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Researchers invent new method to create hybrid yeast strains

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UW-Madison researchers have developed a new method for creating hybrid yeast strains for use in commercial fermentation and brewing.

An info sheet from the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation shows interspecies yeast hybrids are needed to produce certain fermented beverages. For example, the globally popular lager beer is made with hybrids of Saccharomyces cerevisiae and Saccharomyces eubayanus — two common yeast species.

The current process for creating improved hybrids is “cumbersome,” according to WARF, as it can require genetic modification. And that has led some to question their safety.

To improve on that process, researchers have developed a process called Hybrid Production, or HyPr. It doesn’t require any modification of the nuclear genome, which WARF lists as a benefit.

The info sheet says the new method is “simple, more robust and efficient than known techniques.” And it could be applied to many yeast strains important to multiple industries, including beverages as well as biofuels.

It’s noted that demand is growing for “locally sourced” yeast strains, especially for the craft brewing industry. WARF is seeking commercial partners to develop this method, which could be used by a company to create designer yeast hybrids for

brewers.

See more at WisBusiness.com.