

MoA Technology appoint Virginia Corless as CEO

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MoA Technology Limited, the crop protection discovery company, announced today that Dr Virginia Corless has been appointed as CEO and will lead the company from March 2021.

Dr. Corless, who trained at MIT and the University of Cambridge, is an experienced leader of cutting-edge enterprises that aim to make agriculture more efficient and sustainable. Her work has received international awards and honours. From a start in astrophysics, she worked on clean energy technologies for the US Senate, built food-energy-water nexus solutions at the Sahara Forest Project, and most recently, served as the Chief Growth Officer of Novihum Technologies, a leading German AgTech company dedicated to improving agricultural soils.

Farmers are facing an increasingly difficult challenge: to increase food production while defending their crops in a sustainable manner. Effective weed control plays a crucial role in being able to achieve sufficient food production for a growing global population. However, similar to the antibiotic resistance crisis affecting healthcare, there have been no major new herbicides introduced to the market with a novel mode of action in the last thirty years. This has forced overreliance on a small number of similar products that, in turn, has led to the rapid growth of weed resistance.

MoA Technology took up this challenge in 2018. Spun out of Oxford University, the company has developed its own discovery platforms and is focused on the discovery of the next generation of sustainable herbicides with new modes of action from both natural and synthetic chemistry.

MoA Technology has developed three proprietary platforms: Galaxy™, Target™ and Select™. These three distinct *in vivo* platforms allow a rapid identification of novel potent herbicidal activity, precise determination of the novel model of action, and rapid improvement of the original lead, while also allowing early-stage filtering for environmentally benign compounds. The combination of platforms offers the opportunity to revolutionise the herbicide discovery process and critically identify new, effective and environmentally sustainable herbicides. The platforms are based upon a unique combination of genetics, trait analysis and data analytics.

Dr Virginia Corless said:

“I am thrilled to join MoA Technology as it embarks on this next stage of its growth. With breakthrough science addressing a vital market need, MoA is poised to deliver sustainable crop protection solutions that support farmers and rural communities while contributing to a healthier and more sustainable food supply.”

Hadyn Parry, Chairman at MoA Technology, added:

“We are delighted that Virginia has joined the company at such an exciting time in the company’s development. We have shown that our approach is not only fully validated but also prolific in uncovering new biological herbicidal activity and identifying novel lead candidates. The first of these will go into field trials this year. “

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