Swiss start-up’s insect-derived food intent on overcoming consumer bugbear [18 August/Food Navigator]

Essento, a Swiss based start-up, is planning to make its range of insect based burgers and meatballs available to consumers through supermarkets. The products which blend products like rice, vegetables, chickpeas and flavouring with flourworms will initially be offered through seven stores in Geneva, Bern and Zurich. Co-founder of Essento, Christian Bartsch, said the release will enable them to assess how people react to the product and its story, which includes high nutritional profile, high culinary potential and an environmental favourable production footprint. The release is possible due to a change in Swiss food safety laws which now allow insect derived products into the human food chain (up to 1 May, insects were restricted to use in pet food). The law permits the use of crickets, grasshoppers and mealworms in human food, although there are strict production standards which require four generations to be bred under supervision before the insects are certified as fit for human consumption. The updated Swiss regulation is in contrast to situation surrounding how the EU interprets foods made from insects, were they are classified as novel foods and subject to regulatory approval.