

UAE's Novel Foods to build \$500Mn biotech production hub

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Novel Foods Group, a company based in Abu Dhabi that produces sweet proteins, has announced a significant agreement to construct the first phase of a \$500 million biotech production hub in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) that focuses on precision fermentation. The agreement was signed between Novel Foods Group, a subsidiary of the investment conglomerate Gewan Holding,Â Glatt Group, a German expert in plant engineering,Â BioEngineering AG, a Swiss company specialising in engineering and design, andÂ CB Consultancy AG, a Swiss company that provides engineering solutions for cutting-edge industries.

The new production site will initially develop brazzein, a sweet-tasting protein found in the fruit of the native West African Oubli plant that is said to be significantly sweeter than sugar. Local people have used and eaten the fruit for many years. However, harvesting has been difficult due to the remote locations where the berries grow.

Novel Foods Group is committed to offering healthy alternatives to sugar by utilising precision fermentation to bring brazzein to the commercial market. The alternative sugar market is growing at approximately 5 per cent per year, while traditional sugar is growing at 1 per cent per year. Brazzein has commercial applications that extend across the food and beverage sector.

Through partnerships with universities and research institutions, Novel Foods creates brazzein-infused recipes and engages in consumer feedback sessions to tailor products to regional tastes. The company's R&D centre in Dubai develops innovative food products that prioritise health and sustainability.