

BENEO inaugurates new plant to advance plant-based nutrition in Germany

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BENE, a leading manufacturer of functional ingredients for food, feed and pharma and member of the Südzucker Group, has officially inaugurated its first pulse-processing plant after a construction period of just one and a half years.

Südzucker Group invested around ~50 million in its site in Obrigheim, Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany for the opening. A local pulse called faba bean is processed into food and feed ingredients in this plant. The faba bean itself also plays a key role in sustainable agriculture, as pulses require no nitrogen fertiliser and enhance the soil quality for future crops. BENE's faba beans are grown in Germany, in close proximity to the production plant, and are REDCertified, which is equivalent to the Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA) from SAI at the highest Gold level.

This new plant was built next to the existing BENE site where its sugar replacer Isomalt and smart carbohydrate Palatinose TM (isomaltulose) are produced. The plant covers an area of approximately 4,000 square meters.

On 11th April, a special inauguration ceremony was attended by Daniela Schmitt (Minister of Economic Affairs of Rhineland-Palatinate), Johannes Steiniger (Member of the German Bundestag), Nicole Eicher (Mayor of Obrigheim), Dr Niels Pflügersen (CEO of the Südzucker Group), Olivier Roques (CEO of BENEО GmbH), Niels E. Hower (Member of the Executive Board of BENEО GmbH) and Dirk Dinger (Chairman of the Works Council of the Obrigheim plant).

“BENEО's new plant represents a strong commitment to Rhineland-Palatinate as a business hub. At the same time, the investment is driving innovation in the food industry and strengthening regional value creation. Future-oriented projects like this secure jobs, promote sustainable economic activity and strengthen rural areas,” said Daniela Schmitt, Minister of Economic Affairs for Rhineland-Palatinate.

Sustainability has been a key focus for the new development, with the plant production running entirely on electricity from renewable energy sources. Additional power is generated by a rooftop photovoltaic system and waste heat from production is used to heat the building, while the pulse processing requires no water. The site's sustainability credentials are further reinforced by a zero-waste approach, ensuring that all raw materials are fully utilised as ingredients for the food and animal feed industries.

Niels E. Hower, Member of BENEО's Executive Board, stated “What began more than 30 years ago with the processing of beet sugar into ingredients with added health benefits is now being continued at the new plant. The faba bean is a legume with a long history. Here in Obrigheim, we will process it into high-quality, plant-based ingredients that will contribute to future-proofed nutrition.”

With the expansion of the site, BENEО is addressing these evolving consumer trends and catering for rising customer demand. Pulse-derived proteins, such as those from faba beans which are used for meat or dairy alternatives and egg replacement, are increasingly sought after in the food industry as alternatives to animal protein, playing a key role in the development of plant-based products.