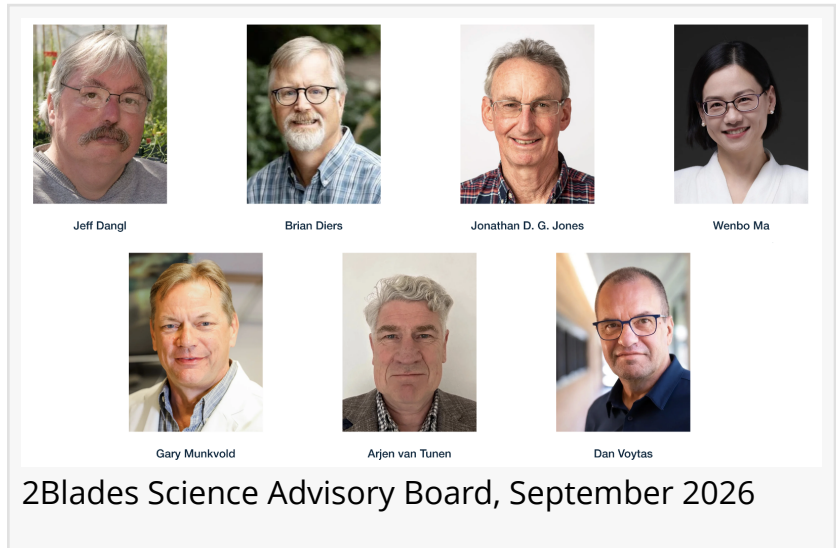


2Blades welcomes new Science Advisory Board to accelerate innovation in crop resilience

Leading scientists and innovators bring expertise spanning plant immunity, crop breeding, field pathology, gene editing, and agricultural biotechnology

EVANSTON, IL, UNITED STATES, September 1, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [2Blades](#) has appointed a new Science Advisory Board (SAB), bringing together seven distinguished leaders whose expertise spans the scientific and translational challenges at the heart of 2Blades' work: understanding plant immunity and pathogen biology, discovering and engineering new resistance traits, breeding them into crops, testing their performance against disease in the field, and advancing innovations toward agricultural impact.



The new Board will advise 2Blades as it expands programs in soybean, corn, potato, and trait-platform development and pursues new genetic solutions for durable crop resilience.

"For 2Blades, discovery is the beginning, not the endpoint," said Diana Horvath, President and Co-Founder of 2Blades. "Our goal is to take the best science and move it toward solutions that work in crops and ultimately reach farmers in the US and around the world. The breadth of expertise on this new Science Advisory Board—from fundamental plant immunity to breeding, field pathology, genome engineering, and commercialization—will be enormously valuable as we do that."

Expertise from discovery through delivery

The new Science Advisory Board brings together complementary perspectives across the agricultural innovation chain:

Jeff Dangi, Professor of Biology, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Investigator,

Howard Hughes Medical Institute, is a pioneer in understanding how plants recognize microbes and activate their immune systems. His work on immune receptors and plant-microbe interactions provides fundamental insights into how disease resistance can be discovered, understood, and ultimately harnessed for crop improvement.

Brian Diers, Professor Emeritus, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, is an internationally recognized soybean geneticist and breeder. His research has focused on using genetic diversity and modern breeding approaches to improve soybean yield, quality, and resistance to major diseases and pests. His deep understanding of soybean genetics and breeding will help connect 2Blades' trait discoveries with the realities of developing improved varieties for farmers.

Jonathan Jones, Senior Group Leader, The Sainsbury Laboratory, is one of the world's leading scientists in plant-microbe interactions and plant immunity. Over more than three decades, his research has produced major advances in understanding plant resistance genes and immune mechanisms, while his involvement in agricultural biotechnology has also given him experience translating fundamental discoveries toward practical applications.

Wenbo Ma, Senior Group Leader, The Sainsbury Laboratory, has pioneered knowledge about how plants and pathogens communicate and compete at the molecular level through RNA-based mechanism. Discoveries in her group have shown how small RNAs can silence pathogen genes during infection, helping to establish trans-species RNA interference for engineering broad-spectrum and potentially durable disease resistance.

Gary Munkvold, Professor and Chair of Plant Pathology, University of Kentucky, brings decades of expertise in plant pathology, crop disease, seed health, and the interaction between pathogens and agricultural production. His experience provides an important field and disease-management perspective as 2Blades advances resistance to economically important crop pathogens, including its work on toxigenic fungi and mycotoxins in corn.

Arjen van Tunen, CEO, TunenAgroFood BV, brings extensive leadership experience in agricultural biotechnology, including 19 years as CEO of KeyGene. His expertise in innovation strategy, intellectual property, business development, and translating agricultural technologies toward the market will help 2Blades consider not only what can be discovered scientifically, but how promising innovations can progress toward broad use.

Dan Voytas, Distinguished McKnight University Professor of Genetics, Cell Biology and Development and Director of the Center for Precision Plant Genomics, University of Minnesota, is a leader in plant genome engineering and a pioneer in the development and application of programmable gene-editing technologies, including TALENs. His expertise will help 2Blades evaluate strategies for precisely engineering and deploying useful traits in crops.

Building on more than two decades of innovation

When 2Blades began in 2004, it grew from a vision for advancing plant science through a different model—one designed not simply to generate discoveries, but to move them toward tangible benefits in agriculture. More than two decades later, 2Blades has led the development of more than 25 technical advances with over 50 partners in 20 countries, with programs addressing diseases of crops important to global food security.

The organization itself has evolved along the way. What began as the Two Blades Foundation, primarily supporting research through grants to university partners, has developed substantial internal research capabilities at The Sainsbury Laboratory in Norwich, UK, and the University of Minnesota in St. Paul, alongside collaborations with academic and industry partners around the world.

Throughout that evolution, one principle has remained constant: a product mindset that connects scientific discovery with impact in the field. 2Blades seeks to discover new solutions to damaging causes of preharvest losses, advance the most promising advances through translational research, and work with partners to deliver them to commercial agriculture and smallholder farmers.

That mission increasingly requires expertise across disciplines. A breakthrough in molecular plant immunity must become a useful trait. A useful trait must function in an important crop. It must withstand the pathogen pressures and environmental complexity of the field. And ultimately, it must have a pathway to reach farmers.

The new Science Advisory Board has been assembled with that continuum in mind.

Together, the SAB and 2Blades science teams will help identify emerging opportunities, challenge scientific assumptions, guide program strategy, and accelerate the development of creative new approaches to trait discovery and delivery in soybean, corn, potato, and other crops.

By connecting world-leading science with practical agricultural application, 2Blades aims to deliver more resilient crop varieties—and contribute to a more secure global food supply.

About 2Blades

2Blades is a non-profit, agbiotech company dedicated to preventing pre-harvest crop losses, by advancing cutting-edge scientific discoveries into demonstrated resilience in the field. With its unique dual-market business model, 2Blades supports both commercial and smallholder farmers by bridging public and private sector resources to maximize the success and accessibility of agricultural innovations.

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