

Insects back on the menu of our chicken!

For a long time, we have not been part of nature anymore. We over consume, waste a lot, and make the world warmer. But the doomsday scenario never appealed to me, more than enough has been written about that. The scenario that concerns me more is the world after 'Project Sustainability'. Because sustainability is a means, not an end. The goal is a world with endless perspectives and in which every human being can live a happy and rich life. Although we are not moving in that direction now, we will get there through sustainable solutions, actions, and regulations.

One of the most important solutions is that of our food. Every day we eat and drink, sometimes with the aim of getting stronger, sometimes because we want to enjoy ourselves and often just because we need it. Proteins are an important part of this. Proteins are building blocks for our muscles, health and immune system. Worldwide, proteins are produced by growing crops, keeping animals, and catching fish. But this is becoming increasingly difficult. The oceans are being overfished and the lands on which we grow crops are becoming depleted. At the same time, we should give land back to nature and fish less so that biodiversity can increase rather than decrease. In other words, we should be more in balance with nature. How can we achieve that?

I believe in technological solutions, especially if they are built around the ingenuity of nature. That's what Protix has done. Protix is the global leader in producing proteins from insects. A natural source of protein that almost every animal depends on. Especially when they are young, need to grow fast and build their immune system. Insects can also grow well and quickly on food waste, making them the 'linking pin' in the natural cycle of life. We've studied that role and we've built a whole range of systems, processes and technologies around it. For example, we have more than 250 patents and we were the first in the world to build a large-scale factory and operate it on industrial level. This is a unique achievement that has also been rewarded by, among others, the World Economy Forum, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, and the National Innovation Award 2020.

Recently, an important milestone has been achieved, making sustainable meat a reality. The European Union authorizes the use of insect proteins in poultry and pig feed. And that is not only logical but also very impactful. Logical because chickens and pigs are naturally looking for insects. For example, a chicken brain is similar to that of a lizard. She is 'motion blind' and likes to see moving larvae. The health of a chicken improves when she can scavenge again in search of those larvae. In addition, the impact is also huge. We can feed chicken with local insect protein that uses virtually no CO₂, land, and water, so the footprint of that chicken is a lot lower. Importantly, it will no longer require the import of soy from the other side of the world.

This change was crucial and will be an accelerator towards sustainable meat and fish. Our plate will become richer, healthier, more fun and tastier and will have sustainable meat and fish in addition to hyper-processed plant-based burgers.

Thanks to the innovative power of Protix and the naturally rich proteins from insects, a large-scale food transition to a more sustainable food system will be possible and accelerated. This new legislation is a wonderful example of cooperation between government, science & education and business and I am proud of all colleagues and stakeholders and thank them for all their support. This way, we can continue to enjoy nutritious food with an increasingly positive impact on our environment.

Stay tuned. We have only just begun.

Kees