Press release

September 10, 2025

Kanematsu signs exclusive distribution agreement with South Korean biotech firm manufacturing plant-based collagen peptide

—Pursuing sustainable food supply and better health—

On September 8, 2025, Kanematsu Corporation (“Kanematsu”) signed an agreement with South Korean biotech startup company, RAWGA, Inc. (“RAWGA”) for the exclusive distribution of VC-H1®, plant-based collagen peptide derived from hibiscus, in Japan. The Kanematsu Group, with Kanematsu Chemicals Corporation (“Kanematsu Chemicals”) playing a leading role, will roll out VC-H1 to various business areas where it can leverage the Group’s expertise and domestic/global network, such as food and beverage manufacturing as well as health food.

Photo taken at the signing ceremony held in Kanematsu’s Tokyo Head Office on September 8th
Left : Kanematsu/General Manager, Food Dept.No.1, Masayoshi Saito
Right : RAWGA/CEO Mr. HyunMin Kim

■About VC-H1

Based solely on non-GMO hibiscus and water, VC-H1 is a powder ingredient manufactured using RAWGA’s proprietary hydrolysis technology without using any organic solvents. The hibiscus plants are grown on the RAWGA-owned farm in Laos, then extracted and processed at the RAWGA plant in South Korea. VC-H1 has excellent solubility and features a high content of hydroxyproline, which is specifically found in collagen, as well as tripeptides composed of glycine, proline, and other amino acids.

Features of VC-H1

1. **High collagen production effect:** *In vitro* tests (where conditions similar to those in the human body are artificially created in a test tube, incubator, or the like using human or animal tissues to study pharmaceutical reactions) have shown that while four types of animal-based collagen exhibited maximum collagen production of 10.15% per 0.25 g, VC-H1 exhibited maximum collagen production of 16.87% per 0.1 g, which is approximately four times higher.
2. **Small molecular design expected to provide excellent absorption:** While low-molecular fish collagen, which is generally considered to have excellent absorption, has an average molecular weight of around 1,000 Da (daltons), VC-H1 has an even smaller molecular weight in the 300 Da range.
3. **Antioxidative effect**
4. **Flavor without animal odor**

The results of clinical tests conducted using VC-H1 have been published in an academic journal indexed in the Science Citation Index (SCI), which includes only the most authoritative academic papers that satisfy the most rigorous criteria. A randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial was conducted with 100 adults (aged 35–60 years) presenting with dry skin and periorbital wrinkles. Participants randomly received 1.5 g/day of VC-H1 or placebo for 12 weeks. The VC-H1 group showed significantly greater improvement than the control group in the respective areas of skin hydration, skin elasticity, skin texture, and periorbital wrinkles.（Source：*International Journal of Molecular Sciences* **2025**, 26, 7291）

RAWGA-owned farm in Laos

Hibiscus grown on the farm

■ Outlook

Leveraging the expertise and customer base it has developed over the years through the domestic sales of chemicals and ingredients for foods with nutrient function claims, Kanematsu Chemicals will start supplying VC-H1 in Japan as a food ingredient. Additionally, it will work with Kanematsu, which has strengths in the chemicals, food, and beverages sectors, to expand business both in and outside Japan. The two companies will focus on promoting VC-H1 as an ingredient suitable for a variety of inner beauty products, including tablets, capsules, powders, beverages, and jellies.

*Kanematsu Chemicals plans to showcase VC-H1 at Health ingredients Japan 2025, which will be held at Tokyo Big Sight.

（Date: Oct.10 – Oct.17）

【Comments from representatives of the signing parties】

Kanematsu Corporation General Manager, Foods Dept. No.1, Masayoshi Saito

Toward contributing to the further growth of the beverages and health food market, we have conducted extensive discussion and verification together with RAWGA and Kanematsu Chemicals to bring this partnership to fruition. The entire Kanematsu Group will work as one to expand into the collagen and protein market, which is poised for growth in the future.

RAWGA　CEO Mr. HyunMin Kim (Raw)

Through the independently developed VC-H1 ingredient and clinical research, our company has been leading innovation in the collagen market.

Leveraging the Kanematsu agreement, we will expand our partnerships to major regions worldwide, including North America where we already established exclusive distribution, and grow into a global raw material company.

RAWGA is a pioneer in raw material innovation. Our flagship ingredient, VC-H1, has completed clinical trials and been published in academic journals, including SCI-level journals, being internationally recognized as the first collagen alternative proven for both efficacy and safety.

We will continue to drive raw material innovation, secure global competitiveness, and enhance the status of K-Bio on the world stage.

■ **RAWGA | Corporate Profile**

Name	RAWGA, Inc.
Establishment	October 23, 2020
Main Office	2F, 216 Hwangsaeul-ro, Bundang-gu, Seongnam-si, Gyeonggi-do, Republic of Korea
Representative	HyunMin Kim (Raw), KyungSoo Ha (Peter)
Business	Manufacturing, sales, and R&D of plant-based proteins, including managing materials.
URL	https://www.rawga.co.kr/

■ **Kanematsu Chemicals Corporation | Corporate Profile**

Name	Kanematsu Chemicals Corporation
Establishment	September 25, 1974
Main Office	3-8-1 Nihonbashi-ningyocho, Chuo-ku, Tokyo, Japan
Representative	Hiroki Shimokawa, President
Business	Domestic sales, import, and export of chemicals in general, pharmaceuticals, pharmaceutical raw materials, ingredients for foods with nutrient function claims, etc.
URL	https://kccjp.co.jp/

【Contact】

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