

NEWS RELEASE 4-MAR-2024

# Intel Ignite Tel Aviv partners with Hebrew University startup 'Rumafeed' for innovative agricultural project

Business Announcement

THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM

*Hebrew University is thrilled to announce that "Rumafeed," a startup associated with Hebrew University and Yissum, led by Prof. Haim Rabinowitch, has been chosen by Intel Ignite Tel Aviv to partner with Holit on a Proof of Concept (POC). Their project has achieved a remarkable transformation of potato leaves, turning what is currently considered biological waste into a valuable product – animal fodder and silage with excellent digestibility compared to traditional fodder, along with excellent nutritional value.*

As the largest employer in Israel, Intel launched the Intel Ignite acceleration program in 2019 under Tzahi Weisfeld and Alon Leibovich. Initially focusing on deep tech startups, the highly successful acceleration program expanded beyond Israel to the USA, continental Europe, and England. Right now, the events of October 7th led the program's managers to extend the program by utilizing their expertise and abilities to provide innovative technological solutions for supporting the rise from the ruins of the Western Negev. The chosen site for this effort is 'Holit,' a kibbutz in southern Israel's Gaza envelope, historically sustained through agriculture. Following the events of October 7th, where thirteen members of the kibbutz were murdered, substantial damage affected homes, infrastructure, and production units.

The Intel Ignite judging team, consisting of management, venture capitalists, entrepreneurs, and agriculture innovation experts, had the formidable task of selecting projects with the greatest impact. Their objective was to enhance crop yield and quality, streamline agricultural practices, and push the boundaries of agriculture on both Israeli and global levels.

RumaFeed was selected as one of the five companies to partner with Intel Ignite Tel-Aviv. Prof. Rabinowitch, leading RumaFeed, played a key role in revolutionizing the global tomato industry, a world leader in Allium research, and making strides in various ventures. He introduced a groundbreaking method for cultivating dual-purpose potatoes, combining original thinking with modern biological tools, resulting in significant success over the last three years. RumaFeed focuses on solutions to increase global food production, prioritizing environmental sustainability, and addressing nutritional security challenges. Their innovation involves reevaluating the use of crops, especially those in the *Solanaceae* (nightshades) family. While significant portions of the biomass of crops such as wheat, corn, and soy are utilized, Prof. Rabinowitch was aware that valuable components of important crops like potatoes and tomatoes are discarded due to the accumulation of toxic substances known as glycoalkaloids in the foliage.

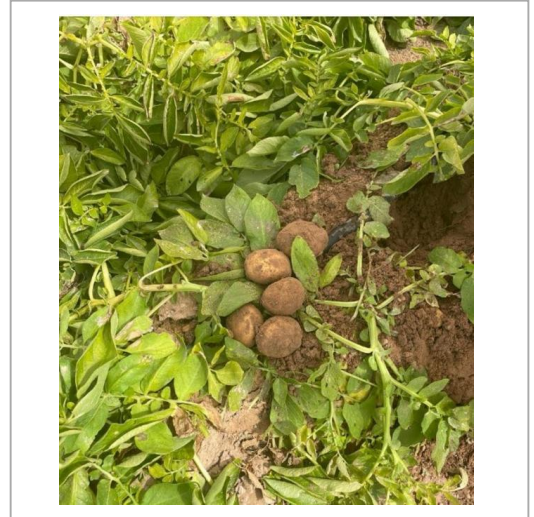


IMAGE:

**UNVEILING A VIBRANT GREEN LANDSCAPE WITH TUBERS THAT WERE CONCEALED BENEATH THE SOIL, NOW BROUGHT INTO VIEW.**

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Modern biology tools provide a solution by halting glycoalkaloid synthesis even under optimal conditions. Through this innovative approach, the project has successfully transformed what was once considered biological waste into a valuable feed. Notably, potato leaves have been found to be more digestible than traditional fodder, and feeding experiments have demonstrated normal and even superior development compared to standard hay feed for livestock.

The conventional method of growing potatoes involves vine-killing 10-20 days before harvesting the tubers, primarily achieved through the application of herbicides. Hence, posing environmental hazards and economic challenges. Up to this point, RumaFeed varieties farming follows the same cultivation methods as standard practice. However, it offers a unique solution in subsequent steps. Instead of disposing of the haulm by killing and trashing it, RumaFeed harvests and transforms the haulm into high-value fodder or silage, requiring no additional investments in resources. This environmentally friendly approach provides a highly nutritious alternative for animal feed, contributes to the income of potato growers, and mitigates environmental.

Global estimates suggest that integrating RumaFeed varieties could generate 150-200 million tons of high-quality feed, enabling more extensive production of human food and raw materials without compromising critical areas or natural values.

Given the favorable climate, inputs, skills, and human qualities in the settlements of the Western Negev, this region has become Israel's primary potato producer.

RumaFeed has obtained exclusive IP rights for the above from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem/Yisum. RumaFeed will now align with Intel Ignite's acceleration program to establish a business venture in Holit, dedicated to cultivating RumaFeed varieties. The goal is to leverage advanced technologies, prioritizing sustainability and a circular economy to produce high-quality propagation materials for RumaFeed varieties. Being recognized as a promising startup by Intel Ignite provides a supportive platform, merging the biotechnology expertise from the Hebrew University's now owned by RumaFeed with the Company's capabilities. This collaboration, enriched by the unique qualities of Holit's residents and favorable environmental conditions, is poised to significantly contribute to the settlement and neighboring areas. It holds the promise of advancing agricultural practices, benefiting Israel and the global community by enhancing human food security.

"My journey with RumaFeed personnel and board, in partnership with Intel Ignite, embodies a commitment to redefining agricultural practices. The collaboration in Holit signifies more than a mere business venture; it constitutes a mission to convert waste into valuable resources, enhance crop yield, and bolster global food security. Following the tragic events of October 7th, there's a compelling urgency to channel our efforts towards positive and impactful initiatives. With cutting-edge technologies and a steadfast focus on sustainability, we aspire to create a positive impact on the environment and the community. Together, we aim to elevate agricultural practices, not only within Israel but on a global scale, ensuring a future where innovation converges with nutritional security." - Prof. Haim Rabinowitch, Hebrew University, CTO of RumaFeed

#### METHOD OF RESEARCH

Experimental study

#### SUBJECT OF RESEARCH

Not applicable

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