

WHITEPAPER

# Brabant: The ScaleUp Plant of Europe

# The future is Plantbased

With ongoing climate change, global population increase, and geopolitical disturbances, food security has never been higher on the agenda. Most of the world's food systems are heavily animal-based, highly demanding on resources such as water and land, and create environmental problems such as CO2 effluent from cows. The need for a new food system is evident. Brabant has all the ingredients to develop innovative, sustainable plantbased food solutions and ingredients, and market them far beyond the borders.

# Brabant as the center of Plantbased innovation

Apart from the US, the Netherlands is the second largest exporter of agricultural products in the world. In addition, the agricultural exports are valued nearly €124 billion in 2023, showing how important our country is in the global food market and its potential to lead change.

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Looking at Brabant, the region has a long history in agriculture and food production



# Why Brabant excels in Plantbased

#### Complete value chain

Complete value chain for the efficient production of plantbased food innovations.

#### Feedstock basis

The major crops in Brabant include potatoes, beets, field-grown vegetables and soft fruits.

#### Strong knowledge institutes

Presence and in near proximity of knowledge institutes like HAS, WUR, Gent and Delft university, TU/e and JADS.

#### Strategic location

Brabant is perfectly positioned between the food innovation hubs of Gent, Delft, and Wageningen. Additionally, it sits at the crossroads of key logistics centers, including Amsterdam Schiphol Airport, Europe's leading seaport in Rotterdam, and the Port of Antwerp.

#### Proven scaling ecosystem

With success stories like the Vegetarian Butcher, Protix, Peel Pioneers, Protein Brewery, Redefine Meat, Cosun Protein and Livekindly.

#### **Great Plantbased network**

The Plantbased Network in West-Brabant provides an excellent platform for companies to join forces in developing sustainable and innovative solutions.

#### Incentives

The Food Pioneers Accelerator supports entrepreneurs in South Netherlands and Flanders by connecting them with cross-border demo or production partners, while also providing guidance and financial assistance to help them scale.

## Facts & figures

>50%

of all Dutch EU patents are generated in Brabant.

Source: EOB, 2022

>30%

of private R&D expenditure in NL is disbursed in Brabant.

Source: CBS, 2022

7th

Ranking Eindhoven when it comes to the most promising global science hubs.

Source: Dealroom.co, 2022

#4

Eindhoven University of Technology (TU/e) ranks worldwide in collaboration with the industry.

Source: TU/e, 2022

€124

**Dutch Agrifood** export in 2023

14.490 Agrifood companies in Brabant

17.9%

(85,120) of the total Agrifood jobs in the **Netherlands** 

#1

province in production value in the Netherlands

2.87

sale of plantbased alternatives by Dutch wholesalers in 2023

has evolved into a dynamic hub of innovation and opportunity, particularly in the field of plantbased food. The region's well-established infrastructure and knowledge base make it an ideal location for companies looking to develop and scale novel plantbased products and ingredients.

Everywhere you look, there are start-ups and scale-ups pushing the boundaries and creating the future of Agrifood.

The region offers a unique ecosystem that supports the transition to more plantbased food. It is full of innovative companies that use its High Tech sector to create new ways of producing food. Brabant is like a huge testing ground, with lots of farmers, food-and ingredient processors and co-manufacturers where new ideas can be tried out, plus the desire to collaborate that exists throughout Brabant across all sectors. Consequently, Brabant is the perfect hotspot for farming innovation. Everywhere you look, there are start-ups and scale-ups pushing the boundaries and creating the future of Agrifood.

### Challenges and solutions in scaling **Plantbased** production

The transition to plantbased food in Brabant, while promising, is not without its challenges. One of the primary obstacles is scaling production to meet the rapidly growing demand. As more consumers turn to plantbased diets for health and environmental reasons, the need for efficient and scalable production processes becomes critical. Another major challenge lies in improving



**SHOWCASE** 

## Redefine Meat

Redefine Meat uses 3D-printing to produce meat substitutes with flavour, taste, and texture comparable in quality to animal meat. Its 'New-Meat' aims to go beyond today's alternative meat products to provide the full sensory experience of meat, including flavour profile, texture, and aroma. New-Meat is already commercially available within food services in the Netherlands, Germany, Israel, and the UK, while also featuring on the tables in high-end Dutch restaurants.

Redefine Meat established operations in a former meat processing plant in Brabant to launch in the Netherlands, with the aim to serve the growing demand for sustainable meat products in Europe and solidify its roadmap to become "the world's largest meat company, harnessing technology instead of animals". Having existing facilities in place enabled Redefine Meat to grow its operations, adapting old infrastructure for plantbased alternatives. Thanks to the marriage of old and new, the former meat processing location is now reaching a new market.

the taste and nutritional profile of alternative proteins. Although plantbased foods have made great advances in recent years, they often still cannot match the taste and texture of traditional products. It is crucial to ensure that these alternatives offer similar or superior nutritional benefits so that they are accepted by a wider audience. This requires ongoing research and development to innovate and refine plantbased products to meet consumer expectations.

