

Tate & Lyle Ventures and Agri Investment Fund invest in gut-health technology company

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Tate & Lyle Ventures and Agri Investment Fund have co-led a €3.5m investment into Fugeia, a newly formed functional food technology business with a focus on gut health.

Fugeia is a spin-out company from the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (K.U. Leuven), whose own Gemma Frisius Fund has co-invested, and the University College Sint-Lieven (KaHo Sint-Lieven). The founders Professor Jan Delcour (Head of the Laboratory of Food Chemistry and Biochemistry of K.U.Leuven) and Professor Willem Broekaert (former Vice President Technology of CropDesign) are joined by a number of eminent advisors from the gut health field: Paul Coussement (Vice President Europe of Metagenics and former CEO of Orafiti) joins the board as a non executive director and Professor Glenn Gibson (Head of the Department of Food Sciences, University of Reading) joins the science advisory board, which is chaired by Professor Jan Delcour.

The first product in Fugeia's pipeline is a proprietary, patent-protected arabinoxylan oligosaccharide ingredient derived from natural wheat bran fibre, with potent prebiotic and antioxidant functionality. This soluble and acid stable ingredient is metabolised by the gut microbiota predominantly in the distal colon, an area of the digestive tract that is vulnerable to disease and often not addressed by other prebiotic fibres.

Simon Barnes of Tate & Lyle Ventures commented: "Gut health is well recognised as a top priority in health and wellness and we believe Fugeia is an ideal commercial platform to develop a range of functional ingredients. It is a privilege for us to have backed such world-renowned individuals in the world of cereal and prebiotics science."

David Atkinson of Tate & Lyle Ventures added: "Fugeia already has one promising ingredient in the pipeline. With strong clinical data to support its prebiotic effect and robust intellectual property, it is hoped that this product will prove to be a step-changing ingredient in the development of fibre-enhanced foods."

Luc Basstanie of Agri Investment Fund commented: "Agricultural products have a high intrinsic value and thanks to Fugeia's technology a range of new ingredients from wheat bran is now available, which can be used in daily food products to benefit human health. Giving agricultural products a higher value in terms of human nutrition is a promising development for the food industry"

Willem Broekaert, Founder and CEO of Fugeia said: "I am truly excited that Fugeia has been able to complete a highly successful financing round. The strong financial position and backing by a consortium of experienced investors with excellent insight in the food industry puts the company well on track to become a high impact player in gut health technologies."

Fugeia will be based in Leuven, Belgium. **ENDS**

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Note to Editors

Tate & Lyle Ventures (www.tateandlyleventures.com) is a £25m venture capital fund focused on investing in high growth companies in the fields of renewable ingredients, food technologies, renewable resources such as biomaterials and biofuels and industrial processing technologies. Tate & Lyle, the fund's principal investor is one of the world's leading renewable ingredients companies focused on innovation and product development in these sectors. The fund is independently managed by Simon Barnes and David Atkinson of Circadia Ventures, an FSA authorised and regulated firm based in London.

Agri Investment Fund (AIF) is the investment entity of MRBB, the financial holding of the Boerenbond. AIF invests in companies that contribute to the improvement of the competitiveness of the agriculture and horticulture sector within the region where Boerenbond is active. AIF is based in Leuven, Belgium.

Gemma Frisius Fund is the venture capital fund of the University of Leuven (K.U.Leuven), and is established as a partnership between Fortis Private Equity, KBC Private Equity and K.U.Leuven Research & Development. With a total of 25 million Euro at its disposal, the fund provides seed and start-up capital to spin-offs that aim to commercialize knowledge and research results developed at K.U. Leuven or at an institute of higher education in the K.U. Leuven Association.

K.U. Leuven was founded in 1425 and is Belgium's largest University catering for more than 33,000 students. With a budget of €1.3Bn it strongly focuses on top level research. The technology transfer office, K.U.Leuven Research & Development, has operated since 1972, and has overseen the incorporation and provided guidance to more than 80 spin-out companies (several of which have become quoted companies) as well as managing a large patent portfolio.

The University College Katholieke Hogeschool Sint-Lieven is a dynamic higher education institution housing 5 000 students. KaHo Sint-Lieven is a member of the K.U.Leuven Association and offers a wide variety of study programmes in the fields of biotechnology, health care, business studies, industrial sciences and technology, teacher training and nautical sciences. KaHo Sint-Lieven is a university college with a strong focus on basic and applied research.