switchasia Funded by the European Union

ACEBA
ASEAN Circular Economy Business Alliance

CIRCULAR ECONOMY BUSINESS CASE STUDIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA



Lemit Foods & Lemit Ingredients

- Can Tho, Vietnam
- Food industry
- facebook.com/lemitfoods
- Analysis period: 2023-2026

Enabling Low-carbon Food Production with Jackfruit-derived Ingredients

Business Spotlight

Lemit, covering the Lemit Foods and the Lemit Ingredients brands of Innovative Food Technology Joint Stock Company (IFT) based in Can Tho, Vietnam, develops functional, structured food ingredients from under-utilised young jackfruit. The company transforms jackfruit fibre, well-known for its ability to absorb flavours and mimic meat textures, into versatile ingredients for plant-based and blended protein foods. This preserves nutritional value, reduces food loss, and creates ingredients suitable for low-carbon, alternative protein foods.

The company contributes to resource circularity, through the conversion of by-products into food-ingredients, and resource efficiency by supplying jackfruit fibre that create meat-like texture and properties to lower-carbon plant proteins. Lemit supplements farmer incomes, diversifies markets, and builds resilience against climate and market volatility. Lemit Foods gathered experience in consumer foods, which Lemit Ingredients uses to build a business-to-business (B2B) ingredient platform intended to help food manufacturers create familiar products with more plant-derived components. The focus is on three practical functionalities: texture, water holding, and formulation flexibility.

Lemit increasingly focuses on industrial food ingredient production for commercial viability, circularity and social impact. Ingredient standardisation, industrial validation, traceability, and scaling are required, and they call for wider farmer participation in sourcing young jackfruits. Lemit turns a locally available low-value fruit byproduct into a versatile food ingredient system that supports use and acceptance of alternative proteins. The company has embedded livelihood resilience, inclusivity and sustainability to demonstrate that a socially-oriented enterprise can drive environmental benefits, empower communities, and achieve business success.

Keywords

young jackfruits, functional food fibre, alternative protein food

Innovation

Product, Manufacturing, End-of-life management, Resource circularity, Resource efficiency

Analysis of Lemit Food & Lemit Ingredients

Context and baseline

Vietnam produces close to one million tonnes of jackfruit annually from approximately 84,000 ha under cultivation, of which around 56,000 ha are currently productive.[1,2] In 2021 the Mekong Delta accounted for more than 38,000 ha of jackfruit cultivation.[3] Young jackfruit is removed during orchard management and in absence of an established buyer is commonly discarded or left without a food use, despite its nutritional and functional value.

Established in May 2023, Lemit began by developing branded foods rooted in Vietnamese eating habits and familiar textures. Its consumer product experience has generated know-how in preparation, flavour acceptance, packaging and processing. It has reported a portfolio of about 15 stock-keeping units (SKUs), including jackfruit pâté, Vietnamese-style sausage, spring rolls, dumplings and puff snacks. These consumer products, under brand name Lemit Foods, remain an important market-learning and revenue channel while the company develops its B2B ingredient business, under the brand name Lemit Ingredients.

The wider opportunity is not to position jackfruit fibre as an alternative to the protein content of soy or pea ingredients.. Instead, it can complement such ingredients by offering structure and moisture retention. This distinction matters in blended foods, where manufacturers may need to maintain a familiar eating experience while changing the ratio of animal and plant components.

Innovation

The company's innovation journey began with jackfruit-based consumer product development and has since evolved into a broader ingredient innovation strategy. The company has found that the uniqueness of young jackfruit is not the protein concentration, but the unique fibrous structure. After appropriate processing the fibres deliver critical food functionalities such as structured natural fibre, texture and bite, moisture retention, product body and structure, and compatibility with diverse formulations.

The Lemit innovation is also rooted in Vietnamese cuisine and culture, incorporating traditional flavours and dishes to create products distinct from existing plant-based offerings. Such cultural integration strengthens consumer resonance and distinguishes Lemit in global markets. The company has already commercialised jackfruit-based pâté, sausages, spring-roll and dumpling fillings. These products promote health and wellness, offering jackfruit-fibre-based food as a healthier alternative to traditional meat, and appealing to flexitarian consumers along with vegetarians/vegans and meat-eaters.

