



UNIVERSITY OF LISBON  
INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES  
ON SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT AND SEAS

## MICROALGAE BIOMASS AS A SUSTAINABLE FOOD SOURCE

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## SESSION III - Microalgae as important sources of bioactive compounds for food and pharmaceutical applications

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### SESSION II - Microalgae as important sources of bioactive compounds for food and pharmaceutical applications

#### SUMMARY

Microalgae as important sources of bioactive compounds for food and pharmaceutical applications

Microalgae are one of the renewable sources for pharmaceutical compounds

Why the use of microalgae biomass as a food ingredient is really important?

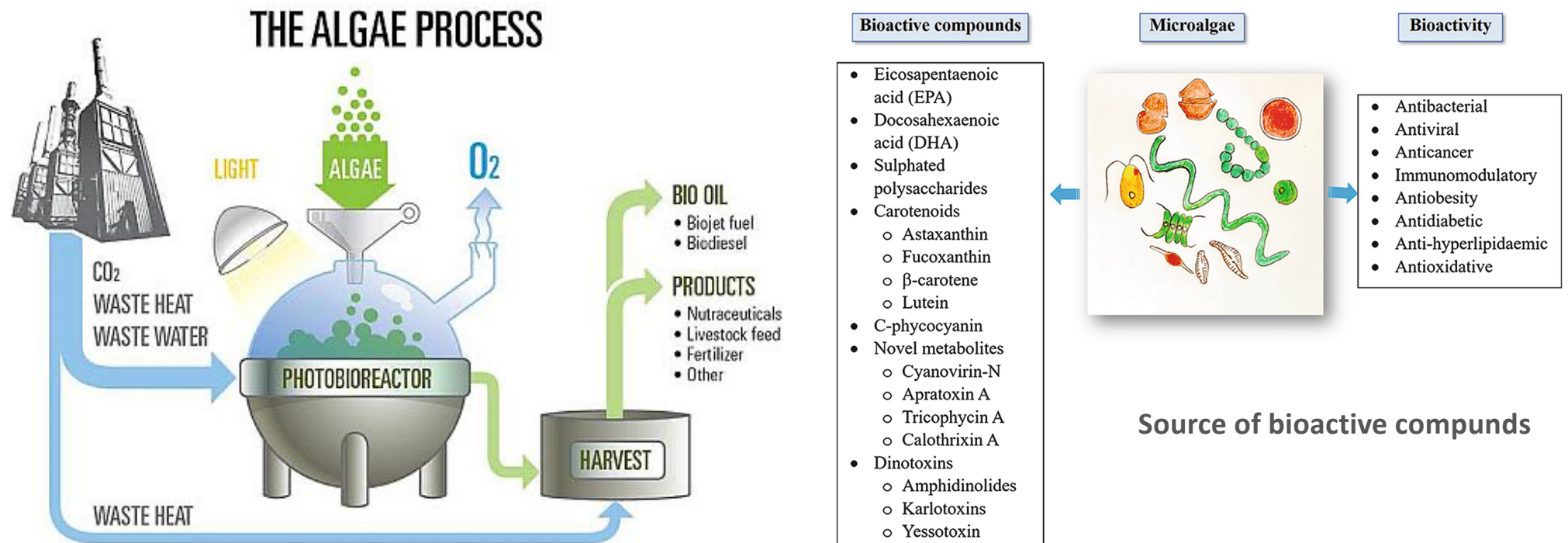
Microalgae as a source of protein and bioactives for food products

Microalgae – a tool for Food Innovation

Major challenges to the incorporation of microalgae in food



### SESSION III - Microalgae as important sources of bioactive compounds for food and pharmaceutical applications





## Microalgae are one of the renewable sources for pharmaceutical compounds

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/cben.201600023>

Cyanobacteria (spirulina) - source for antibiotics and pharmacologically active compounds  
A large number of **antibiotic compounds**, many with novel structures, have been isolated and characterised.

Cyanobacteria – production of antiviral and antineoplastic compounds.