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Despite these challenges, the future prospects for plantbased food in Brabant are incredibly promising. Much of our food production and technology excellence is centered around Brabant. It's central location, connecting leading food technology universities like Wageningen University & Research, TU Delft, and Gent, is key to its development as a scale-up ecosystem. The blend of industry knowledge and academic R&D drives product development from small to largescale production. In addition, the presence of multiple value chains for the existing food, agriand pharma sectors, amongst others, provides an excellent framework to leverage.

# **Brabant: The Scale-**

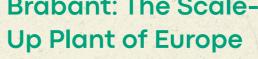
Brabant is uniquely positioned with a complete value chain for the efficient production of plantbased food innovations. However, the

region has identified a crucial gap: the lack of facilities where start-ups can scale up their ideas and bring them to market more rapidly. Developing a food ingredient is already a significant challenge, but scaling it to a commercial version requires even more expertise, resources, and capital—something start-ups often cannot achieve on their own. Brabant is stepping in to address this need by focusing on the scale-up phase for plantbased food startups with the ambition: Brabant: The Scale-Up Plant of Europe.

Brabant's ambition to become The Scale-Up Plant of Europe is gaining momentum. The region's phased approach to growth, supported by pilot, modular demo, and full-scale facilities, ensures that companies can scale their operations safely and effectively. Successful plantbased pioneers, such as The Vegetarian Butcher, have already established themselves in Brabant, contributing significantly to the region's growing reputation as a plantbased powerhouse.

Additionally, the region is establishing longterm, sector-specific support for start-ups in the scaling phase. Existing companies are also invited to join this initiative, offering part of their capacity to collaborate with start-ups. Moreover, the collaborative partners are focusing on international positioning, acquisition, and partnerships with global start-ups, solidifying Brabant's role as Europe's hub for plantbased food innovation.

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#### **Plantbased Value Chain Brabant**













































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PROTIX





























Algae

























Primary processors feedstock















**Driscoll's** 

Farmers of major crops in Brabant

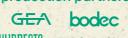
New Tech & production partners















New Tech & production partners



**Smart Farming &** New crop development







**RIJK ZWAAN** 





## Food Pioneers Accelerator

The Interreg Food Pioneers Accelerator program is dedicated to making food production more efficient, sustainable, and healthier. New technologies and innovations play a crucial role in tackling these societal challenges.

Increasingly, companies are developing solutions that benefit both us and our environment. These innovations include better valorization of residual side streams from food production and making plant-based products, like meat and dairy substitutes, that are both tastier and healthier.

For many entrepreneurs, moving from the laboratory and pilot phase to technical upscaling represents a significant challenge. We support SMEs in the southern Netherlands and Flanders with innovative food solutions during their technical scaling phase by connecting them with new production partners across the border. Once a sustainable partnership has been established, applications can be submitted for guidance and financial support in the scaling process. We offer 50% subsidy for projects up to €250,000.

The Food Pioneers Accelerator program is a collaboration between three organizations from Southern Netherlands and three from Flanders. These include Flanders'FOOD, ILVO, POMWVL, LIOF, Impuls Zeeland, and BOM. Our expertise, network, and subsidies enable us to support entrepreneurs with technical scaling challenges.

Curious if we can help you? Check our website to see which organizations are eligible for support and what scaling issues we aim to boost. You can also contact one of our project partners directly.

Scan the QR-code for more information about the Interreg Food Pioneers Accelerator program.



# 5 most promising Plantbased start-ups in Brabant

Since 2020, the number of start-ups in Brabant has grown significantly. With 1,462 start-ups, Brabant now boasts the third-largest start-up population among Dutch provinces, a 22% increase from 2020, when there were 1,200 start-ups. Brabant is strengthening its position as a key start-up hub, offering promising prospects for the future economy. While scaling opportunities are plentiful, ongoing efforts are essential. The following start-ups are scaling up in Brabant:















# Scale up your Plantbased food innovation!

Are you a start-up active in the plantbased sector and looking for the knowledge and infrastructure to scale up your plantbased food innovation? Or an established company interested in offering capacity and expertise to these emerging innovators?

The ambition of the Province of North Brabant, the Brabant Development Agency (BOM), and REWIN West-Brabant is to establish Brabant as Europe's leading scale-up hub for plantbased food start-ups. Under the banner "Brabant, the Scale-Up Plant of Europe," the goal is to be recognized both nationally and internationally within five years as the premier location for scaling plantbased innovations. Brabant will develop a network of accessible pilot, demo, and full-scale facilities to support this growth.

In addition, long-term, sector-specific support will be provided to start-ups in the scale-up phase. Established companies are also encouraged to join the initiative, offering part of their capacity to collaborate with start-ups. The partners will focus on international positioning, acquisition, and partnerships with global start-ups to further strengthen Brabant's position. Where possible, the BOM will invest in participating food start-ups to boost their growth and success.

Scan the QR-code for more information and facts & figures about Plantbased in Brabant.



Brabant: The Scale-Up Plant of Europe is an initiative of:





Provincie Noord-Brabant

Food Pioneers Accelerator is powered by

