

## *Lejka zlejevanka (Slovenia)*

### Product developed in EIT Food RIS Consumer Engagement Labs project

Consumers ask for products rich in proteins but without artificial additives, convenient to prepare at home and open to customisation. At the same time however, some of them are sceptical about plant-based products as they regard them as less nutritious. Such opinions were challenged by the innovative composition of “*Lejka zlejevanka*” – a buckwheat and chickpea dry mix for an omelette-like dish developed in Slovenia, based on opinions expressed by older consumers. Thanks to them, a traditional recipe from the eastern part of Slovenia became the source of inspiration for sustainable and innovative food product.

To find out what kind of food products answer the needs of older adults, the EIT Food project team invited older adults in Slovenia to participate in co-creation workshops. The participants developed an idea of an innovative plant-based product targeted at older consumers.

#### Innovative food product

The Slovenians decided to look at traditional recipes to find a solution to consumers’ need for healthy meat replacements. Customers crave nutritious products with only natural ingredients. At the same time, older consumers possess knowledge of traditional recipes, which can be used as an inspiration for innovative food products. In consequence, they proposed a new take on the well-known local dish “*Lejka zlejevanka*”. In the updated version however, it will be egg and dairy free, with increased protein value thanks to the chickpea protein isolate. The proposed changes in the recipe improve the nutritional value of the product and make it comparable to meat in terms of protein contents, while keeping the product fully vegan.

#### Good for health

The product has an increased amount of proteins, which are an important building block of bones, muscles, cartilage and skin. They are also vital for the cell repair processes. Older consumers recognize the importance of proteins and seek healthier alternatives to meat consumption. Unlike meat, the new product will be free from cholesterol or saturated fats. The main ingredient, buckwheat flour, improves heart health, promotes weight loss, and helps manage diabetes. Buckwheat is a rich source of protein and fibre. Moreover, chickpea isolate, second main ingredient of “*Lejka zlejevanka*” improves digestion, a quality desired by the older population.

#### Preferred by older adults / Designed by older adults for older adults

“*Lejka zlejevanka*” is a traditional dish from the Eastern part of Slovenia, which can be served as a sweet or savoury small meal. Hence, the new product is familiar in preparation, but offers an exciting experience of discovering new ways to prepare and serve a re-created national dish. It is convenient to prepare - as it comes in a ready to prepare dry mix, that could be quickly and without any hassle turned into a nutritious meal at home or even at work. Each customer can later customise the product based on their own preferences. It is also easy to carry and store at home – as it comes in a small compostable sachet that is easy to open. It can be stored for a year and used whenever a healthy and convenient meal is needed.

#### Different from existing products

“*Lejka zlejevanka*” combines modern food processing technologies with generational knowledge of older consumers. It is different from the products available on the market as it does not contain any eggs or dairy. Instead, it uses the combination of buckwheat and chickpea flour to increase the protein value. Product is based on buckwheat flour, which is considered a superfood of Eastern Europe, as it is highly nutritious, albeit not widely used by food producers.

### Additional information about the project:

“*Lejka zlejevanka*” – a buckwheat and chickpea dry mix for an omelette like dish - is a product designed during the co-creation workshops, held as part of the EIT Food RIS Consumer Engagement Labs project. The project is coordinated by the University of Warsaw and financed by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), under the Horizon 2020/Horizon Europe, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. The project's main aim is to address the needs of older consumers in the food and beverage market by applying novel methodology which engages consumers, stimulates their creativity, and fosters the acceptance of new products. The product concept was designed in 2020 in Slovenia during co-creation sessions which gathered older consumers, scientists from University of Ljubljana and the representatives of the food start-up Bevo. Following the co-creation process, the innovative product was developed and introduced to the market in 2021.

Find out more about the project at: <http://timo.wz.uw.edu.pl/cel>