



Grow-NY

grow-ny.com

Grow-NY Food & Ag Summit

November 12-13, 2025

Canandaigua, NY



Empire State
Development



Cornell University



CNY RISING
FROM THE GROUND UP



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PASSWORD

ROCUS2023

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When you enter the Grow-NY Food & Ag Summit, you are entering an environment where photography, audio, and video recording may occur. By entering the event premises, you (i) consent to interview(s), photography, audio recording, video recording (collectively, the "Audio and Video Data"), and its/their release, publication, exhibition, or reproduction to be used for news, webcasts, social media, or any other purpose (collectively, the "Purpose") by Cornell University and its affiliates and representatives (collectively, "Cornell"), (ii) release Cornell from any liability connected with obtaining or using the Audio and Video Data; (iii) grant Cornell the perpetual and irrevocable right to use any Audio and Video Data in all forms, whether now existing or not yet created for the Purpose; and (iv) waive any right to inspect or approve any Audio and Video Data collected at the event.

Welcome to Grow-NY 2025

For seven years, Grow-NY has showcased the energy generated from the three-way juncture of economic development, technology innovation, and the agrifood system in Upstate New York. That energy has driven new jobs, new solutions to persistent and emerging problems, and a new awareness of New York's leadership in making progress toward our region's goals. You are part of that energy – it is the people and communities that make progress and problem solving possible. Thank you for being part of it.

Here's a quick guide to what's happening during the Summit:

The live pitch competition on the Main Stage will once again highlight the top 20 early-stage food and agriculture startups from around the world. Chosen from a pool of 270 applications, these startups will showcase their innovations and share their plans to grow and scale in Upstate New York and beyond. In addition to watching them pitch on the Main Stage, enjoy 1:1 networking with the finalists in the Finalist Showcase, on the lower level (with the Espresso Bar!)

Industry experts, thought leaders, and investors all converge in our panels and fireside chats, also held on the Main Stage.

Our breakfast roundtables are high-octane networking sessions that will foster high-impact connections between food and ag entrepreneurs and the organizations that support them. A regional thought leader will host each roundtable, focusing on topics like funding, operations, and opportunities in New York State.

And the Student Stage will provide a platform for the next generation of innovators, with young minds from across New York State presenting fresh ideas that could shape the future of food and agriculture for years to come.

Grow-NY's energy creates measurable momentum. Since 2019, we have connected with over 2,000 startups during the application phase and have used the 1,800+ non-advancing applications to connect those startups with other New York resources. Of this year's finalists, 74% have at least one founder who identifies as a member of a historically underinvested community, and 46% have at least one founder who identifies as a woman. Our portfolio of Grow-NY startups report creating 246 jobs and receiving over \$100 million in follow-on investment.

By being here, you're not just a participant in the Summit — you're part of the energy moving our region's economy and food system forward while addressing global challenges with new solutions. Thank you, again, for playing a vital role in helping Grow-NY exceed its potential.

Jenn and Sarah



Jenn Smith

Director of Food and Ag
Innovation Programs



Sarah Meyer

Manager of Grow-NY Program



Letter from New York Governor Kathy Hochul



STATE OF NEW YORK
EXECUTIVE CHAMBER
ALBANY 12224

KATHY HOCHUL
GOVERNOR

Dear Friends:

Welcome to the 2025 Grow-NY Food & Agriculture Summit and Business Competition!

The twenty startups pitching innovative solutions at this event demonstrate how innovation, agriculture, and economic development go hand in hand to stimulate growth in Upstate New York.

The Central New York, Finger Lakes, and Southern Tier regions offer fertile farmland, abundant natural resources, world-class research institutions, and a skilled workforce. Startups that put down roots here benefit from these assets and, in turn, attract investment, create jobs, and fuel progress across the state. This synergy has cultivated a thriving food and agriculture innovation ecosystem here in New York—with Grow-NY serving as a driving force.


Since 2019, Grow-NY winners have fulfilled their commitments to make a meaningful impact across the competition's target regions. They have cumulatively attracted over \$100 million in follow-on investments and created many top-quality jobs. Their partnerships with local manufacturers and research and development facilities have strengthened the ecosystem, making the New York even more attractive to both homegrown businesses and startups from across the world.

Agriculture and food production have long been central to our state's economy, especially in rural Upstate. Grow-NY builds on this tradition, bringing it into the 21st century through an injection of innovation, and your attendance at the Summit supports this work.

I join in congratulating this year's finalists. Best wishes to all for a meaningful event.

Sincerely,

Kathy Hochul
Governor



Letter from Ronald P. Lynch Dean Houlton

Cornell **CALS**

College of Agriculture
and Life Sciences



October 9, 2025

Dear Grow-NY Community,

What a grand fit to gather for the 2025 Grow-NY Food and Ag Summit here in Canandaigua, NY — a vibrant hub in the Finger Lakes region where innovation, agriculture and economic development converge. As the state's Land-Grant institution, Cornell University and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (Cornell CALS) are proud to support this transformative initiative that continues to shape the future of food and farming across New York and beyond.

