

Inside AUSTRIA JUICE's Fermentation Innovation for Naturally Reduced-Sugar Fruit Juice

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The innovation enables manufacturers to deliver clean-label juice products without relying on artificial sweeteners



Severin Guski, Team Leader of Business Development – Food Technology at AUSTRIA JUICE

Growing consumer demand for healthier beverages, coupled with tightening sugar-reduction regulations, is reshaping the global fruit juice industry. As manufacturers seek ways to reduce naturally occurring sugars without compromising taste, authenticity or clean-label credentials, fermentation is emerging as a promising innovation. The revised European Union Breakfast Directives, which came into effect in June 2026, have further accelerated this shift by formally recognising reduced-sugar fruit juice from concentrate as a new product category, opening fresh opportunities for beverage brands to meet evolving consumer expectations.

Against this backdrop, AUSTRIA JUICE has developed a patent-pending fermentation-based technology that reduces the natural sugar content of 100 per cent fruit juice by more than 30 per cent while preserving its flavour, aroma and nutritional profile. The innovation enables manufacturers to deliver clean-label juice products without relying on artificial sweeteners or additives, aligning with both regulatory requirements and the growing demand for naturally healthier beverages.

In an interaction with NUFFOODS Spectrum, Severin Guski, Team Leader of Business Development – Food Technology at AUSTRIA JUICE, discusses the inspiration behind the company's fermentation-based reduced-sugar technology, its

commercial potential under the revised EU Breakfast Directives, the science behind the process, and the roadmap for expanding the platform across fruit categories and beverage applications.

What inspired AUSTRIA JUICE to develop this fermentation-based reduced-sugar technology, and how long was the journey from concept to commercialisation?

We identified a gap in the market: consumers want 100 per cent fruit juice, but they also want to reduce sugar intake - without compromising on taste or turning to artificial sweeteners. At the same time, regulatory developments in Europe signaled a growing need for compliant, future-ready solutions in this space.

The biggest challenge was finding a way to reduce naturally occurring sugar while preserving the sensory quality. That is exactly where many conventional approaches reach their limits. Finding the best solution, took us several years. Our fermentation-based technology was developed to address this challenge with precision, enabling meaningful sugar reduction while maintaining the integrity and character of 100% fruit juice. It combines our expertise in fermentation and fruit processing.

How does your patent-pending fermentation process reduce sugar by over 30 per cent while preserving the authentic taste, aroma, and mouthfeel of 100 per cent fruit juice?

The core of the process lies in a highly controlled yeast fermentation step. Sugar is converted, and the resulting juice is then further processed. Finally, the product is then blended with fruit juice concentrated to achieve the desired sugar content.

Unlike mechanical separation methods, like membrane filtration, the benefit of a fermentation process is that it basically maintains all minerals, acids and vitamins.

With the revised EU Breakfast Directives taking effect in June 2026, how do you see the reduced-sugar fruit juice category evolving across European and global markets?

The revised EU framework is a major milestone, as it formally defines “reduced-sugar fruit juice from concentrate” as a new category for fruit juices with a minimum sugar reduction of 30 per cent.

This regulatory clarity provides both manufacturers and consumers with transparency and trust, which will accelerate adoption across Europe.

Beyond Europe, many markets are already experiencing similar consumer trends around sugar reduction, even if regulatory frameworks differ. For global beverage brands, reduced-sugar juice concepts can be introduced across multiple regions.

As consumers increasingly seek clean-label and naturally healthier beverages, how is AUSTRIA JUICE addressing these expectations without relying on artificial sweeteners or additives?

With our new product “reduced-sugar fruit juice from concentrate” our approach is fully aligned with clean-label expectations and the EU-Breakfast Directive, because it is based on a natural process rather than formulation tricks. The sugar reduction for this product is not compensated by adding artificial sweeteners or additives but only achieved by the fermentation process. The product is 100 per cent fruit juice and stays 100 per cent natural.

This allows our customers to maintain simple and transparent ingredient declarations while offering nutritionally improved fruit juice.

Apple juice concentrate is the flagship product for this platform. Could you share the company’s roadmap for expanding the reduced-sugar portfolio across other fruit categories and beverage applications?

Apple was a natural starting point due to our heritage, as we are a global leading supplier of apple and berry juice concentrates.

We already offer additional reduced-sugar variants of orange and multitfruit juices. Generally, we address juice, which can be consumed as 100 per cent fruit juice.

How do you expect beverage brands and manufacturers to leverage these plug-and-play solutions, particularly in categories such as children's drinks, breakfast beverages, and on-the-go nutrition?

In categories like children's beverages, reduced-sugar juice from concentrate offers a compelling proposition: it allows brands to deliver familiar taste of 100 per cent fruit juice profiles while lowering the sugar intake, which is an important factor for parents.

For breakfast and on-the-go formats, the combination of the natural positioning of 100 per cent fruit juice and the improved nutritional profile aligns perfectly with current consumption trends. Brands can maintain the positive image of fruit juice while addressing growing concerns around the sugar intake. Other product categories than fruit juices are out of scope in the case of the "reduced-sugar fruit juice from concentrate".