

Radicle Growth Launches The Radicle Corn Challenge Sponsored by US Corn Farmers to Drive New Demand for Corn

\$1.75M Challenge Invites Global Startups to Develop New Uses for Corn Across Materials, Chemicals, Fuels, and Emerging Value Chains

SAN DIEGO, CA, UNITED STATES, January 13, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Radicle Growth today announced the launch of The Radicle Corn Challenge sponsored by US Corn Farmers, a global call for startups developing technologies that create new, durable

demand for corn through innovative products, materials, and value chains. The Challenge will invest a total of \$1.75 million in selected companies and is supported by twelve leading U.S. corn grower organizations: Colorado Corn Promotion Council, Corn Marketing Program of Michigan, Illinois Corn Marketing Board, Iowa Corn Promotion Board, Kansas Corn Commission, Kentucky

Corn Promotion Council, Missouri Corn Merchandising Council, National Corn Growers Association, Nebraska Corn Board, Ohio Corn Marketing Program, South Dakota Corn Utilization Council, and Tennessee Corn Promotion Board.

Corn farmers are highly efficient at producing corn, but long-term profitability increasingly depends on expanding how corn is used beyond traditional markets. The Radicle Corn Challenge is designed to support startups that are

building new uses for corn by helping unlock additional sources of demand across industrial, material, chemical, and fuel applications.

"Corn has long been a foundational feedstock for food, feed, and fuel," said Kirk Haney, Managing Partner at Radicle Growth. "The next opportunity is expanding how corn is used across new products and markets. Through the Radicle Corn Challenge, we're looking to support



companies that can translate innovation into real-world demand.”

The Challenge seeks applications from startups and growth companies around the world working on technologies that convert corn and corn-derived streams—such as sugar (glucose), ethanol, and other byproducts—into higher-value products. Areas of interest include bioplastics and materials, corn- and ethanol-derived chemicals, valorization of corn byproducts, and emerging fuel pathways, including marine fuels and sustainable aviation fuel.

“Advances in chemistry, catalysis, and biological conversion are opening up new, practical pathways for corn-based products,” said Neal Gutterson, Partner and Chief Technology Officer at Radicle Growth. “What’s particularly compelling today is how many of these technologies are becoming technically and commercially viable at scale.”

The Radicle Corn Challenge Sponsored by US Corn Farmers will invest \$1.75M across the winning startups and growth companies. In addition to capital, selected companies will benefit from Radicle’s commercialization expertise, scientific and technical diligence, and connections across the corn and broader bioeconomy ecosystem.

Historically, corn growers have played an active role in building and growing new markets, including the early development of the ethanol industry. The Challenge explores how similar alignment between innovators, investors, and growers can help scale the next generation of corn-based technologies.

“Corn farmers continue to lead the way in producing high-quality corn, supplying feed, fuel, fiber and food around the globe,” said Joe Roberts, Iowa Corn Promotion Board President and farmer from Belmond, Iowa. “As the corn industry continues to expand in Iowa and around the country, the surplus of corn carryout is forecasted to increase, challenging farmer profitability. That’s why Iowa Corn, together with our corn state partners, is proud to sponsor the second Radicle Corn Challenge sponsored by US Corn Farmers. The challenge will once again spotlight breakthrough ideas and bold new demand opportunities for corn. I’m eager to see the startups and growth companies showcase their new technologies, while learning how we can work together to continue finding new uses for corn.”

Investment decisions will be made following a comprehensive due diligence process, with selected winners announced at the Bio Innovations North America conference on September 9th, 2026 in Omaha, NE.

For more information about The Radicle Corn Challenge Sponsored by US Corn Farmers, and to apply, visit radicle.vc/radicle-corn-challenge.

About Radicle Growth:

Radicle Growth is a global innovation platform investing in and accelerating the most transformative technologies in agriculture and food. Through a differentiated approach to deal sourcing, capital formation, market access, and company building, Radicle ensures that breakthrough innovations reach scale and deliver meaningful impact. The firm partners with

entrepreneurs and strategic stakeholders to address some of the sector's most pressing challenges—from sustainability and food security to productivity and supply chain modernization. Radicle's platform combines deep domain expertise with a hands-on model to help founders navigate commercialization, technology complexity, and global growth. For more information, visit radicle.vc.

About Iowa Corn:

Iowa Corn, headquartered in Johnston, Iowa, works to develop and defend markets, fund research, and provide education about corn and corn products. For more information, visit iowacorn.org.

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