



Soon you could be buying dairy-free, plant-based cheese from your local cheese counter | Photo source Change Food

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DAIRY-FREE CHEESE PROCESS USES FERMENTATION

  FOOD & DRINK

An Australian company is using fermentation to produce dairy-free cheese that contains the same compounds as dairy cheese

Spotted: For many vegans, one of the hardest foods to do without is cheese. Packed with protein, calcium and umami, cheese is not only delicious, but it is very useful in a wide variety of dishes. However, the intensive dairy farming needed to make the milk used in most cheeses is harmful to the environment and animal welfare. Enter Change Foods.

While most vegan cheeses are plant-based and usually lack the texture, taste and properties of dairy cheeses, a growing number of vegan cheesemakers are using fermentation to recreate dairy products. Change Foods is one such company, which uses a technique called precision fermentation. This takes microorganisms that have been genetically modified to produce the compounds found in dairy cheese.

The compounds can then be combined with plant products to make something that actually tastes like cheese because it contains proteins and fats identical to those found in dairy. Change Foods was founded in Australia, but has recently moved to San Francisco and acquired an angel investor — Simon Newstead, founder of the nonprofit vegan food project, Bite Society.

Change Foods believes that the production of a tasty, dairy-free cheese is an important step in the creation of a more ethical food system. [According to](#) Change Foods VP Sacha Baker, “With unprecedented events in the world accelerating the need for changes to our food system, now and on the horizon, Change Foods believes it can lead the way by helping to transform the dairy industry and provide superior products the world knows and loves — with no compromise on taste, function, or texture.”

Springwise has previously covered a number of innovations that focus on [vegan leather or footwear](#), but the number of vegan food innovations has also been growing: we have recently explored [3D-printed chicken](#) and [lab-grown kangaroo](#).

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Takeaway:

Although a growing number of companies are producing plant-based cheeses, many lack key properties — such as the ability to melt — that make cheese such a versatile ingredient. Change Foods clearly hopes that a product that can both melt and taste like cheese will convince consumers to switch to the more sustainable and ethical alternative. Although other companies are working on similar products, there is plenty of room in the market: [revenue in the cheese market in the US alone amounted to \\$28,641 million \(€24,400 million\) in 2020](#).