

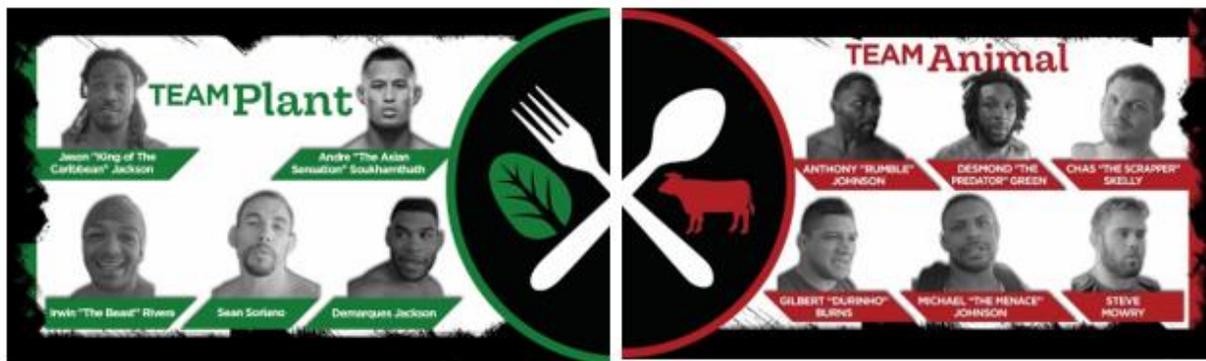


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**SCIENTISTS AND UFC FIGHTER REVEAL RESULTS OF NEW STUDY THAT SHOWS  
 RICE PROTEIN EQUALS ANIMAL-BASED WHEY IN BUILDING AND MAINTAINING MUSCLE –  
 FOR FIRST TIME IN PRO ATHLETES  
 Results Presented at Press Conference During Natural Products Expo West**



(Marina del Rey, CA March 12, 2018) – On Friday March 9, 2018, a press conference was held where Dr. Douglas Kalman PhD, RD, FACN, FISSN and the UFC’s Featherweight fighter Chas Skelly met the press to reveal the results of a new study that demonstrated that Axiom Foods’ Oryzatein® brown rice protein equals animal-based whey protein for building and maintaining muscle - for the first time in pro athletes. Oryzatein rice protein, manufactured by Axiom Foods, is available at retail nationally in the [Growing Naturals](#) brand. Scarlett Full MS, RDN, Axiom’s Director of Nutrition & Research, also appeared to explain the science behind the product and why the amino acid profile of rice protein acts the same as animal-

based whey protein. The announcement was made during the Natural Products Expo in Anaheim, California.



The same day, the most trafficked sports media outlet in the U.S., ESPN.com reported: “[New Study with UFC Fighters Shows Plant-Based Protein Produces Same Results as Whey in Athletes.](#)”



### New study with UFC fighters shows plant-based protein produces same results as whey in athletes



Anong Suakhamrath defeated Luke Sanders in December by second-round TKO. He credits a shift to plant-based protein as a factor in the win. Kyle Terada/USA TODAY Sports

The study, titled “The Body Composition Effects of Extra Protein in Elite Mixed Martial Artists Undergoing Frequent Training over a Six-Week Period,” was led by Dr. Douglas Kalman and Sports Nutritionist Alison Escalante, RD, out of Florida International University, was peer-reviewed at The International Society of Sports Nutrition Annual Conference and published in the Journal of the International Society of Sports Nutrition (P34) (JISSN). The products used in the study were Growing Naturals’ Rice Protein (featuring Axiom Food’s Oryzatein®) and NutraBio’s Whey Protein.



Chas Skelly  
UFC Featherweight Fighter (17-3)



According to Dr. Douglas Kalman: "We now have confirmed proof that this rice protein, which is typically thought of as an inferior protein source, can support the metabolic and physical needs of athletes, elite athletes just as well as meat-based options, such as whey protein. With MMA fighters, we found that this rice protein (Oryzatein®) supported positive changes in body composition in the same vein that meat-based protein (whey) does. In order to sustain life, the body requires essential amino acids to be ingested as the body cannot manufacture these proteins. The rice protein tested, Oryzatein® has been found to contain the full array of essential amino acids, which are needed for human health. Other plant proteins cannot be as concentrated as Oryzatein® and may not give the same body positive response when combined with exercise, unless larger volumes of product are ingested. The MMA athletes tested often burn upwards of 8,000 calories per day, whereas the rest of us, typically are lower than 2000 calories per day, which means that nutrition is that much more paramount for the stressed training athlete. Oryzatein® supported the metabolic needs of these elite MMA athletes. In general, using the rule of thumb, aim to get at least 0.5 grams per pound body weight protein daily, Oryzatein® fit this role nicely in these elite MMA professional athletes."

