

Innovation gives 'legs' to business of eggs

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Vinita Choolani (right), founder, Float Foods

Whether soft boiled as part of breakfast, or fried sunny-side up on rice, eggs are a popular food in Singapore, with the Republic consuming about 2 billion eggs a year.

But with the majority of Singapore's eggs being imported, Float Foods founder and CEO Vinita Choolani, 58, saw an opening to enhance the nation's egg supply by creating a plant-based version.

Choolani, who founded the 15-strong food tech startup in June 2020, was spurred by "the detrimental effect Covid-19 had on the food supply chain".

She created and filed a patent under her OnlyEg brand for plant-based eggs, engineered to contain 10 per cent protein – the same amount as a regular chicken egg – and no cholesterol, hormones or drug residue.

While incubating OnlyEg, the CEO had a game plan: Leverage product innovation to lead the category. "If you are going to pursue anything worth pursuing, it must be predicated on innovation," she says. "This sets us apart, and will give us 'legs' to stand firm for the long haul."

Two years later, OnlyEg's ready-to-eat, frozen "eggs" are used by numerous lo-

cal F&B brands, including Cedele, Poke Theory, Bangkok Jam, 3 Buns, Hainan Story and Old Town Coffee. They also feature in dishes served at hotels like Shangri-La Singapore, Conrad Centennial Singapore, and Swissôtel The Stamford.

The brand's "XL Omelette" even nabbed the award for Best Plant-Based Functional Product at September's World Plant Based Expo in New York. The omelette can be used for breakfast dishes, burgers, sandwiches and crepes.

Now, Choolani plans to unveil a manufacturing facility in Q1 2023, which will enable her plant-based eggs to make the leap from R&D facility to factory floor – and is in talks with distributors in Australia and Malaysia to bring her products overseas.

Beyond this, Float Foods is in talks with the Singapore Agri-Food Innovation Lab (SAIL) to review breakthroughs in fermentation technology as it gears up for the next stage of its evolution.

SAIL is a national platform operat-

ed by Nanyang Technological University in partnership with Enterprise Singapore. It enables SMEs and startups in the local agri-food sector to work with established traders to testbed, scale and commercialise their solutions internationally.

"Through innovation, companies can differentiate themselves and capture emerging opportunities," says EnterpriseSG's Lee Pak Sing. "Innovation is a key pillar of our strategy to deepen trade with the rest of the world."

"There is still so much potential to build and to innovate to develop a larger ecosystem of plant-based foods that can truly cater to our diets," adds Choolani. "There are thousands of plants that have yet to be catalogued in terms of nutritional profile. We have just started to scratch the surface."



This is the final of a four-part series that explores how a focus on innovation can help homegrown companies unlock opportunities and open doors to global partnerships. Scan the QR code to find out more.

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