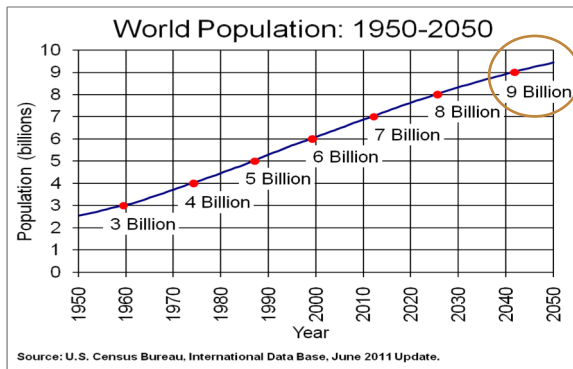
A range of pharmacological activities have also been observed with **extracts of microalgae**, however the active principles are as yet unknown in most cases.

Several of the bioactive compounds may find application in human or veterinary medicine or in agriculture. Others should find application as research tools or as structural models for the development of new drugs. The microalgae are particularly attractive as **natural sources of bioactive molecules** since these algae have the potential to produce these compounds in culture which enables the production of structurally complex molecules which are difficult or impossible to produce by chemical synthesis.

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/BF00003544>

## Why the use of microalgae biomass as a food ingredient is really important?

In 2050 there will be 9 billion people on the planet!



Sharp population growth



Resource scarcity

*Thomas Malthus (1798) - At that time he realized that the supply of food did not keep pace with population growth.*

## Food in the future?

**In the XXI century, food production is scarce and food prices assume significant increases**

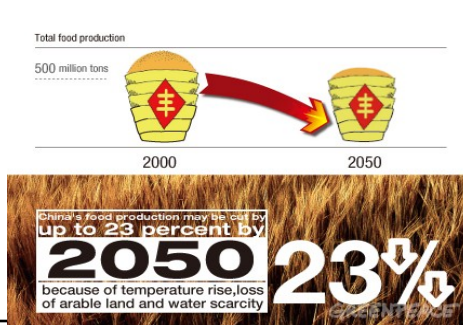
FAO estimates the production will have to rise by up to 70%, in order to have food available for all...

Efficiency of agricultural production systems

Scarcity of water resources and arable land

Climate change

Protein shortage



What is the role of microalgae?



Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations



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## New perspective: Healthy and sustainable food



Do you eat for your health or environmental sustainability?  
You can do both, says The Double Pyramid !

HealthyWorldin

### Microalgae - Food Innovation

UNDER-EXPLOITED RESOURCES

CIRCULAR ECONOMY

valorisation of by-products



### Microalgae biomass

Seaweed  
other marine resources  
(underutilized species used in food)  
Insects

