

As the Global Vanilla Industry Looks for Alternatives to Synthetic Vanilla, Israeli Company Vanilla Vida Is Building a New Infrastructure for Reliable Natural Vanilla Supply in Uganda

Vanilla Vida has launched a **2 hectare** vanilla cultivation, processing and curing site in Uganda, alongside the completion of a first-of-its-kind controlled natural vanilla growing process in Israel - resulting in a raw material with vanillin levels several times higher than the market standard.

~99%

OF VANILLA PRODUCTS ARE SYNTHETIC TODAY

2 ha

NEW CULTIVATION SITE IN UGANDA

× several

VANILLIN ABOVE MARKET STANDARD

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OPERATING HUBS ACROSS 3 COUNTRIES

Although vanilla is one of the world's most widely used and loved flavors, it is estimated that around 99% of vanilla products used today by the food industry are based on synthetic ingredients or vanillin that is not extracted directly from natural vanilla beans.

The reason lies in a long-standing challenge in the natural vanilla market: global shortages, sharp price volatility, concentration of

cultivation in limited geographic regions, and supply difficulties that make it hard for food manufacturers to rely on natural vanilla over time.

The industry's key challenge is not the development of a new vanilla variety, but the ability to produce natural vanilla consistently, at sufficient scale, with uniform quality and long-term price stability.

A new cultivation and curing infrastructure in Uganda

Against this backdrop, Israeli agro-foodtech company Vanilla Vida has launched a new agricultural site in Uganda, covering 20 dunams. The site includes climate-controlled vanilla greenhouses, a curing and processing facility, quality control infrastructure, and operational and data systems. The company noted that it plans to expand the site in the coming years.

The Uganda operation includes dozens of local employees and professionals across cultivation, curing, processing and quality control. According to the company, the model is designed not only to strengthen the stability of the natural vanilla supply chain, but also to build a long-term operation based on partnerships with farmers, local knowledge and capability development within the local community.

Vanilla Vida operates through a hybrid model that combines company-owned cultivation with partnerships with local farmers, the Uganda Vanilla Exporters Association, research institutions and local organizations. The company has also established a local advisory council that includes representatives from the community, research sector and public ecosystem.

Israel as the development and validation hub

In parallel with its activity in Uganda, the company has completed an end-to-end controlled natural vanilla growing process in greenhouses in Israel, from planting and cultivation to the processing of the raw material.

According to the company, this is the first controlled process of its kind in Israel, resulting in a high-quality vanilla paste with vanillin levels several times higher than the market standard.

The company emphasizes that its innovation is not a new product or a new vanilla variety, but the ability to create a controlled, reliable and repeatable process that enables oversight across every stage of cultivation and processing. This process now serves as the foundation for the company's vanilla products, including the vanilla paste currently marketed in Israel to the professional market.

According to Vanilla Vida, the product was launched in Israel less than two years ago, primarily for the institutional and professional food market, and has generated growing demand. As a next step, the company plans to launch the paste in international markets as part of its global expansion.

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Vanilla is one of the most familiar and loved raw materials in the world, but the real challenge is not the product itself — it is the ability to produce it reliably, consistently and at meaningful scale.

We are not developing a new vanilla. Our innovation lies in taking natural vanilla as it exists in nature and building around it an end-to-end controlled system — from the greenhouse to the raw material.

Israel serves as our center for development, validation and quality control, supporting technology designed to help the industry access natural vanilla in a more stable, consistent and high-quality way.

Ilanit Bar-Zeev

CEO of Vanilla Vida

Today, the company's activity is based on three main hubs: a technology and development center in Israel, a cultivation and production site in Uganda, and commercial activity in Europe through the company's hub in the Netherlands.

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The story of Vanilla Vida demonstrates how Israeli innovation can connect with the world of international development and create shared value.

Beyond the technological and business aspects, this is about building long-term partnerships with farmers, communities and local institutions, and creating a model that connects agricultural development, employment and knowledge transfer.

The decision to operate in Uganda and integrate local players throughout the value chain creates not only a commercial-scale solution but also a foundation for long-term local development.

Ayelet Levin-Karp

CEO of SID Israel — the umbrella organization of the Israeli international development and humanitarian aid community

Natural vanilla, built for reliability.

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