

Engineering Nutrition: Marico's R&D Push to Redefine Everyday Wellness

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At the forefront of India's evolving food innovation landscape, Marico Limited is redefining how science, sustainability, and consumer-centric design intersect in everyday nutrition. From pioneering LoSorb Technology that reduces fat absorption, to advancing Hybrid Extrusion for wholesome, functional foods, and championing DOC Valorisation for circularity in food production, Marico is leading with purpose and progress. In an exclusive interview with NUFFOODS Spectrum, Dr Shilpa Vora, Chief R&D Officer, Marico Limited, shares insights into how the company's cutting-edge technologies and cross-sector collaborations are shaping a healthier, more sustainable future for Indian consumers.

Marico showcased several pioneering technologies at World Food India 2025. Could you elaborate on how these innovations, such as LoSorb, Hybrid Extrusion, and DOC Valorisation, are shaping the future of your food portfolio?

At World Food India 2025, Marico showcased a suite of pioneering technologies that are set to redefine the future of food – not just for our consumers, but for the broader ecosystem of nutrition and health, sustainability, and innovation. These advancements – LoSorb Technology, Hybrid Extrusion, and DOC Valorisation – reflect our commitment to creating food that is not only better for consumers but also better for the planet.

- As health-conscious consumption continues to rise, **LoSorb Technology** is a timely breakthrough. Integrated across our Saffola Oils portfolio, including cold-pressed variants, this innovation enables 15 per cent–30 per cent lower fat absorption during cooking. The result is lighter, less oily food, allowing consumers to enjoy their favourite indulgences without guilt. This positions Saffola not just as a cooking medium, but as a partner in everyday wellness.
- **Hybrid Extrusion Technology** is powering a new generation of nutritious, convenient foods by allowing greater flexibility in ingredient formats. It enables the use of wholesome grains, pulses, and vegetables in ways that are functionally innovative and also nutritious. Products like Saffola Oodles are a direct outcome of this. The same technology supports Saffola Muesli with flavour pops and multigrain flakes, and has been recently extended to the

Saffola Crunchiez range, expanding our footprint in the healthy snacking space.

- **DOC Valorisation** represents Marico's commitment to sustainability and circularity in the food system. Traditionally considered waste or used in low-value applications like animal feed, DOC is now being researched (in collaboration with NIFTEM, Kundli) for its potential in nutrition. By reintegrating these nutrient-rich byproducts into the human food chain, we're creating a new paradigm in resource efficiency, reducing waste, and contributing to responsible innovation.

LoSorb Technology is particularly relevant for a health-conscious India. How do you see consumer demand for healthier cooking oils and guilt-free indulgences evolving in the coming years?

Consumer demand for healthier cooking oils and guilt-free indulgences is poised to accelerate as India undergoes a meaningful shift towards health-conscious lifestyles. Rising awareness around nutrition, greater access to health information, and an increasingly label-conscious urban population are reshaping food choices – with more consumers actively seeking better-for-you alternatives that don't compromise on taste or convenience.

Marico's LoSorb Technology directly responds to this shift. By enabling lower fat absorption during cooking, it allows consumers to enjoy their favourite fried foods with significantly less oil – without sacrificing taste or texture. In a country where fried or deep-fried foods are an integral part of the diet, this innovation offers a practical way to reduce daily oil intake and support heart health, and cholesterol and obesity management, aligning with the nation's public health priorities. Technologies like LoSorb demonstrate how purposeful innovation can play a vital role in building a healthier, more informed India.

This technology is integrated across our Saffola Oils portfolio, including Saffola Total, Saffola Gold, Saffola Active, Saffola Tasty+ and Saffola Cold Pressed Oils

Beyond oils, our broader foods portfolio reflects this same commitment to nutritious indulgence. Offerings like Saffola Oats, Cuppa Oats, Crunchiez, and Muesli provide convenient, tasty formats that cater to today's on-the-go yet health-aware consumer. True Elements adds value with clean-label products like Rolled oats, Granola, and the newly launched Protein Bars and Overnight Oats. Plix supports holistic wellness with Apple Cider Vinegar Effervescents, Protein Powders, and other functional formats.

