

## AI-powered plant-based dairy alternatives enter the US market

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Climax Foods Inc., a US-based biotech start-up with innovative plant-based dairy alternatives and Bel Group, a global leader in cheese production, have partnered to develop a new generation of plant-derived cheese with the goal to tackle key challenges of the food transition such as taste, nutrition and indistinguishable from dairy cheeses while reducing carbon footprint.

The two companies will collaborate to create plant-based cheese versions under the brand names Laughing Cow®, Kiri®, Boursin®, Babybel®, and Nurishh® using data science and artificial intelligence (AI). Bel acquired an equity stake in Climax to support its disruptive solution development.

The partnership between Bel and Climax Foods will utilize AI and data to help change the game and meet the challenge of scaling up quickly and effectively. Climax's team of food scientists have already succeeded in creating various prototypes with all the characteristics of specialty cheeses, including blue, brie, feta, and goat varieties. Bel aims to launch these new plant-based products in the U.S. and Europe by the end of 2024. This will contribute to achieving the Bel Group objective to balance its portfolio with 50 percent of dairy products and 50 percent of plant-based/fruits products.

"Bel, have a strong determination to explore new territories and develop innovative solutions that will define the future of food, for all. The products we will develop can meet the three-fold challenge of being sustainable, nutritious, and accessible. This collaboration epitomizes our co-innovation strategy by combining their distinctive technological data science and AI platforms

and expertise with Bel's pioneering and historical knowledge," said Cécile Béliot, CEO of the Bel Group.

Dr. Oliver Zahn, CEO and founder of Climax Foods Inc., adds, "AI and data can be game changers in food in terms of delivering optimal taste and texture while making it affordable and sustainable. We must accelerate food evolution due to climate change and consumer preferences."

Climax Foods' predictive analytics and AI enable a deep understanding of animal-derived foods at the molecular level. Climax leverages this knowledge to replicate animal-derived products with plant-based versions that match their texture, flavor, and nutrition density. Climax Foods' AI-powered product development significantly reduces the time required to create plant-based recipes that harness more from the vast plant kingdom.

Bel brings together deep expertise and innovation capabilities, both in dairy cheese and non-dairy alternatives, to make new generation of cheese accessible. As part of Bel Group's pioneering strategy towards feeding 10 billion people by 2050, this new partnership combines the best of both plant and animal worlds.