Bayer and Ginkgo Bioworks close deal creating Agricultural Biologicals Powerhouse

Bayer announced that the company has closed the previously announced transaction with Ginkgo Bioworks to begin a multi-year strategic partnership to accelerate research and development of biological products for agriculture. The transaction includes the divestment of Bayer's West Sacramento Biologics Research & Development site, and its internal discovery and lead optimization platform.

With the close of this transaction, the Biologics business which is part of Bayer's Crop Science Division, will also be able to further engage the open innovation ecosystem and build upon its leading position as partner of choice for innovators and scientists around the world.

Joyn Bio, the joint venture created by Bayer and Ginkgo Bioworks in 2017, will be integrated into Ginkgo Bioworks to enable the continued advancement of Joyn Bio's innovative nitrogen fixation platform. As part of the agreement, Bayer retains the right to commercialize the technology to complement synthetic fertilizer use in the coming years.

Bayer is now the first major partner of Ginkgo Bioworks expanded agricultural biologicals platform, entering into a new collaboration focused on important programs in the areas of crop protection, nitrogen fixation, and carbon sequestration to identify next generation biologicals that provide clear benefits to growers.

"Biological solutions play a critical role in the agricultural innovation ecosystem, and we see tremendous opportunity for these products to add even more value for agriculture in the future," said Dr. Robert Reiter, Head of R&D at Bayer's Crop Science Division. "The open innovation approach will accelerate the product pipeline and will make sure that we bring high-quality biological solutions and innovative technologies to the market faster."

Ginkgo Bioworks aims to develop and advance agricultural microbial solutions across crops and geographies through broad, fully-enabled technical platforms that address diverse market needs. Ginkgo Bioworks will work independently with different partners in the discovery of microbial derived products for agriculture.

"Ginkgo is committed to harnessing the power of programmable biology to enable sustainable food production and food security worldwide," said Jason Kelly, CEO and co-founder of Ginkgo Bioworks. "We look forward to partnering with Bayer and other innovative companies, and to bringing more applications on to Ginkgo's expanded agricultural biologicals platform so that growers worldwide can develop breakthrough products."

Through years of successful R&D partnerships and collaborations with leading companies like Novozymes, and AlphaBio Control, the Biologics business of Bayer has developed the deep expertise needed to partner with innovators across the entire range of biological innovation. By building new collaboration pathways within the scientific community, Bayer will better be able to leverage its biologicals expertise to develop and deploy more sustainable, climate-smart and innovative agricultural solutions to growers around the world.