Grow-NY exemplifies the power of partnership and place. By bringing together global agtech startups, regional entrepreneurs and community leaders, the summit fosters a thriving innovation ecosystem rooted in Upstate New York. This year's theme — the intersection of agriculture technology and economic development — reflects the very mission of Cornell CALS: to harness science and innovation to improve lives, grow economies and steward our natural resources.

From our work in precision agriculture and digital farming to climate-resilient food systems and circular bioeconomy models, Cornell CALS is advancing solutions that are both economically viable and environmentally sustainable. Our researchers and students collaborate with industry and community partners to develop technologies that support growers, reduce waste and create new market opportunities — many of which are showcased through Grow-NY's dynamic startup competition.

The 2025 finalists represent the best of what's possible when bold ideas meet regional commitment. Their innovations — from AI-powered pollination and methane mitigation to upcycled food ingredients and regenerative crop platforms — are not only addressing critical challenges but also creating jobs, attracting investment and strengthening local economies.

We are honored to continue our partnership with Grow-NY and celebrate the entrepreneurial spirit that drives this summit. On behalf of Cornell CALS, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to this year's finalists. Your work inspires us, and we look forward to the lasting impact you will make in the Grow-NY region and beyond.

Sincerely,



Benjamin Z. Houlton, Ph.D.
The Ronald P. Lynch Dean



The Grow-NY Region

With its rich resources in research and development, education and business, the Grow-NY region offers one of the nation's best climates for food and agriculture startups to take root and thrive.

New York's leaders recognize that startups provide fuel for the economic engine of the state and the Grow-NY region of Central New York, the Finger Lakes and the Southern Tier has the ideal conditions for incubating agrifood startups that are aiming to grow and scale. Agriculture, food production, and related industries — such as agricultural supplier service providers, warehousing, transport, retail, restaurants, and tourism — continue to be pillars of New York state's rural economy, especially in the Grow-NY region.

The region offers an abundance of freshwater lakes, boundless farmland, hardworking people, and cutting-edge research and development that is evolving the industry. Technology options for farms are proliferating, and investment in food and beverage consumer-packaged foods is robust.

The United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization estimates the world will need to double its food production by 2050 to meet the growing global population's needs. The Grow-NY region plans to be part of the solution.

GROW-NY REGION BY THE NUMBERS¹

- Encompasses nearly **50%** of the state's **33,000+ farms**
- Is home to the largest number of jobs in the food and agriculture sectors, employing **a third** of all food and agriculture sector workers in the state, and approximately **27,750 people**
- Employs **16,500+ workers** in the food and beverage manufacturing sector
- Has seen its agricultural economy employment increase by **25.4%** in the past decade

AREAS OF AGRIFOOD INNOVATION PRIORITIZED IN THE GROW-NY REGION²

- Farm robotics and automation
- Localization and decentralization of supply chains
- Novel crop protection
- Biomaterials development
- Climate change adaptation and mitigation
- Diversification and equity of land access
- Rural economic development

¹ Analysis of data provided by New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL) and USDA Census of Agriculture.

² Center for Regional Economic Advancement at Cornell University, *A Call for Innovation: New York's Agrifood System*, April 2021

Our Partners & Supporters

The Grow-NY region boasts a thriving ecosystem of large and small farms, food and beverage manufacturers, researchers, investors, startups, and established industry partners — all working together to make our region the epicenter of food and agriculture innovation.

Grow-NY continues to receive invaluable support and guidance from organizations and individuals across the region to help maximize the state's investment in this program and help generate high-impact results.

THANK YOU TO OUR GROW-NY PARTNERS

These partners strengthened our innovation ecosystem by completing over **500 meetings** and discussions with finalists and mentors during the Grow-NY business development phase.



2025 GROW-NY SPONSORS



Empire State
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Cornell University

SUMMIT SPONSORS



FARM CREDIT EAST

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Gateway
Serving Schuyler County, NY & Beyond



Genesee
County
Economic
Development
Center

GROW-NY SUPPORTERS



S Syracuse University
Innovation Law Center

UGLY  DUCK





NEW THIS YEAR: Networking Roundtables

At this year's Summit, we've elevated the networking experience by introducing networking roundtable discussions. Roundtables are high-octane networking sessions that will foster high-impact connections between food and ag entrepreneurs and the organizations that support them. A regional thought leader will host each roundtable.

ROUNDTABLE HOSTS



Associated
New York State
Food Processors



BISON BAG
Flexible Packaging Specialists



Cornell AgriTech
New York State Agricultural Experiment Station

NYS Center of Excellence For Food and Agriculture



FARM CREDIT EAST

**Koffman
SOUTHERN TIER INCUBATOR**
BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY

LaLew
PUBLIC RELATIONS

Launch NY



Division of
Science, Technology
& Innovation

A Division of Empire State Development

**Next Rung
Technology**



**SKULL
DIAMOND
AND HEART**
CAPITAL

Check out the roundtable themes for each day on the next two pages >>

DAY 1 SESSIONS

(Wednesday from 8:30-9:15 a.m. in the Lakefront Grand Ballroom on the Main Floor)

AI on the Farm: Beyond ChatGPT

Hosted by Farm Credit East, ACA

Join Farm Credit East for a discussion about real-world applications for AI on farms of different types in the Northeast.

