grade scaling facilities and the attraction of new businesses to the NIZO site, provide a powerful boost to the region’s growth as an international hub for biotechnology and the protein transition. This new facility aligns with the Gelderse Climate Plan and the provincial agriculture and food policy, which focus on creating a more sustainable food chain.

Boost for the protein transition and Gelderland's economy

“With the investment from Perspectieffonds Gelderland (PFG), we are accelerating the protein transition and strengthen the position of the Eastern region of the Netherlands as a center for sustainable food innovation,” says Ingrid Rombouts, investment manager at Oost NL. *“The BFF offers companies in the alternative protein sector the opportunity to scale up faster and serve the European market.”*

Perspectieffonds Gelderland is a fund of the Province of Gelderland, managed by Oost NL. Oost NL has been committed to the protein transition for years through innovation and internationalization, aiming to achieve lasting impact both within the region and beyond. PFG invests in the BFF and, together with the current shareholder, in NIZO Food Research. This investment strengthens the region's position as an innovation hub for green biotechnology and the protein transition.

The Netherlands as a Leader in Biomolecular and Cellular Technologies

The Netherlands holds a strong position in the research and application of biomolecular and cellular technologies. These technologies contribute to a healthy and sustainable food system. These technologies, part of the broader field of biotechnology, focuses on molecules and cells, and provides solutions to challenges in food production and health. With the establishment of the BFF, the Netherlands strengthens its leadership position.

About the BFF

The Biotechnology Fermentation Factory (BFF) in Ede focuses on the research and scaling up of animal proteins using precision fermentation and microbial biomass. Its capacities range from small volumes to 10,000 liters. This innovative technique employs microorganisms to produce animal proteins, making the BFF a key contributor to a more sustainable and future-proof food system. The construction of the facility is already underway, and the BFF and NIZO welcome companies and

partners. Companies interested in collaborating, can already contact Marcel Oogink (Marcel.Oogink@bff-edc.com), Managing Director of BFF, or the Business Development team at NIZO Food Research for more information.

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