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EU GRANTS €22 MILLION IN FUNDING TO BIO-REFINERY RESEARCH PROJECT LED BY GLANBIA IRELAND

- **Project will explore how to convert by-products from the dairy industry to high value bio-based products including biodegradable plastics -**

The European Commission today announced €22 million in funding for a new bio-economy research project to be led by Glanbia Ireland.

The project, called AgriChemWhey, will receive €22 million in funding from the Bio-Based Industries Joint Undertaking (BBI JU) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme. It is the first dairy industry project to be awarded funding under the programme. The overall value of the project is €30 million with the balance of funding coming from the partners involved.

The project will explore the development of a new state-of-the-art, bio-refinery at Lisheen, Co Tipperary with a world-first process for converting by-products from the dairy industry into high value bio-based products including biodegradable plastics.

AgriChemWhey is based on groundbreaking technology developed and patented by Glanbia Ireland, in collaboration with University College Dublin and Trinity College Dublin. It builds on previous research programmes funded by Enterprise Ireland and research carried out within the Science Foundation Ireland funded Advanced Materials and BioEngineering Research (AMBER) centre.

Making the announcement today, Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development Phil Hogan said: *"I am very pleased to see this project receive funding under the Bio-Based Industries Joint Undertaking. AgriChemWhey is a highly innovative research project, which if successful, will serve as a flagship for Europe's growing bio-economy, contributing towards a more resource efficient European dairy sector, with enormous potential for replication in other areas across Europe, while also providing a boost to jobs and growth in Europe's rural economy."*

Speaking at the launch, Michael Creed TD, Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, said: *"I congratulate Glanbia and all the Irish partners involved in this ground-breaking award. Innovation is a key theme of the Food Wise 2025 strategy for the sustainable growth of the agri-food sector. Projects such as AgriChemWhey will strengthen the environmental sustainability of the sector, while offering new opportunities for rural employment and development."*

Philippe Mengal, Executive Director of BBI JU which has awarded funding to the project commented: *"All of us in BBI JU, together with our founding partners the European Commission and the Bio-based Industries Consortium (BIC) are very pleased to support this project. It is exciting to see Glanbia Ireland and its partners spearhead this research and innovation project as it gives us a clear indication that more actors see the potential offered by a sustainable and competitive bio-based sector for Europe and its citizens"*.



The AgriChemWhey project will take low value by-products from the dairy processing industry – excess whey permeate (WP) and delactosed whey permeate (DLP) - and convert them into cost competitive, sustainable lactic acid. Lactic acid can then be used in value-added bio-based products for growing global markets, including biodegradable plastics, bio-based fertiliser and minerals for human nutrition.

The new technology developed by Glanbia Ireland will provide both the dairy industry and wider society with an opportunity for greater resource efficiency - less food waste, more products from the same starting material (milk), and integration of food and non-food material production.

Julie Sinnamon, CEO of Enterprise Ireland added: *“A key plank of Enterprise’s Ireland engagement with international research and innovation cooperation is through the European Union Research and Innovation Framework Programmes. Enterprise Ireland leads the national support network for Horizon 2020 through which funding for the AgriChemWhey project has been secured. This project is Ireland’s biggest win under the fund to date and illustrates the potential of the fund for Irish companies and researchers. I want other Irish companies to work with us and see Horizon 2020 as an opportunity to innovate and grow their businesses.”*

Professor Mark Ferguson, Director General of Science Foundation Ireland and Chief Scientific Adviser to the Government of Ireland congratulated the partners on this ambitious project stating: *“Ireland is ranked second in the world for Animal and Dairy Research, a topic of great strategic importance to this country and it is a testament to the excellent research being undertaken across industry and academia that competitive European investments of this magnitude are won. I am delighted that Glanbia is leading this project and I hope that other Irish based industries are encouraged by their success to lead and win additional research projects of scale from the EU programmes. The technology garnered from this research will place Ireland at the cutting edge of sustainable agricultural processing, and provide an excellent test bed for the roll-out of new and innovative technologies in the dairy sector.”*