### Alternative sources of protein



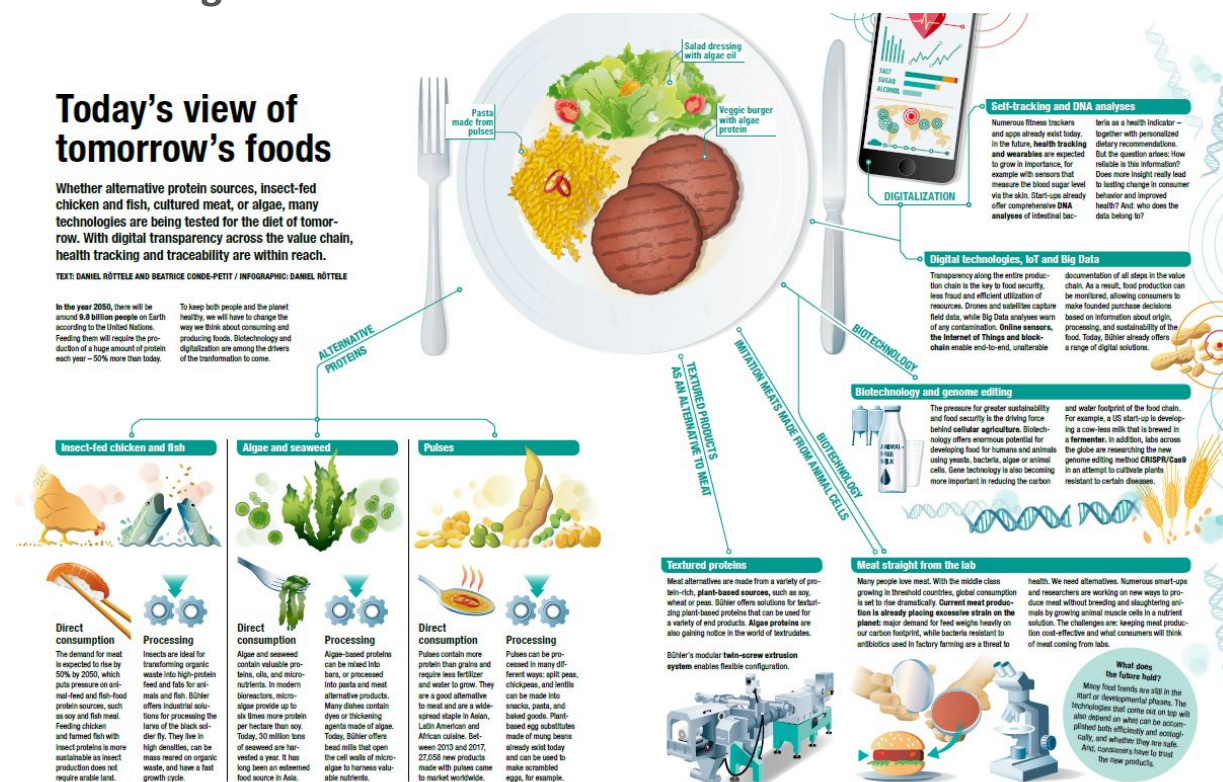


### Microalgae - Food Innovation

#### Today's view of tomorrow's foods

Whether alternative protein sources, insect-fed chicken and fish, cultured meat, or algae, many technologies are being tested for the diet of tomorrow. With digital transparency across the value chain, health tracking and traceability are within reach.

TEXT: DANIEL RÖTTELE AND BEATRICE CONDE-PETIT / INFOGRAPHIC: DANIEL RÖTTELE



Sources: UNICEF "World Population Prospects" 2017, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Meat Atlas 2018, Just, perfectlyethed, TRUE project RL, Bühler





### Major challenges to the incorporation of microalgae in food

#### MICROALGAE – FOOD FOR FUTURE?

New colours,  
New textures  
New flavours  
Positive impact on health  
Protein source  
Modelling composition -  
production conditions



**Technological challenge**  
Technological limit of  
incorporation  
Sensory limit (consumer)  
Overall cost of the product



### How to engage the consumers?

Two distinct approaches with different technological and  
consumer impacts ...

- A) **Technological approach** – Food engineering
- B) **Artistic Approach** – Gastronomic science

## MICROALGAE – FOOD FOR FUTURE?

The consumption of microalgae is an alternative to the lack of food that is expected for the next years, being an **excellent source of protein and functional ingredients**

The introduction of microalgae into high-consumption foodstuffs and diversified gastronomic productions is a decisive contribution to their **acceptance by consumers**

Microalgae present **varied nutritional profiles**, according to their origin and growth conditions, with different possibilities of incorporation into culinary preparations



Comparison of microalgal biomass profiles as novel functional ingredient for food products

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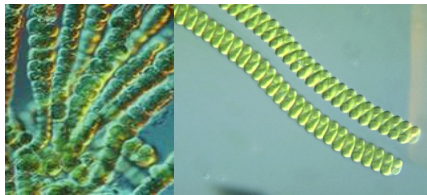
Bioactive compounds with health impact  
+  
Complex macromolecules



Impact on physical, nutritional and sensory properties of developed products  
Food production costs with microalgae incorporation



### Role of regulators in relation to novel foods ...



*Spirulina maxima/ Arthrospira platensis* (cyanobacteria)

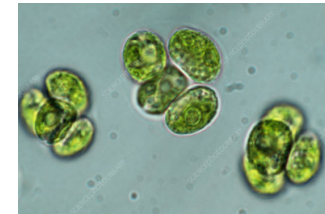
**Health benefits** - stimulation of the immune system, reduction of cholesterol levels and blood pressure, anti-carcinogenic, detoxifying effect.

**Phycocyanin** (blue phycobiliprotein): antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, neuroprotective effect...

**High protein content** (~65%) and balanced amino acid profile

**Essential fatty acids** ( $\gamma$ -linoleic acid)

**High Vitamin B12 and Fe content** - vegetarian supplements



*Chlorella vulgaris*

**Health benefits** - strengthening of the immune system, detoxifying - stimulates tissue growth and repair - protection against UV radiation; retardation of aging phenomena. Prevention of atherosclerosis, hypercholesterolemia and as an antitumor agent.

