

# Article: Online Plant Protein Summit June 2020

## Experts at the Summit

- Excellent expertise and content during the many presentations and panel discussions;
- Many perspectives about plant protein food products from around the globe presented by the industry, research and government;
- Gerard Klein-Essink from Bridge2Food has a very strong and well-established network in the plant protein system also known as the “Global Plant-Based Foods EcoSystem”. He is a pioneer in the field with ten years experience in the plant protein sector, and he was the organizer of the first global virtual Plant Protein Summit from June 22-26, 2020;
- Valuable insights and connections obtained during summit because Gerard builds bridges among speakers, attendees, industry sectors, the value chain and present organizations;
- The importance of finding common ground and joining forces to face common challenges a key focus. “The more you are able to collaborate, the more competitive you are/become.”
- The Netherlands was well represented and was clearly visible during the Summit as a strategic partner. Protein Industries Canada (PIC) expressed their will and need to collaborate with partners in the Netherlands as “an opportunity that makes sense”.

**80+ Global Partners**

Food Manufacturers	Ingredient Companies
Kraft Heinz, Borden Spink, Simply V, CONAGRA, Fonterra, Dairy for Life, NS nutrition & santé, Bonduelle, General Mills, Unilever, Nestlé, Research, Ferrero, Amidori, Danone Nutricia, Bush's, Nomad Foods, Hershey's, Groupe Savencia, Quorn, Upfield, Maple Leaf, Kellogg's, Rügenwalder Mühle, Chobani	BOQUETTE, BOTANECQ, Givaudan, BUNGE, CORUCCA, AM Nutrition, EMSLAND GROUP, Avebe, herba Ingredients, iff, Cargill, AVENA, RUITENBERG, MANE, DÖHLER, novozymes, Cosun, Ingredion, Biospringer, FUJI OIL, LORRYMA, Corbion, AICL
Research Institutes / Universities	Process Technology Companies
WAGENINGEN, UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA, UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN, PROTEIN INDUSTRIES CANADA, IMPROVE, pulse, NIZO, KeGene, Maastricht University, University of Reading, CSIRO, Wile Open Agriculture	BUHLER, PALL, Food and Beverage, WENGER, STABILA, wafilin, HOSOKAWA ALPINE, POITEMILL, bodac, Flottweg, BRIDGE2FOOD

Global Plant-Based Foods Ecosystem | 2019 - 2022 | 5

Klein Essink  
Plant-Based Foods  
Road Map  
for 2025

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## **Canada as ingredient provider**

- Canada, fifth largest agricultural exporter worldwide, has traditionally focused on exports;
- Due to domestic/foreign developments, Canada is making a shift to more domestic processing in the agricultural sector: from commodity producer to ingredient provider;
- Protein Industries Canada (PIC), an industry led organization funded by the Canadian government, is looking for partners with knowledge, expertise or technology in the plant protein sector on specific crops to advance and accelerate the plant-based sector;
- PIC is exploring collaboration with partners in industry and research throughout the whole supply chain of the plant protein sector. Aim of PIC is in line with sustainable development goals, such as circular agriculture with whole plant utilization including side streams. Industry and research partners from the Netherlands can help Canada realize its agri-food potential, and thereby create value and commercialize on it;
- The Plant Protein Industry, once considered a niche market, is now becoming a mainstream market. The global industry is expected to reach over \$40 billion by 2025, due to rising consumer demand. This affects the sector as consumer demand drives industry innovation. In addition to that, more research on plant proteins is needed for scientific knowledge on health benefits, which is expected to further increase the demand.

## **Theoretical Insights**

- The second part of the week focused on theoretical approach on plant proteins;
- Excellent insights for researchers about plant protein functionality and connection between plant protein foods with human nutrition/health. Processing techniques can be used to tailor plant protein functionality;
- Many speakers and researchers presented case studies and reports from the Netherlands, such as WUR and Maastricht University, and from Canada the Universities of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta;
- The impact on health is not (yet) known. Emphasis on importance of improving and communicating health benefits of plant proteins.

## **Plant Protein for Health and Nutrition**

- Throughout the sessions a variety of proteins were discussed such as potatoes, peas and fava beans. Main driver for improving development of plant protein is taste, health and wellness. With this aim in mind there is a focus on the improvement of quality, functionality, composition, texture, flavor and processing techniques of plant protein food products;
- Worldwide technology presented, including the innovative processing technology of Dutch company Bodec. Diversity of food processing techniques demonstrate how the process can be made more efficient and sustainable;
- Prairie Provinces Western-Canada were well represented throughout the Summit, with focus on the expertise of their food product development centers;
- The different fragments of the supply chain in this sector make the development of plant protein products complicated and a long-term process. This underlines the need for transparency and collaboration throughout the supply chain of the protein sector on a global level.

## Product Development

- Several sessions elaborated on the technical development of plant proteins into plant protein food products. This product development is a complex and dynamic process to enhance taste, texture, flavor, functionality and quality that meets the needs of consumers. This, however, provides opportunities for researchers, ingredient companies, and process technology companies to further improve the product;
- The plant-based protein food sector is a dynamic category, and one that is growing. The variety goes above and beyond the “pattie” (=plant-based burger) with novel products such as meatless wings and vegan dumplings. Expected potential and growth is forecasted for meat-free, dairy-free and seafood-free food products;
- Continuous valorization and ingredient innovation expand into more novel products such as dairy-free spreadables made from nuts. Speakers stated that plant-based seafood, such as crab-free cakes, will become the new category with the most potential in upcoming years.

## Plant Protein Food Sector

- The increase in production and consumption of plant-based protein products in the Western World is symbolic of a shift towards a more ethical food system;
- Consumers want variety in their food product choices, leading to the evolution of plant-based food products;
- Plant-based products are growing in demand. This trend has only accelerated further due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important for the sector to keep this momentum going. Transparency and local-grown food play a big role, as people question what they eat;
- There are significant opportunities for businesses in the plant protein sector as people are always looking for better-for-you foods. Next to health and well-being, taste and costs remain important drivers for consumers. Therefore, it is important for companies to keep in mind competitive prices versus premium prices, and to focus on new and/or different taste for “novel” products to keep the consumer on board with the product.



## Challenges

- During the last five years investments in research and companies have provided food companies with necessary research and development on specific proteins such as peas;
- In 2020, new entrants have come to the plant protein market and new proteins have also gained momentum such as faba, chickpeas and oats. New investors have come to the market, making the plant protein sector a dynamic market;
- At the moment the focus of the sector should be on the challenge of managing the value chain and shaping strategic relationships between suppliers and users;
- The current challenge for the sector is to look beyond the current supply challenges and ensure that players are ready for a new supply situation with new protein products;
- In order for the plant protein sector to continue to thrive it is necessary for the sector to have an operational, tactical and strategic approach to their products for the long term.