Researchers produce Omega 3 using marine plant micro-organisms

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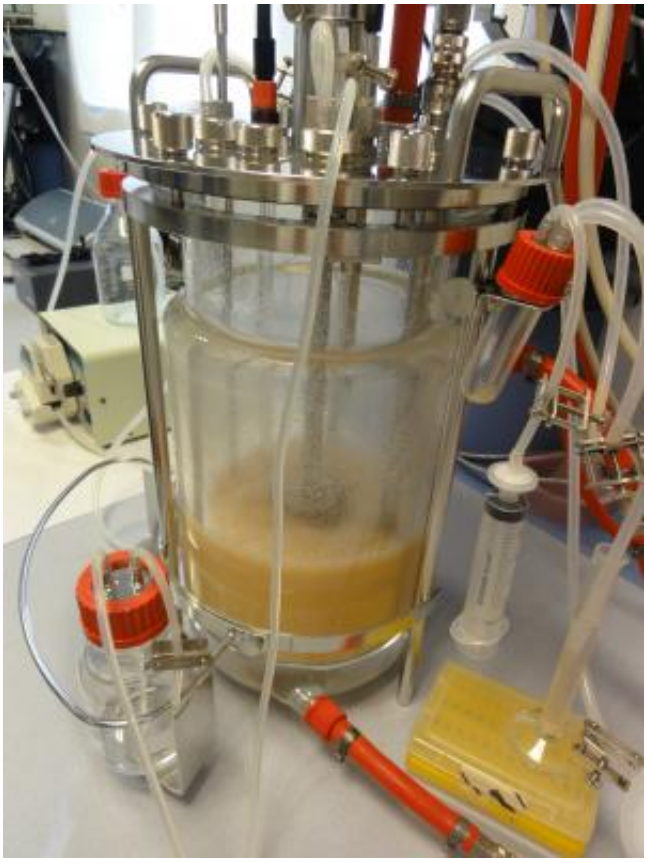

Neiker-Tecnalia, the Basque Institute for Agricultural Research and Development, and the company FARMARABA S.L. are working together on a Project designed to produce Omega 3 using marine plant micro-organisms. The ultimate aim is to develop in-house technologies

to obtain this highly valued fatty acid, and then apply them at a FARMARABA production plant.

Researchers at the R&D centre, which has proven experience in the biotechnology and agri-foodstuff sector, have managed to obtain meal with a high Omega 3 content by means of the fermentation processes of various marine plant micro-organisms. The experts are seeking to identify and isolate the micro-organisms most suited to producing the fatty acid. They are also researching the most suitable fermentation conditions to obtain types of meal with a greater nutritional value and which are suitable for food applications.

The technology to produce Omega 3 by cultivating micro-organisms is the basis of a flourishing biotechnology industry. So Neiker-Tecnalia and Farmaraba have committed themselves to active collaboration in the development of in-house technologies and in the identification of new micro-organisms capable of producing Omega 3, a functional ingredient increasingly being called for in the production of foodstuffs with a high nutritional value.

The project is being funded by FARMARABA S.L., a subsidiary of Grupo Elgorriaga BRANDS set up in Vitoria-Gasteiz (Basque Country) in 2010. The company, which is in the biotechnology sector, is committed to research in a sector where development is booming: the production and marketing of functional ingredients for food use.

The quest for food that is more health-giving

The improvement in eating habits and the consumption of natural products are turning into a collective awareness in the quest for health and wellbeing. This social awareness has driven demand for innovative foodstuffs formulated so that they are more nutritional and more health-giving. For many years the food market has been offering new products

with a high fibre content, low in fat, fat-free or low in sugar, but the demand for health-giving foodstuffs continues to expand and consumers are seeking new, more sophisticated products that include compounds essential for health, like Omega 3 fatty acids.

The year 2000 saw the launching onto the market worldwide of nearly 140 new products that contained Omega 3, while nearly 2,000 appeared in 2009; this accounts for approximately 3% of the total of new products on the food market. The market for products with Omega 3 is set to go on expanding in Europe at a rate of 24% per year until 2014, according to a recent study by the Frost & Sullivan consulting company.

Provided by Neiker-Tecnalia

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