

Aphea.Bio Joins the International Phytobiomes Alliance



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The [International Alliance for Phytobiomes Research](#) is pleased to announce that [Aphea.Bio](#) has joined the organization as a sponsoring partner.

The Phytobiomes Alliance is an international, nonprofit consortium of academic institutions, private companies, and government agencies. The Alliance facilitates and coordinates international efforts toward expanding phytobiomes research to accelerate the sustainable production of food, feed, and fiber for food security.

Phytobiomes research is a system-level approach focused on the complex interactions between plants, microorganisms, soils, climate, environment, and management practices. The term “Phytobiome” refers to a plant growing within a specific environment, or biome. Phytobiomes consist of plants, their environment, and their associated communities of organisms. Interactions within phytobiomes are dynamic and profoundly affect plant and agroecosystem health.

The Belgium-based biotechnology company Aphea.Bio was founded in 2017 as a spin-off of VIB, a life sciences research institute in Flanders, Belgium, and its partner universities UGent and KU Leuven. The company focuses on the development of agricultural products based on natural microorganisms that help reduce fertilizer application (biostimulants) and control fungal diseases (biocontrol agents) sustainably in maize and wheat. Aphea.Bio is in a unique position to deliver novel and powerful solutions to the market because of its innovative research and development platform bundling different technologies in bio-informatics and microbiome mapping, state-of-the-art microorganism culturing, high-throughput crop phenotyping and data analysis for discovery of new biocontrol and biostimulant products for farmers.

“We are delighted to join the Phytobiomes Alliance. We both share the same passion of using science and technology to develop microbial based solutions for sustainable agriculture. It’s a great opportunity for us to be part of a unique group of academic and industry experts knowledgeable in the field of microbiomes,” said Isabel Vercauteren, Aphea.Bio CEO, who will be joining the Alliance Coordinating Committee. This Committee identifies research, resource and technology gaps, establishes priorities, and develops strategic plans to achieve Alliance goals.

“We are excited that Aphea.Bio is joining the Phytobiomes Alliance,” said Kellye Eversole, the Alliance Executive Director. “Their biostimulants and biocontrol agents will give wheat and maize growers the tools they

need to increase the sustainability of their farming operations. Their experience with improving the sustainability of wheat will be especially valuable as wheat will continue to be the single most important source of nutrition for the world's population."

Over the next decades, the United Nations predicts that the world population will reach 9.7 billion by 2050. To produce enough food for this growing population in less than 30 growing seasons requires a major paradigm shift in agricultural research and production. The Phytobiomes Alliance aims at addressing this challenge by establishing a foundation of knowledge on how phytobiome components interact and affect each other. Understanding entire systems of phytobiomes will be critical to ensuring sustainable global food security in the next decades in the context of population growth, climate change, the necessity to preserve biodiversity and natural resources, and maintain or enhance grower and farmer profitability.

Later this year, worldwide scientists from the public and private sector working on phytobiomes research will gather in Denver, Colorado, USA, from 1 to 4 December 2020 for the International Phytobiomes Conference – an event organized by the Phytobiomes Alliance – to present their research, discuss, and share their expertise to advance knowledge on how phytobiome components interact and affect each other.

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About the Phytobiomes Alliance

The Phytobiomes Alliance is an international, nonprofit alliance of industry, academic, and governmental partners created in 2016. The goal of the Alliance is to understand, predict and control emergent phenotypes for sustainable production of food, feed and fiber on any given farm. The Phytobiomes Alliance is sponsored by Bayer Crop Science, Eversole Associates, INRAE, Novozymes, Valent BioSciences, Biovante, Colorado State University, Eurofins BioDiagnostics, Indigo, IRD, Joyn Bio, the University of Maryland, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, NewLeaf Symbiotics, the Noble Research Institute, Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences, Pivot Bio, The Fertilizer Institute, the Waterloo Centre for Microbial Research, Apeha.Bio, the American Phytopathological Society, BioConsortia, AIT Austrian Institute of Technology and Karyosoft.
www.phytobiomesalliance.org

About Apeha.Bio

Founded in 2017 as a spin-off of the VIB and its partner universities UGent and KU Leuven, Apeha.Bio has raised about USD 10 million in funding. Apeha.Bio's mission is "Applied Nature for better Agriculture" and develops new and superior agricultural biologicals to provide farmers with innovative and sustainable solutions to reduce fertilizer and pesticide use.

www.aphea.bio

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