

Novel Food: Curse or blessing?



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In 2023, Partners from The Protein Community gathered to deliberate on the challenges and opportunities surrounding novel food products and regulations. The significance of novel ingredients in propelling innovation and sustainability within the protein sector was underscored. However, the discussion highlighted the intricate nature of navigating complex regulations, ensuring food safety, gaining market acceptance, and effectively scaling products employing novel food ingredients and processes.

Key takeaways from the session included:

- 1:** Participants voiced frustration over the extensive timelines associated with EFSA Novel Food Regulations. While certain regions like Singapore and the US exhibit relatively shorter approval periods, the EU's process can stretch from 30 to 60 months. Shortening authorization timelines must however not compromise food safety.
- 2:** Safeguarding intellectual property (IP) before embarking on the regulatory process was emphasized. Failure to do so could potentially lead to public disclosure, jeopardizing businesses' proprietary information.
- 3:** Suggestions were made to explore alternative routes, such as preparing a document demonstrating why an ingredient does not qualify as a novel food or seeking partnerships with other firms or academic institutions to streamline the process.
- 4:** Enlisting the services of advisors to assist in navigating the complexities of assessing a product's eligibility as a novel food was strongly recommended.
- 5:** The importance of considering market dynamics from the outset was highlighted. Understanding customer needs, crafting compelling commercial narratives, and focusing on becoming experts in specific categories were deemed crucial for success.