

**Plant based alternatives, technical application expert Mr. Angelo Suarez**

SACCO s.r.l (Italy), that develops its business centered on the manufacturing and sales of starter cultures and contract manufacturing, has been pioneering the entry into the plant-based food field, where demand is strong worldwide. Sacco has a lineup of plant-based material fermentation starter products "4Choice" and are currently focusing on further market development, including the latest plant-based food market trends, Sacco's position as a lactic acid

bacterium starter supplier, introduction of its products, etc. will be serialized in an interview format. In this first installment, we talked to Mr. Angelo Suarez, an application specialist in the plant-based field, about market trends in Europe and 4Choice products.

**--About Sacco**

Mr.Suarez:

We are one of Sacco System, which works as a group aiming for synergies between four companies, along with CSL, a probiotic lactic acid bacterium, Caglifificio Clerici, an enzyme for rennet and dairy products, and Kemikalia, a mold product for cheese. Since the founding of Clerici in 1872, it has grown by acquiring Kemikalia, Sacco, and CSL. Although they are separate companies, we work together to meet the needs of users because the products we handle have synergies. The strain collection has more than 6,500 in the entire group. The bases are concentrated in Europe, but CSL Asia Pacific in 2018 and Sacco System Japan in 2020 have been increased as new bases. At present, CSL USA, which was established in Wisconsin, USA, is also equipped with

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## 乳酸菌によるユニークなプラントベースフード食品開発

**SACCO社**  
 フラントベースドオルタナティブス、テクニカルアプリケーション エキスパート

**アンジェロ スアレス氏**



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manufacturing equipment and has already started sales activities. We have 7 manufacturing facilities around the world, have export records almost all over the world, and conduct joint research with more than 50 affiliated universities.

**--How about the European plant-based food market?**

Mr.Suarez:

Plant-based demand is rising as vegans and flexitarians grow, and consumers are constantly looking for new things. Studies show that the reason for choosing plant-based foods for vegans is primarily animal welfare. On the other hand, for example, dairy-free-focusing people have a strong tendency to be conscious of their health and allergies, and even if they are flexitarians, the background differs depending on the user.

The vegan and vegetarian population itself is still small, and plant-based demand in recent years is supported by the flexitarian population. The proportion of flexitarians has already risen considerably in European countries, and even countries with strong dairy traditions, such as Italy and Denmark, where markets have been sluggish, have turned traditional dairy products into plant-based, and there is a growing awareness of consumers. While large companies are driving these trends, small and medium-sized companies are facing challenges such as know-how and investment funds even if they want to enter. Although we are a lactic acid bacterium manufacturer, we are proposing solutions in cooperation with manufacturers that handle plant materials and thickeners, and we also propose recipes that can be commercialized without the user's development ability, and even support manufacturing.

**-- What will happen to the market in the future?**

Mr.Suarez:

Currently, the number of products that claim to be plant-based is growing, but these will become natural choices in the future, and unless they are thoroughly vegan or flexitarian, they will be delicious, clean labels, and environmentally friendly hybrids. Products will be required in addition to the taste itself, it is known that the texture is actually a very important point in order to feel the good taste and satisfaction.

To meet these needs, our lactic acid bacteria are very supportive. Fermenting plant materials with lactic acid bacteria can produce good textures, flavors and also health benefits. We have entered this field as a starter since 2008 and have a long experience of accumulating research and knowledge ahead of others. We have a solid support system for recipe proposals and user problem solving, and we are steadily increasing our product lineup. When users want to make fermented plant products, we want to be the one who

wants to use Sacco's products first and consult with them.

**-- Please tell us the specific product features**

Mr.Suarez

All of our "4Choice" starter products for plant-based fermentation are allergen-free. Also, one of our strengths is that some products have vegan certification, which is considered to be difficult to obtain. Plant-based fermentation is not easy to be made consistently harmonious, and if you use the wrong lactic acid bacteria, you will end up with products of different quality each time. 4Choice is designed to produce products that are all uniform and controllable, giving it a refreshing acidity and texture to make it more palatable. Although it is a problem with ordinary yogurt, it can also prevent the phenomenon of post-acidification, which becomes sour when the expiration date approaches during refrigeration, transportation, storage, etc. In addition, we select bacteria that can be fermented firmly even if the sugar content that feeds the lactic acid bacteria is as low as possible, so we have a lineup of products that require less or no sugar to be added. Also, in the production of yogurt, milk hardens when acidified, but when using plant-based raw materials such as soy milk and almonds, other raw materials such as thickeners may be required to harden. Contrary to the clean label, it is a barrier to entry due to the need for manufacturing technology, but this can also be covered by the action of lactic acid bacteria.

We also offer product combinations to meet the needs of users who want to create unique products, and we have a wide range of these applications. In addition, we also carry out contract manufacturing, so it is possible to create your own starter.

**-- How do you see the Japanese market?**

Mr.Suarez:

As this COVID-19 situation made it difficult to travel between countries, local consumption of foodstuffs and the economy had to be boosted. The local food in Japan is recognized by the world as being very unique, and we are paying close attention to it. I would like to cooperate with Japanese producers to help produce high-quality fermented plant products using Japanese ingredients and raw materials.