**High levels of  $\beta$ -1,3-glucan:** active immune stimulator, which acts in the elimination of free radicals and as a blood lipid reducer and **vitamin B12**.

**High chlorophyll content**



### Role of regulators in relation to novel foods ...

COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING REGULATION (EU) 2017/2470

of 20 December 2017

establishing the Union list of novel foods in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2015/2283 of the European Parliament and of the Council on novel foods

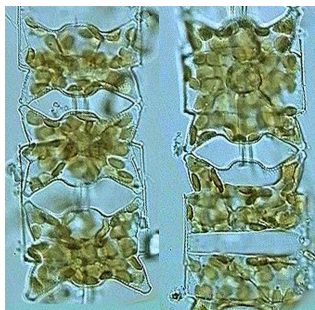
(Text with EEA relevance)

(OJ L 351, 30.12.2017, p. 72)

#### *Tetraselmis chuii*



#### *Odontella aurita*



Flavoured pasta, fish soups, sea food terns, broth preparations, salt crackers, frozen breaded fish; Incorporation levels range from 0.5% to 1.5%.

Dried <i>Tetraselmis chuii</i> microalgae	Specified food category	Maximum levels	The designation of the novel food on the labelling of the foodstuffs containing it shall be 'Dried microalgae <i>Tetraselmis chuii</i> ' or 'Dried microalgae <i>T. chuii</i> '  Food supplements containing dried microalgae <i>Tetraselmis chuii</i> shall bear the following statement: 'Contains negligible amounts of iodine'
	Sauces	20 % or 250mg/day	
	Special salts	1 %	
	Condiment	250 mg/day	
	Food Supplements as defined in Directive 2002/46/EC	250 mg/day	

#### *Euglena gracilis*



3.12.2020

PT

Jornal Oficial da União Europeia

L 406/29

#### REGULAMENTO DE EXECUÇÃO (UE) 2020/1820 DA COMISSÃO

de 2 de dezembro de 2020

que autoriza a colocação no mercado de *Euglena gracilis* desidratada como novo alimento ao abrigo do Regulamento (UE) 2015/2283 do Parlamento Europeu e do Conselho e que altera o Regulamento de Execução (UE) 2017/2470 da Comissão

(Texto relevante para efeitos do EEE)



### Another promising microalgae as food ingredients....

#### *Haematococcus pluvialis*

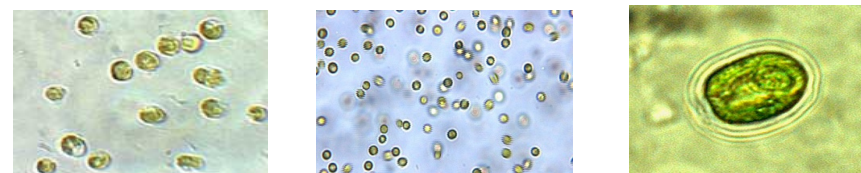


Largest natural source of **astaxanthin** - accumulation capacity of about 0.2-2% dry biomass after carotenogenesis

Carotenoids are accumulated and have an important free radical scavenging effect - a more significant antioxidant effect than  $\beta$ -carotene, vitamin C and vitamin E

The combination of carotenoids confers special **use as antioxidant**, with beneficial effect in the treatment of CNS pathologies

#### *Isochrysis galbana* e *Diatronema vlkianum*



Common in European seas, particularly in the North Atlantic and Irish coast.

**Important source of PUFA's** - EPA (20: 5-3) and DHA (22: 6-3), which may be an alternative to fish oils.

Important sources of sterols: sitosterol and tocopherols - **antioxidants**

The production of these metabolites depends on the growth conditions of the microalga...

Already farmed for the production of aquaculture feeds.

## MICROALGAE BIOMASS AS A FOOD INGREDIENT - SUMMARY

Important source of **bioactive compounds** with positive **impact on health** - healthy diet  
**Sustainable** food source  
Important **source of protein**  
Large-scale controlled production facility - **reasonable costs**

### From the technological point of view

Impact of microalgae on the **food structure** (macromolecules and polysaccharides )  
Impact of processing levels (different thermal treatments severity) on the **degradation of the bioactive compounds**  
Food processing has a determinant impact on **bioaccessibility** and it should be optimised in order to reduce the degradation of the bioactive compounds

### From the consumer point of view

BUT...