Are You Ready to Scale? What Co-Packers Wish You Knew

Hosted by Craft Cannery

Explore what emerging brands often overlook before approaching a co-packer, how to know when you're ready, and how to avoid common pitfalls that can stall a successful launch.

Best Practices for Scaling and Commercial Readiness: Lessons Learned from FOAK Pilot Plants

Hosted by Next Rung Technology with Vance Metals

Learn tips for scaling technology and commercial readiness, including how to think about deploying to larger physical assets, how they should be owned, and how techno-economics factor into your roadmap.

Brand Ready: From Concept to Consumer

Hosted by Bison Bag Co.

Explore how strategic packaging, storytelling, product positioning, and founder-led grit come together to launch and grow a successful brand.

Breaking Through at Whole Foods Market: Insights from the Inside

Hosted by Associated NYS Food Processors

Whole Foods Market's John Lawson will host a candid and insightful discussion on how to successfully launch your CPG product in one of the most competitive retail environments.

Fertile Ground: Where Early-Stage Ideas Meet Capital

Hosted by Skull, Diamond, and Heart Capital, LLC

Learn more about what venture capital is and what it isn't in this open conversation about VC and how to effectively raise money.

Navigating New York's Innovation Ecosystem

Hosted by NYSTAR - Empire State Development

This roundtable discussion will introduce and explore the state's portfolio of innovation assets, including Centers of Excellence, Centers for Advanced Technology, Manufacturing Extension Partnership centers, and entrepreneurial support programs.

Regenerative Agriculture's Marketing Challenge

Hosted by Agency 29

Join regenerative farming pioneer Mike Kreher and growth marketing expert Maureen Ballatori to discover proven strategies for turning complex farming practices into compelling brand stories that consumers understand and pay for.

Retail Insights: From the Frontlines

Hosted by Attention Span Media

With insights from local to global, the future-focused agency Attention Span will lead a discussion of the forces shaping food purchases across the realms of rural, convenience, and e-commerce.

Rise Above the Noise: How Startups Can Stand Out to Media Outlets

Hosted by LáLew Public Relations

This session will highlight how strong positioning and strategic public relations strategies can help startups rise above the noise, gain meaningful media coverage, and drive long-term growth.

Where Clean Tech Meets Ag Tech

Hosted by Koffman Southern Tier Incubator

From tools to tractors, next-gen energy solutions are increasingly central to agriculture, and batteries of all sizes are key enablers for technologies attempting to address scaling food production with an awareness of climate pressures.

DAY 2 SESSIONS

(Thursday from 8:30-9:15 a.m. in the Lakefront Grand Ballroom on the Main Floor)

Beyond the Recipe: Collaborating for Production-Ready Success

Hosted by Craft Cannery

Dive into the partnership required for a successful relationship between a brand and a co-packer, including what each party should expect to bring to the table and what each side should expect regarding compromise.

Brand Storytelling That Sells: Beyond “Farm to Fork” Clichés

Hosted by Agency 29

Join brand strategist and Agency 29 founder Maureen Ballatori for an interactive deep-dive into crafting authentic narratives that actually drive purchase decisions, and learn the difference between storytelling that builds connection versus storytelling that builds revenue.

Breaking Through at Whole Foods Market: Insights from the Inside

Hosted by Associated NYS Food Processors

Whole Foods Market’s John Lawson will host a candid and insightful discussion on how to successfully launch your CPG product in one of the most competitive retail environments.

Digital Foundations for Food and Ag Startups

Hosted by Koffman Southern Tier Incubator

Join a conversation on customer-centric design, best practices, meaningful trends, and how to ready your website or app for excellence.

How to Start and Grow Your Food Business

Hosted by NYS Center of Excellence for Food and Agriculture at Cornell AgriTech

Cornell AgriTech is here to help aspiring food entrepreneurs. Join the Center of Excellence for Food and Agriculture and the Cornell Food Venture Center to learn about the facilities and expertise available to help you launch and grow your business.

Inside the Deal: Investment Trends in CPG Startups

Hosted by Launch New York Inc.

Join Launch New York for a candid roundtable on the current investment landscape for CPG startups. You’ll learn what Launch NY looks for in CPG deals, key trends shaping the market, and how founders can stand out.

More Than Money: How to Secure Investment That Unlocks Strategic Partnerships

Hosted by Skull, Diamond, and Heart Capital, LLC

What is a strategic investor? How do you find them? How do you share the good, the bad, and the ugly about your company? Join Skull, Diamond, and Heart Capital for a conversation around finding the right investors for you and your company.

