

Collaborative Programme Funding CPF II Project Spotlight

Project Spotlight: Helping Bring the Next Generation of Plant-Based Protein Drinks to Market

Project: *Pilot-scale, industry-relevant demonstration of amaranth protein concentrate in ready-to-drink beverage systems*

Lead Organisation: University of Reading

Industry Partner: Amaranth Labs

Stream: Demonstration Project

Addresses Innovation Challenge:

Unlocking Nature's Potential

Protein Discovery

Could amaranth become the next breakthrough ingredient in sustainable protein drinks?

Amaranth is an underutilised crop with huge potential. Naturally rich in high-quality protein, it offers a promising alternative to more commonly used plant proteins, helping diversify the ingredients available for healthier and more sustainable foods.

While amaranth protein can now be produced at commercial scale, food manufacturers still need evidence that it performs reliably during real-world production. This project will generate that evidence by testing amaranth protein in ready-to-drink beverages using pilot-scale equipment and industry-standard manufacturing processes.

Researchers at the University of Reading will evaluate how the protein performs in different types of high-protein drinks, assessing factors such as stability, texture, appearance and taste. The findings will help manufacturers better understand how amaranth protein behaves during commercial processing, reducing technical uncertainty and supporting its wider adoption in future food and beverage products.

By bridging the gap between research and industry, the project will help accelerate the development of innovative, sustainable plant-based drinks while expanding the range of protein sources available to consumers.

"NAPIC funding will enable us to generate critical near-market evidence on the performance of amaranth protein concentrate in ready-to-drink beverage systems under industry-relevant processing conditions. By demonstrating its viability in commercial applications, this project will

support wider adoption of sustainable plant-based proteins and help accelerate innovation within the UK alternative protein sector."

Mikhail Glik

Co-Founder and CEO, Amaranth Labs

Why this matters

- Demonstrates the commercial potential of an emerging sustainable plant protein.
- Generates real-world evidence for use in high-protein ready-to-drink beverages.
- Helps manufacturers confidently adopt new plant protein ingredients.
- Reduces technical barriers to commercialisation and product innovation.
- Supports the diversification of sustainable protein sources for the food and beverage industry.