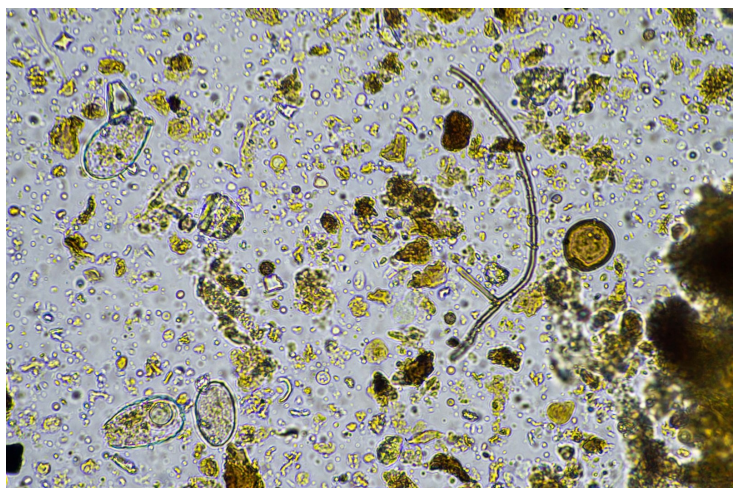


Moa and NAICONS join forces to discover next-gen bioactive herbicides

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Oxford-based agricultural biotech firm Moa Technology has stepped up the global hunt for a safe, effective and affordable biological herbicide by forming a new partnership with NAICONS, an Italian natural products company.

Moa's proprietary high-throughput screening platform will rapidly test 70,000 micro-bacterial extracts from NAICONS' library of natural products, searching for biological leads which could control weeds, while being safe to humans or the environment, either as a standalone new herbicide or to enhance the efficacy, safety, and resistance-breaking potential of existing herbicides.

The need for new herbicides to help farmers protect their harvests has never been more urgent, with over 273 species of weeds now resistant to one or more commercially available herbicides. For example, annual crop losses from weeds cost the US economy over \$11 billion and the Australian economy over \$3.3 billion. In the UK, the herbicide-resistant weed blackgrass costs farmers around \$500 million every year.

To date, Moa's platforms have screened almost 800,000 synthetic and naturally-occurring compounds, discovering over 70 potentially novel mode of action herbicides. Three synthetic herbicides with novel modes of action discovered by Moa have already performed strongly in their first two seasons of international field trials.

The agreement with NAICONS gives Moa exclusive rights to develop any new herbicides discovered in the library, with value to be shared from future licensing and commercialisation.

Dr Virginia Corless, Chief Executive Officer of Moa Technology, said "Our discovery platform is very well suited to screen natural product libraries, as it provides a reliable and early indication when a compound is too weak or too toxic to become a commercially viable herbicide. We are looking forward to applying our screening technology to NAICONS' high-quality library of actinomycete bacteria to see if we can find a biological compound that can help farmers control weeds effectively and sustainably."

Stefano Donadio, Chief Executive Officer of NAICONS said: "We are very excited about this collaboration. Our library has never been screened for herbicides and we are confident promising lead molecules will be rapidly identified through our powerful micro4all platform. Over 150,000 different molecules have been identified in the extracts sent to Moa and our team is eager to help in identifying the most promising herbicide candidates."