

# NEWS RELEASE



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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **AMERICA'S CULTIVATION CORRIDOR™ ANNOUNCES FIRST COHORT OF CULTIVO™ VIRTUAL ACADEMY**

*Startups from Australia, Israel, and United Kingdom to participate in six-week program*

**DES MOINES, IOWA** – America's Cultivation Corridor™ announced today the names of the eight international startup companies that will participate in the first Cultivo™ Virtual Academy. The six-week virtual program will provide participants with mentorship, interaction with Iowa's agricultural leaders, and an online curriculum focused on U.S. market entry, regulatory and financing systems, and customer perspectives.

The program will launch on April 13, 2021, with sessions facilitated by Iowa business and university leaders. America's Cultivation Corridor will host and coordinate the Cultivo Virtual Academy in partnership with its investors and supporting organizations. The Iowa Economic Development Authority is the presenting sponsor of the program.

"We are excited to welcome a very impressive group of startups to the first Cultivo cohort and look forward to making critical connections with Iowa's business leaders, research and forward-thinking farmers and livestock producers," said Judd O'Connor, President of U.S. Commercial Business for Corteva Agriscience, and Chairman of the Cultivation Corridor Board of Directors.

Participating companies include:

- [AgriDigital](#), Australia, provides a 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.
- [FarmSee](#), Israel, develops precision livestock monitoring and growth optimization products based on advanced computer vision and neural networks.
- [LifeDome, Ltd](#), Israel, uses non-invasive and remote sensing technology to monitor temperature, behavior, and other changes to detect potential subclinical diseases for individual animals in livestock barns.
- [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.
- [SoftRide](#), Israel, provides safe and cost-effective autonomous machinery operations in geofenced areas with a seamless, plug-and-play solution for plant protection applications.
- [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 companies in the Cultivo Virtual Academy cohort represent a diverse group of new technologies and innovative approaches to a range of agricultural challenges,” said Debi Durham, director of the Iowa Economic Development Authority and the Iowa Finance Authority. “We look forward to the connections and opportunities that are built as they connect with Iowa’s research, farming and business leaders and provide opportunities for these companies as they plan their entry into the U.S. marketplace.”

The program will be hosted via the Virtual Academy Hub, a professionally managed platform for learning and engagement.

“The companies in the Cultivo Virtual Academy cohort represent a diverse group of new technologies and innovative approaches to a range of agricultural challenges,” said Debi Durham, executive director of the Iowa Economic Development Authority and the Iowa Finance Authority. “As these companies plan their entry into the U.S. marketplace, we look forward to the connections and opportunities that emerge in Iowa as they collaborate with our state’s research centers and agricultural and business leaders.”

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, and 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).*