

J-WAFS Food & Water News

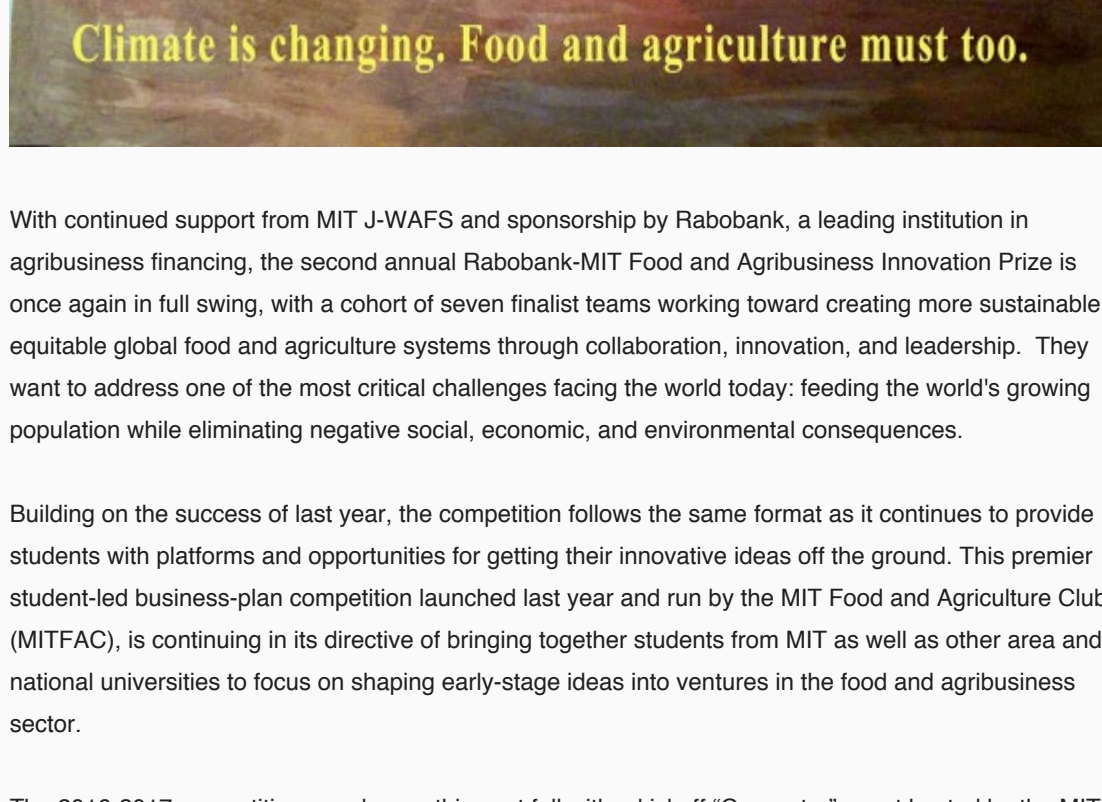
February 2017

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J-WAFS Highlight

Rabobank–MIT Food and Agribusiness Prize Announces Finalist Teams



With continued support from MIT J-WAFS and sponsorship by Rabobank, a leading institution in agribusiness financing, the second annual Rabobank-MIT Food and Agribusiness Innovation Prize is once again in full swing, with a cohort of seven finalist teams working toward creating more sustainable, equitable global food and agriculture systems through collaboration, innovation, and leadership. They want to address one of the most critical challenges facing the world today: feeding the world's growing population while eliminating negative social, economic, and environmental consequences.

Building on the success of last year, the competition follows the same format as it continues to provide students with platforms and opportunities for getting their innovative ideas off the ground. This premier student-led business-plan competition launched last year and run by the MIT Food and Agriculture Club (MITFAC), is continuing in its directive of bringing together students from MIT as well as other area and national universities to focus on shaping early-stage ideas into ventures in the food and agribusiness sector.

The 2016-2017 competition year began this past fall with a kickoff "Generator" event hosted by the MIT Food and Agriculture Club, where students learned about the challenges in food and agribusiness from the perspective of prominent leaders in the industry, pitched initial ideas, joined forces around common interests, and began to form teams. MITFAC received eighteen submissions in late December.

