

2Blades Welcomes New Leadership Team Members; Sets Sights on New Crop Disease Projects

2Blades Bolsters Leadership Team to Accelerate Mission of Addressing Crop Disease & Global Food Security

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- 2Blades is

bolstering its leadership team and

Board of Directors as it seeks to

accelerate its mission of providing long-lasting solutions to crop disease and global food security.

The new hires represent a period of growth for the organization as it expands its work on economically important crops like soybeans and corn.

The logo for 2BLADES, featuring the text "2BLADES" in a blue serif font, with a horizontal line underneath.

"This past year has shown us how vulnerable our food systems are to environmental, social, economic, and political factors," said 2Blades President and co-founder, Dr. Diana Horvath.

"Meeting this challenge requires new and bold ideas to produce more resilient crops, and I am thrilled by the talent and diversity that we have brought on board to advance our efforts."

Since inception in 2004, 2Blades has helped to bridge public and private resources to advance scientific discoveries into disease-resistant crops for commercial and smallholder farmers. Past achievements include the advancement of resistance genes against Asian soybean rust in Brazil, Stem Rust in wheat, and Late Blight in potato.

2Blades has also advanced enabling technologies such as the TALEN gene-editing platform that has been used to create new traits in rice, wheat, corn, potato, and other crops.

Dr. Eric Ward, Chairman of the Board and former President of 2Blades, echoed Dr. Horvath's excitement: "Crop disease may not be the first thing that comes to mind when we think of global security threats, but it has the potential to affect every aspect of our lives. To solve these problems requires innovation and collaboration. As Chairman of the Board, I am thrilled to welcome our new members and work together with the 2Blades team during this inflection point in global agriculture."

New hires to 2Blades' leadership team include:

Dr. Apolonio Huerta, Business Development Manager. Dr. Huerta previously worked as a Venture Capital Fellow at Redalpine Venture Partners in Zurich, Switzerland where he helped source Life Science and Digital Health start-ups with innovative technologies and transformative business models. He completed his Ph.D. from the Swiss Institute of Technology (ETH).

Dr. Josiah Musembi Mutuku, Group Leader. Prior to his role as 2Blades Group Leader in St. Paul, MN, Dr. Mutuku served as Director of Research at the Central and West African Virus Epidemiology (WAVE) Institute based in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire. At WAVE, he helped to implement science strategy across 10 Central and West African countries. Previously, Dr. Mutuku was awarded the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) fellowship while at the Riken, Yokohama Institute, Japan. He obtained his Ph.D. from Kagoshima University.

Dr. Karen Century, Director of Operations. Dr. Century brings over 20 years of experience in the ag-biotech industry, including research and business roles at BASF. Her career has focused on developing disease and pest control biotech traits and bringing these technologies to market. She earned her Ph.D. in Plant Pathology from the University of California, Berkeley, as a National Science Foundation graduate fellow.

Dr. Kamil Witek, Group Leader. Dr. Witek has been a member of the 2Blades Group at The Sainsbury Laboratory in Norwich, UK since 2019 and was promoted to Group Leader in March, 2023. Before joining the 2Blades group, he spent nine years as a post-doctoral researcher at The Sainsbury Laboratory where he created germplasm collections and developed novel techniques to clone a variety of functional plant immune receptors. Dr. Witek was awarded his Ph.D. by the Institute of Biochemistry and Biophysics PAS in Poland, where he studied interactions between potato and major viral pathogens.

Wilson Paine, Director of External Affairs. Mr. Paine arrives at 2Blades following substantial development and public affairs experience, including most recently as Vice President of Institutional Advancement & External Relations at Ferrum College. Paine began his career as a Presidential Management Fellow at FEMA and the U.S. Department of State. He is a graduate of Ferrum College and holds a masters in theological studies from Harvard University.

2Blades also welcomes the following individuals to its Board of Directors:

Sylvia Wulf. Ms. Wulf currently serves as CEO, President and Director of AquaBounty Technologies, Inc. AquaBounty is a biotechnology company focused on enhancing productivity in the aquaculture market and is a majority-owned subsidiary of Intrexon Corporation. Wulf joined AquaBounty from US Foods, Inc., one of the country's leading food distributors, where she was a Senior Vice President and President of the Manufacturing Division. She joins 2Blades' Board after serving on its Sustainability Council since 2019. Beyond her service at 2Blades, Ms. Wulf also serves on the executive committee of the National Fisheries Institute, board of directors for the Women's Foodservice Forum and the International Foodservice Manufacturers Association.

Ken Moonie. Mr. Moonie started his plant biotech career at Calgene, where he worked in

business development and led operations for the Flav Savr tomato. Moonie has provided business development, strategic planning and negotiating expertise to many of the world's leading plant biotechnology, microbial, seed and crop protection companies, advising clients on strategy and the establishment of more than 140 research alliances, technology licenses, joint venture, mergers and acquisitions valued at more than \$1.6 billion. Among the biotech companies that he worked with over his career, Mr. Moonie assisted 2Blades with licensing the TALEN gene-editing platform and with strategic relationships with Corteva, Bayer, and others.

About 2Blades (www.2blades.org)

2Blades is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization dedicated to the discovery, advancement, and delivery of environmentally responsible, long-lasting solutions to crop disease by merging cutting-edge science discovery with delivery in the field. 2Blades establishes and manages development programs addressing significant unsolved crop disease problems in collaboration with leading research institutions around the world and manages a portfolio of specific traits and enabling technologies that it implements in its own programs and out-licenses for broad use. 2Blades is headquartered in Evanston, IL, with research labs in Norwich, UK and St. Paul, MN, and offices in Chapel Hill, NC and Zurich, Switzerland.

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2Blades

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