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Governor Cuomo Announces Israeli Biotech Company Creating New Economic Opportunity in Capital Region

BioHarvest Ltd. to Expand Key Operations from Tel Aviv to Albany and Create 60 New Jobs.

ALBANY, N.Y. (January 13, 2014) — Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced that BioHarvest Ltd., an Israeli biotechnology company, is creating new economic opportunity in the Capital Region by moving its research and development start-up operations from Tel Aviv, Israel, to Albany and creating 60 new jobs. The company will collaborate with the University at Albany's [Cancer Research Center](#) (CRC) to produce innovative technologies for human health, including functional health food products and intervention strategies based on the cultured cells of fruits and vegetables, in three phases.



In pre-clinical and clinical studies, BioHarvest's red grape cell powder, or "Vinia," demonstrated beneficial effects on cardiovascular disease, Type II diabetes, and metabolic conditions.

"Companies in growing fields from around the globe are coming to New York and creating new economic opportunity in all parts of our state," Governor Cuomo said. "This partnership with BioHarvest will create new jobs and continue to establish the Capitol Region as a leader in the research and development field. We will continue to collaborate with up-and-coming companies to generate jobs and transform New York's economy."

Founded in 2007 as Fruitura BioScience Ltd, the woman co-owned and managed Israeli biotechnology company has developed a patented, state-of-the-art platform to grow and bio-harvest fruit cell cultures in 3D bioreactors. The unique technology enables the production of safe and clinically researched super-foods rich in phytonutrients in highly bio-available and efficacious forms, which are produced on an industrial scale for the nutrition, wellness, and supplements markets. Along with New York State's highly competitive economic development agenda— including Governor Cuomo's Regional Economic Development Councils (REDC) and START-UP NY program—and the Capital Region's unique asset as a fast growing hub for high-tech industries, BioHarvest was attracted by UAlbany's research strengths and the prospect of developing a strong, public-private partnership with CRC scientists at the University's East Campus.

UAlbany President Robert J. Jones said, "With the innovative science and technologies of the Cancer Research Center complemented by the resources of the State of New York through Empire State Development, the collaboration with BioHarvest is a model public-private partnership, clearly illustrating how the discovery, innovation and entrepreneurship equation creates jobs and positive economic outcomes for the community."

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In early 2013, BioHarvest's first large scale commercial product, red grape cell powder, now referred to as "Vinia," was given the designation of a "novel food" in Israel by the country's regulatory agencies — one of only six functional foods so classified. Pre-clinical and clinical studies demonstrated that Vinia had beneficial effects on cardiovascular disease, Type II diabetes, and metabolic conditions. In addition, in the U.S., Vinia has been designated "Generally Recognized as Safe" by the Food and Drug Administration.

BioHarvest's technology is a new paradigm for deriving health benefits from super-foods. It delivers super-foods with phytonutrients present in all-natural, unblocked and unaltered form, resulting in high bioavailability without extraction by solvents, genetic modification, or synthetic molecular processing.

"Most of us are aware of the health benefits of the French Paradox phenomenon: reduced incidence of coronary heart disease, anti-inflammatory activity, mitigation of metabolic disorders and anti-aging properties," explained Yochi Hagay, Ph.D., CEO and co-founder of BioHarvest Ltd. "Vinia provides all of those French Paradox benefits for proactive health management."

The BioHarvest and Cancer Research Center partnership will unfold in three phases:

1. Scientific and clinical collaborations for research into health and intervention strategies. Studies are already in progress and four to five staff members are expected to be hired as part of this phase.
2. The building of a site on the East Campus to house four, five-ton bioreactors and production and sales facilities. This phase will generate as many as 50 jobs and is expected to begin by the end of 2014 or 2015.
3. The establishment of a Center for Innovative Functional Foods Research to study the underlying biology of bioactive compounds in red grape cell powder and other functional foods and create a data set for all functional foods. This phase will produce up to 10 local jobs.

A \$1.2 million Empire State Development (ESD) award through the Capital Region Economic Development Council (CREDC) will assist BioHarvest in start-up expenditures, supporting the partnership with UAlbany and the creation of 60 new jobs. The ongoing development of the regional Biotechnology Corridor and the availability of highly qualified trained personnel from the CRC's bioinstrumentation degree program, also funded by an ESD award, solidified the commitment by BioHarvest.

"BioHarvest's decision to expand its key start-up operations to the University at Albany's East Campus highlights the Capital Region's strength in growing high-tech, emerging industries and the unparalleled asset that institutions like UAlbany are for New York State," said ESD President, CEO & Commissioner Kenneth Adams. "We welcome BioHarvest to New York State and are proud to support the development of a ground-breaking product and the creation of dozens of jobs in the expanding fields of science, technology, engineering and math."

James J. Barba, co-chair of CREDC and president and CEO of the Albany Medical Center said, "I am thrilled that BioHarvest has decided to invest right here in the Capital Region. This novel public-private partnership between BioHarvest and the University at Albany will not only lead to the development of innovative technologies and healthy functional foods, but profoundly underscores how Tech Valley is advancing. Today's announcement is also a reminder of how the Governor's REDC program is supporting economic growth in numerous ways, including bringing science, innovation and technology together to make the lives of those around us better."

"Vinia and other preparations produced using this bioreactor technology contain all the bioactive compounds produced in red grape cells, and it is this combination of botanicals that are responsible for the beneficial effects of Vinia," said [Martin Tenniswood](#), director of the CRC at UAlbany. "The Cancer Research Center looks forward to our collaboration with BioHarvest to investigate the chemo-preventive properties of Vinia and other botanical preparations."

Cancer Research Center

The central mission of the University at Albany Cancer Research Center is to conduct research and provide training related to understanding the genetic and environmental causes of cancer. The basic research mission is focused on the underlying biology associated with tumor initiation and progression, and the development and evaluation of chemopreventive regimens and therapeutic approaches for common cancers. To this end, the Cancer Research Center houses fully staffed, comprehensive, state of the art research facilities.

Faculty at the Cancer Research Center are dedicated to providing a collaborative research environment within the University at Albany School of Public Health and its affiliated Wadsworth Research Laboratories of the New York State Department of Health to foster the training of graduate students and postdoctoral fellows in cancer biology.

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