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Upstream Biotechnology and Bene Seeds in collaborate to develop High-Yielding Heirloom Tomatoes

08 January 2025 | News

Upstream Biotechnology (Upstream), a developer of innovative crop varieties resilient to environmental stress, and Bene Seeds Inc. (Bene Seeds), a provider of high-quality tomato seed products, have announced a strategic business and R&D partnership. Together, they will work to create new tomato varieties that combine genetics for both excellent flavor and shelf life with broad-spectrum disease resistance. These new varieties will be suitable for growth in a wide range of different geographies and will make premium, heirloom-quality tomatoes available to the mainstream markets.



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Upstream's cutting-edge breeding technologies, which protect plants from yield-threatening diseases, are unmatched in the industry and have already delivered strong results in major crops like soybean and rice. The company is excited to apply its platform to enhance specialty crops, including tomatoes.

"Field tomatoes and protected tomatoes are vulnerable to many common diseases. By breeding genetics for broad-spectrum disease resistance into tomato varieties, we can significantly reduce crop losses, ensuring more consistent yields and higher-quality fruit," said George Greene, Founder and CEO, Upstream Biotechnology. "This innovation not only enhances the reliability and sustainability of tomato production but also supports growers in meeting the growing demand for premium tomatoes while reducing the need for chemical treatments."

Jen Greenstein, Senior Director of Investments at NC Biotech, added "Upstream leverages unique technical capabilities initially developed at Duke University and supported by a loan from the NC Biotech Center. They are an impressive company within the growing NC agtech hub, and this strategic partnership with Bene Seeds will be mutually beneficial."

"We are delighted to be working with Upstream," said Oliver Ratcliffe, Co-Founder of Bene Seeds. "Bene Seeds specializes in breeding tomatoes that offer real benefits to the customer; our varieties taste and look great but also have a long shelf life, which reduces food waste. The collaboration with Upstream will further improve the natural resistance of our varieties to various diseases and thereby enhance the fruit yield that is obtained by growers."