The Prize has attracted students from a variety of schools and a diverse array of academic disciplines. The schools represented by this year's applicants are: MIT, Harvard University, Wellesley College, Cornell University, Stanford University, University of California at Davis, Babson College, Yale University, New York University, Tufts University, and the Culinary Institute of America. The students on the teams were both graduate and undergraduate students, coming from a range of departments and disciplines, in particular engineering, business, public administration, international development, urban planning, medicine, manufacturing, and horticulture and agronomy. While all teams had to have student participation, some team members are professionals from industry.

A committee of judges reviewed and scored the applications, choosing seven finalist teams to move on to the final application round. Collectively, these teams are working to address a wide range of challenges in the food and agriculture sectors:

Preserve-air, a smartly designed temporary storage room for harvested crops
Aims to reduce the counter effects of sun on crops sitting idle on fields after harvest

Cambridge Crops, an edible and natural biomaterial coating
Aims to dramatically extend the shelf life of perishable food

Rooted, sustainable and nutritious algae-based snack foods
Aims to combat environmental degradation through introducing and normalizing the consumption of algae in the form of familiar snack foods, as a sustainable and nutritious alternative to animal protein

AquaOne Technologies, a novel water desalination technology for agriculture
Aims to innovate at the intersection of water and food with a particular focus on water desalination technology tailored for agriculture, smart nutrient delivery mechanisms, real-time monitoring, and dynamic yield optimization

WISFRAN, live measurement and analysis of farm data
Aims to improve profits for growers by measuring and analyzing live the time, cost and effectiveness of their farming activities

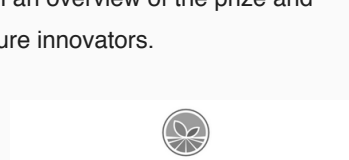
Foodfully, an app focused on reducing household food waste
Aims to reduce household food waste through an app that links with grocery store loyalty cards and scans receipts to track food purchases in order to notify users before food goes bad, provide recipes, and show users waste reduction tips

Spray that Stays, a technology reducing pesticide waste
Aims to help farmers drastically cut down on the amount of pesticides waste and thereby lowers the farmer's costs and reduces pollution

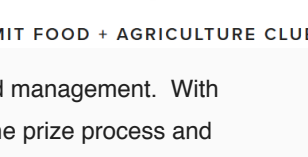
Once the finalist teams were selected, the MIT Food and Agriculture Club planning team drew upon a pool of professionals from both the private sector and academia to work with the teams, helping them develop and refine their business plan for final submission and presentation. Serving as mentors for up to three months, they were matched according to their relevant background and area of expertise.

The mentors for this year's finalist teams bring a wide breadth of expertise and experience: in founding and financing food, agriculture, and sustainability focused start-ups; agricultural engineering; protein preservation; consumer packaged goods; business development and strategy in the agricultural sector; food waste solutions and technologies; private equity; food production and equipment; and agricultural and food distribution. Mentors are identified and recruited through Rabobank, MIT, and the personal networks of the MITFAC student planning team. They are provided with an overview of the prize and encouraged to be a part of launching the next crop of food and agriculture innovators.

The MIT Food and Agriculture Club student team that is leading the planning and execution of this year's Prize are masters and PhD level graduate students at MIT, coming from a variety of disciplines: business, engineering and manufacturing, biology, and system design and management. With sponsorship from Rabobank and support from J-WAFS, they developed the prize process and application, planned the first Generator Dinner, and identified a panel of judges and mentors. They are passionate about the food and agriculture sector, and are thrilled to be a part of helping to launch the next crop of innovators in this sector.



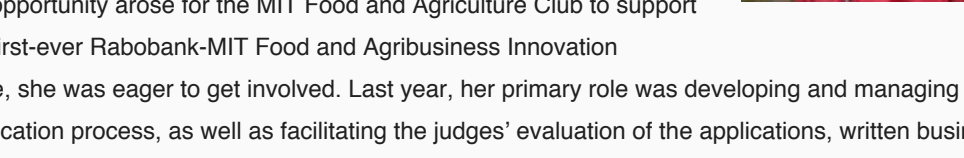
Samantha Fahrback, who heads the MITFAC team in the planning and organization of the prize, is a Sloan MBA Candidate, pursuing a Sustainability Certificate with a focus on sustainable operations in the food and agriculture industry. She came to MIT Sloan to transition to a career focused on improving the sustainability of the food and beverage industry, so she connected with students in the MIT Food and Agriculture Club as soon as she got to campus in August 2015. When the opportunity arose for the MIT Food and Agriculture Club to support the first-ever Rabobank-MIT Food and Agribusiness Innovation Prize, she was eager to get involved. Last year, her primary role was developing and managing the application process, as well as facilitating the judges' evaluation of the applications, written business plans, and in-person pitches. This year, she is using her experience from last year's prize to oversee the team from MITFAC planning this year's prize, providing advice and guidance for the entire process from the planning of the Generator Dinner through the application process to the final event.



