

Suntory Holdings and Suntory Beverage & Food Europe Sign New Partnership with CIRAD to Tackle Global Orange Disease

Tokyo, Japan (June 6, 2024) — Suntory Holdings, one of the world's leading beverage companies, and its subsidiary Suntory Beverage & Food Europe (SBFE) have signed a partnership with CIRAD, the French agricultural research organization to launch an ambitious experimental program to tackle the global "yellow dragon" disease, one of the factors negatively impacting orange harvests.

The "yellow dragon" disease or Huanglongbing (HLB) is a bacteriosis of citrus fruits. It causes symptoms such as deformation of the fruit, its size, a reduced organoleptic quality and above all a lower yield. Suntory Group uses orange juice in many of its iconic soft drink brands and products across the globe and protection of the orange crop is important, both for the integrity of supply but also to support the total value chain associated with orange growing, an important crop for the agricultural community.

Guided by its value of "Growing For Good", the Suntory Group has a long-standing commitment to responsible and regenerative agriculture. This commitment is reflected in many projects supported by the group, such as the regenerative agriculture program initiated in the United Kingdom in collaboration with blackcurrant producers, whose objective is to improve the quality of soils and crops while preserving biodiversity.

The project deployed by Suntory Holdings, Suntory Beverage & Food Europe and CIRAD is part of this long-term strategy with the aim of providing a solution to the problems encountered by the juice orange sector. It aims to anticipate and preserve the sector, for the benefit of all stakeholders. The Group's orange-based beverages marketed in France, Belgium and Spain will benefit from the results of this project, and the benefit may potentially expand to other regions in the future.

Brian Golden, Senior General Manager of Global Supply Solutions, Suntory Holdings commented:

"Our support for this research project with CIRAD to combat Huanglongbing (HLB) reflects Suntory's dedication to agricultural sustainability. By addressing this devastating disease, we aim to secure the future of citrus farming, safeguard livelihoods, and ensure a steady supply of healthy oranges. This initiative underscores our commitment to innovative solutions and long-term community benefits that can only be solved through strong global collaboration."

Michelle Norman, Director of External Affairs and Sustainability, Suntory Beverage & Food Europe said:

"Our commitment to providing moments of conviviality and pleasure is based on a sustainable approach. The project, carried out in collaboration with CIRAD, may not only help to guarantee a supply of quality oranges, but also to help the entire sector affected by HLB. It benefits all communities and is part of the long term. This is a good illustration of our responsibility as part of our Growing for Good sustainability action plan."

The Group is joining forces with CIRAD to test a promising varietal innovation* resulting from its research which is already tested on bitter oranges. The objective is to allow orange trees to better tolerate HLB disease and therefore extend their lifespan and years of production. The technology will be tested via the planting of experimental fields in April 2025 in Guadeloupe, then in October 2025 in Brazil. The ambition is also to deploy it in Spain, to verify its adaptation to European conditions and thus anticipate and contain possible contamination in the Mediterranean basin, which has so far been preserved.

This 6-year experimental project is intended to address the urgency of the situation that threatens the global supply of juice oranges.

Raphael Morillon, Research Director at CIRAD and head of the project for the scientific part, says:

"This experiment, carried out in cooperation with Suntory and SBFE, is a medium-term response to the tense situation in the orange sector that we are currently experiencing. We are proud to have entered into this partnership, which gives us the opportunity to continue deploying our research results in the field. It is through the collective commitment of all the citrus sector stakeholders that we will be able to move forward together and find solutions against HLB."

The project in a few figures:

2024: signature and launch of the partnership with the sending of equipment and preparation of the experiment in Brazil and Guadeloupe

2025: planting of experimental fields in Brazil and Guadeloupe

6 years: duration of the project

* This technical solution is based on polyploidy, a process common in plants leading to the doubling of their chromosome number s . Indeed, in nature, it is not uncommon for the number of chromosome batches to be greater than two. However, CIRAD and other teams of researchers have observed that these so-called "tetraploids" trees may have superior properties for adapting to environmental constraints. The idea is then to study and select varieties of tetraploid rootstocks and fruit plants that will confer better tolerance to the disease and reduce symptoms.