**Colour** - colours not common (green bread?)  
**Flavour** - Sea and fish flavour may be relevant  
**Cost** (even)

Sharp increase in microalgae consumption  
from domestic scale to industrial food production?...



Are the consumers prepared?

What can we do to engage the consumer?





Algal Research 50 (2020) 101998

### GLUTEN FREE PRODUCTS

FRADINHO, P., NICCOLAI, A., SOARES, R., RODOLFI, L., BIONDI, N., TREDICI, M.R., SOUSA, L., BAYMUNDO, A. (2020). Effect of *Arthrospira platensis* (spirulina) incorporation on the rheological and bioactive properties of gluten-free fresh pasta. *Algal Res.*, 46, 101998.



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Article

## Tetraselmis as an Ingredient to Improve Structure, Rheology, and Texture of Gluten-Free Pasta

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Received: 31 March 2020; Accepted: 1 May 2020; Published: 4 May 2020



Article

## Microalgae-Based Products: A Review

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## Effect of Arthrospira platensis on the Rheology and Bioactive Properties of Gluten-Free Pasta

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OPEN

## Development of new microalgae-based sourdough “crostini”: functional effects of *Arthrospira platensis* (spirulina) addition

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More than 20 years on new food product development incorporating microalgae into different foods for different consumers!

Impact of the addition of microalgae on nutritional, technological, sensory, digestibility and bioactivity properties - systematic approach



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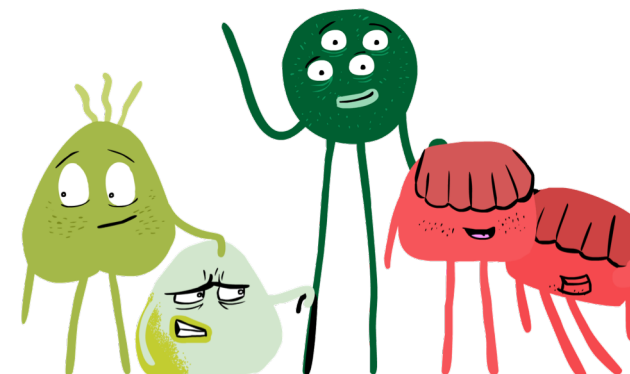
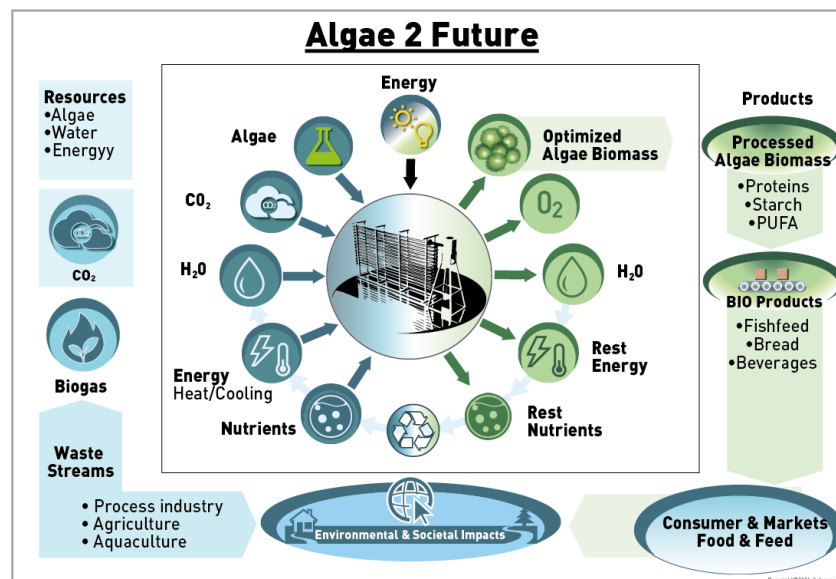
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Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union



Financial support:  
Research Council of Norway's BIONÆR Programme  
(project no: 267872/E50 A2F)



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Strategies do engage the consumers...



