

Agriculture meets innovation

24-Hour Startup AgTech Event at Farm Progress Show a huge success

On June 19 & 20, tech gurus, business professionals, design experts, and members of the agriculture industry from across Saskatchewan came together for Cultivator powered by Conexus' 24-Hour Startup AgTech event. Partnering with Canada's Farm Progress Show, the event brought technology and agri-business together, working to solve real problems facing the agricultural industry.

Over two days, 36 participants took part in the event where ideas were pitched, teams were formed and minimum viable products (MVP) were built. Participants travelled from as far away as Ottawa, Ontario to participate and one participant showed extreme determination and adversity before the competition even started.

David from Shaunavon, Saskatchewan got a flat tire while driving to the kick-off of the event and had to take his car into a shop in Moose Jaw. After contacting event organizers to say he would likely miss the competition, he decided to rent a car and made it to the event just in time to pitch his idea. His idea was selected and his team (DelishUS) actually went on to win the competition!

During the event teams had the support of many mentors including the Honourable Minister Tina Beaudry Mellor, Conexus' Venture Capital Fund Manager Sean O'Connor, and Ag Innovator Danielle Wildfong, just to name a few.

"Saskatchewan can become a global leader in Ag-Tech innovation, and the 24-Hour Startup AgTech event showed just how strong the local talent is in this space," said Sean O'Connor, Venture Capital Fund Manager at Conexus. "It was great to see how much the participants were able to accomplish in a short period of time. I'm looking forward to tracking which of these young ideas gets put into motion and hopefully seeing the next IntraGrain or DOT come out of this event."

At the end of the event, five teams then pitched their products to a panel of expert judges for the chance to win up to \$4,000 in prizes. The panel of expert judges included Kyle Folk, Founder of IntraGrain, Tannis Axten, Canada's Outstanding Farmer Award recipient in 2017, and Todd Andries, Regional Vice President of Agriculture Banking with Conexus.

"I was extremely impressed with all of the innovative AgTech solutions created in just 24 hours," said Kyle Folk, Founder of IntraGrain. "These participants identified real problems in the Ag industry and solutions like these have the potential to become the next big thing in Ag. Events like this can help take AgTech to the next level."

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The winning pitch came from Team DelishUS, impressing the judges with their innovative product to connect local food producers with local restaurants through the use of a simplified and cost-effective tech solution.



(Members of DelishUS with the 1st place prize at the 24-Hour Startup AgTech Event)

Coming in second was team Ecofresh for the idea of end to end transparency from farm to fork for both consumers and producers in the grain industry. Transend won people's choice at the event for creating an innovative solution to supply chain management in the Organics industry.

"This event was a great success, and we're extremely happy with the turnout and results," said Jordan McFarlen, Business Incubator Manager at Cultivator powered by Conexus. "We understand the Ag industry is changing and technology is advancing faster than ever before. Events such as these bring together a diverse group of people to help solve these real-time challenges and we're happy to be a part of it."

To see how the 24-hour Startup AgTech Event unfolded, watch for the event wrap-up video in the coming days on Cultivator and Conexus' social media accounts. For information on future events, visit <https://www.cultivator.ca>.

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About Cultivator powered by Conexus:

Cultivator powered by Conexus is Canada's first credit union led business incubator. Launching in January 2019, the business incubator exists to help grow innovative Saskatchewan companies who are looking to scale through programming, mentorship, services, access to capital and more. No longer will local entrepreneurs have to take their ideas elsewhere as we are building a hub for local startups to launch and grow right here in Saskatchewan.

As part of the Conexus Building Communities project, Cultivator will use approximately 15,000 square feet of the space, and include a flex space, a pitch space and have a connection to Darke Hall. For more information, visit <https://conexusbuildingcommunities.ca/business-incubator>

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Photos from event:



Panel of judges: (left to right) Todd Andries, Regional Vice President of Agriculture Banking, Conexus; Kyle Folk, Founder of IntraGrain; Tannis Axten, Canada's Outstanding Farmer Award recipient in 2017.



Jordan McFarlen kicking off the 24-Hour Startup AgTech Event on June 19.

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(Members of Transend, People's Choice winners at the 24-Hour Startup AgTech Event)

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