CHR. HANSEN

Improving food & health

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Chr. Hansen develops game-changing fermentation process for carmine

In collaboration with University of Copenhagen, Department of Plant and Environmental Sciences (KU) and Technical University of Denmark, Department of Systems Biology (DTU), researchers from Chr. Hansen have succeeded in producing carmine by a modern fermentation process. The first of a series of patents that protects the technology has been published today.

Carmine is a long-established natural red pigment, used in a broad range of food and beverage applications. The production method relies on cultivation of the cochineal that lives on cactus plants. One kilo of carmine requires manual collection of 100,000 cochineals, which adds significantly to the cost of the natural color.

Researchers from Chr Hansen, KU and DTU have now uncovered the complicated processes involved in the natural production of carmine. Using this insight and state of the art biotechnology the researchers have produced carmine by a modern fermentation process and Chr. Hansen is now filing patents to protect the technology.

Cees de Jong, CEO of Chr. Hansen, says: “This is a potential game-changer for carmine production. The new technology is expected to make production of carmine more cost-efficient and thereby further lower the barriers for conversion to natural colors”.

Excellent position to exploit technology

Fermented carmine is still some years away from commercialization, as the process needs further optimization. Cees de Jong, CEO comments: “When the technology is ready for use, Chr. Hansen has an excellent position to exploit it. Fermentation is our core competence and we are market leading within natural colors”.

For more information on fermented carmine, please contact Finn Okkels, New Technology Manager, Chr. Hansen Natural Colors, on +45 5339 0730 or DKFIO@chr-hansen.com