About Suntory Group

As a global leader in the beverage industry, Suntory Group offers a uniquely diverse portfolio of products, from premium spirits, beer, wine, ready-to-drink alcohol beverages, to brewed teas, bottled water, still and carbonated soft drinks, ready-to-drink coffee and energy drinks, along with health and wellness products. Suntory is home to award-winning Japanese whiskies *Yamazaki*, *Hibiki* and *Hakushu*, as well as iconic American spirits *Jim Beam* and *Maker's Mark*. Suntory also fascinates the taste buds with *The Premium Malt's* beer, and owns the exceptional Japanese wine, *Tomi*, and the world-famous *Château Lagrange*. Its brand collection includes *Sauza Tequila*, non-alcoholic favorites *Orangina*, *Lucozade*, *Ribena*, *BOSS* coffee, *Iyemon* green tea, *Suntory Tennensui* water, *TEA+ Oolong Tea*, *V* and *BRAND'S*, as well as popular health and wellness product *Sesamin EX*.

Founded as a family-owned business in 1899 in Osaka, Japan, Suntory Group has grown into a global company operating throughout the Americas, Europe, Africa, Asia and Oceania, with an annual revenue (excluding excise taxes) of \$20.9 billion in 2023. Its 41,511 employees worldwide draw upon the unique blend of Japanese artisanship and global tastes to explore new product categories and markets.

As a corporation sustained by the gifts of nature and water, Suntory Group will always protect the ecosystems that deliver water. Because its ecosystem is the wellspring, not only of its business and the rich experiences the group creates for people's lives, but also of human life itself. Suntory Group will continue to be a company where everyone is empowered with the freedom and flexibility to innovate. Through all of its corporate pursuits, Suntory seeks to inspire the brilliance of life.

Learn more about Suntory Group, its brands, and its commitment to social responsibility and sustainability at www.suntory.com, on [Facebook](#), [X](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [YouTube](#).

About Suntory Beverage & Food Europe

Suntory Beverage & Food Europe (SBFE) was established in 2014 and is one of five regional divisions of the Japan-based Suntory Group, one of the leading global drinks companies. We're proud to be part of a family-owned business with its inspiring

120-year heritage and we are guided by Shinjiro Torii's founding spirit. SBFE is made up of 3,400 passionate people working throughout Europe on hugely iconic brands including Schweppes*, Orangina, Lucozade, Ribena, La Casera, Oasis*, Pulco and MayTea with a commitment to producing great-tasting, healthier drinks. As a corporation sustained by the gifts of nature and water, Suntory Group and SBFE will always protect the ecosystems that deliver water because its ecosystem is the wellspring, not only of its business and the rich experiences the group creates for people's lives, but also of human life itself. SBFE will continue to be a company where everyone is empowered with the freedom and flexibility to innovate. Through its corporate pursuits, Suntory seeks to inspire the brilliance of life.

**Owned and commercialized within SBFE respective territories*

For more information, please visit our [website](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

About CIRAD

CIRAD, Centre for International Cooperation in Agricultural Research for Development, is the French agricultural research and international cooperation organization for the sustainable development of tropical and Mediterranean regions. It is also a partner of the French National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment (INRAE) and has established itself as one of the most advanced centers for research related to citrus fruits.

With its partners, it co-constructs knowledge and solutions for resilient agriculture in a more sustainable and united world. It mobilizes science, innovation and training to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. It puts its expertise at the service of all, from producers to public policies, to promote the protection of biodiversity, agroecological transitions, the sustainability of food systems, health (of plants, animals and ecosystems), the sustainable development of rural territories and their resilience to climate change. Present on all continents in some fifty countries, CIRAD relies on the skills of its 1,800 employees, including 1,240 scientists, as well as a global network of 200 partners. It supports France's science diplomacy. www.cirad.fr

Concerning CIRAD's work on citrus fruits: In Guadeloupe and Martinique, CIRAD is currently evaluating triploid, tetraploid genotypes and different citrus populations newly created for their HLB tolerance/resistance properties. In addition, in collaboration with INRAE, CIRAD manages one of the largest collections of citrus fruits in the world in Corsica (more than 600 cultivars and 200 rootstocks).