29 – 31 March 2026

Venue: Omnia
Wageningen ▪ Netherlands

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Update 5 December 2025

New frontiers:
Exploring breakthroughs in technologies, talent, startups and crops that will define the future of crop innovation

Conference day 1 - Sunday 29 March 2026

13:15	**Welcome guests for social event**
13:45	**Start social event**
16:00	**Registration desk open**
17:00-17:15	**Welcome and opening CROP Innovations & Business 2026 conference**
17:15-19:00	**Plenary presentations** *Guided by this year's theme - New Frontiers: exploring breakthroughs in technologies, talent, startups, and crops that will define the future of crop innovation - the first day of the conference opens with a look at the innovations reshaping the agri-food landscape. The program highlights emerging technologies and trends, the evolution of biological crop management, and the shifting regulatory and market dynamics influencing adoption.* *We will explore how new collaboration models between industry, startups, and research partners are accelerating progress across the innovation ecosystem. The focus shifts to the convergence of robotics, automation, and plant science, revealing new opportunities at the interface of engineering and biology.* *This Sunday program offers a dynamic and forward-looking start to stepping into the new frontiers in crop innovation.*
19:00-21:00	**Conference buffet**

Conference day 2 - Monday 30 March 2026

08:30 **Registration desk open**

09:00-09:45 **Beyond the Genome: From Data to Decisions**
This plenary keynote opening presentation highlights how AI and data science are transforming plant breeding from deeper biological insight to faster, smarter decision-making. It offers an inspiring look at the breakthroughs reshaping the field today and what comes next for data-driven crop innovation.

09:45-10:30 **Break**

10:30-12:30 **PARALLEL SESSIONS PART 1**

1A. Engineering Plants of Tomorrow
This session explores how next-generation crops are being shaped through improved photosynthesis, optimized plant architecture, and advanced metabolic design to boost efficiency, resilience, and biobased production. It also highlights emerging consumer-focused traits - such as enhanced nutrition, taste, and shelf life - that will drive the value and acceptance of future crops across food, feed, and biobased markets.

1B. Domestication Reimagined: Speed Breeding and Novel Crops
During this session we will examine how speed breeding, pan-genomics, and genomic prediction are accelerating domestication and expanding opportunities for novel crops. We highlight advances in understanding genetic variation, the use of new genotyping technologies, and the evolving future of marker-assisted breeding in delivering resilient, diverse, and high-value crops.

12.30-13:30 **Lunch, networking and exhibition**

13:30-15:30 **PARALLEL SESSIONS PART 2**

2A. Crops and Systems: Closing the Gap between Engineering and Breeding
Discover how speed breeding, pan-genomics, and genomic prediction are accelerating domestication and enabling the development of new crops. It highlights advances in understanding genetic variation, emerging genotyping technologies, and the evolving role of marker-assisted breeding in creating resilient, diverse, and high-value crops.

2B. Disruptive Technologies I: Next-Gen Breeding Tools
In this session, we will highlight emerging breakthroughs - such as single-cell breeding, 2S1Graft hybrid technology, apomixis, and advanced doubled haploids - that are transforming the speed and precision of variety development. These tools accelerate trait fixation, broaden hybridization options, and streamline breeding pipelines, enabling faster innovation cycles and new opportunities in competitive crop markets.

15:30-16:15 **Break**

16:15-17:45 **Plenary Pitch program**
The pitch program is supported by biotope [by VIB] , CEPLAS and StartLife.

Academic institutes and startups will get the possibility to pitch their innovative technology, -service or -product to the audience from the international agri-food industry.

Pitching companies - *Curated by StartLife, the leading AgriFoodTech accelerator in Europe:*
- To be announced

17:45-19:00 **Reception**

19:15-22:00 **Conference dinner**
Venue to be announced in the Networkapp and during the plenary closing program part on Monday.

Conference day 3 – Tuesday 31 March 2026

08:30 **Registration desk open**

09:00-09:45 **Plenary program**

Keynote opening presentation: to be announced.

09:45-10:30 **Break**

10:30-12:30 **PARALLEL SESSIONS PART 3**

3A. Disruptive Technologies II: Protein and Allele Design
Join this session to explore how advances in protein and allele design are enabling precise, molecular-level improvements in plant performance. By shaping enzyme activity and key regulatory pathways, these approaches support crops with greater efficiency, resilience, and product quality - streamlining breeding strategies and opening new high-value opportunities across food and biobased markets.

3B. Novel Disease Resistance Strategies
This session explores new approaches to disease resistance that enhance crop protection and production reliability. By leveraging deeper insights into plant–pathogen interactions and expanding available resistance mechanisms, breeders can develop varieties with more durable performance and reduced dependence on crop protection inputs - lowering risk, strengthening supply chains, and creating opportunities for differentiated products.

12:30-13:30 **Lunch, networking and exhibition**

13:30-15:30 **PARALLEL SESSIONS PART 4**

4A. Partnering for AgTech Innovation
Explore how startups and corporates can collaborate effectively despite differences in culture, pace, and priorities. This session highlights best practices for structuring partnerships, aligning expectations, and accelerating joint development to turn technological potential into shared commercial success.

4B. AI and Machine Learning in Plant Breeding
How AI, machine learning, and deep learning are accelerating breeding pipelines through faster predictions, smarter selection, and improved control of complex traits. These data-driven tools shorten development cycles, cut costs, and strengthen variety success rates - helping companies integrate advanced analytics for competitive advantage and new market opportunities.

15:30-16:15 **Break**

16:15-17:00 **Closing keynote presentation**

17:00-18:30 **Closing conference reception**

Note: the organisation keeps the right to make changes to the program at any time.