

Vegan Curds? No Whey!

San Francisco Bay Area Biohackers are engineering yeast to produce Real Vegan Cheese

Date: July 1st , 2014

Oakland, CA and Sunnyvale, CA – A collective of biohackers from the Bay Area have joined forces to produce Real Vegan Cheese in baker's yeast. The aim of the project is to produce a renewable and sustainable, closed-loop food source that will provide the same nutritional value as non-vegan cheese and **taste just as great!** Additionally, the project will provide a *real cheese* for vegans, the lactose intolerant, and those that have food allergies to animal-derived milk proteins.

Using synthetic biology, the team is working to engineer yeast into a milk-protein factory whose output is used to manufacture vegan milk. This vegan milk is then used to produce Real Vegan Cheese through a traditional cheese-making process. The outcome is real cheese that does not include any animal products.

Beginning July 1, 2014, Real Vegan Cheese intends to raise \$15,000 for the initial research phase of the project. Throughout phase I, the team will produce an initial cheese product and take their project to the International Genetically Engineered Machine competition (iGEM). **This is the first year community groups are allowed to participate in iGEM and this project is sure to impress!** Following completion of phase I, the group will raise more funds to optimize the process and create a variety of vegan cheeses.

About Counter Culture Labs:

Counter Culture Labs is a new DIYscience community in Oakland, California open to citizen scientists, biohackers, and empiricists of all stripes. CCL provides training and lab space open to participation. www.counterculturelabs.org

About BioCurious:

BioCurious is a Bay Area hackerspace for biotech. Opened in 2011, BioCurious is a completely volunteer run non-profit organization. We serve the community by providing low-cost lab space and classes to members. www.biocurious.org

*The **iGEM competition** is an international synthetic biology competition which in 2014 opened its doors to community DIYbio organizations. The competition calls on scientists to build simple biological systems from standard, interchangeable parts and operate them in living cells.*

The **San Francisco Bay Area iGEM team** works out of Counter Culture Labs (Oakland) and BioCurious (Sunnyvale).

<http://realvegancheese.org>

<http://indiegogo.com/projects/real-vegan-cheese>¹

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