Over the course of the last month, we engaged in a number of conferences, workshops, and FoodTech Challenge outreach events around the world and had the chance to listen to creative and cutting-edge ideas to address the world's food security challenges. Submissions are coming in from all over the globe, and we're truly inspired by the ambitious, creative, and energetic ideas we've received so far.

To support you in putting together the best business case possible, we're offering all our participants the opportunity to obtain initial feedback on their submission. Applicants who submit their idea ahead of our Early Bird Deadline of 15 December will receive tailored advice and will be allowed to re-submit their application up until February 13, 2020.

We have partnered with a stellar panel of judges who will be reviewing all submissions and selecting the top ten entries in March next year. They are experts on food and agriculture technology across academia, industry, and policy circles. In this month's newsletter, we are highlighting Cinar Kurar, CEO of Catalyst and a judge in the FoodTech Challenge.

Finally, our "agtips" will answer the question: what exactly does it mean to propose solutions that are technologically-driven?

As always, you can get in touch with us at info@foodtechchallenge.com. We hope to see many of your submissions by December 15th!
FoodTech Challenge Highlights

FoodTech Challenge University Roadshow
October – December 2019

The FoodTech Challenge Team has been presenting at various universities to spread awareness about the competition to students. We provided an overview of food security in the global and UAE context, the UAE National Food Security Strategy, leading technological applications in agriculture, and competition mechanics.

Thank you to NYU Abu Dhabi, Zayed University, University of Sharjah, UAE University, and Wageningen University for hosting us! Stay tuned on our social media to find out where we will hold our next workshops – we may be coming to a school near you.

Upcoming events are:
• Northeastern University, Boston, United States, 5 December 2019
• University of Santa Cruz, California, United States, 6 December 2019

Global Grad Show
Dubai, 13 November 2019

The Global Grad Show is an exhibition of social impact innovation from graduate students across the world. Our team met with several exhibitors presenting innovative ideas in addressing food security and encouraged them to participate.

Entrepreneurship Festival
Sharjah, 26 November 2019

The Sharjah Entrepreneurship Festival is a two-day event that brings together business leaders and entrepreneurs to inspire the next generation of founders. Our team met with several exhibitors presenting innovative ideas in the food security space and encouraged them to participate.

Innovations for Marginal Environments
Dubai, 20-21 November 2019

The Global Forum on Innovations for Marginal Environments (GFIME) aims to understand the impact of soil and water salinization on agricultural productivity and food security worldwide. A select global audience of 250 influential policymakers, scientists, and experts who are at the forefront of reshaping agriculture and food production were present at the event.

Her Excellency Mariam Al Mheiri, the UAE Minister of State for Food Security, talked about the importance of technology adoption and the inclusion of youth as an important pillar of achieving the National Food Security Strategy, with The FoodTech Challenge as an example.
AgTips: What's the "tech" in "agtech"?

In our previous issue, we talked about the food security challenges that the UAE is facing. These challenges have several environmental, policy and economic elements that make them complex to tackle. Technology is the vehicle to address these challenges, but what is technology, exactly? In our modern world, technology is everywhere around us, and its potential applications to food security are equally diverse. "Technologically-driven" solutions have a clear grasp of what methods currently exist to solve food security issues and propose a way forward to achieve better results. Below are a few examples of technology applications to get you thinking into how this works in practice.

**Sensors**

**What is it?** A device that gathers information about its environment and sends the information to other electronic devices.

**How is it applied?** Aeroponic farms install sensors to monitor nutrient uptake for different kinds of plants.

**Internet of Things**

**What is it?** The system of interrelated computers and devices with the ability to transfer data over a network without requiring human interaction.

**How is it applied?** These sensors transmit information about plant growth rates to computers that house data for the entire farm.

**Artificial Intelligence**

**What is it?** The simulation of human intelligence processes by machines through the process of learning, reasoning, and self-correction.

**How is it applied?** These computers can be taught to adjust levels of light and water to maximize agricultural output, tailored for each kind of plant.

Strong ideas use a combination of the technologies above to maximize the benefits of each. An example of a company leveraging multiple technologies is Winnow Vision. Through cloud technology, vision-enabled artificial intelligence, and data analytics, Winnow Vision helps chefs track food items routinely wasted and adjust their production to slash cost. As a result, Winnow Vision was able to cut food waste by half and saved up to 20% of total food costs. Technology is an essential component in a strong application. If you are looking for a technical person to join your team, we encourage you to connect with other participants via our social media, where you will find a community who are passionate about food security just like you!
Food for Thought

A roadmap to operationalize the Marine Innovation Park
*Ministry of Cabinet Affairs & The Future*

The UAE has outlined its ambition to become a pioneer in the sustainable food production sphere by boosting aquaculture with the signing of a Memorandum of Intent between the Minister of State for Food Security, Her Excellency Mariam Almheiri, and James Cook University, Australia.

Read more »

The Ministry of Health and Prevention (MOHAP) and UAE’s Food Security Office launch National Nutrition Guideline
*Emirates News Agency, by Hassan Bashir*

MoHAP has launched, in collaboration with the UAE's Food Security Office, the National Nutrition Guideline as part of the government's efforts to develop food safety systems in sustainable ways.

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The governance of food security, optimisation of entities’ roles
*Emirates News Agency, by Hatem Mohamed*

The Ministerial Development Council discussed the establishment of the Emirates Council for Food Security to oversee the implementation of the National Food Security Strategy.

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NASA looks to UAE for help to grow fresh food for space
*The National, by Kelly Clarke*

NASA is collaborating with the UAE on research methods to grow fresh food in space, given its emphasis on robotics and smart technologies related to food production.

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In the deserts of Dubai, salmon farming thrives

*GulfNews & Agence France-Presse*

Fish Farm, an aquaculture farm in Dubai, is able to recreate the cool currents of the Atlantic to cultivate thousands of Norwegian salmon raised in tanks despite the country's desert climate.

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**Meet our judges**

We are proud to announce that we have partnered with an incredible panel of experts to judge The FoodTech Challenge submissions. Our panel is comprised of local and international experts on agriculture from academia, private sector, and policy circles.

We spoke with Cinar Kurra, CEO of Catalyst, to talk about his thoughts about food technology trends in the UAE and abroad.

(IInterview has been edited for clarity.)

**What is your favorite memory related to food?**

Grandma’s cooking – both were marvelous, my grandma and her cooking!
What makes you excited about food technology?
Food, if organically produced, is an innovative way of minimizing hunger and obesity.

In your opinion, what key technologies have promising applications for UAE food security challenges?
Food monitoring when importing, in order to give the best deals to consumers before expiration, are so far the best ideas that I have witnessed. The FoodTech Challenge will certainly discover great startups utilizing new tech ideas.

Surveys have shown that youth are increasingly disengaged from food and agriculture work. How do we renew youth engagement in this area?
Perhaps gamification of cultivating and reward mechanism for production could engage youth in a positive way.

What are books, papers, and/or articles that you’re reading about food security that you would recommend?
The Fate of Food: What We'll Eat in a Bigger, Hotter, Smarter World.

We created a Blog!
The FoodTech Challenge Team is excited to launch a new blog page on our website, which will contain exciting updates about the competition. The blog will also contain exciting information about the food technology space that may be helpful to your application. Stay tuned our website for more updates.

Fun Food Facts

Eating bananas can help fight depression?
Bananas are packed with nutrients that are essential for your health. They have high levels of tryptophan, an amino acid that is converted to serotonin, the brain neurotransmitter responsible for happy moods.

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