

AgTech Start-up APOLO Biotech Wins \$50,000 'Innovate for Impact Challenge' after Global Competition

Three finalists were selected from nearly 400 applications and pitched their concepts live to a panel of judges at the 2025 Borlaug Dialogue

DES MOINES, IA, UNITED STATES, October 23, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- After a 10-month global competition, Argentina's APOLO Biotech was named as the winner of the inaugural World Food Prize Foundation [Innovate for Impact Challenge](#) at the Norman E. Borlaug International Dialogue today.

The Challenge aims to identify and support early-stage, tech-driven startups whose transformative solutions address the critical challenges of global food security and sustainability. It received nearly 400 applicants from 65 countries, all in their early stages of funding and development—from validated concepts to pre-Series A funding.

Matias Badano, Co-founder and CEO of APOLO Biotech, was presented their \$50,000 prize by Karsten Temme, Founder and Chief Innovation Officer of Pivot Bio. APOLO Biotech uses RNA technology to address the pressing challenges of climate change impact on agriculture and the need to reduce reliance on synthetic pesticides.

The first runner up, Vet Konect Ltd, was represented by Terese Shadrach Akpem, Founder and CEO, and presented their \$10,000 prize by Steven Wittbecker of CoBank. Vet Konect Ltd. was recognized for their pioneering work on reimagining animal care across Africa by leveraging mobile connectivity and artificial intelligence to provide animal health coverage and social protection for livestock farmers regardless of the barriers of distance.

Third place went to India's Capsber Agriscience, represented by Co-founder and Managing Director Manoj Kumar Rupa. The \$5,000 award was presented by Billi Hunt from America's Cultivation Corridor, a co-collaborator in launching the Challenge alongside the World Food Prize Foundation. Capsber Agriscience was acknowledged for its contributions revolutionizing agriculture through a next-generation microbiome platform that eliminates the need for chemical fertilizers by harnessing nature's own biological intelligence.

"APOLO Biotech truly represents what the Innovate for Impact Challenge is all about—bold thinking, creative problem-solving and a deep commitment to making a difference," said Mashal

Husain, President, World Food Prize Foundation. "Their innovation is a powerful reminder that one idea can ignite real change and inspire a more sustainable future for us all."

Unveiled at the 2024 Norman E. Borlaug International Dialogue, the Innovate for Impact Challenge invites forward-thinking entrepreneurs from around the globe to present transformative, scalable ideas with the potential for worldwide impact. The three finalists all pitched their ideas live at the Borlaug Dialogue in front of a panel of judges. The judging criteria considered the novelty and significance of the solution, its viability and demand within the agricultural industry, its alignment with environmental and social goals, and its ability to expand and adapt across diverse contexts.

"Innovation is the key to solving today's agricultural challenges and securing a sustainable future for global food systems," said Gov. Tom Vilsack, Chief Executive Officer, World Food Prize Foundation. "By empowering startups to break new ground, we are cultivating the next generation of visionaries who will help feed the world and protect our planet."

The Innovate for Impact Challenge not only accelerates innovation in agriculture but also fosters a global community of problem-solvers committed to building resilient, sustainable food systems for the future.

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