Lemit Ingredients is now focused on conversion of young jackfruit into functional fibre formats suitable for product development and eventual industrial use. Lemit has developed and is refining shredded, minced and other prepared fibre formats. Their utility depends on particle size, processing conditions, water uptake, formulation composition, freezing or cooking conditions and the customer's target texture.

Lemit emphasises three qualities. First, texture: fibrous material may contribute body and a meat-like bite where appropriate. Second, water holding: the fibre may help manage product juiciness and cooking behaviour in particular recipes. Third, formulation flexibility: manufacturers can explore different inclusion levels, ingredient combinations and formats without necessarily creating an entirely new food product category.

The ingredient platform is relevant to food manufacturers, food-service operators, original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), co-manufacturers and ingredient distributors. Its intended uses include fillings for dumplings and spring rolls, structured meatball or burger mixtures, sausages and pâté concepts with a reduced share of animal-derived ingredients'.

Lemit demonstrates that a locally available B-grade fruit can become the foundation for a globally relevant, lower-carbon food-ingredient system. Their innovations address principally taste and texture to ensure consumer acceptance, health and wellness promotion. They also support local farmers and communities, and contribute to environmental sustainability.



1 https://www.producereport.com/article/fresh-vietnamese-jackfruit-approved-import-china
2 https://www.vietnam.vn/en/mot-loai-qua-ban-day-cho-viet-gia-re-beo-tro-thanh-mat-hang-xuat-khau-chu-luc-dat-con-so-hang-chuc-trieu-usd-chi-trong-nua-nam
3 https://www.itfnet.org/v1/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/jackfruit-report-final-no-isbn.pdf

Circular Economy impact

The innovative jackfruit-based consumer products and ingredient platform of Lemit supports the circular economy in two complementary ways. First, Lemit recovers and adds value to under-valued and under-utilised young jackfruit that would otherwise be largely wasted, showing resource circularity. Second, these jackfruit-derived ingredients provide meat-like texture and properties that make it possible to partially or fully replace animal protein in final food products with less resource-intensive plant-based and/or other non-meat proteins, exemplifying resource efficiency.

In 2026, the company has been processing some 25 tonnes of young jackfruit, preventing both the potential disposal of this fruit as waste and the environmental pollution and nuisance this disposal would have otherwise created. In addition, the jackfruit peels that remain from processing are returned to farms for composting.

The reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that results from replacing animal protein with plant-based protein is highly dependent on the specific protein substitutions and the production systems and regions. A recent review of international studies found GHG emission reductions of between 40% and 98% per kg of protein when plant proteins replaced animal proteins.[4]



Business and market impact

Since their entry into the market, the commercial activity of Lemit has grown substantially, evolving from a consumer-focused brand selling food products into a business-to-business (B2B) food-ingredient developer and supplier. This transition is aiming for circular value creation at scale, as customers include Lemit jackfruit-derived ingredients in their food products for consumers using their existing production systems.

Stakeholders

In 2026 Lemit is employing around 11 staff, with women representing the majority of the workforce. The company's strategy is to leverage diverse stakeholders and channels to advance a vision of sustainable, healthy, more plant-based food choices. The key stakeholder groups are food manufacturers, OEM partners, food-service operators, distributors, retailers, and international food-sector partners. Food manufacturers and OEM partners collaborate with Lemit Ingredients to test and incorporate jackfruit-derived fibre ingredients into commercial food formulations, and to enable Lemit Foods to specialise in and scale up the processing of jackfruit into food ingredients.

Lemit sources young jackfruit from one cooperative (that brings together around 30 jackfruit-growing households) and 10 individual jackfruit-growing households. Beyond product innovation, Lemit also invests in education, awareness campaigns and community engagement, reinforcing their role as both technology innovator and social-impact driver. Partnerships ensure fair pricing, sustainable sourcing, and livelihood resilience, especially in communities facing market volatility and climate pressures; and circular agricultural practices are reinforced. Research and technical partners contribute expertise in food technology, circular design, and impact measurement. This model contributes to diversification of farmer income, improved utilisation of agricultural produce, greater value capture from fruit not entering premium fresh markets, and more resilient agricultural livelihoods.

Lemit has learned and connected through programmes and organisations supporting circular design, food innovation and enterprise development, including CIRCO, Yunus Environment Hub, GIZ, UNDP, UNEP, PUM, New Energy Nexus and the Royal Academy of Engineering. Their contributions include mentoring, technical learning, business development and international exposure. Participation in these initiatives should not be construed as product certification, financing commitments or third-party validation of every environmental claim.

