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Contact: media@gatesagone.org

Bill & Melinda Gates Agricultural Innovations and Donald Danforth Plant Science Center Collaborate to Boost Crop Innovation for Smallholder Farmers

St. Louis, Mo. (Jun. 20, 2023) — Bill & Melinda Gates Agricultural Innovations (Gates Ag One) and the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center (Danforth Center) are to collaborate to increase crop science and innovation to benefit smallholder farmers across Africa.

The Danforth Center, home to [the Institute for International Crop Improvement](#) (IICI), is the world's largest nonprofit plant science research institute with a mission to improve the human condition through plant science. The IICI focuses on increasing the productivity and nutritional value of food security crops including cowpea, sorghum, teff and cassava in developing regions of the world. Most recently, the Danforth Center was a key partner in the delivery of an insect-resistant variety of cowpea that was commercialized in Nigeria. Researchers are also working to maximize the heat-resistant and drought-tolerant qualities of sorghum.

"We're delighted to have the backing of Gates Ag One as we continue our work to leverage cutting-edge crop science to benefit smallholder farmers in Africa," said Dr. Donald MacKenzie, executive director of the Institute for International Crop Improvement at the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center.

Two-thirds of the 811 million people going hungry live in rural areas, with the highest hunger and poverty levels found in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

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“The Donald Danforth Plant Science Center’s dedication to improving the human condition through crop science closely aligns with our mission of driving agricultural innovations to support smallholder farmers,” said Joe Cornelius, CEO of Gates Ag One. “We’re thrilled to be partnering with the team at the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center to accelerate crop research and development that serve the unmet needs of smallholder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa.”

Gates Ag One, a non-profit affiliate of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, was created to leverage advances in global crop science to serve the growing needs of smallholder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. The organization invests in early scientific discoveries to accelerate the development of improved crops that can close the yield gap.

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About Gates Ag One:

Bill & Melinda Gates Agricultural Innovations (Gates Ag One) is a non-profit organization that accelerates breakthrough agricultural research to meet the urgent and neglected needs of smallholder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Out of the conviction that all lives have equal value, Gates Ag One serves the interests of smallholder farmers, who are most exposed to climate shocks yet lack the access that others have to the latest agricultural innovations. Gates Ag One works to level the playing field and empower smallholder farmers to transform their agricultural productivity, nutrition security and climate resilience. Learn more at gatesagone.org.

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