

GREEN TECHNOLOGIES APPLIED TO PROTEINS FROM THE *Leguminosae* FAMILY  
TO IMPROVE THEIR TECHNOLOGICAL PROPERTIES

**Abstract**

People have been seeking a healthier and eco-friendly lifestyle and gradually modifying their dietary habits, as for instance by replacing the consumption of animal proteins with plant-based alternatives. Many plant proteins which meet human dietary demands belong to the *Leguminosae* family, with soy standing out as one of the most widely consumed worldwide. However, the extensive use of soy has led to a significant expansion of cultivation areas and the adoption of techniques to increase productivity on a global scale, resulting in environmental impacts and production overload (AVELAR et al., 2021). Consequently, there is a need to explore new plant sources for protein extraction intended for food formulation. Some emerging plant proteins, such as those from peas, chickpeas, and lentils, are well-received by consumers. However, protein extraction from these sources still needs efforts to enhance both yield and process costs (KYRIAKOPOULOU et al., 2019). Additionally, these proteins pose challenges such as low solubility, pH and ionic strength sensitivity, as well as poor digestibility and bioavailability, thus impacting essential bio- and techno-functional properties for food products formulation (LI et al., 2019). However, these limitations can be overcome through the application of “green” technologies, preferably those which avoid high temperatures. This is justified by the expensive amount of heat required and by the risk of irreversible protein denaturation which leads to the loss of both protein bio- and techno-functionalities (ESTEGHLAL et al., 2019). Unconventional and non-thermal technologies, such as high-pressure homogenizers and ultrasound may minimize this problem. These technologies can act interactively and in a controlled manner, positively influencing the conformation of supramolecular protein structures, transforming them into simpler structures, such as secondary and tertiary (CHACHA et al., 2021). These processes enhance solubility, hence improving foaming, emulsifying and gelling properties, allowing an easier use of these proteins in formulated foods. Besides, such technologies may improve digestibility and bioavailability of *Leguminosae* proteins. In summary, high-pressure and ultrasound may be helpful alternatives to allow a better exploration of *Leguminosae* proteins in the food industry nowadays in order to meet the society needs and market demands (SRIDHAR ET AL., 2022).

## References

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