According to Fahrback: "The thing that has been most surprising to me during my involvement with the prize is the incredible breadth and diversity of the ideas that teams have submitted to the prize over the past two years. The food and agriculture industry presents a number of challenges for business and society, and it's been inspiring to see how many different perspectives and solutions that teams are bringing to the table—it makes me very hopeful for the future of our global food and agriculture system."

This year's seven finalist teams are now in the midst of the three-month mentoring period. The final event in May will provide the finalist teams with the opportunity to pitch their idea to the judges in person, with an audience in attendance. The judges will score the finalist teams on their pitch presentations and use this score, as well as their scores on the written business plans, to determine the first, second, and third place winners for a share of this year's \$25,000 prize. In addition, the final event will feature opening remarks from Rabobank, members of the MIT community, as well as a keynote speaker.

Stay tuned for the final pitch and award ceremony to be held during the first week of May 2017. More details to come this spring.



J-WAFS News

J-WAFS Solutions program upcoming call for proposals

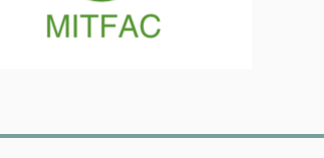
J-WAFS and the Deshpande Center for Technological Innovation will announce a call for proposals for J-WAFS Solutions grants on February 17. We seek projects with faculty inventors eager to see their work commercialized. The grant program is open to all MIT PIs and provides funding as well as additional benefits such as industry mentorship. **Pre-proposals will be due March 27, 2017**, with full proposals (by invitation only) due June 1, 2017.

Other Water & Food News

MIT alum and food startup founder Ricky Ashenfelter named one of the Forbes 30 under 30

In its sixth year, the [Forbes 30 under 30 list](#) honors 600 people under the age of 30 who are leading the way as innovators and change makers, covering twenty diverse categories, including a category for social entrepreneurs. Over 15,000 people were nominated this year, and at least 30 of those chosen represent MIT, as students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

One of those named in the "social entrepreneur" category is recent Sloan graduate Ricky Ashenfelter, honored for his work as co-founder of a company called [Spiller Alert](#), a technology company with the mission of making use of unused food before it spoils, keeping surplus from going to waste by diverting good healthy food from the waste stream. Through a real-time marketplace platform, Spiller Alert enables farms, nonprofits and food businesses to manage the inventory of surplus food through donations and discount sales.



Ashenfelter started the company along with Sloan classmate Emily Malina. He has a background in management consulting, experience in supply chain sustainability and technology adoption, and an interest in social entrepreneurship. This interest led him to Sloan's entrepreneurship program, and he applied what he learned to his concern about how much food is wasted in the US and globally. His view of social impact entrepreneurship is that companies are increasingly evaluated on a triple bottom line: not just of economic growth, but also the social and environmental value the company creates.

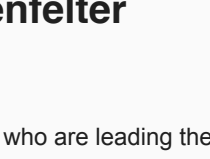
Spiller Alert was among nearly two dozen MIT-related and other local water and food sector companies featured in the startup showcase at J-WAFS conference last April.

Upcoming J-WAFS Events

CEE / J-WAFS Water and Food Security Seminar Series

Presented by Chandra Madramootoo, visiting professor in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE) and visiting scholar with J-WAFS, as well as other MIT graduate students, to provide senior undergraduate and graduate students in CEE, as well as other MIT graduate students, with a background on some of the challenges of global food security, particularly in relation to issues around water management engineering in differing agro-ecologic conditions. The first seminar in the series, on Feb. 23, is titled "An Irrigation Grand Challenge: Salt management and drainage water disposal in irrigated areas." [More Info here.](#)

Event Organizer: Civil & Environmental Engineering (CEE) and J-WAFS
Date: Thursday February 23, noon-2pm
Location: Room 1-242

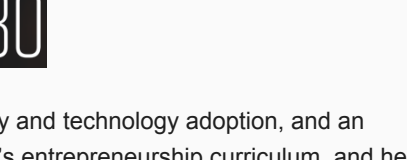


Other MIT Events

MIT IDEAS Generator Dinner

Working on a project that will contribute to a better world? Want to recruit new team members? Want to get involved, but don't yet have an idea? The IDEAS Generator Dinner is one of the best venues to find a team to join, pitch your idea, network, and recruit teammates. With the last chance to enter the MIT IDEAS Global Challenge just a few weeks away (March 2, 2017), get started at this event. Learn more and register [HERE](#).

