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Thai Union Group invests in alternative protein startup

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Flying Spark Ltd., a FoodTech startup, and Thai Union Group PCL, one of the world’s largest seafood producers, headquartered in Thailand, are leveraging their expertise and capabilities to develop an important entry in the alternative protein market. Thai Union will also invest in Flying Spark, enabling the startup to move ahead with its insect growing and processing capabilities in Thailand and dedicate efforts towards cost reduction and process improvements. The startup received its seed investment, and is supported by, the Israeli FoodTech incubator “The Kitchen Hub”, a part of the Strauss Group Ltd., the second largest food producer in Israel.



Flying Spark raised investment from Thai Union to increase insect protein production

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The Flying Spark and Thai Union announcement includes both a strategic partnership and investment to promote larval insect protein as a highly sustainable, highly nutritious contender in the alternative protein market. This collaboration joins Thai Union’s production capabilities and global reach with Flying Spark’s innovative technology in creating an affordable protein offering to fulfill the worldwide growing need for cheap, sustainable, high-quality protein.

Thai Union recently announced the foundation of a venture fund with an initial commitment of US$ 30 million for investments in innovative companies that are developing breakthrough technologies in food-tech. The fund will focus on three strategic areas: alternative protein, functional nutrition and value chain technology. As a first investment, Thai Union announced an investment into Flying Spark.

“We are excited to collaborate with this leading multinational seafood company,” expressed Eran Gronich, CEO and founder of Flying Spark. “Thai Union and Flying Spark see eye-to-eye on the need for future alternative protein products to offer high-value protein while minimizing the ecological footprint. This marks a significant step forward in bringing insect protein into the food industry mainstream.”

Flying Spark uses larvae from *Ceratitis Capitata*, that in nature feed on fresh fruits. The larvae have a lifespan of only seven days yet multiply their body mass 250 times in that period. Flying Spark’s technology enables easy and low cost cultivation and processing, with nearly zero waste, as all parts of the larvae are used. This gives Flying Spark an edge over conventional protein sources — not only those from meat and plants but also over other insects, such as crickets and grasshoppers.

“Over the last years, Thai Union has made significant investments to become a leader in seafood innovation and sustainability,” said Thai Union CEO Thiraphong Chansiri. “As we move into the coming decade, we will increasingly cooperate with innovative start-ups in strategically interesting areas. This will complement our own activities as we are broadening our business beyond our traditional core.”