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Ferrero invests in hazelnut farming globally with research grants to the U.S. University programs

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Ferrero Hazelnut Company (Ferrero HCo), a division of global sweet-packaged food company the Ferrero Group, today expanded its investment in U.S.-grown hazelnuts withÂ $340,000Â in research grants:Â $180,000Â toÂ Oregon State UniversityÂ andÂ $160,000Â toÂ Rutgers University. The grants, a part of Ferrero's commitment to using high-quality, fresh ingredients, will support the universities' collaborative efforts with local farmers, producers, and distributors, to advance sustainability and efficiency in the industry.

Hazelnuts are an essential ingredient for Ferrero's well-loved brands like Ferrero RocherÂ®, the #1 premium chocolate brand in the U.S., and NutellaÂ®, a power-brand that includes the leading spreads snack in the U.S. convenience channel, Nutella & GoÂ®. As a versatile, premium ingredient, hazelnuts are in high demand during seasonal celebrations acrossÂ North America, such as the upcoming winter holidays. Â To ensure year-around availability, the company has diversified its hazelnut sourcing globally to support its rapid growth, especially inÂ North America.

"Our mission is to master the hazelnut value chain from end-to-end to create and deliver value in service of customers, brands, and products," saidÂ Tommaso de Gregorio, Head of Ferrero's Agri Competence Center. "This is particularly important inÂ North AmericaÂ where we have invested billions of dollars in growth and innovation over the past decade."

For years Ferrero has partnered withÂ Oregon State UniversityÂ and the state's growers to foster and strengthen hazelnut cultivation in the Willamette Valley. Recently the company has doubled its hazelnut sourcing from the area and to date has donated overÂ $760,000Â to OSU agriculture programs. Ferrero's latest grant ofÂ $180,000Â will support multiple ongoing projects including biological control of invasive species, diseases, and fungi as well as integrated weed management within orchards, all with the goal of reducing herbicide.

"Our team atÂ RutgersÂ is breeding trees resistant to the fungal disease Eastern Filbert Blight, which severely limits the production of hazelnuts inÂ New JerseyÂ and throughout the East Coast," saidÂ Thomas Molnar, Associate Professor in theÂ Rutgers UniversityÂ School of Environmental and Biological Sciences. "With Ferrero's generous support, our program is helping to unlock hazelnut production in easternÂ North AmericaÂ while providing a means to combat this disease if it spreads to new regions of the world."

In addition hazelnut cultivation, Ferrero Group has recently invested heavily in logistics, R&D, and manufacturing capabilities inÂ North America. The company's multiple expansions to its manufacturing campuses inÂ Bloomington, IllinoisÂ andÂ Brantford, OntarioÂ have created hundreds of new local jobs, and the company's first ever North American Innovation Center and R&D Labs opened inÂ ChicagoÂ in 2023. Ferrero has other facilities acrossÂ Georgia,Â Kentucky,Â Ohio,Â Arizona,Â Pennsylvania, andÂ New JerseyÂ and currently employs over 5,300 acrossÂ the United StatesÂ andÂ Canada.