As Indian consumers seek a healthier way of life, Marico is well-positioned to lead with innovations that are science-led, delicious, nutritious, practical and accessible.

DOC Valorisation reflects Marico's commitment to sustainability. How do you envision scaling this initiative to reinforce a circular economy model within the Indian food ecosystem?

DOC Valorisation is a key pillar of Marico's broader commitment to sustainable innovation and circular economy practices within the Indian food system. As India grapples with rising food waste, resource inefficiencies, and the environmental footprint of large-scale production, we see significant opportunity and responsibility in transforming agricultural byproducts into high-value, nutritionally rich inputs for human consumption.

Our approach, developed in partnership with NIFTEM-Kundli, focuses on reintegrating de-oiled cakes (DOC) – traditionally limited to low-value uses like animal feed – back into the human food chain. These byproducts are inherently rich in protein and fibre, and through research-led innovation, we aim to unlock their full potential as functional ingredients in modern foods.

To scale this initiative meaningfully, we are focused on advancing the research to accelerate product development pipelines and investing in cutting-edge technologies to embed sustainability into product formats.

Ultimately, DOC Valorisation reimagines the lifecycle of food, fosters responsible consumption, and helps shape a more regenerative, resilient future for Indian food.

How is Marico leveraging collaborations with institutions like NIFTEM to accelerate science-backed product development, and what role does your R&D team play in driving consumer-centric innovation?

At Marico, we believe science-backed innovation is key to driving meaningful impact in health and nutrition. Our collaboration with institutions like NIFTEM-Kundli enables us to co-develop solutions rooted in research – such as DOC Valorisation, which explores the reintegration of nutrient-rich byproducts into the human food chain, advancing both sustainability and nutrition.

Our R&D teams translate these insights into consumer-centric products that are functional, tasty, and accessible.

Our innovation and product development approach is rooted in rigorous research and nutritional science. This is coupled with a strong focus on consumer-first design thinking, where we develop solutions that are not only effective but also enjoyable and easy to integrate into daily life.

We are equally committed to responsible formulation and transparent labelling while clearly communicating nutritional value to empower informed choices. This integrated approach helps us meet the evolving wellness needs of Indian consumers while building a more resilient and responsible food ecosystem.

From Saffola to True Elements and Plix, Marico's portfolio spans across health, nutrition, and wellness. How do these brands collectively align with your vision of building a healthier India?

Marico's food portfolio, including brands like Saffola, True Elements, and Plix, is designed to address the evolving nutritional and wellness needs of a rapidly transforming India. With increasing urbanisation and rising health awareness, Indian consumers are shifting toward balanced nutrition and holistic wellness.

Our brands collectively embody this shift by providing innovative, accessible, and affordable solutions that promote healthier lifestyles at scale. Saffola plays a critical role in transforming daily dietary habits through healthier cooking oils and foods, while True Elements responds to demand for clean-label, nutrient-rich foods that resonate with the rising fitness and health-conscious culture. Meanwhile, Plix taps into the expanding market for convenient, functional nutraceutical supplements, bridging gaps in daily nutrition and wellness.

Leveraging robust R&D, consumer insights, and regulatory alignment, Marico aims not just to participate in but to lead the health and wellness revolution in India. Our focus is on creating inclusive growth by democratizing access to nutritious food and wellness products for consumers.

What can consumers expect next from Marico in terms of food innovations, and which categories do you see as the biggest opportunities for growth in the near future?

Consumers can look forward to a steady pipeline of food product innovations from Marico, especially in high-potential categories such as edible oils, breakfast cereals, oats, and nutritious snacks.

We see strong growth opportunities in offering nutritious, convenient, and great-tasting products that align with consumers' evolving health and wellness aspirations. Whether it's reimagining familiar formats or introducing new ones, our focus remains on creating better-for-you food products with inherent goodness and benefits.

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