Navigating New York’s Innovation Ecosystem

Hosted by NYSTAR - Empire State Development

This roundtable discussion will introduce and explore the state’s portfolio of innovation assets, including Centers of Excellence, Centers for Advanced Technology, Manufacturing Extension Partnership centers, and entrepreneurial support programs.

Packaging & Supply Chain Optimization: How to Synergize, Energize and Grow

Hosted by Bison Bag Co.

Bison Bag packaging expert Tom Seymour, CPP, will lead this engaging roundtable on practical strategies to streamline your packaging operations, improve shelf appeal, and reduce costs through smarter materials, formats, and supplier relationships.

Wellness and the Future Consumer

Hosted by Attention Span Media

Dive into the future of food through a discussion of health and wellness. Explore the rise of food tribes and how purchase decisions will be made in an age of AI Agents, wearables, and disrupted delivery.

The Grow-NY Symposium

The Grow-NY Symposium leads change in our region by spotlighting conversations among our partners, showcasing the innovation and economic strength food and ag technology bring to Upstate New York and the Northeast by bringing thought leaders together to light a path forward during a time of tremendous transformation.



Scan the QR code to read biographical information on speakers listed below



Cultivating the Future: Agtech AI for the Northeast

Wednesday, 9:15 – 10:00 a.m. ET

AI isn't just for the mega-farms in the Midwest; new technologies help specialty crop farmers in the Northeast address weather prediction, pest detection, precision spraying, and crop forecasting. Hear a conversation between industry players, scientists, and funders on how innovations are taking root in New York and beyond.

Katie Gold, *Susan Eckert Lynch Assistant*

Professor of Grape Pathology, Cornell AgriTech

Chris Laughton, *Director of Knowledge Exchange and*

Farmstart Program Manager, Farm Credit East

Gloire Rubambiza, *Research Scientist,*

IBM Research

Alyssa Whitcraft, *Executive Director,*

NASA Acres



Impact at Scale

Wednesday, 2:10-2:35 p.m. ET

Chobani's Chief Impact Officer Nishant Roy joins Cornell Associate Dean Julie Suarez to explore how a mission-driven company and university partnership can turn purpose into impact, fostering growth and prosperity in New York communities.

Julie Suarez, *Associate Dean for Land Grant Affairs and Director of Translational Research Programs, Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences*

Nishant Roy, *Chief Impact Officer, Chobani*



The New Ingredient Playbook: Innovation, Restrictions, Alternatives, and Insights

Thursday, 9:15 – 10:00 a.m. ET

New nutritional needs, challenges with clean labels, MAHA bans, and startups acquiring ingredient companies are just some of the changes impacting how new food products show up in market. This conversation between researchers, investors, and industry leaders will talk about what everyone innovating in CPGs needs to know.

Gavin Sacks, *Professor and Chair of Food Science, Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences*

Laine Clark, *Program Manager, Big Idea Ventures*

Ed Collins, *Director, Eurofins Product Development & Innovation*

Mark Nisbet, *Director of Product Development, Mars Snacking*



The Future of Food Entrepreneurship: Investing for Durability

Thursday, 2:10-2:35 p.m. ET

Hear a conversation between a food business journalist and a VC on how startups are building scalable food companies that reflect today's culture of innovation and what it takes to grow companies that endure and inspire.

Laura Reiley, *Writer, Cornell Chronicle*

Hallie Bonnar, *Co-founder & Partner, Brand – New Fare Partners*



The Grow-NY Competition

Grow-NY is an unprecedented food and agriculture business competition that identifies, supports, and funds the world's top food, beverage, and agriculture innovations. Startups across the globe apply to compete for the \$1 million top prize, two \$500,000 prizes, and four \$250,000 prizes.

A panel of independent judges evaluates these applications to select up to 20 finalists. Finalists receive mentoring and support, and the chance to pitch their business plans to a live panel of judges and a public audience at the Grow-NY Food & Ag Summit.

Winning companies commit to making a positive impact on the growing startup hub, located in New York state's Finger Lakes, Central New York, and Southern Tier regions.

A STRONG APPLICANT POOL

In the past seven years, the Grow-NY competition has attracted over 2,000 innovative entrepreneurs worldwide with broad geographic, gender, and ethnic diversity:



2,083

startups applied in rounds 1-7 of the competition.



44

states in the United States have been represented.



95

countries were represented in applications.



54%

of applicants have a founder that identifies as a member of an underinvested community.



38%

of applicants have a female-identifying founder.



