Global Forum for Innovations in Agriculture: driving innovation for an agricultural revolution

The GFIA seeks to highlight the sustainable agriculture initiatives and innovations being planned and deployed around the world. This year’s conference incorporated an exhibition of over 125 innovators and was attended by 1,800 delegates who witnessed keynote sessions, panel discussions, an African Ministerial discussion and 150 innovation presentations by 180 speakers. In this round-up, International Innovation picks out a selection of highlights from this inaugural Forum.

Bill Gates, Co-Founder of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people across the globe lead healthy and productive lives. Their mission is guided by the belief that every life has equal value. In developing countries, the focus is on improving health and generating opportunities for communities to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty; whereas, in developed countries, the drive is to ensure that everyone has equal opportunity to access the resources they need to succeed in society.

“...In a world where most of the poorest are farmers, investments in agriculture are the best weapons against hunger and poverty. To help the poorest seize agriculture’s potential, we need to unleash as much innovation as possible.”

Dr Frank Rijsberman
CEO of CGIAR

CGIAR is the world’s largest global partnership of agricultural research institutes for a food-secure future. The consortium is dedicated to reducing rural poverty, increasing food security, improving human health and nutrition, and ensuring more sustainable management of natural resources. The partnership is made up of 15 research centres across five continents, and works in close collaboration with hundreds of partner organisations, including national and regional research institutes, civil society organisations, academia and the private sector.

“...History shows us that the most effective route to keeping global food prices low is to massively increase investment in agricultural innovations.”
Dr Mark Post, Professor of Physiology at Maastricht University

With research interests encompassing vascular patterning, neovascularisation, muscle cell function and restenosis, scientists within Post’s research group primarily work to develop and test novel biomaterials suitable for arterial grafting in surgery. However, his work has recently gained notoriety for a completely different avenue of research – tissue engineering of skeletal muscle to create cultured meat for consumption. Last year, Post announced the successful production of the first lab-cultured beef hamburger. The ability to produce meat products for human consumption from cultured animal stem cells would eliminate the need to continually raise billions of animals for meat – a practice that is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain.

These types of events are important for everybody. Not just people working in this field but basically for the entire world.

Andras Forgacs
CEO of Modern Meadow

Modern Meadow applies the latest advances in tissue engineering to develop novel biomaterials that can address some of the world’s most pressing global challenges. The company’s primary focus is developing lab-cultured leather and meat products that do not require the slaughter of animals, and minimise inputs of land, water, energy and chemicals.

Cultured meat and leather can provide a safe, sustainable, economical and ethical alternative to the traditional livestock industry.

**POWER SESSIONS**

The Power Sessions represented the largest collection of sustainable agricultural innovations. A representative from each innovative product had 15 minutes to convince a gathered audience of funders, policy makers and industrial partners that their product would fundamentally change the way food is produced.

For the full selection of innovators visit: innovationsinagriculture.com/Event-programme/Project-partners

**AIRRIA** – turning cattle and poultry manure into food, fuel and water without waste www.ACES-BC.ca

**Delfino 3 plough** – a plough specifically designed to till arid soil www.valleranisystem.com

**Humigation** – mimicking nature to extend the shelf life of fruit and vegetables www.ihtair.com

**Hydrophobic Sand** – water conservation in landscape and agricultural sites www.dimecreations.com

**MooMonitor** – a necklace for cows that revolutionises milk production www.dairymaster.com

**Plantwise** – a network of plant clinics providing local advice to farmers www.cabi.org

**SmartGrit** – agri-monitoring with biodegradable wireless sensor networks www.ecow.co.uk

www.innovationsinagriculture.com

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