



Harvesting Scientific Innovations, Breeding Commercial Breakthroughs
Donald Danforth Plant Science Center | St. Louis, MO | May 24 - 25, 2010

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Global Ag-Tech Conference Provides Forum for Leading Investors, Industry Leaders and Entrepreneurs to Explore Commercialization Opportunities

April 29, 2010, St. Louis, MO – Focused on spotlighting commercial investment opportunities and scientific advances from around the world in ag-bio, food and nutrition, biofuels, sustainable materials, clean-tech, information technology and animal health, a marquee event entitled *the Ag Innovation Showcase* will be held on May 24th & 25th in St. Louis, MO. The venue is the Danforth Plant Science Center, the world's largest independent plant science research institute, located in the heartland of American agriculture.

Dr. Bryan Willson, Director of the Clean Energy Supercluster at Colorado State University, and Dr. Jerry Caulder, Executive Chairman of Finistere Ventures, a life-science investment company based in San Diego, are two of many speakers and forums that will provoke lively discussion at second annual event, which has become the premier gathering of plant science leaders from all sectors.

Keynote speeches and panel discussion topics will span the spectrum of current ag science and industry issues, with special attention to developing ideas and opportunities related to agriculture as a key component of solving long-term energy issues. Registration information and general details are available at www.agshowcase.com.

A special feature of the program will be presentations to investors and industry experts by the 17 winners of a global business plan competition. This year's selection of winning business plans represent some of the most promising businesses in the plant-tech space across a broad range of industry sectors and geographies.

"As a prime relationship building opportunity for entrepreneurs, companies and investors in the ag community, the Ag Innovation Showcase is designed to stimulate strategic deals, partnering opportunities and collaborative business ventures in the plant science and agriculture markets," said Sam Fiorello, President of Bio-Research and Development Growth (BRDG) Park, a research and commercialization campus which opened in June 2009 the first of three buildings for fledgling plant and life sciences companies on the campus of the Danforth Plant Science Center.

Keynote Speakers & Panelists

As the opening speaker, Dr. Willson – named in 2009 as one of the “Scientific American 10” by *Scientific American* for “guiding science to serve humanity” on a global basis – will document encouraging evidence for large scale solutions for global energy needs, from nutritional and specialty chemicals in as little as three years to algae to biofuels as a global fuel supply within five years.

Often referred to as the “father of agriculture,” Dr. Caulder will focus on the critical importance of providing capital for basic science and technology to drive commercial development and high paying jobs in a period of economic recovery. As executive chairman of Finistere Ventures, Dr. Caulder directs a leading life science venture capital fund, building on successes in early venture investment activity, commercial development and introduction of all new agricultural products during 15 years at Monsanto earlier in his career.

In addition to keynote addresses by Dr. Caulder and Dr. Wilson, panel discussions will feature an elite group of leading agribusiness and life science companies and institutional investors, including Ron Meeusen, Managing Partner, MidPoint Food & Ag Fund, LLP; Andrew Williamson, Director, Physic Ventures; and Derek Norman, Investment Manager Syngenta Ventures; Atish Babu, Vice President, Nexus Venture Partners; David Fischhoff, Vice President Technology Strategy, Monsanto; Miguel Oliveira, Director of Global Innovation, Bunge; and Jake Tarr, Founder and Partners, Kinetic Ventures.

Panel topics and moderators will address key issues from a variety of viewpoints:

- **The Nexus of Energy and Agriculture** will address the challenges in supplying energy at appropriate costs while managing the carbon footprint, including the impact of policy and technology on energy use, commodity pricing, and opportunities in emerging technologies for the sustainable production of food, feed and renewable fuels. It will be moderated by Dr. Mich Hein, Managing Partner of Nidus, a partnership focused on developing and commercializing early stage technologies in the energy and agriculture markets.
- **The Future of Ag: Global Partnerships and Collaborations** will look at how challenges in food and energy, rising commodity prices, environmental degradation, and diversion of foods to biofuels are impacting emerging markets in Brazil, Canada, Malaysia, Israel, Australia and New Zealand, where agriculture and food production are important to their competitive profile. The moderator will be Rohit Shukla, Founder and CEO of Larta Institute, representing companies emerging from federally-funded research, top research universities, and network of global partner nations.
- **Ag Ventures in 2010: Is Agriculture the Next Cleantech?** Designed to focus on this emerging investment and policy frontier and what it will take for cleantech and sustainable agriculture startups to attract venture capital and other institutional investors. The moderator will be Arama Kukutai, Managing Director, Finistere Ventures, responsible for agricultural technology and green energy portfolio investments.

Participants at the Ag Innovation Showcase will represent a “who’s who in the Ag industry.” Attendees will range from major agricultural companies such as Dow AgroSciences, LLC, John Deere, Monsanto, BASF and Archer Daniels Midland (ADM) to agriculture investors such as Finistere Ventures, Prolog Ventures, CMEA Capital, StrathKim, the Kauffman Foundation, and

the U.S. Department of Agriculture, plus many of the elite emerging plant science entrepreneurs from around the country and the world.

The Ag Innovation Showcase is a joint enterprise between BRDG Park, Nidus, Missouri Biotechnology Association and Missouri Technology Corporation. It is produced by Larta Institute, a Los Angeles-based innovation hub that also manages the national commercialization programs of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and National Institutes of Health.

About BRDG Park at the Danforth Center

BioResearch & Development Growth (BRDG – pronounced “bridge”) Park at the Danforth Plant Science Center helps life sciences companies bridge research, resources and relationships to achieve commercial success. Building I, opened in June 2009, is a LEED Gold facility featuring world-class wet laboratories and office space, a prominent incubator, and on-site workforce development and training. BRDG Park’s location on the campus of Danforth Center facilitates access to the intellectual capital of top scientists, as well as to greenhouse, growth chambers, microscopy and proteomics facilities and other vital resources. BRDG Park, which will include three buildings and 450,000 sq. ft., is being developed by Wexford Science+Technology LLC, a privately held real estate developer and investment company specializing in university facilities and science research parks in leading research markets. More information is available at www.BRDG-Park.com.