JUDGING CRITERIA

A panel of independent, third-party judges will award \$3 million in prize money, payable in increments based on milestones. Judges will base decisions on the following criteria:

- **Viability of commercialization and business model:** Generation of revenue and maintenance of a cost structure that allows for a competitive and sustainable business; demonstrated readiness of the applicant's technology or innovation to fulfill its needed value proposition.
- **Team:** Demonstration of a level of cohesion, completeness, diversity, and readiness within the team of founders, employees, and advisors; inclusion or plans for inclusion of employees and advisors from communities that have historically been excluded from the innovation economy, such as women and minorities.
- **Customer value:** Provisions of significant value for customers for which they are willing to pay and addressing a substantial market.
- **Agriculture and food innovation:** Pushing the state of the art in food and agriculture, and contributing to making Upstate New York a global leader in agriculture and food innovation.
- **Growth potential:** Ability to generate significant growth, as measured and assessed by employment and revenue growth, and the potential for returns and liquidity for equity holders.
- **Regional job creation:** Potential for creation of high-quality jobs in the Grow-NY region and relevance to the existing food and agriculture ecosystem.
- **Participation:** Timely cooperation, participation, and engagement in program activities such as regional visit, webinars, application updates, pitch deck delivery, and Summit week activities.

FINALIST SUPPORT AND TRAINING

The Grow-NY competition connects finalists with the assets and resources they need to thrive in the Grow-NY region. Each startup finalist receives a package of support, introductions, and training to help them determine how to make the best possible product and the biggest possible economic impact in the area.

Finalists are matched one-on-one with experienced food and agriculture entrepreneur mentors who live and work in the Grow-NY region. Mentors work with finalists to maximize a three-day business development trip to the region, which is funded by a stipend and includes meetings with members of the food and agriculture ecosystem located throughout Central New York, the Finger Lakes, and the Southern Tier.

Finalists also receive marketing and media relations support to promote their startup and garner public interest in their companies, as well as for the emerging food and agriculture cluster in the Grow-NY region.



SCREENING JUDGES

Selecting the best startups in the world to compete for a \$1 million top prize is a rigorous process, and we rely on our judges for their insight and thoughtfulness.

Each year, applications are reviewed by panels of up to seven evaluators until we reach a group of 20 finalists. On every application, these evaluators provide comments, which we summarize for applicants once the finalists have been confirmed.

The feedback that is given to applicants honors the time startups invest in applying to Grow-NY and helps them refine their business plans and focus their efforts as they move forward, leading to a more competitive pool of early-stage startups connected to the Grow-NY region.

This year's screening judges have our thanks and respect.

Rajni Aneja, *Managing Director, Cornell Institute for Food Systems*

Colleen Anunu, *Senior Advisor for Coffee at Fairtrade International*

Maureen Ballatori, *Founder and CEO, Agency 29*

LaRon Batchelor, *Founder and CEO, Passport Food & Beverages*

Ed Bizari, *Entrepreneur in Residence, Rev: Ithaca Startup Works*

Judy Cherry, *Executive Director, Schuyler County Partnership for Economic Development*

Barak Cohen, *Entrepreneur in Residence, Cornell Center for Regional Economic Advancement*

Scott Colby, *Professor, SUNY Morrisville*

Christa Downey, *Entrepreneur in Residence, Launch NY*

Maiah Johnson Dunn, *Beverage Education Manager, New York Kitchen*

David Eilers, *Innovation Partner, Possibility Partners, LLC*

Andrew Fish, *Former SVP of Member and Business Experience, CenterState CEO*

Meghan Florkowski, *Director, WISE Women's Business Center, Syracuse University*

Victoria Giarratano, *Assistant Director, Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development, Cornell Cooperative Extension*

Brad Gouldthorpe, *Entrepreneur in Residence, Launch NY*

Holly Hillberg, *President, Hillberg Consulting*

Donna Howell, *Director of Industry Partnerships, Cornell Center for Materials Research*

Robb King, *Owner and Instructional Lead, Blume Theory*

Drury MacKenzie, *Entrepreneur in Residence, ClimateTech Expertise Network*

Sheila Marshman, *Professor, SUNY Morrisville*

Xanthe Matychak, *Founder, Tuning Design Co.*

Charlie Mulligan, *Exited Founder, GiveGab*

Melanie Neumann, *Founder and Global Food Lawyer, Neumann Advisory Services LLC*

Jomaree Pinkard, *Co-founder, Hella Cocktail Co.*

Aaron Proujansky, *Entrepreneur in Residence, Cornell University*

Emad Rahim, *Entrepreneurship Manager, Syracuse Surge Accelerator, CenterState CEO*

David Richards, *Principal, DB Richards Consulting*

Kuturie D. Rouse, *Founder & Principal Consultant, Rouse & Associates*

Heather Saffer, *Entrepreneur in Residence, Launch NY*

Heather Sandford, *Founder, Empire Food Consultants*

Jaira Santiago, *Certified Business Mentor, SCORE Mentors*

Rena Scroggins, *Consultant*

Tom Seymour, *Co-Founder, Moka Energy*

Derek Simmonds, *Business Development Specialist, NYS COE for Food and Agriculture*

Bill Strassburg, *Emeritus Executive Vice President of Strategy and Innovation, Wegmans Food Markets*

Julie Suarez, *Associate Dean for Land-Grant Affairs, Cornell College of Agriculture and Life Sciences*

Kim Wagner, *Founder, Co-owner and Managing Director, TBGD Partners, Stoutridge Vineyard*

