

Protein For Life: A Priming Foods Initiative

Development of High Protein Foods for Healthy Ageing



Protein For Life is a pre-competitive collaborative grant between academia and industry to work towards food solutions for healthy ageing. A report was commissioned to explore the industry-based challenges and opportunities specific to the product design brief. In-depth discussion with industry partners revealed the following main findings:

- **Cost** is the main limiting factor for product development and is significantly impacted by raw ingredient cost and challenges with ingredient functionality particularly for emerging proteins
- A **reliable and scalable supply chain** for raw protein ingredients is essential for both small and large businesses
- **Favouring plant-based proteins over animal proteins**, due to their greater environmental sustainability, could make development of high protein products difficult due to the lower protein content of plant proteins relative to animal proteins. Protein fractions are an obvious solution however they are not suitable for use in all product segments and can be associated with higher costs
- The industry perceived **protein quantity to be of greater value** than protein quality for the consumer, due to a lack of consumer awareness about the role of protein in age-related muscle loss
- Lack of **consumer awareness** is currently a significant barrier to the development of age-related high protein products; the industry would welcome greater involvement from public health bodies to create a clear and concise health message for consumers
- **Consumer acceptance** of 'functional' protein products could be a barrier to product success; to increase consumer acceptance, further research into consumer attitudes and behaviours is required – this will help develop an effective marketing approach for age-related high-protein products
- **Labelling requirements** for protein claims could be improved to reflect the needs of older adults; age-specific nutrition claims will aid product marketing
- **The industry is proactive, well equipped, and will be highly successful** at overcoming the recognised and emerging formulation challenges specific to plant-based protein ingredients