

Akorn Technology focus on stemming postharvest losses in Global South takes company to FoodTech Challenge final 10

Akorn Technology named top 10 finalist in UAE 2025 FoodTech Challenge for plant-based coatings tackling postharvest losses and cold chain gaps in Global South.

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EINPresswire.com/ -- [Akorn](#)

Technology, Inc., an innovator in sustainable postharvest solutions, has been named as a finalist for the prestigious 2025 [FoodTech Challenge](#) –

a UAE-based competition which brings together the world's most ambitious and pioneering food and agriculture startups – for proposals to help small growers combat significant post-harvest losses and cold chain problems.



Mangoes sprayed with Akorn Natural Advantage

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Our patented technology enables us to extract valuable compounds from agricultural byproducts and transform them into powerful, natural solutions capable of reducing post-harvest losses by up to 50%.”

*Anthony Zografos, PhD,
Founder and CEO*

Currently in its final stages, the FoodTech Challenge, organized by the International Affairs Office at the Presidential Court of the UAE and Tamkeen (<https://www.tamkeenuae.com>), focuses on identifying and scaling agri-food technologies capable of transforming “arid, hot and increasingly challenging environments.”

As revealed at the Clinton Global Initiative 2025 Global Meeting, which took place at the United Nations General Assembly in New York, the 10 FoodTech finalists were selected from 42 semi-finalists drawn from 1,215 submissions from 113 countries.

“We’re honored to be recognized as a finalist for the FoodTech Challenge,” said Anthony Zografos, CEO of Akorn. “Akorn’s mission is to create practical, nature-based solutions that make

fresh produce last longer without relying on chemicals and single-use plastics. Being part of this initiative validates the global importance of our mission and serves as one more testimonial to the groundbreaking nature of our technology platform.”

Up to 30% of fresh fruits and vegetables are lost after harvest, with smallholder farmers in the Global South particularly affected. Reducing these losses with post-harvest treatments is essential to improving farmer livelihoods and ensuring year-round global access to healthy, nutritious produce.

The post-harvest sector has long been dominated by chemical-based solutions that, while effective, are increasingly at odds with tightening global regulations and consumer demand for clean-label, chemical-free food. In contrast, newer entrants have focused on “natural” solutions that often proved too costly, impractical, or ineffective at scale and ultimately failed. Major retailers such as [Walmart](#) and Whole Foods have recently instituted wide-reaching chemical bans which are now reverberating through the global supply chain.

Akorn is the first company to successfully bridge this gap. Its innovative products combine natural ingredients with proven performance—delivering solutions that are effective, easy to use, and cost-competitive, without the addition of synthetic chemicals. Akorn’s solutions represent a new era in post-harvest protection: appealing to consumers, sustainable for the planet, and profitable for growers.

“Our patented technology enables us to extract valuable compounds from agricultural byproducts and transform them into powerful, natural solutions capable of reducing post-harvest losses by up to 50%,” said Zografos. “We have already demonstrated the effectiveness of



Akorn-coated mangoes on packing line



Post-harvest treatment on oranges in packing house

our technology on crops such as mangoes, stone fruit, pome fruit, sweet potatoes, and more.

“Through the FoodTech Challenge, we are expanding our work to leverage local resources and develop new formulations specifically optimized for the arid conditions of the Global South. The UAE offers an ideal testbed for these innovations—providing the perfect environment to validate their impact and scalability. The country has emerged as a global launchpad for technologies that advance sustainable food production in resource-scarce regions.”

Xander Shapiro, Chief Commercial Officer of Akorn, explained that as a result of poor cold chains and excessive use of synthetic chemicals, perishable goods from smaller producers in the Global South often fall foul of the strict quality and safety standards required by lucrative export markets such as the European Union, Japan, the US, and others.

He added: “The inability to access global markets not only limits income growth but also stifles investment in improved farming practices and infrastructure. Akorn’s technology will improve supply chains, and boost economics and quality for the Global South markets.”

The winners of the FoodTech Challenge will be announced in the first quarter of 2026. More information can be found at <https://www.mediaoffice.abudhabi/en/environment/foodtech-challenge-announces-10-finalists-for-3rd-edition-on-sidelines-of-2025-un-general-assembly/>.

About Akorn Technology

Akorn Technology, Inc., based in Berkeley, California, develops and commercializes innovative, plant-based edible coatings that extend the shelf life of fresh produce while maintaining its quality, flavor, and nutritional value. Akorn’s proprietary water-dispersible vegetable protein technology is plant-based, sustainable, and compatible with existing packinghouse equipment, enabling easy adoption worldwide.

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