Leslie Woodward, *Founder and CEO, Edenesque*

Meet the Finalists

PITCHES 1-5

MediumWell Tel Aviv, Israel

MediumWell Technological Solutions' BioResin and BioBags are made from biodegradable materials, offering scalable and sustainable solutions for food and pharma.

mediumwell-tech.com

 Medium Well Technical Solutions



Shire's Naturals Peterborough, New Hampshire

Shire's Naturals offers clean-label, dairy-free foods made entirely from whole-food, plant-based ingredients.

eatshires.com

 Shire's Naturals

 Eat Shire's

 eatshires



Finger Foods Farm Bloomfield, New York

Finger Foods Farm produces a line of vertically-integrated, health-forward frozen soups, made with local ingredients, processed at regional businesses, and branded to celebrate New York's bounty.

fingerfoodsfarm.com

 fingerfoodsfarm



Full of beans New York, NY

Full of beans is building a vertically integrated fava bean platform — starting with regenerative New York-grown crops and ending with high-protein, ready-to-eat foods.

fullofbeanskitchen.com

 Full of beans kitchen

 fullofbeanskitchen



Living Ink Technologies Berthoud, Colorado

Living Ink repurposes renewable biomass waste, like algae, into sustainable black printing inks and pigments.

livingink.co

 Living Ink Technologies

 Living Ink

 livinginktech



PITCHES 6-10

ZILA BioWorks Renton, Washington

ZILA BioWorks converts vegetable oils into high performance, low carbon, recyclable bio-epoxy resins for use in industrial composites, coatings, and adhesives.

zilabioworks.com

 ZILA BioWorks  ZILA BioWorks



Seen Nutrition Ithaca, New York

Seen Nutrition is a food tech startup in the menopause market, initially focused on bone health, with a patented dietary calcium chew made with dairy produced in Central New York.

seennutrition.com

 Seen Nutrition  Seen Nutrition  thecalciumqueens



Whipnotic New York, NY

With a patented nozzle technology, Whipnotic creates whipped creams infused with all-natural fruit juices and flavor essences.

whipnotic.com

 Whipnotic  Whipnotic  whipnotic



Renewal Mill Canandaigua, New York

Renewal Mill creates premium, gluten-free, vegan, and upcycled baking ingredients and snacks by transforming nutritious byproducts from food manufacturing into delicious, sustainable products.

renewalmill.com

 Renewal Mill  Renewal Mill  renewalmill



Ergo Sunchales, Argentina

Ergo pioneers plant cell culturing via a proprietary platform combining AI, genetic engineering, and automation to create plant-based proteins.

ergobiotech.com

 ERGO



LOOKING FOR A PLACE CHAT?

Network or have a meeting at **Meetup Point A, B, C, or D**
in the Attendee Lounge, located on the lower level

PITCHES 11-15

Knead Technologies Alberta, Canada

Knead's software platform leverages technology to streamline food rescue operations, enabling businesses to redirect surplus food to those in need while quantifying environmental impacts.

kneadtech.com

 Knead Tech  kneadtech



Mothership Materials New York, NY

Mothership Materials transforms agricultural waste into carbon-negative feedstocks — such as glucose and cellulose — that power the foods, fuels, and fabrics of the future.

mothershipmaterials.com

 mothershipmaterials



Roca Water Alameda, California

Roca has developed an electrochemical system that removes ammonium from wastewater and recovers it as nitrogen fertilizer, helping farms and food processors reduce pollution and lower fertilizer costs.

rocawater.com

 Roca Water



Pollen Patrollers Nairobi, Kenya

Pollen Patrollers empowers small-scale farmers and beekeepers through AI-powered smart hive technology and precision pollination services.

pollenpatrollers.com

 Pollen Patrollers  Pollen Patrollers



Trebe Biotech Buenos Aires, Argentina

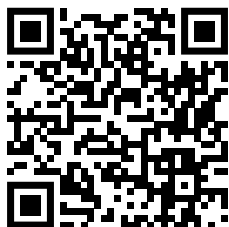
Trebe Biotech uses insect larvae to produce faster, more scalable, and cost-efficient bioproducts for animal health, such as recombinant proteins and vaccines.

trebebiotech.com

 Trebe Biotech  trebebiotech



WHO SHOULD WIN?



Vote for the startup you think has the most innovative and promising pitch! The startup with the most votes will win the **\$10,000 Wegmans Audience Choice Award**.

Voting runs daily from 9 a.m., Tuesday, November 11, through 4 p.m., Thursday, November 13. The winner will be announced at the Grow-NY Awards Ceremony on November 13.