Scarlett Full, an RDN who has worked on Oryzatein®, the rice protein that was used in the study, explained: "Like Intel Inside, Oryzatein® is an organic brown rice protein ingredient found in 1,000's of food products like chips, bars, shakes, ready-to-drink juices and feeding formulas. Axiom Food's patented ingredient is used for sports formulations for building muscle, power, strength and recovery. This is an FDA GRAS ingredient; meaning it can be used in food formulations, not just supplements. It's fractioned from rice without use of petrochemicals, in a proprietary enzymatic process which allows us to remove most of the starch and carbs so we can concentrate it up to 90%; rice protein is not high carb. In the fitness world, there has been a misconception that you can't build muscle with plant protein-because plant proteins are typically incomplete proteins (low in one or more essential amino acid). But this study along with others has debunked this notion as we know that a variety of protein sources consumed in a 24-hour period can be combined to "complete each other." In addition, another study published in 2014 showed that the leucine (the amino acid that triggers tissue building) in rice protein was uniquely absorbed almost 30% faster than leucine in whey protein, which scientists believe may be another reason rice protein was equal to whey for building and maintaining muscle." These studies both demonstrated the effectiveness of Axiom's Oryzatein® brown rice protein.

One of the 11 mixed martial artists who was part of this study, Chas Skelly, UFC Featherweight (17 - 3) said: "I have always used whey protein but, I've always had problems digesting it; my stomach hurts really badly and I feel sluggish. During this study, I watched my teammates getting the same results and saying they felt better than I did. Though I am a carnivore, hunter and fisherman, this study changed my mind about protein supplements. Since the study, I've switched, and it does a lot better for me."

This study is the **first time** a comparison of plant protein and animal-based whey protein was studied specifically in pro athletes. Dr. Kalman studied this same rice protein in 2013 with recreational collegiate athletes. Another study published in 2014 found that only Axiom's patented Oryzatein® brown rice protein supplies the body with the muscle-building amino acid leucine to a similar degree and at a faster speed than leucine from whey protein.

The study was conducted in Spring 2017 at The Combat Club in Lantana, Florida with the following participants:

Gilbert "Durinho" Burns, UFC Lightweight (11-2)  
Desmond "The Predator" Greene, UFC Lightweight (20-5)  
Demarques Jackson, Titan FC 45 (6-1)  
Jason "King of the Caribbean" Jackson, Titan FB Welterweight Champion (7-3)  
Anthony "Rumble" Johnson, Former UFC Light Heavyweight (22-6)  
Michael "The Menace" Johnson, UFC Lightweight (17-12)  
Irwin "The Beast" Rivera, Titan FC Bantamweight (6-4)  
Chas "The Scrapper" Skelly, UFC Featherweight (17-3)  
Sean Soriano, Former UFC Featherweight (10-5)  
Andre "The Asian Sensation" Soukhamthath, UFC Bantamweight (12-5)  
Steve Mowry, Titan FB Heavyweight (3-0)

Kay Abadee, VP Marketing of Growing Naturals said: "The pure protein used in the study is the most naturally extracted on the market today. We offer it as a customizable DIY protein so that everyone from beginners and weekend warriors, to pro athletes can mix and match with other nutritional elements they want for their personalized nutrition. This study doesn't just help show the power of Growing Naturals by using Axiom's patented Oryzatein®, but it also helps raise up the entire sustainable plant protein category, and just in time for Plant Protein Month in April. This study is sending a shock wave through the fitness industry, hopefully toppling long-held ideas that animal-based whey protein is necessary for serious athletes. Basically, we are finding that the combination of whole foods and plant protein supplements to fill the gaps can do the job and animals are no longer necessary to get our protein."

**About:** Combat Club is a mixed martial arts training facility in Lantana, FL, led by head coaches: Henri Hooft (Dutch Kickboxing), Gilbert Burns (Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu), and Greg Jones (Wrestling). Combat Club caters to people of all levels, from beginner to pro.

**About:** Growing Naturals, LLC is the maker of both allergen-friendly single-source pure plant protein powders from organic brown rice and peas, plus Benefit Blend's A.M. Energy and P.M. Restore, featuring "one and done" nutrition solutions that simplify daily rituals. All Growing Naturals plant proteins are FDA GRAS approved food and the rice protein products feature clinically tested and patented Oryzatein® inside.

**About:** Axiom Foods, Inc. We are on the cutting edge of plants and protein. We're involved in clinical trials and education by sponsoring Plant Protein Month, which launched April 2017. We are affecting change in the global food supply by bringing compassion to the food business and showing the world that animals are not necessary to build muscle. We're at the forefront of rice becoming the new wheat – and the new meat. Just ask CNBC.



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