

AgTech and Food-Tech Start-ups to compete in global Radicle NPP Challenge

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UPL a global provider of sustainable, agriculture products and solutions, and Radicle Growth, a company-building platform investing in early-stage agriculture and food technologies, have launched, ["The Radicle Natural Plant Protection \(NPP\) Challenge by UPL"](#).

The Challenge sets out to invest \$1.75M in start-up companies that are advancing natural and biological solutions to protect crops from biotic stresses such as bacteria, fungi, nematodes, insects, arachnids, and weeds. A \$1 million investment will be made in The Challenge winner and a \$750,000 investment in the second place winner in order to accelerate their growth. In 2022, \$1.25M was invested in early-stage companies under "The Radicle Carbon and Soil Challenge by UPL".

NPP is a business unit of UPL, offering growers an extensive portfolio of natural solutions to increase crop resilience and protection, improve nutrition, and support soil health. Over the past decade, there has been a growing demand for natural solutions as an alternative or complement to synthetic chemistries as means of protecting crops whilst safeguarding the environment.

Mike Frank, CEO of UPL Corporation Ltd. said: "Amidst the multitude of challenges facing farmers and food systems, natural solutions are critical to advancing agriculture in a way that delivers prosperity for growers, consumers, and the environment. Guided by our OpenAg purpose, we're working with Radicle Growth to seek out start-ups that are pioneering the next generation of game-changing solutions. We invite entrepreneurs who share our aspirations to apply and join our journey to Reimagine Sustainability."

Kirk Haney, Managing Partner, Radicle Growth, said: "to transform agriculture system and advance sustainable solutions in the food value chain, we need to find new technologies that are working on natural and biological control solutions. We are working collaboratively with UPL to find and fund the best entrepreneurs worldwide who are solving these issues."

Investment decisions will be made during a "Pitch Day" in March 2024. A judging panel of industry experts will hear from 4-6 finalists who will be chosen from the global applicant pool. In addition to the funding, the winners will also get access to advice from both UPL and Radicle senior executives to help accelerate their company's business and technical efforts.