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## Bakery veteran acquires stake in 'diabetic bread' biotech firm

By RJ Whitehead, 18-Feb-2016

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**Meiert Grootes, chairman of Europe's biggest supplier of speciality baking products, has acquired a stake in a Malaysian-Australian biotech firm that earlier this year launched ingredients to produce the world's first clean-label, low-GI "diabetic" white bread.**

Holista Colltech, which develops "*natural healthstyle products*", announced that Grootes's shares, when fully exercised, would allow the 27-year bakery industry veteran to own up to 10% of the company. Within three years, he expected to emerge as Holista's third-biggest shareholder, the company said in a statement.

In January, Holista CollTech claimed a global scientific breakthrough when it announced it had developed ingredients to produce a white bread with a glycemic index of 53—the world's lowest for such a product. The company said its blend significantly reduced the high blood sugar levels caused by consuming white bread and bakery products.

Its claims have been validated by an Australian university, which conducted a final clinical study in December, confirming that white bread blended with Holista's GI Lite formula and a natural sourdough by Veripan, the Swiss company which Grootes chairs, registered the lowest glycemic index level ever achieved by any clean-label white bread.

The formula consists of Holista's GI Lite, which contains extracts of okra, lentils, barley and fenugreek, and Veripan's Pantura sourdough.

Rajen Marnicka, chairman and chief executive of Holista, called the results a "*major breakthrough*" at a time of growing concerns surrounding high blood sugar levels across Asia-Pacific.

Holista and Veripan will initially begin their joint distribution of Panatura GI in Australia around October. The roll-out will be followed in Europe, North America, China, India and the rest of Asia. The global white bread market is worth US\$170bn.

Holista claims that the use of Panatura GI will increase production costs marginally, and will comprise roughly 5-7% of the final formulation.

Grootes said: "*I can say with conviction that this is the best thing since sliced bread. With Holista's expertise and our business networks, we intend to make this revolutionary ingredient available to food manufacturers around the world.*"

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