

# Improvement of agricultural sustainability with microalgae

The University of Almeria (UAL) is at the helm of the SABANA project, which seeks to obtain new biofertilisers and biopesticides as an alternative to the chemicals currently used in agriculture. The focus is on microalgae, which could help improve both the sustainability and profitability of agriculture.

This has been reported by the UAL in a note after a working meeting held last week, which counted with the participation of 50 researchers from Germany, Hungary, Belgium, Czech Republic and Spain, and which has been organised in the framework of an initiative that will last for four years and aims to set up a globally prestigious research centre for the development of microalgae biotechnology.

According to the UAL, the SABANA project will make it possible to obtain fruits and vegetables, as well as safer aquaculture for the consumer and the environment. The director of the microalgae marine biotechnology research group, Emilio Molina, explained that the demonstration plant featuring the technologies developed will have the capacity to produce up to 300 tonnes of microalgae and by-products per year, which will be evaluated for introduction into different markets.

The project also includes the creation of a research and development centre, which will give courses at different levels, as well as of an on-line service to provide access to all information generated during the project.

The UAL is coordinating this project, which has a budget of 10.6 million Euro, and which has the support of companies, like the Cajamar Foundation, and various institutions, such as the Institute for Agricultural, Fisheries and Food Production Research and Training (IFAPA), the Council of Economy and the Council of Environment and Land Planning of the Regional Government of Andalusia, as well as the Subdelegation of the Government and the City of Almeria.

The SABANA project is funded by the European Union in the framework of the "Blue Growth" program, which is focused on the sustainable use of marine resources.

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