

Media release

Sanitarium and UNSW breaking new ground in plant-based product segments

The Future Food Systems Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) has welcomed Australia's longest-established plant-based health-food manufacturer, Sanitarium Health Food Company™, into its consortium of industry, government and research partners.

Australia's iconic] brand is set to work with UNSW food-technology specialists in CRC projects to improve the functional properties of plant-based Sanitarium products including Barista dairy-free milks.

Future Food Systems is a national initiative funded as part of the Australian Government's CRC Program to boost Australia's capacity to compete in booming global markets for healthy food products with strong sustainability credentials.

CRC partner, UNSW, will work with Sanitarium to develop innovative plant-based protein products, starting with its Barista dairy-free milk range.

The plant-based milks, which come in almond, soy and, most recently, oat varieties, are designed for and marketed to Australia's food-service industry under the brand The Alternative Dairy Co.™.

"Sanitarium's new Barista plant-based milks are in high demand in the café sector in Australia and New Zealand," said Paul Ginn, General Manager – Development & Innovation at Sanitarium.

"With the team at Future Food Systems we are investing in the development of a method to quantitatively measure the 'stretchiness' of the foam produced by our Barista milks to continue offering the best experience possible, and provide a method to assess the performance of different plant-based milks."

The project, scheduled to commence in February 2021, will be helmed by the CRC's Research and Commercialisation Director Cordelia Selomulya, a Professor in UNSW Sydney's School of Chemical Engineering and a leading expert in the field of advanced dairy formulations.

Professor Selomulya and the UNSW Sydney project team will work with Sanitarium's research team at the company's Cooranbong R&D site, using state-of-the-art food-processing methods and technologies to evaluate, then improve key functional attributes of the oat and almond varieties of the Barista 'alternative milks'.

"We are addressing very specific technical challenges aimed at optimising the creaminess, 'silkeness' and foaming performance of these products for The Alternative Dairy Co and its customers," Prof. Selomulya said.

"The research challenge is that because the products are low in fats and free from additives such as synthetic stabilisers and emulsifiers, we have to understand how these ingredients in the Barista products interact with coffee in order to optimise their properties so they behave more like conventional dairy products.



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“The team will employ advanced imaging technology to evaluate the oat and almond Barista milks, then use these evaluations to tweak the existing formulations and protocols, especially regarding creaminess and ‘stretchiness’.

“Our project team includes a food scientist who previously advised a leading appliances firm on milk-product formulations and protocols for its coffee machines,” Prof. Selomulya added.

Sanitarium expects that its participation in the CRC will lead to further research collaborations, including a potential four-year project with UNSW Sydney’s School of Chemical Engineering commencing in 2022.

“We are looking forward to seeing the benefits of collaborating with the deep expertise of the food engineering research within the UNSW Future Food Systems group on three projects across our flagship brands,” said Ginn.

“We are confident their expertise will offer solutions to ensure we can continue to bring quality health foods to our consumers.”

The partnership is a ‘natural fit’, noted Future Food Systems CRC CEO David Eyre.

“There is growing demand for plant-based protein products, and innovative companies like Sanitarium are leading the way,” Eyre said.

“The CRC model enables industry partners to cost-effectively access the expertise and laboratories of our university partners - in this case, the world-class team and facilities at UNSW.”

Media enquiries

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About Sanitarium

Sanitarium Health Food Company, established in 1898, is one of Australia's longest-established and most trusted food and beverage manufacturers. One hundred per cent Australian-owned, the company is guided by ethical principles and committed to the health and wellbeing of its suppliers, employees, customers and the planet. All Sanitarium's food and beverage products are plant-based and manufactured in Australia from wholesome, locally sourced ingredients, created with customers' health top of mind. In December 2020, Sanitarium won Woolworths' Supplier of the Year.

<https://www.futurefoodsystems.com.au/byte/sanitarium-named-woolworths-supplier-of-the-year-2020/>

For more information about Sanitarium and its product range, visit the company's official website.

<https://www.sanitarium.com.au/>

About The Alternative Dairy Co

The Alternative Dairy Co's plant-based products are manufactured at Sanitarium's Berkeley Vale factory on the New South Wales Central Coast. Launched in 2018, its range of plant-based milks are designed for use in the food-service industry. The Alternative Dairy Co's 100 per cent animal-free soy, almond and, most recently, oat milks, billed as 'the superlative alternative to dairy', are available in one-litre cartons. The almond and oat versions hero Australian-grown almonds and oats, respectively. All are made in Australia.

For more information about the Alternative Dairy Co, visit <https://altdairyco.com/barista>

About the Future Food Systems CRC

The Future Food Systems Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) is a national initiative funded as part of the Australian Government's CRC Program and commenced in December 2019. Its goal is to broker industry-led collaborations between business, researchers and the community that improve the competitiveness, productivity and sustainability of Australia's agrifood sector, especially in areas of competitive strength. CRC industry partners include large and small firms across farming, food manufacturing and technology services that share a vision for increasing Australia's ability to value-add agrifood production and build scale in growth markets for trusted, healthy food and advanced precision-nutrition goods.

For more information about the Future Food Systems CRC, its participants and its research, visit the CRC's website

<https://www.futurefoodsystems.com.au/> or subscribe to its monthly eNews.

<https://www.futurefoodsystems.com.au/contact-us/#subscribe-to-newsletter>

About Professor Cordelia Selomulya

Dr Cordelia Selomulya joined UNSW in late 2019 as a Professor (Food & Health) in the School of Chemical Engineering and as Research & Commercialisation Director for the Future Food Systems CRC. Prior to her relocation she was an ARC Future Fellow at Monash University, where she also led the Biotechnology and Food Engineering group, which had an internationally recognised reputation in particle engineering and drying technology research, particularly for food and dairy applications. Prof. Selomulya was the director of the Australia-China Joint Research Centre for Future Dairy Manufacturing, a joint strategic initiative funded by the Australian and Chinese governments and industry partners in both countries, including Bega, Saputo Dairy Australia, Fonterra, Gardiner Foundation, COFCO and Mengniu Dairy. She was also the director of Graduate Research Industry Partnership (GRIP) for the Food and Dairy industry at Monash University.

For more information about Prof. Selomulya, view her CRC profile.

<https://www.futurefoodsystems.com.au/people/professor-cordelia-selomulya/>



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The CRC Program supports industry-led collaborations between industry, researchers and the community. Further information about the CRC Program is available [here](#).

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