<https://www.thelocal.se/20180329/ikea-develops-new-mealworm-meatballs-and-dogless-hotdogs>



## SESSION III - Microalgae as sources of bioactive compounds for food

The role of Gastronomic science to engage the consumers

*Food of the world*



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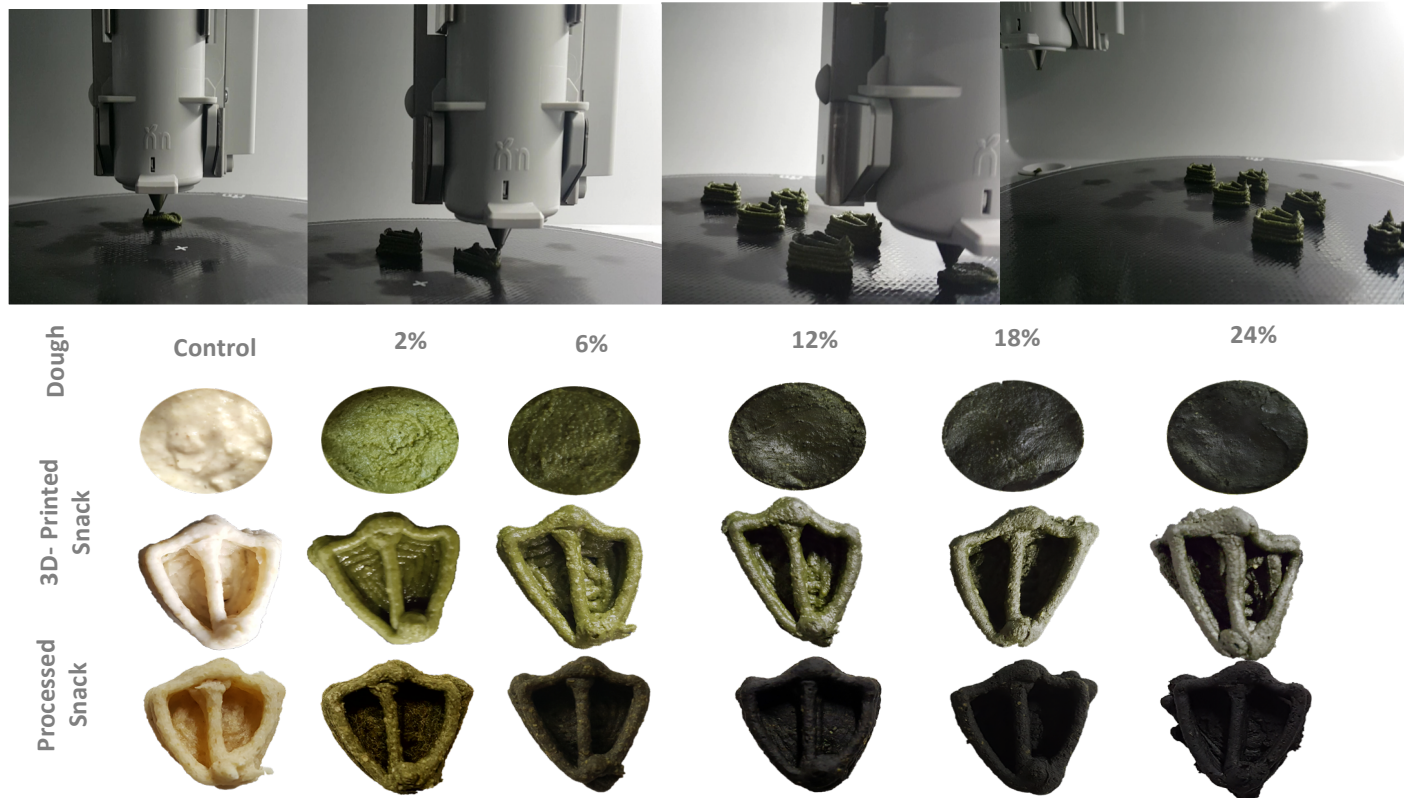
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## Messages to take home

Microalgae are rich in bioactive compounds, which make them extremely important for food and pharmaceutical industries.

The use of microalgae as a food ingredient requires consumer engagement.

The use of gastronomic science techniques allows the creation of structures and flavors that are decisive for increasing the acceptance of microalgae in food.





An underwater photograph showing a sea turtle swimming towards the left. The water is filled with various pieces of plastic waste, including a large, crumpled plastic bag on the left, several plastic bottles, and other debris floating near the surface. A school of small fish is visible in the background. The overall tone is somber, highlighting the impact of ocean pollution.

Ulisses

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