

ASPIRE

Vision : A world transformed by insect technology.

Our vision is to pioneer insect agriculture for the good of all. We are creating tomorrow's traditions through breakthrough innovations that are in harmony with our largest stakeholder: our planet. We aim to accelerate the world's transition to sustainable ingredients and materials. We believe in technology that unleashes, rather than replaces, the incredible treasures of our natural world. We Aspire to a world that is abundant in Planet-Based Nutrition™ that is better for people, pets and plants.

Mission: Harness the combined powers of technology and nature to pioneer the future of farming.

In order to bring cricket protein to mainstream markets, we must successfully commission and operate the world's lowest cost commercial facility selling crickets and frass at a profit, with demonstrable positive environmental and social outcomes. We produce best in class financial, environmental, and social positive returns for all stakeholders through relentless investment in R&D, human capital, and quality assurance in the production of crickets and their by-products for use in food, feed, and other industrial applications. We refuse to live in a world where food and nutrition insecurity abound, and we have the **Audacity, Skills, Passion, Ingenuity, Rebelliousness** and commitment to **Excellence (ASPIRE)** to do something about it.

Brief History of Aspire Food Group

Aspire Food Group was created in 2013 by McGill University MBA students Mohammed Ashour, Shobhita Soor, Gabriel Mott, Jesse Pearlstein, and Zev Thompson. Recognizing the global issue of food security and searching for a solution that would not do more harm to our planet than good, they decided to create a business that would produce a high-quality protein with a low environmental footprint - namely insect protein. Their idea would go on to win the [2013 Hult Prize](#), rising to the top amongst 11,000 other proposals and winning the \$1 million dollar top award.

In 2014, Aspire started a palm weevil larva farming pilot facility with KNUST University in Ghana, the first of its kind on the continent. The same year, Aspire incorporated in Mexico to conduct R&D in the southern state of Oaxaca while simultaneously launching a pilot cricket production facility in Austin, Texas, earning their first revenue dollar in the USA. The decentralized model of farming piloted in Ghana, which involved smallholder farmers, demonstrated the challenges of raising insects via a cottage industry where quality control is paramount. As a result, in 2015 Aspire Ghana launched a centralized production facility in Kumasi, Ghana. Aspire Food Group Ghana would go on to spin off from Aspire Food Group in 2020 and become Legendary Foods Africa, with Co-Founder of Aspire Shobhita Soor serving as CEO. Meanwhile, the pilot facility in Austin highlighted the need for further automation of cricket farming to achieve lower costs and higher production.

In 2017, Aspire built its second pilot plant in Austin, Texas, a Research and Development facility that was custom built for the purpose of testing and demonstrating the technologies necessary to commercialize production and advance insect agriculture into the 21st Century.

In 2018, recognizing a strategic opportunity to market its story directly to consumers, Aspire acquired EXO and consolidated a number of consumer packaged goods under a single brand.

Aspire continued to automate its production process through 2019 by relying heavily on data gathered from the pilot scale facility. Aspire ultimately succeeded in laying the groundwork for scaling to commercial production and began to look for a site to bring production to commercial scale.

An exhaustive search of potential sites for the world's first automated cricket protein production facility ultimately led to London, Ontario as the selected site, in part due to significant support and financial backing from the Canadian Government. The chosen site is aptly located at the intersection of Concept Drive and Innovation Drive, is in an industrial park owned by the City of London and dedicated to innovation in food processing.

Aspire contracted with EllisDon, and in 2020, broke ground on construction of the world's largest cricket production facility. The plant will showcase technologies including robotics, automated storage and retrieval, sensors, and artificial intelligence. Aspire commenced hiring a world-class production and development team in London.

In 2021, shifting its focus and core competency increasingly towards manufacturing, indoor production automation, and ingredient development, Aspire sold the EXO brand to Hoppy Planet Foods. By consolidating its focus exclusively on being an ingredient supplier, Aspire is well-positioned to serve its numerous customers in the human and pet food markets.

In late 2021, the Artificial Intelligence solution developed by Aspire and DarwinAI was selected as one of the Top 10 Outstanding Projects applying AI to advance the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The Aspire / DarwinAI project – “Novel Application of Advanced Manufacturing Approaches to High Quality Protein” – was one of two outstanding solutions in North America, the other submitted by NASA.

Aspire Food Group is on track to become the largest producer of cricket protein in the world. At 150,000 square feet and 11 stories tall, Aspire's London facility is expected to produce up to 12,000 metric tonnes of crickets annually beginning in 2022. Aspire continues to invest in and conduct R&D at the pilot facility in Austin, Texas, USA.

Awards:

2013 - Hult Prize (Overall Winner)

2015 - The Food Lab Food Challenge Prize (Division Winner - Healthy Eating & Nutrition)

2015 - Top 3 Impact Makers in McGill MBA Program History (Top MBA Impact Maker)

2017 - Rabobank FoodBytes! (Highly Commended Award)

2018 - Singularity University Global Grand Challenge Awards (Food Security Award)

2018 - Fast Company's List of 100 World Changing Ideas

2021 - IRCAI Top 10 Outstanding Project