

'A major milestone for the UK edible insect sector:' UK edible insect makers hope for Novel Food approval by 2023

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A network of over 30 edible insect companies in the UK has submitted a Novel Food dossier to the Food Standards Agency (FSA) for *Acheta Domesticus*, or house crickets.

The Woven Network hopes its dossier will be approved in around 18 months. It called the move a major milestone for the UK edible insect sector and a 'vital step towards British consumers being able to benefit from this highly versatile and sustainable alternative source of protein'. Woven is also working on a dossier for *Tenebrio Molitor* (mealworms), expected to be submitted in the summer 2022. Others may well follow, it said.

The dossier runs to 100 pages of evidence of the safety of house crickets for human consumption citing over 200 scientific studies and over 20 detailed laboratory analyses. For speediness and harmonisation, our UK application is based on the similar dossier submitted by the [Belgian Insect Industry Federation](#) to the European Foods Standards Authority.

There are over 1,800 species of edible insects, globally, and many have provided valuable nutrition for centuries in many countries. Around 9m Europeans consumed products with insects in 2019 with no known cases of harm, according to the International Platform for Insects for Food and Feed (IPIFF).

Woven boldly claims that figure will rise to 390 million by 2030 thanks to the perceived sustainability and nutrition benefits offered by edible insects. Insects emit fewer greenhouse gases and less ammonia than cattle or pigs and require significantly less land and water than cattle, according to the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). In 2019 estimated the global insect protein market could be worth up to USD 8bn by 2030, growth of over 24% annually



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“About 20 different applications for Novel Food approval have been submitted to the EFSA in Europe and with all likely to be granted as the insects are totally safe for human consumption and the companies comply fully with industry practice for hazard assessment and management,” said Dr Nick Rousseau, Founder of the Woven Network.

“We are confident that the UK Government supports our sector, following the considerable investment that it has already made to support innovation, and we look forward to seeing the wide range of delicious, nutritious and sustainable products that our members have developed being available to consumers on the high streets up and down the UK.”

The versatile and diverse world of edible insects

Research has also suggested that insect protein has the greatest potential to reduce the food-related carbon footprints of European consumers, if edible insects – such as crickets, flies, and worms – are consumed directly or processed as food. The highest market share is represented by whole insects, followed by bars, snacks, speciality food ingredients and pasta.

House crickets have a pleasant nutty flavour and can blend well in a wide variety of recipes, Rousseau told FoodNavigator. “You could eat insects morning, noon and night,” he said. “There are new products being developed all the time.” These include breakfast products such as muffins and bagels, protein shakes and bars for sports enthusiast, snacks and nibbles and higher protein flour substitutes. Yum Foods even offers insect-based recipe boxes and meal delivery kits.

“Different insects have different flavour characteristics,” Rousseau added. *“In China, one of the most delicious things to eat is wasps’ larvae.”*

The companies involved in the *Acheta Domesticus* dossier are:

- Monkfield Nutrition
- Instar Farming
- Eat Grub
- HOP®
- Nutribug
- The Grub Kitchen / Bug Farm Foods
- Protein Rebel
- Yum Bug
- Prosects
- Throne Farm
- Saved Food
- UK Tiny Farms
- Small Giants/Positeave

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