Jim Bergin, CEO of Glanbia Ireland concluded: *“We are very excited about this R&D project which has the potential to harness the potential of by-products from the dairy processing stream and to create a circular bio-economy for the dairy industry. I would like to thank our partners who have contributed to the project so far and most particularly, our funding partner, the BBI JU. We look forward to working together and to taking the project forward to its next phase of development.”*

This project has received funding from the Bio Based Industries Joint Undertaking (BBI-JU) under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 744310. The BBI-JU is a €3.7 billion Public-Private Partnership between the EU and the Bio-based Industries Consortium.

Growth in milk production is set to continue as a result of increasing demand for whey protein for human and animal nutrition globally and the removal of milk production quotas in the EU in 2015, underscoring the need for new technologies, products and markets to manage the associated waste streams.



AgriChemWhey has the potential for replication in other regions across Europe, contributing towards the development of the European bio-economy to promote rural growth, competitiveness and job creation and aligning with European sustainability targets.

The new facility is planned for the new bio-economy innovation campus at Lisheen, Co. Tipperary on the site of the former Lisheen mines. The new bio-economy campus will offer a single hub to enable industry, entrepreneurs and researchers to scale technologies that convert Ireland's natural resources to products of high value for use in a wide variety of sectors.

AgriChemWhey will also partner with Model Demonstrator Regions for sustainable chemicals in Ireland and in Belgium to examine policy development for market uptake of bio-based products and share best practice while working on common challenges together as part of the Irish Bioeconomy Association.

Partners in the AgriChemWhey project include:

- Glanbia Ireland - Project Coordinator;
- University College Dublin (UCD) – Beneficiary;
- AMBER, School of Physics, Trinity College Dublin (TCD) – Beneficiary
- Commercial Mushroom Producers Cooperative Society Ltd (CMP), Ireland – Beneficiary
- PNO Consultants Limited, UK – Beneficiary
- GIG Karasek GmbH, Austria – Beneficiary
- Tipperary County Council, Ireland – Beneficiary
- TEAGASC – Agriculture and Food Development Authority, Ireland – Beneficiary
- Pole Greenwin, Belgium – Beneficiary
- Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium – Beneficiary
- EW Biotech GmbH, Germany - Beneficiary

For more information, visit www.agrichemwhey.com

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About Glanbia Ireland

Glanbia Ireland is a world class, ambitious, integrated agri-food and nutrition business, with a diverse portfolio of quality ingredients, leading consumer and agri brands with the proven talent to succeed in the global market.

Glanbia Ireland is a joint venture 60% owned by Glanbia Co-op and 40% owned by Glanbia plc. Established in July 2017, it combines Glanbia Ingredients Ireland, Glanbia Consumer Products and Glanbia Agribusiness.

Glanbia Ireland owns leading consumer and agri brands such as Avonmore, Kilmeaden Cheese, Premier Milk, Wexford, mymilkman.ie and GAIN Animal Nutrition. It processes a 2.6 billion litre milk pool from 21 counties and exports high quality dairy and agri ingredients as well as branded products to over 60 countries.

With annual revenue of €1.8 billion, Glanbia Ireland has 11 processing plants, 53 agri branches and over 1,800 employees.

About BBI-JU

The Joint Undertaking on Bio-based Industries (BBI-JU) is a €3.7 billion Public-Private Partnership between the EU and the Bio-based Industries Consortium. It aims to increase investment in the development of a sustainable bio-based industry sector in Europe while contributing to establishing Europe as a key player in research, demonstration and deployment of advanced bio-based products and biofuels. The BBI Joint Undertaking's mission is to implement, under Horizon 2020 rules, the Strategic Innovation and Research Agenda (SIRA) developed by the industry and validated by the European Commission.