

ASR Group Announces Strategic Investment In Bonumose, Inc. To Bring Lower-Cost, Plant-Based Sugar Alternatives To The Market

Investment will accelerate the production and commercialization of tagatose and allulose and will expand ASR Group's sweetener portfolio to meet consumers' wide variety of needs

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WEST PALM BEACH, Fla., Feb. 17, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- American Sugar Refining, Inc., a member of ASR Group, made a strategic investment in Bonumose, Inc. to produce and commercialize lower-cost, plant-based alternative sweeteners tagatose and allulose as part of ASR Group's strategy to provide a variety of products to meet the wide range of consumer needs.

The Series B investment round in Bonumose, a start-up company with innovations in plant-based food ingredients, was co-led by American Sugar Refining and The Hershey Company (NYSE: HSY).

Bonumose developed and patented a production process for high-purity rare sugars, including tagatose and allulose, from low-cost, abundant, plant-based starches. These products have fewer calories than traditional sugars and a negligible glycemic index impact.

Importantly for food manufacturers and consumers, tagatose and allulose taste closer to sugar than any other alternative. These sugar alternatives also offer the texture and mouthfeel similar to the functional properties of sugar, without the need to add fillers such as maltodextrin or dextrose. Tagatose and allulose perform well across a variety of categories, including

confectionery, frozen desserts, beverages, dried fruit, dairy, baked goods, condiments, ready-to-eat cereal and keto-friendly protein bars. Tagatose and allulose have been well known by the global food industry, but historical cost structures have limited the widespread application of these rare sugars.

"ASR Group is committed to providing our customers with solutions to meet all of their sweetening needs," said Rob Sproull, ASR Group's Senior Vice President of Sales, Marketing & Product Development. "Sugar sets a high bar in terms of taste, functionality and cost, and most sugar alternatives fall short. Our investment in Bonumose expands our portfolio to provide customers with sugar alternatives that offer full flavor, closely-matching functionality across multiple food and beverage applications, and at a lower cost than other alternatives."

ASR Group is Bonumose's distribution partner for food, dietary supplements, personal care and pharmaceutical customers in the United States, Mexico, Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland and much of mainland Europe.

"Bonumose could not hope for two better strategic investors than The Hershey Company and ASR Group," said Ed Rogers, Bonumose CEO and Co-Founder. "Sugar (sucrose) is the gold standard, and ASR Group is the world's leading cane sugar refiner and marketer. We have been impressed with the talent of ASR Group's people, their strong customer relationships and the depth of their knowledge of specialty sweeteners. Similarly, we admire Hershey's longstanding legacy and commitment to innovation and appreciate their support in helping Bonumose achieve our mission of making delicious, plant-based sugar alternatives affordable for more consumers."

Bonumose will use the investments to develop its first commercial-scale tagatose and allulose production plant and to advance development of products in its R&D pipeline.

"As an industry leader, Hershey remains committed to giving consumers a broad portfolio that offers the choices they seek to meet their many snacking needs," said Hershey President, U.S. Chuck Raup. "In response and as part of our strategic vision, we're making strategic investments, both internally and externally, and have a focused plan that allows us to make reduced and zero-sugar chocolate that still has the same amazing taste consumers know and love."

Bonumose's science team is led by Dr. Daniel Wichelecki, Chief Scientific Officer, Co-Founder, and primary inventor for Bonumose's patented process for affordable tagatose and allulose production. Bonumose has patents granted or allowed in the U.S., Japan, Korea, Europe, Mexico, China, and many other countries. Previous investors include Bangchak, iSelect Fund, Argonautic Ventures, Applied Food Sciences, Cure8 Ventures, Next Gen Nutrition Investment Fund and a Japan-based food company.

About American Sugar Refining, Inc.

American Sugar Refining, Inc. is a subsidiary of ASR Group International, Inc. (ASR Group), the world's largest refiner and marketer of cane sugar, with an annual production capacity of more than 6 million tons of sugar. The company produces a full line of grocery, industrial, food service and specialty sweetener products. Across North America, ASR Group owns and operates six sugar refineries, located in New York, California, Maryland, Louisiana, Canada and Mexico. In Europe, the company owns and operates sugar refineries in the United Kingdom, Portugal, and, with a joint venture partner, Italy. ASR Group also farms sugarcane and owns sugar mills in Mexico and Belize. The company's portfolio includes the leading brands Domino®, C&H®, Florida Crystals®, Redpath®, Tate & Lyle®, Lyle's® and Sidul®. ASR Group is owned by Florida-based cane sugar producers Florida Crystals Corporation and Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative of Florida. ASR Group and its parent companies jointly own Tellus Products, LLC, a maker of single-use, compostable tableware and food-service products from sugarcane fiber. For more information, visit www.ASR-Group.com.

About Bonumose, Inc.

Bonumose, Inc. (www.bonumose.com) is an early-stage food ingredient and enzyme innovation company based in Charlottesville, Virginia. Bonumose is supported by global strategic investors and "food for health"-focused institutional investors, and an expanding ecosystem of collaboration partners across the value chain. Bonumose developed and patented a technology platform for continuous production of high-purity rare sugars – such as tagatose and allulose – from low-cost, plant-based feedstocks (starch). Bonumose's cost-advantaged process makes possible the mass-market adoption of healthy, great-tasting, fully-functional rare sugars. Going beyond commodity starch as its feedstock, Bonumose upcycles by-product/sidestream starch left over from its supply chain partners' food production, such as pea protein production and potato processing. Beyond food ingredients, under Dr. Wichelecki's

technical leadership Bonumose is developing enzyme solutions for dietary supplements, crop protection, animal nutrition and other industries. Bonumose operates with a philosophy of *Business as a Moral Imperative*.

SOURCE ASR Group