



Media Release

Blue Horizon announces investment in the future of chocolate

Zurich, 1 March 2022 – Blue Horizon, a pure play impact investor in the future of food, today announces its first investment in plant cell culture.

Blue Horizon has invested in [California Cultured](#), a Davis California-based plant cell culture company pioneering a promising new application for [cellular agriculture](#). Similar to cultivated meat, plant cell culture allows producers to grow complete, authentic cells in bioreactors rather than in fields or feedlots. In this case, cells are isolated from living plants and proliferate in a liquid nutrient media.

Some plants are well-suited for plant cell culture because they contain highly valuable components and phytonutrients that are otherwise hard to grow and extract or pose negative impacts from conventional production. The chocolate industry relies on a [cocoa supply chain](#) that is fragile, causes severe deforestation in biodiverse tropical areas, and is implicated in human rights issues.

California Cultured's mission is to bring about a new age of real chocolate through cellular agriculture free from deforestation and labour abuse by growing, creating and scaling the most authentically delicious and nourishing chocolate on earth without the need for genetic modification.

Blue Horizon is participating in California Cultured's seed round alongside other strategic investors including chocolate company Meiji, Agronomics, SOSV, Cult Food Science and Prithvi Ventures.

Blue Horizon's [other investments](#) in the sustainable chocolate industry include Yes Life Foods, Love Raw and Hail Merry.

Thomas Kindler, Partner at Blue Horizon, said: "We are inspired by what people can achieve alongside the Plant Kingdom, in this case finding radically better ways to grow certain plants. Plant cell culture is another exciting technology now being applied from biopharma to food. Cellular agriculture is a big impact opportunity because with it we can also decouple some crops from most deforestation, water use, land use, soil degradation, and supply chain volatility. We expect that California Cultured will continue its leadership role in this sector because of their team of seasoned entrepreneurs and technical experts, research breakthroughs, and strategic partnerships. Blue Horizon is happy to continue investing in pioneers working on securing sustainable chocolate for the future."

To date, Blue Horizon has raised funds of over \$850 million and invested in 60+ companies with a focus on protein alternatives and food tech. Some of the firm's recent investments include TomorrowFoods, a plant protein processing innovator, Planted, an alternative meat start-up, Mosa Meat, which is developing tissue engineering technologies to mass produce affordable, cultured meat and AgBiome, the leader in developing innovative products from the Earth's microbial communities.

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Media contact Blue Horizon

Marc Duceck
Head of Communications
Phone +41 79 639 42 38
media@bluehorizon.com

About Blue Horizon

Blue Horizon is accelerating the transition to a New Sustainable Food System that delivers outstanding returns for investors and the planet. The company is a global pioneer of the Future of Food. As a pure play impact investor, Blue Horizon has shaped the growth of the alternative protein and food tech market. The company invests at the intersection of biology, agriculture and technology with the aim to transform the global food industry. Blue Horizon was founded by Roger Lienhard in 2016 and is based in Zurich. To date, the company has raised over USD 850 million and invested in more than 60 companies. Its business model offers an attractive opportunity to invest in the evolution of the global food system while contributing to a healthy and sustainable world. www.bluehorizon.com

About California Cultured

We are a team of chocoholics who are dedicated to protecting the planet. chocolate is an irresistible indulgence to be enjoyed by all. But the harsh reality is, the chocolate we know and love causes harm. That's why...We are making a better chocolate. You deserve a delicious chocolate bar without guilt. [Join us in the new age of sustainable & ethical chocolate.](#)

California Cultured is led by a team of professionals from the food industry.

Alan Perlstein, CEO

Alan started working in a tiny cell-cultured fish lab in Long Island 17 years ago, back in the early days of cell-culture technology. He launched his first food tech company Joywell Foods (formerly Miraculex), where he commercialized protein sweetened foods. When he saw tension brewing between the huge demand for chocolate and the sustainable/ethical issues surrounding it, he knew he had to look towards something bigger and thus, California Cultured was born.

Debbie Neumann, CFO

Debbie is a CPA who specializes in corporate taxation and financial planning/analysis. She is elegantly balancing the roles of CFO and HR. Debbie is a lifelong chocoholic.

Steven Stearns, Head of Commercial

Steve is a former chef of Copenhagen's Noma, which has been ranked the world's number one restaurant. He then attended UC Davis where he researched food chemistry and completed his MBA. Starting off in venture capital focused AgTech, Steve switched his focus to helping companies build their commercial innovation capabilities in business development, business strategy, and general management. Most recently he was Head of Innovation at Arcadia Biosciences.