Implementation

Lemit Foods achieved ISO 22000:2018 and HACCP food-safety certifications, along with One Commune One Product (OCOP) recognition for its eligible consumer products. In 2026 Lemit Foods was preparing for Halal certification. To advance towards industrial scale, it establishes documented processing procedures, ingredient specifications and certificates of analysis, for batch

4 https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2772801325000429#tbl0003

consistency, traceable sourcing and customer trials. Manufacturers require more than a sustainability narrative: they need predictable texture, food safety, supply availability, pricing, lead times and technical support that fits their production lines. Lemit's formulation support is therefore organised around practical application tests, quality records and iterative customer feedback.

Alongside commercial learning, Lemit is strengthening the measurement of its resource inputs, conversion yields, organic residues and potential emissions effects. Transparent reporting distinguishes current performance from ambitions and allows the circular ingredient model to develop on the basis of evidence, rather than claims alone.

The implementation approach at Lemit Ingredients is designed as a drop-in solution for food manufacturers. Clients can adopt jackfruit-derived fibre ingredients by adjusting recipes rather than making equipment changes, thus avoiding costly factory retrofits. The company's R&D department supports product reformulation, including a small AI-driven project to accelerate ingredient integration in customers' existing food products. The activities at Lemit include R&D for taste and texture comparable to traditional animal protein foods, development of diverse product applications, marketing and outreach to increase awareness and demand, and continuous stakeholder engagement to refine solutions based on feedback and data.

Takeaways

Lemit has transformed from producing young jackfruit-based foods to becoming a producer of jackfruit-derived ingredients that food manufacturers can use to reformulate lower-carbon, vegetarian or blended variants of their existing animal protein food products. The company's development journey has brought together agriculture, technology, livelihoods and culinary heritage, demonstrating that circular innovation can be implemented at scale, and can bridge agricultural byproduct value creation, food technology and market adoption while systematically addressing the challenges of standardisation, validation and impact measurement.

Farmers, employees, partners and communities are central to Lemit's success, reinforcing their identity as a socially oriented enterprise. The company's active participation in Vietnamese and international programmes on sustainable food systems, climate action and inclusive business development has provided external validation, technical support, mentoring, and international exposure. Their business experience demonstrates a potential for adaptation to other fruits and their byproducts to reduce food loss, create new ingredients with added value, and strengthen farmer livelihoods.

ACEBA
ASEAN Circular Economy Business Alliance

ARAIBA

switchasia

Funded by the European Union

Acknowledgements

This business case study was prepared for the ASEAN Circular Economy Business Alliance (ACEBA) within the framework of the Technical Advisory project: Mobilising Business Action for Circular Economy in the ASEAN countries under the EU SWITCH-Asia Policy Support Component for the sole purpose of documenting and analysing business experiences with circular economy. ACEBA is an ASEAN-centric and business-led initiative that fosters business leadership and action on circular economy in Southeast Asia. ACEBA is an initiative of ARAIBA Sdn Bhd, a not-for-profit business organization that promotes responsible and inclusive business, in collaboration with national business membership organizations and with technical advisory of the EU SWITCH-Asia Policy Support Component.

The business case was produced by Sri Shalini Sathyanarayanan (circular economy expert) and reviewed by Rene Van Berkel and Thomas Thomas (regional experts and ACEBA co-convenors) on the basis of information provided and validated by Lemit Foods & Lemit Ingredients (brands of Innovative Food Technology JSC), Vietnam.

Disclaimer

The content of this publication is the joint responsibility of Lemit Foods & Lemit Ingredients (brands of Innovative Food Technology JSC), Vietnam.and the expert team. This publication does not constitute an endorsement of Lemit Foods & Lemit Ingredients (brands of Innovative Food Technology JSC), Vietnam. by the European Union nor any of the partners of the SWITCH-Asia Policy Support Component, nor necessarily reflect their views.

© 2026 SWITCH-Asia

www.aceba.co

info@aceba.co

www.switch-asia.eu

EU SWITCH-Asia Programme
@EUSWITCHAsia

SWITCH-Asia
@SWITCHAsia

SWITCH-Asia Official
@switch-asia-official