



30 AUG, 2022

Meat alternative research work launched

Otago Daily Times, Dunedin

Page 1 of 2

Meat alternative research work launched

SALLY RAE

WHAT do soybean skin, wheat stalk, brewers' spent grain and leftover fruit have in common?

All are unwanted waste carbohydrate products which could potentially be used as a base product for high-value protein products that require less energy and water to make, resulting in a lower carbon footprint.

That is the belief of Twizel-born entrepreneur Jade Gray, the founder of plant-based meat company Off-Piste Provisions which has embarked on a research and development project in partnership with a Singapore-based food science and technology team.

Mr Gray spent 20 years living in China where he successfully co-founded a pizza business — and made the move to vegetarian and vegan topping options — and was involved with other wide-ranging initiatives.

He returned to New Zealand several years ago and launched Off-Piste Provisions; its first product, which went on sale in November last year, was a jerky made using protein sourced from fava beans and peas.

The proprietary technology used in the range, which uses pea and fava bean as the main source of protein, was developed in partnership with Massey University, Callaghan Innovation and the Ministry for Primary Industries.

Now the company has begun a collaboration with a team led by Prof William Chen, director of the food science and technology programme at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, jointly exploring fermentation technology to create products that deliver taste, texture and a protein hit comparable to that of animal products.

The technology being

developed by Prof Chen and his team allowed users to cultivate a fungi-based food product that could serve as a healthier, better-tasting and greener alternative to plant-based protein, a statement said.

The fungi used to cultivate the product was grown from a base of nutrient-rich common food waste which infused the mushroom root with more essential nutrients such as protein, iron and amino acids, which made it more nutritious than ingredients commonly used in plant-based alternative meat products such as peas, chickpeas, wheat gluten and soy, Prof Chen said in the statement.

Mr Gray said it was that sustainability aspect that, from his perspective, was one of its most exciting features, given its potential to use food waste and by-products of the agriculture and food and beverage industries.

Determining how fermentation technology could be applied in a New Zealand setting would be undertaken by Off-Piste Provisions over the next three to five years, initially at The FoodBowl, a pilot-scale food processing facility in South Auckland that is part of the government-funded New Zealand Food Innovation Network.

The FoodBowl chief executive Grant Verry said Off-Piste Provisions, as far as he was aware, was the first and only company in New Zealand using fermentation in a commercial setting for alternative meats.

Off-Piste Provisions recently launched a series A fundraise which would fund the ongoing research and development of fermentation technology.

It would also fund the construction of a purpose-built, full-scale manufacturing plant, Mr Gray said.



30 AUG, 2022

Meat alternative research work launched

Otago Daily Times, Dunedin



Daring to be different . . . Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern visits the Off-Piste Provisions facility at The FoodBowl earlier this year, flanked by Off-Piste Provisions chief technology officer Rinku Singh (left) and chief product officer Alex Radley. PHOTO: OFF-PISTE PROVISIONS