

# NEWS RELEASE



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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **FIRST COHORT OF INTERNATIONAL STARTUPS COMPLETE CULTIVO™ VIRTUAL ACADEMY**

*Startups from Australia and United Kingdom interacted with Iowa business, research, government and entrepreneurial leaders during six-week program*

**DES MOINES, IOWA** – Six international startup companies have successfully completed the first session of the Cultivo™ Virtual Academy. The six-week virtual program provided participants with mentorship and interaction with Iowa's agricultural leaders and an online curriculum focused on U.S. market entry, regulatory and financing systems, and customer perspectives. America's Cultivation Corridor hosted and coordinated the Cultivo Virtual Academy in partnership with its investors and supporting organizations. The Iowa Economic Development Authority was the presenting sponsor of the program.

"I was impressed with all of the companies and am proud that Iowa has been part of the journey as they prepare to introduce their products and technologies to the U.S. marketplace," said Debi Durham, Executive Director of the Iowa Economic Development Authority and the Iowa Finance Authority.

"Iowa's strong agricultural economy has created an unparalleled network of expertise. The connections these companies have built with Iowa will be valuable as they refine business strategies and launch to U.S. farmers, livestock producers and ag companies."

The first cohort of companies included:

- [AgriDigital](#), Australia, provides digital platform for the grain supply chain, including a grain tracking program that enables growers to track and trace their harvest, inventory and sales.

- [ARCITEKBio Ltd](#) (ABL), United Kingdom, has developed a sustainable biotechnological platform for producing the natural sweetener xylitol using proprietary microbial strains and a fermentation-based approach.
- [Bondi Labs](#), Australia, uses smart glasses and computer-vision detection applications to deliver internal training in meat processing plants and conduct food safety and compliance inspections and audits.
- [Escavox](#), Australia, uses smart trackers to collect data related to time, temperature, and location, of fresh produce and meat products as they travel through the food system from farm to retail shelf.
- [Safe Ag Systems](#), Australia, provides a platform to mitigate risk, improve safety behavior and manage compliance and regulatory requirements and audits for a range of agricultural businesses.
- [SWAN Systems](#), Australia, is a precision irrigation tool developed to optimize water and nutrient use, including precise irrigation scheduling, monitoring of crop health, and tracking progress against water and nutrient budgets.

“The success of the Cultivo Virtual Academy is rooted in a strong curriculum presented by Iowa food and ag leaders, and the over 50 connections that participants made throughout the program,” said Billi Hunt, executive director of America’s Cultivation Corridor. “Entering the U.S. marketplace can seem overwhelming for startups bringing new innovations to the industry. The Cultivo program is designed to provide the knowledge and introductions that will allow cohort members to successfully navigate a path to market in the United States.”

Applications are currently being accepted for the second cohort, planned for October 2021. For more information on the program, or to learn about opportunities to sponsor or participate in a future cohort, visit <https://www.cultivationcorridor.org/cultivo-global/> or contact Bill Hunt, executive director at America’s Cultivation Corridor at [bhunt@cultivationcorridor.org](mailto:bhunt@cultivationcorridor.org).

Investors and partners of America’s Cultivation Corridor are working together to accelerate the development of new technologies, strengthen Iowa’s ag bioscience workforce, and attract economic development, all focused on meeting the challenge of feeding a growing world population in a sustainable way.

Stakeholders in America's Cultivation Corridor include Iowa State University, Corteva Agriscience, Deere & Company, Greater Des Moines Partnership, Iowa Pork Producers, Kent Corporation, MidAmerican Energy Company, Ames Economic Development Corporation, Iowa Corn Promotion Board, Iowa Farm Bureau, ISG, Kemin, REG, Sukup Manufacturing,

More information is available at [CultivationCorridor.org](http://CultivationCorridor.org), or by following on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), and [Facebook](#).

***About America's Cultivation Corridor***

*Focused on further developing and marketing the world-renowned agricultural and bioscience economy in Iowa, America's Cultivation Corridor is building on a rich history of innovation to accelerate value-added agriculture business development by attracting companies, talent and capital from across the globe to the state. Representing a diverse public-private coalition of stakeholders including Iowa State University, Greater Des Moines Partnership, Ames Chamber of Commerce, nonprofits and private sector companies from across the region and state, the Cultivation Corridor is one of the nation's foremost cluster-based economic development organizations. For more information, visit [CultivationCorridor.org](http://CultivationCorridor.org).*