

Breaking News on Food & Beverage Development - North America

Previous page : [New R&D plant to focus on low-cholesterol dairy](#)

New R&D plant to focus on low-cholesterol dairy

By Lorraine Heller

1/16/2008- **Construction has started on a new plant that will focus on the production of a "healthy" dairy ingredient, announced the Center for Advanced Technology & Innovation (CATI).**

The facility will focus on the research and development of Benelact, which was launched last year in response to an increased consumer demand for healthy dairy products.

The ingredient is made using a proprietary process said to remove up to 80 percent of cholesterol and saturated fat from milk, according to CATI.

The technology was originally developed and donated to the center by Kraft Foods. CATI then licensed the process to Alliance Enterprises, which is now undertaking the construction of the new facility.

The plant, located in the CATI Center, will be used for R&D as well as initial production of Benelact.

"Alliance is demonstrating the speed and cost-effectiveness of bringing a commercially viable product to market and contributing to the economic growth of the region by leveraging under-utilized intellectual property from private industry," stated CATI.

The project has an estimated value of \$1.5bn.

CATI said Benelact was launched in 2007 in response to increased consumer demand for *"healthy, tasty food options"*.

The process claims to be an *"all-natural"* way to remove much of the cholesterol and saturated fat from milk, said to result in a *"healthier"* product that can function as milk in a variety of food products.

"Benelact will be marketed primarily to manufacturers in the dairy and bakery markets as an ingredient to drive healthy consumer options while still retaining the taste, texture and consistency that consumers desire," said Brandon Malacara dairy marketing director for Alliance Enterprises.

The company last year had said it plans to target the product at the rapidly growing Hispanic cheese market.

"The technology works with all cheeses including process cheese," said Ed Salinas, CEO of Alliance Enterprises.

"Alliance will, initially, focus on Hispanic cheeses, a market where there are few low-fat or low-cholesterol alternatives."

Hispanic cheeses represent one of the fastest growing cheeses in the industry with a 23 per cent annual growth rate, according to figures furnished by CATI.

"Hispanic households use more cheese than any other ethnic group in the US," CATI stated.

"This product will give a healthy alternative with the same characteristics of the products Hispanics love for authentic meals."

Alliance will subcontract with other cheese manufacturers to produce mozzarella, cheddar, and

muenster cheeses in order to provide healthy alternatives to school lunch programs and other food service providers.

"Research has shown a direct link between minority business development and increases in employment, particularly amongst minorities. It only makes sense to encourage more value-added minority venture creation using technology transfer as a mechanism for increasing employment opportunities," said Matt Wagner, CATI's executive director.

CATI partnered with the Racine Hispanic Business and Professional Association as part of its new minority tech transfer program.

Previously CATI launched one other company around a yogurt technology it owns. The product is called Yokit, an instant yogurt product. The patent was donated by S.C. Johnson. CATI's senior technical advisors recommended that developing a start-up firm would be the most advantageous route to market. Yokit was launched in September 2005.