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## Edible Bioeconomy Event—Recap

24 Jun 2015 clara foods, edible bioeconomy, muufri, pembient, tomato sushi

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A dispatch from our social media guru, Erin Kim:

On May 29th, I had the great pleasure of attending the very first Edible Bioeconomy event in San Francisco, hosted jointly by New Harvest and Indie Bio. The event was a way for people who are involved and interested in the emerging economy that is being built around sustainable animal products (including but not limited to leather, eggs, dairy products, and eventually meat) to have the chance to taste and hear firsthand about some of what has been developed thus far, while engaging in discussions about how to tackle practical challenges like what language can be used to describe these kinds of products, how to overcome the misinformation and confusion felt by the general public on how science relates to food, and other topics.

I flew in from Edmonton primarily to attend, knowing the unbearable FOMO I would suffer if I'd just stayed at home and heard about it after the fact. Tickets easily sold out and over 130 people came out, including investors, donors, people working in various areas of food tech, and enthusiastic future consumers. It was an amazing feeling to be in a room full of so many brilliant people supportive of a post-animal bioeconomy, while having the privilege of being some of the first in the world to enjoy products like the delicious (and very tuna-like!) Tomato Sushi by Master Chef James Corwell, "chirps" (chips made from cricket protein) by Six Foods, and local seasonal artisan beer from San Francisco-based Almanac Beer Co. Needless to say the event was a huge success, and I was thrilled when Isha told me that it will become a recurring series. (If you'd like to be informed about future dates, sign up for our newsletter at <http://t.co/tF7iTB2pN>)

The speaker panel consisted of:

- Ryan Pandya, CEO of Muufri, who are working on genetically engineering yeast to produce cow's milk and products like cheese;
- Arturo Elizondo, CEO of Clara Foods, creating egg whites without chickens by using yeast to convert sugar water into egg protein;
- Matthew Markus, CEO of Pembient, the makers of 3D printed rhino horn and other wildlife products (such as elephant ivory and tiger bone) to subvert poaching and extinction of endangered animals;
- and Master Chef James Corwell, founder of Tomato Sushi, a company producing a completely plant-based and sustainable alternative to tuna, by using the sous vide method of cooking tomatoes!

Each of these companies is helping to pave the way for the diverse, sustainable, and ethical bioeconomy that New Harvest envisions and is working so hard to build. They have already received impressive amounts of investor funding, advance consumer interest, and media coverage. The fact that enough of this innovation in food is currently taking place to spark events like The Edible Bioeconomy is truly an amazing thing. I have been a part of the New Harvest community for a little

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over a year, but in that time alone, the huge developments and growth that have taken place are assurance that engaging with science and business to solve for unsustainable, cruel, and outdated human consumption habits is not only the “right” thing to do, but also rewarding for all involved. There is only room to grow in this new industry (another reason why I think the investors, scientists, and entrepreneurs getting involved are so smart). We will continue to see new and exciting additions to this space, and I can’t wait for what the next Edible Bioeconomy nights will look like, and what products will become available for guests to try in the near future!

On a personal note, as much of my work doing social media for New Harvest is done remotely, it’s always so wonderful to finally get to meet people who I have come to know through my volunteer work with New Harvest, with whom I mostly communicate with via Skype, Twitter, or e-mail. Meeting the brilliant young people behind Muufri and Clara Foods was especially meaningful, as these two companies came into existence directly as a result of New Harvest’s efforts connecting scientists and entrepreneurs who had specific visions and turning that into a viable business. As they mentioned on the panel, for Ryan, it was that as a vegan he was satisfied with the meat substitutes that were available, but felt there was a “missing piece” when it came to dairy; and for Arturo it was the re-imagining of the egg white as a more sustainable, ethical source of protein than the increasingly outdated and problematic method of using chickens). Watching these two startups grow from a mere idea to eventually becoming real contenders in the food industry has been extremely inspiring and serves as a powerful example of the incredible work that New Harvest is doing.

Even if it takes booking a last-minute flight across the continent to attend The Edible Bioeconomy, I absolutely recommend it. I’ll definitely be doing it again!

*Written by Erin Kim*

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"Fifty years hence, we shall escape the absurdity of growing a whole chicken in order to eat the breast or wing by growing these parts separately under a suitable medium." - Winston Churchill in 1931

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