

FrieslandCampina Ingredients – Big Move in Whey Proteins

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As global demand for high-quality protein continues to surge, strategic investments in capacity, innovation and regional expertise are becoming critical differentiators in the nutrition ingredients market. FrieslandCampina Ingredients has taken a significant step in this direction with its intended acquisition of Wisconsin Whey Protein, strengthening its foothold in North America and expanding its premium whey protein portfolio for performance, active and medical nutrition applications.

In this exclusive interview with NUFFOODS Spectrum, Floor van der Horst, Global Marketing Director Performance and Active Nutrition at FrieslandCampina Ingredients, shares insights into the strategic rationale behind the acquisition, the importance of expanded whey protein isolate capacity, evolving consumer expectations around protein quality, and how the company is positioning itself to stay ahead in a fast-growing, innovation-driven market.

How does the acquisition of Wisconsin Whey Protein strengthen FrieslandCampina Ingredients’ position in the global whey protein market, particularly in North America?

North America is the largest and fastest-growing protein market and is projected to continue to expand. As a heartland of protein innovation for performance and active nutrition companies, the region plays a critical role in shaping global trends. By joining forces with Wisconsin Whey Protein, we are strengthening our position in this strategic market while also enhancing our global whey portfolio with more premium proteins. Importantly, this move enables us to better support our customers’ growth worldwide – combining local production and technical expertise in North America with our broader global capabilities to deliver consistent, high-quality solutions wherever our customers operate.

The intended acquisition furthers our ambition to be a global leader in proteins and prebiotics and supports our existing position as a key player globally in premium dairy proteins. Wisconsin Whey Protein is an at-scale whey protein player with state-of-the-art operations in North America. This acquisition is a significant milestone for FrieslandCampina Ingredients –

one that positions us to better play in the US market across overall dairy proteins and ingredient uses.

Wisconsin Whey Protein is currently doubling its whey protein isolate capacity. How will this expanded capability enhance FrieslandCampina's ability to meet rising demand for high-quality protein ingredients?

Protein supplementation has gone from niche, to mainstream, to global phenomenon. Nearly 60 per cent of global food and beverage consumers actively incorporate more protein into their diets [\[1\]](#) and the demand keeps climbing. As a result, brands are seeking ingredient partners that can deliver a reliable supply.

That's exactly where this expansion makes a real difference. Wisconsin Whey Protein's modern facilities are currently being expanded, which will more than double its whey protein isolate capacity. Combined with our existing whey protein portfolio and global presence, this means we're significantly boosting our ability to meet rising protein demand through a more resilient and flexible supply chain. The acquisition also builds on our recent whey protein capacity investments in the Netherlands for a stronger global manufacturing network. Our expanded whey portfolio will complement our established caseinate offering, giving customers even more versatility to develop a wide range of tailored solutions for the performance and active nutrition markets.

Consumers are increasingly prioritising both protein intake and protein quality. How is FrieslandCampina Ingredients innovating to meet evolving consumer expectations around complete proteins and amino acid profiles?

Consumers today aren't just looking for more protein - they're looking for smarter protein. They want efficacy, great taste and formats that fit seamlessly into their daily routines. Our innovation strategy is built around helping brands deliver exactly that through a comprehensive portfolio of whey and caseinates proteins.

Whey protein has long led the performance and active nutrition categories, backed by extensive research which highlights its benefits and excellent nutritional profile - including high-quality protein, essential amino acids, fats and vitamins and minerals. With the acquisition of Wisconsin Whey protein, we will help our customers lead in this space, accelerating innovation through advanced technical and application capabilities. By integrating our capabilities, we will be able to co-create with brands and deliver protein-based solutions that not only meet but exceed consumer expectations.

Caseinates also offer powerful opportunities for innovation and diversification in the competitive protein solution market. Delivering a high level of key amino acids, this nutrient supports muscle protein synthesis [\[2\]](#) and is particularly suited to endurance-focused formats. One of our biggest breakthroughs in this space is Excellion® Textpro, which has been specifically designed to deliver softer texture, improved mouthfeel and reduced product hardening in high-protein bars, ensuring they remain enjoyable from day one through day 360.

What new opportunities do you foresee in key segments such as performance nutrition, active lifestyle products, and medical nutrition after integrating Wisconsin Whey Protein?

The acquisition of Wisconsin Whey Protein brings more than expanded ingredient capacity. It significantly enhances our capabilities through deeper expertise in technology support. Combined with our capabilities in protein science, research and application development, this integrated knowledge base enables us to co-develop next-generation solutions with our customers - helping them unlock greater value and accelerate product differentiation across the performance, active and medical nutrition markets.

Could you elaborate on the strategic importance of collaborating with Stainless Technologies and how this partnership will support future innovation and production excellence?

Stainless Technologies, currently a sister company of Wisconsin Whey Protein, will remain a crucial partner after the intended acquisition. The company has strong capabilities in process technology, engineering, installation, automation, and operational technology. At present, they have a leading role in key initiatives currently underway in Darlington, Wisconsin, as well as several optimisation projects in both of Wisconsin Whey Protein's plants, with dedicated teams based in Darlington and Menomonie. In addition, Stainless Technologies delivers critical support in process and operational technology. Looking ahead, their deep knowledge and collaborative approach will continue to support Wisconsin Whey Protein's innovation and production capabilities.

With the whey protein market projected to grow at 6.6 per cent annually until 2030, what will be FrieslandCampina Ingredients's main priorities to stay ahead in this fast-evolving landscape?

We're seeing a clear consumer shift towards proactively supporting health and wellness goals, which is driving growth in the functional food and beverage market. Within protein specifically, products that combine proteins with other holistic benefits

are of huge appeal. In addition, a broader range of applications is emerging – from great-tasting high-protein bars and clear protein waters to protein-fortified cereals, yoghurts, deserts and more – each tailored to different consumer needs, preferences, and even individual moments.

To help our customers stay ahead in this fast-evolving landscape, we’re investing in strengthening our local presence worldwide so we can drive consumer-first innovation that responds to local preferences and taste profiles. A recent example is the opening of our new application centre in Singapore, which enhances our ability to deliver tailored ingredient solutions for the APAC region, enabling faster development and deeper collaboration with our partners.

Shraddha Warde

shraddha.warde@mmactiv.com

[1] Innova Market Insights, Functional Ingredients Trends: Global Market Overview, 2025 –

[2] Church DD, Hirsch KR, Park S, Kim IY, Gwin JA, Pasiakos SM, Wolfe EE, Ferrando AA. Essential amino acids and protein synthesis: Insights into maximising the muscle and whole-body response to feeding. *Nutrients*. 2020 dec 2;12(12):3717. Doi: 10.3390/NU12123717. Pmid: 33276485; Pmcid: PMC7760188.