



Flagship VentureLabs™ Introduces Symbiota, Pioneer of Agricultural Innovation Through the Plant Microbiome

By

Published: Nov 13, 2014 8:30 a.m. ET

Symbiota Appoints Dr. Robert Berendes as Executive Chairman

CAMBRIDGE, Mass., Nov. 13, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- Flagship VentureLabs™ announces Symbiota™, after two years of development in stealth mode and a \$7.5 million Series A financing from Flagship Ventures. Symbiota is pioneering microbial solutions that naturally promote plant health and improve agricultural production by harnessing the beneficial microbes that reside within plants. The company has built a substantial platform and advanced multiple products into greenhouse and field trials in globally important crops including corn, soy, wheat, cotton and vegetables.

Symbiota is based on the recognition that the plant's internal microbiome is critical to plant health and yield. The company is developing products that form symbiotic partnerships with plants to support healthier, more stress tolerant crops. This new way of naturally, non-genetically boosting crop performance is beneficial to plants and the environment, cost-effective and compatible with all farming practices.

"In a short period of time, we have made several big discoveries in the plant microbiome that have led to rapid product development opportunities, field results and a powerful intellectual property estate," said Dr. Geoffrey von Maltzahn, Symbiota Co-Founder and President and Flagship VentureLabs Partner. "Symbiota has attracted an extraordinary team of

the world's experts in agriculture, microbiome science, and plant biology to lead this new field."

Adding to Symbiota's leadership, industry veteran and Flagship Venture Partner Dr. Robert Berendes, former Global Head of Business Development at Syngenta, has recently been appointed as Executive Chairman. At Syngenta, Dr. Berendes held executive roles including Head of Diverse Field Crops and Head of Strategy, Planning and M&A. Prior to Syngenta, Dr. Berendes was partner and co-leader of the European chemical practice at McKinsey & Company.

"I am very excited to be joining Symbiota, which is the only company leveraging the plant microbiome in a manner that can produce breakthrough agricultural products," said Dr. Berendes. "Symbiota's technology is one-of-a-kind and built upon a strong scientific foundation that allows for the development of products that act in symbiosis with plants to offer a step change in crop performance without genetic manipulations."

Symbiota was founded by the Flagship Ventures innovation foundry, VentureLabs, where its R&D was initiated in 2012. VentureLabs has been actively exploring the microbiome since 2007 and has used its unique understanding of the human microbiome to drive Symbiota's groundbreaking approach to product discovery.

"Leveraging VentureLabs' extensive experience in the human microbiome has enabled Symbiota to quickly translate its insights into practical applications, resulting in a pipeline of validated product candidates," said Dr. David Berry, Co-Founder and Board Member, Symbiota and Partner at Flagship Ventures.

"Symbiota is an example of the tremendous opportunity we see at Flagship for new innovation in agriculture," said Ignacio Martinez, Symbiota Board Member and Partner at Flagship Ventures. "The company has the ability to make a sustainable positive impact on farm operations for a wide range of growers."

About Symbiota

Symbiota™ is pioneering microbial solutions to naturally promote plant health and improve agricultural production by harnessing the beneficial microbes that reside within plants. By unlocking the power of the plant microbiome, Symbiota is developing products that form unique partnerships with crops to naturally protect plant health and promote yield. Founded by the Flagship Ventures innovation foundry, VentureLabs, Symbiota has built the first platform for product discovery and generated a large pipeline of candidates in globally important crops, including corn, soy, wheat, cotton and vegetables. For more information, please visit www.SymbiotaBio.com.

About Flagship VentureLabs

Flagship VentureLabs™ is the innovation foundry of Flagship Ventures. VentureLabs has been creating innovative, game-changing companies since its founding in 2000. It is the first institution dedicated to entrepreneurial innovation, where the acts of technology invention and entrepreneuring are performed in concert by a team of world-class innovators and professional entrepreneurs. The VentureLabs team innovates, invents, iterates, founds and builds startups using a unique, systematic approach that results in the creation of best-in-class new ventures. To date, 27 life science and technology startups have been created within VentureLabs, including recently launched Seres Health, Pronutria and Moderna Therapeutics. For more information, please visit www.flagshipventures.com/venturelabs.

About Flagship Ventures

Realizing entrepreneurial innovation is the mission of Flagship Ventures. The firm operates through two synergistic units: VentureLabs™, Flagship's innovation foundry which invents and launches transformative companies, and Venture Capital, which finances and develops innovative, early-stage companies. Founded in 2000, and based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Flagship Ventures manages over \$900 million in capital and has founded 27 ventures while investing in another 45. The firm is active in three principal business sectors: therapeutics, health technologies and sustainability. Flagship's portfolio ventures include: Accuri Cytometers (acquired by Becton Dickinson), Adnexus (acquired by Bristol-Myers Squibb), Acceleron (NASDAQ: XLRN), Agios (NASDAQ: AGIO), BIND Therapeutics (NASDAQ: BIND), Concert Pharmaceuticals (NASDAQ: CNCE), Eleven Biotherapeutics (NASDAQ: EBIO), Hypnion (acquired by Eli Lilly), Morphotek (acquired by Eisai), Receptos (NASDAQ: RCPT), T2 Biosystems (NASDAQ: TTOO) and Tetrphase (NASDAQ: TTPH). Additional notable portfolio companies include: Joule Unlimited and Moderna Therapeutics. For more information, please visit www.flagshipventures.com.

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