Event Organizer: MIT IDEAS Global Challenge
When: Rescheduled to Thursday February 16th, 7-9pm
Where: [MIT Stratton Student Center \(W20\)](#), 2nd Floor



Boston-area Water and Food Events

Call for abstracts for upcoming Tufts University Future of Food and Nutrition Conference

Submit an abstract by February 17th for the upcoming 10th annual multidisciplinary Future of Food and Nutrition Graduate Student Research Conference, hosted by the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University. The conference will be held April 7-8, 2017, with the keynote address delivered by Helena Bottemiller Evich, senior food and agriculture reporter at POLITICO, on the topic of the future of US food policy.



Abstracts are due by February 17th at 5 pm EST. View the [call for abstracts](#). Submissions from graduate students, postdocs, and early career researchers in a field related to food and nutrition are welcome. Check out the [conference website](#) for more details, and stay tuned for an announcement when registration opens online.

Global Food+ 2017

24 Speed Talks on the Nexus of Food, Agriculture, Environment, Health, and Society

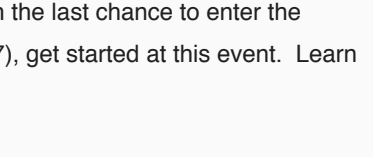
Global Food+ 2017 is a TED-esq event where 24 professors from Harvard, MIT, Tufts, BU, and Northeastern will give speed presentations on their food and agriculture research. The [list of speakers](#) will include Ken Strzepek, Dennis McLaughlin, Amy Dale, Chandra Madramootoo, and Noelle Selin from MIT. The keynote speaker is Dr. Shenggen Fan, director general of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). The event will be followed by a networking reception. Free and open to the public. Click [here](#) for more information.

Hosted by: Weatherhead Center for International Affairs
When: February 24, 12:30 - 4:30 pm
Where: Harvard University Center for Government and International Studies, South Building Tsai Auditorium (S010), 1730 Cambridge Street, Cambridge, MA

Funding and Other Opportunities

MassCEC Internship Opportunity

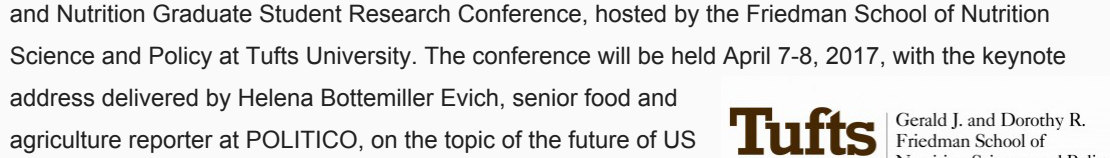
[MassCEC](#) is a quasi-public agency working to build the cleantech ecosystem and economy in Massachusetts. Their investments team makes debt and equity investments in early-stage cleantech and clean energy companies in the Commonwealth. They are seeking a spring-term graduate-level intern, preferably MBA, to help them evaluate investment opportunities in areas such as water and energy storage.



To apply, please send an email to investments@masscec.com with a resume and description of your interest and eligibility. The time commitment per week is flexible depending on your schedule. They will structure the internship to provide academic credit through your academic institution.

Job announcement: Associate Director, Innovation for Urban Water Solutions

100 Resilient Cities is looking to fill the position of Associate Director, Innovation for Urban Water Solutions, to be a key member of the Solution Development and Innovation Team. They seek candidates with a Master's degree or equivalent work experience and a minimum of 10 years relevant working experience within the urban water sector. See more details of the position and qualification [here](#).



100 Resilient Cities is a new organization pioneered by The Rockefeller Foundation with the mission of helping 100 member global cities become resilient in the face of 21st century shocks and stresses, by offering financial support, strategy development support, and peer networks support.

ESI 2017: Funding Opportunity

The MIT Environmental Solutions Initiative announced call for proposals for education grants.

2017 CURRICULUM GRANTS
\$500,000 is available for undergraduate curriculum activities in environment and sustainability. MIT faculty are encouraged to apply for funds to create new classes, adapt existing classes, and generate innovative teaching and learning opportunities in environment and sustainability. Full proposals will be due March 17, 2017 by 5:00 pm. See [here](#) for detailed information.

