

Press Release: Novel Food tasting by ÄIO!

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Tallinn, Estonia – in a rare and tightly regulated event, 120 guests from across the food industry, scientific community, and public sector gathered to taste fermentation-derived novel foods developed by Estonian biotech startup ÄIO and Finnish biotech startup enifer. The event, held on May 21, 2025, marked only the fourth such tasting globally, and the second led by ÄIO.

Co-organized by Enterprise Estonia, Estonian Research Council, TalTech, and ÄIO as part of the Latitude59, the event featured insights from regulatory experts, startup founders, and investors. Participants were given a firsthand experience of sustainable ingredients that aim to replace palm oil, coconut oil, and animal fats, using precision fermentation and food industry side-streams.

“We showed that Estonia is capable of creating new food technology products that are tasty, healthy, and better for the environment, and that have the potential to reach global markets. Public dialogue is essential to explain why we need to move toward more innovative food solutions,” said Petri-Jaan Lahtvee, ÄIO Co-Founder and Professor at TalTech.

“For novel food companies, one of the main hurdles is navigating regulation,” noted Anna Handschuch, regulatory advisor at Future Affairs Consulting. “It’s clear we need faster pathways, not looser safety, but smarter systems that encourage bold, evidence-based innovation.”

“We need more initiatives where the science meets the spoon,” added Mika Kukkurainen from Nordic FoodTech VC and panel moderator. “Connecting innovators, regulators, and industry in one room is how we make real progress.”

ÄIO's technology uses microbial fermentation to create functional, sustainable fats and oils that can serve both the food and cosmetics industries. As the company advances toward regulatory approvals, events like this one highlight both the public interest and market urgency for sustainable alternatives.

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