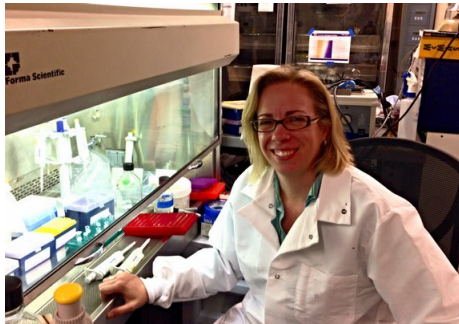


Southampton Entrepreneur Receives \$100,000 Grant For Startup Company

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Take a quick look on foodsafety.gov, and nearly every day some kind of produce or crop is recalled due to bacteria that can cause foodborne illnesses when consumed. Because of that, Southampton resident Noel Goddard launched Goddard Labs in 2013, with the goal of developing a quicker and less expensive way to test crops for bacteria before distributing them to supermarkets.

"We see in the news that outbreaks happen in fresh produce," said Ms. Goddard, 39, referring to salmonella and E. coli

contaminating foods such as tomatoes or spinach. "Our dream is to create a very low-costing thing to empower farmers."

That dream is in full force now, thanks to a \$100,000 grant that Ms. Goddard's start-up received from Accelerate Long Island, a team of research institutes that promotes research within the entrepreneurial community. Goddard Labs is one of five companies to receive this grant, which Accelerate Long Island collaborated on with the Long Island Emerging Technologies Fund.

Ms. Goddard and her lab are in the process of creating "Harvest" technology in the form of a new sample preparation kit that would enable farmers to "harvest" microbiological pathogens from fresh produce using molecular diagnostic testing practices.

Molecular diagnostic testing, which involves analyzing proteins and DNA from a tissue or blood sample, is used in the medical field right now, but Ms. Goddard said it would be very useful for food as well. It is used on food sometimes, but only when bacteria outbreaks occur, she said.

Crops are currently tested for bacteria by a process called culturing, which consists of growing the bacteria in a dish after it is found and then eliminating it if necessary. Ms. Goddard said that process can take from nine hours to a day. She aims to cut that time down significantly with her Harvest kit, which will come with collection tubes, a substrate, and bonding and releasing solutions.

The kit is still in the prototype phase, so Ms. Goddard could not put a price tag on how much it would cost farmers to use per test. Right now, though, testing using molecular diagnostics when outbreaks occur costs about \$10 per sample. Ms. Goddard said she is aiming for Harvest to cost around \$5 per sample.

Ms. Goddard said that receiving the \$100,000 grant will make it much easier for her company to purchase the necessary equipment to further develop the Harvest kits. Executive director of Accelerate Long Island Mark Lesko said that his company has been impressed by Goddard Labs' work for quite some time, which is why it awarded Ms. Goddard the grant for her work.

"We like her technology," he said. "We like that it's a different product. It's related to our agriculture here on Long Island."

Prior to launching Goddard Labs, Ms. Goddard, who attended Rockefeller and Polytechnic universities, and was a Junior Fellow, Society of Fellows, at Harvard University, performed online demonstrations of physics and chemical engineering learning tools for professors across the United States and Canada, and is a past assistant professor of physics at Hunter College.

Goddard Labs is located at Stony Brook University's Small Business Incubator in Calverton. Ms. Goddard said it is beneficial to have her lab closer to the East End, because that is where most of the agricultural activity on Long Island takes place.

She said strengthening the testing for bacteria on produce is important because there are too many recalls of food. President Obama had passed the Food and Drug Administration's Food Safety and Modernization Act in 2011, but even that, Ms. Goddard said, has not been enough to prevent outbreaks from occurring.

"It's not perfect," she said. "When there is an outbreak, it's a terrible thing."



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