PITCHES 16-20

DeepAgro St. Louis, Missouri

DeepAgro develops artificial intelligence solutions for selective agrochemical spraying, sowing, and monitoring and diagnostics.

deepagro.com

 DeepAgro  DeepAgro  deepagroco



Frost Methane Juneau, Alaska

Frost Methane partners with livestock farmers to neutralize methane from manure ponds, earning carbon credit revenue and preventing water ingress.

frostmethane.com

 Frost Methane Labs



ThermoShade Los Angeles, California

ThermoShade's shade panels absorb radiated body heat, making outdoor spaces feel up to 20°F cooler than under standard awnings.

getthermoshade.com

 ThermoShade  getthermoshade



Picketa Systems New Brunswick, Canada

Picketa Systems offers real-time plant analysis for precision nutrient management.

bialtec.co/en

 Picketa Systems  Picketa Systems  picketa.systems



Brekland Brooklyn, New York

Brekland is building a novel, biodegradable foam coating that brings new, in-field functionality to crop protection products.

brekland.com

 Brekland



Meet the Mentors

Grow-NY mentors play an important role in helping finalists maximize the number of connections they make during their business development trips. They serve as conduits to regional experts and thought leaders, potential partners, customers and more. This year, mentors provided over 1,000 hours of consulting to help connect finalists to the region, develop their businesses and refine their live pitches.



Colleen Anunu
Senior Advisor for Coffee,
Fairtrade International



Ed Bizari
Entrepreneur in Residence,
Cornell Center for Regional
Economic Advancement



Barak Cohen
Entrepreneur and Product
Leader, Cornell Center
for Regional Economic
Advancement



Scott Colby
Professor, SUNY Morrisville



David Eilers
Innovation Partner,
Possibility Partners, LLC



Victoria Giarratano
Assistant Director,
Agriculture, Food
Systems, and Community
Development, CCE



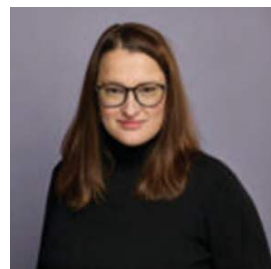
Brad Gouldthorpe
Entrepreneur in Residence,
Launch NY



Alex Hagen
Entrepreneur in Residence,
Cornell Center for Regional
Economic Advancement



Holly Hillberg
President, Hillberg
Consulting



Donna Howell
Director of Industry
Partnerships, Cornell Center
for Materials Research



Drury MacKenzie
Entrepreneur in Residence,
ClimateTech Expertise
Network



Sheila Marshman
Professor, SUNY Morrisville



Xanthe Matychak
Founder, Tuning Design Co.



Charlie Mulligan
Exited Founder, GiveGab



Aaron Proujansky
Entrepreneur in Residence,
Cornell Center for Regional
Economic Advancement



Heather Saffer
Entrepreneur in Residence,
Launch NY



Heather Sandford
Founder, Empire Food
Consultants



Rena Scroggins
Consultant



Tom Seymour
Co-founder, Moka Energy



Jackie Wood
Business Development
Manager, Good Roots



Meet the Final Round Judges



Anthony Colangelo
Senior Innovation and AI
Lead, Farm Credit East



Chris Kirby
Founder and CEO,
Ithaca Hummus



Damian Murray
Investment Analyst,
Level Up Ventures



John Ng
President & Founder, Hudson
Valley Fisheries, Aeterna
Cannabis



Mary Shelman
Founder, Mary Shelman
Group



Kaari Stannard
President and Owner,
Yes! Apples



Ben Verschueren
Executive Director, New York
Department of Science,
Technology and Innovation
(NYSTAR)

Grow-NY Winner Highlights

Grow-NY proves that New York is a place where farms, food producers, and agrifood businesses can thrive, drawing on the potential of food and agriculture startups to diversify, strengthen, and expand Upstate New York's economy; incrementally by building a strong infrastructure for growth, and exponentially through attracting investment into industry-changing technologies. Now that the program's early investments are bearing fruit, here are a couple case studies that show our success.

CHALLENGE

According to InvestNY, in 2024, New York City-based startups raised \$18.7 billion across 869 deals. Startups in the Grow-NY region received \$91.48M. The entirety of Upstate New York received less than 1% of the venture capital invested in New York State. How do we attract more investment to our region?



Ascribe Bioscience's technology is based on research into the soil microbiome and the discovery of molecules that are detectable by plants, which react by priming their innate defense responses.

Their lead commercial product is called Phytalix, a sustainable, non-toxic solution to help crops resist disease and pathogens.

Ascribe won a **\$500,000 investment** through Grow-NY in 2021, providing legitimacy for

them to go on to raise **\$2.5 million** in a seed round co-led by national VCs The Yield Lab and Acre Venture Partners.

That funding facilitated global field trials and local hires, which in turn led to a strategic partnership with Nutrien Ag Solutions, which is integrating Phytalix into Loveland Products premixes for the U.S. market.

Based on the strength of the company and their data, Ascribe closed on a \$12 million Series A funding round this fall.

CHALLENGE

Upstate has a long history of agriculture, value-add processing, and large-scale food production, yet small, new companies with novel food products and technologies struggle to find strategic partners to meet them where they are. How do we create the conditions for innovators to thrive?



Craft Cannery is a contract manufacturer of sauces, dressings, and marinades based in Bergen, in Genesee County.

