

**Voluntary Report** – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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**Report Name:** Microbial Food Ingredients Encounter No Regulatory Barriers in Hong Kong

**Country:** Hong Kong

**Post:** Hong Kong

**Report Category:** Agriculture in the News, Market Development Reports, Biotechnology and Other New Production Technologies

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**Report Highlights:**

Hong Kong's first vegan lab-grown ice cream launched recently amid the growing awareness of plant-based meats by Hong Kong consumers inspired by global trends and the availability of Impossible Foods, Beyond Meat, and Omnipork in the local market.

The U.S.- based Perfect Day's non-animal dairy protein was newly introduced to Hong Kong in January 2021. In view of the fact that some consumers suffer from lactose intolerance, the owner of a Hong Kong company, Igloo Dessert Bar, decided to produce vegan ice cream with Perfect Day's non-animal protein.

Hong Kong does not pose any regulatory barrier to the entry of this microbial food ingredient. Currently, Hong Kong does not have any specific regulation on bioengineered (GE) products either. Nor is there any mandatory labeling requirements for GE foods. This innovative food ingredient can be imported to Hong Kong under the same regulations as conventional foods.

Although Hong Kong is not a pioneer in food biotechnology research, a Hong Kong venture capital company, Horizon Ventures, backed by a local tycoon, supports food technology by investing in start-ups. Horizon Ventures invested in United States-based food technology companies including Impossible Foods and Perfect Day. With the use of microbial technology, the former produces plant-based meat with soy leghemoglobin and the latter ice cream with non-animal whey protein. Both Impossible Foods and non-dairy ice cream are now available in Hong Kong.

With the assistance of Horizon Ventures, in January 2021 Igloo Dessert Bar successfully partnered with Perfect Day and launched its "Ice Age!" range of ice creams that uses Perfect Day's whey protein. According to Perfect Day, the non-animal protein is developed by fermentation from the gene sequence of bovine whey protein and is identical to cow's milk on a molecular level.

While the public may not be familiar with the concept of microbial biotechnology, Hong Kong is picking up the trend of leading a healthy lifestyle with the growing popularity of organic, vegetarian, and vegan foods. This healthy eating trend is further fueled by the pandemic. In recent years, Hong Kong has witnessed the emergence of meatless meat alternatives. Hong Kong was the first overseas market where Impossible Foods launched its plant-based beef alternative in April 2018 and Beyond Meat was introduced to Hong Kong in 2015 by David Yeung, who is a keen pioneer promoting plant-based products. Apart from Beyond Meat, he also introduced a plant-based pork alternative called Omnipork.

**Attachments:**

No Attachments.