Craft Cannery won a **\$500,000 investment** through Grow-NY in 2022, allowing them to expand their processing facility and add an in-line metal detector that scans sealed products, which expanded the volume and type of products and producers with whom they can partner.

Craft Cannery is remarkable because of their willingness to work with small companies.

Craft Cannery President and CEO Paul Guglielmo notes that "physical expansion of our plant and the addition of a second bottling line, both made possible by Grow-NY, have helped us service demand in our manufacturing niche, regardless of run size."

They've **doubled their number of employees**, more than **doubled their number of sales**, and created more linkages for regional farms to sell to small food businesses who can contract with the company.

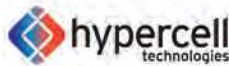
OTHER GROW-NY PORTFOLIO WINNER HIGHLIGHTS FROM EARLIER THIS YEAR:

- **Clean Crop Technologies**, a 2024 \$250K winner, signed **\$3.4 million in purchase orders**, and has a sales and pilot pipeline worth **\$47 million** in annual recurring revenue from companies that represent 39% of the global vegetable seed market.
- **Joyn Food** (formerly Mush Foods), a 2023 \$250K winner, closed a **\$3M bridge round**, launched their mycelium-cut blended meat product to consumers with **\$2M in sales**, and will open a **\$10M Series A Round** in the coming months.
- **Hempitecture**, a 2022 \$500K winner, won the **RISE Innovation Award** for "Innovative Nonwoven Sustainable Product of the Year" for their PlantPanel Thermal Board Insulation and continues to deepen their relationship with NYSEDA.
- **Every Body Eat**, the 2021 \$1M winner, continues to **outperform the cracker category** in every channel of distribution, and received lots of positive press for their of-the-moment 'Seed Oil Free' Certification.
- **AvantGuard™** (formerly Halomine), a 2020 \$250K winner, secured an **\$8M grant** to push forward its mission of long-term pathogen protection by scaling manufacturing capabilities, enhancing research and development, and expanding their national and international market presence.
- **CaproX**, a 2019 \$250K winner, graduated from the prestigious IndieBio Accelerator with a **\$250K investment**.

Grow-NY Winners

\$1,000,000

WINNERS



\$500,000

WINNERS



\$250,000

WINNERS



Schedule of Events

Wednesday, November 12

8:00–8:30 a.m.	Networking & Breakfast
8:30–9:15 a.m.	Networking Roundtables
9:15–10:00 a.m.	Cultivating the Future: Agtech AI for the Northeast
10:00–11:25 a.m.	Pitch Competition
11:25–11:45 a.m.	Coffee Break
11:45 a.m.–12:30 p.m.	Pitch Competition
12:30–1:30 p.m.	Lunch & Networking
1:30–2:20 p.m.	Pitch Competition
2:20–2:45 p.m.	Impact at Scale
2:45–3:55 p.m.	Pitch Competition
3:55–4:10 p.m.	Coffee Break
4:10–5:15 p.m.	Pitch Competition
5:15–5:20 p.m.	Closing Remarks

Thursday, November 13

8:00–8:30 a.m.	Breakfast & Networking
8:30–9:15 a.m.	Networking Roundtables
9:15–10:00 a.m.	The New Ingredient Playbook: Innovations, Restrictions, and Alternatives and Insights
10:00–11:25 a.m.	Pitch Competition
11:25–11:45 a.m.	Coffee Break
11:45 a.m.–12:30 p.m.	Pitch Competition
12:30–1:30 p.m.	Lunch & Networking
1:30–2:20 p.m.	Pitch Competition
2:20–2:45 p.m.	The Future of Food Entrepreneurship: Investing for Durability
2:45–3:05 p.m.	Coffee Break
3:05–4:20 p.m.	Youth Competition
4:20–4:30 p.m.	Closing Remarks
4:30–7:30 p.m.	 Awards Ceremony 

The Lake House

(770 S Main St., Canandaigua)

Tickets are required and this event is sold out. A shuttle bus will run to and from The Lake House every 15 minutes from 4:00-8:00p.m.

Finding your way



MAIN FLOOR

Registration: Hotel Lobby

Main Stage: Lakefront Grand Ballroom

Lunch: Hotel Restaurant

Farm Credit East “Ask an Expert” Table:
Hotel Restaurant

Networking Roundtables: Lakefront Grand
Ballroom

Coat Check & Information Booth: Ballroom Foyer

LOWER LEVEL

Ugly Duck Espresso Bar

Coffee Break Refreshments

Grow-NY Market

Finalist Showcase

Lounge & Meetup Points A, B, C, D

FLOOR TWO

Youth Workshop & Activities: Canandaigua Room



Who should win?

Vote for the startup you think has the most innovative and promising pitch! The startup with the most votes will win the **\$10K Wegmans Audience Choice Award!**

Voting runs daily from 9 a.m., Tuesday, November 11, through 4 p.m., Thursday, November 13. The winner will be announced at the Grow-NY Awards Ceremony on November 13.



We value your feedback!

Use the QR code to submit an attendee feedback survey.