

CORRECTION: An earlier newsletter today incorrectly noted that John Lienhard, director of J-WAFS, received a Distinguished Alumnus Award from the Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering from UC Davis. The correct school is UC San Diego. See below for more.



NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



MIT water tech spinout reaches \$1B valuation

Gradiant cleans industrial wastewater for clients like Coca-Cola, with technology that was developed in the lab of J-WAFS director John Lienhard.

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J-WAFS PI develops material to detect food spoilage

Benedetto Marelli and his colleagues created a biodegradable plastic-like wrap made from silk which changes color when exposed to rotting foods.

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Abandoned croplands could help fight climate change

J-WAFS PI César Terrer describes how agricultural lands that are no longer productive could play an important role in carbon sequestration.

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MIT community addresses climate crisis

MIT is working on many ideas to tackle climate change, including innovative student projects that were on display at a recent poster session that J-WAFS

MIT PhD students pursue sustainability research

The 2023-2024 cohort of Martin Family Society of Fellows include students who are working with J-WAFS PIs on materials for converting moisture into

co-hosted with the MIT Energy Initiative & Environmental Solutions Initiative.

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drinkable water, and others who are exploring water security and fishing patterns.

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J-WAFS researchers present at Tech Reunion

Three J-WAFS researchers spoke to MIT alumni about their work to solve urgent global water and food challenges.

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IN-DEPTH LOOK

MIT WATER AND FOOD CLUBS AWARD INNOVATION PRIZE

MIT Water Club and MIT Food & Agriculture Club team up to offer a joint Innovation Prize

For the first time this year, the MIT Water Club and the MIT Food & Agriculture Club teamed up to offer a joint Innovation Prize. In years past, each club held their own prize competitions for student entrepreneurs working in water or food, respectively. For 2023, the clubs decided to join forces by organizing the inaugural MIT Water, Food & Agriculture (W.F.A.) Innovation Prize competition. Both clubs and the prize are supported in part by J-WAFS.



The W.F.A. Innovation Prize is a business plan competition for teams of university and graduate students from any college or university worldwide. The teams must have a technology, product, service, or process that is aimed at solving a problem related to water, food, or agriculture challenges. After receiving over 150 applications from 13 states and 24 countries, the W.F.A. organizers selected seven top proposals based on feedback from

external reviewers. Each of the seven teams were paired with a mentor to develop their business plans and pitches.

On May 9, 2023, a final pitch event took place on MIT's campus where a representative from each team presented an overview of their startup and the problem in water, food, or agriculture that they are trying to solve. The teams were judged on their final business plans and pitches by a panel of judges who deliberated and awarded a first and second place winner. The audience was also able to vote for their favorite startup, which gave prize money to a third winning team.

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AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS



J-WAFS director receives Outstanding Alumni Award

Corrected: John Lienhard, director of J-WAFS, received a Distinguished Alumnus Award from the Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering at his alma mater, UC San Diego. He was honored at an award ceremony on the UC San Diego campus on June 2. [MORE INFO](#)



J-WAFS to send Travel Grantees to World Water Week

Smriti Bhaya, Chyna Mays, Arjav Shah, & Lizzie Yarina—four MIT grad students—will receive funding to attend Stockholm World Water Week. They study clean drinking water solutions, water reclamation, and climate adaptation in water challenged regions. [MORE INFO](#)



John Hart named head of MechE and awarded MURI funding

The J-WAFS PI was [named head](#) of the Dept of Mechanical Engineering. He also received a 2023 Multidisciplinary University Research Initiative award from the U.S. Department of Defense for a collaborative additive manufacturing & directed assembly project. [MORE INFO](#)



J-WAFS PI Heidi Nepf awarded the Samuel M. Seegal Prize

The Donald and Martha Harleman Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE), Heidi Nepf was selected for the faculty award for her work to inspire MIT students to pursue and achieve excellence. She was recognized at a banquet on May 17 on campus. [MORE INFO](#)



Dave Des Marais honored with Ole Madsen Mentoring Award

An assistant professor in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Des Marais was selected for mentoring & educating students outside of the classroom, and inspiring them to pursue a career in the field of civil and environmental engineering. [MORE INFO](#)



J-WAFS PI Colette Heald to start a new position

Heald, a professor in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences, will begin a new position as Professor of Atmospheric Chemistry at ETH Zurich in January. [MORE INFO](#)



Cordero is a Simons Investigator in Aquatic Microbial Ecology

Otto Cordero, of Civil and Environmental Engineering, will study the structure, form, & function of marine microbial communities. His 2023 J-WAFS project also looks at marine microbial communities to evaluate the health of populations in shellfish hatcheries. [MORE INFO](#)



MIT W.F.A. Prize winning team wins a second competition

Sygne Solutions, the first place winner of the MIT Water, Food, and Agriculture Prize, sponsored in part by J-WAFS, was awarded \$100,000 for second place in the 2023 Rice Business Plan Competition a few days after the MIT event. [MORE INFO](#)



Credit - Caitlin Cunningham

Undergraduate student in the J-WAFS community recognized

Elaine Liu, who won the People's Choice Award at an Earth Month poster session that J-WAFS co-hosted in April, is also one of this year's Outstanding MIT UROP Student Award recipients. UROP stands for Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program. [MORE INFO](#)

FUNDING

AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

J-WAFS Travel Grant for Water Conferences

Deadline: Aug 16, 2023

Open to: MIT graduate students

Students with research in water quality, water supply, or other challenges around water use,

Webinar with CEO of J-WAFS Solutions spinout

Date: June 13, 2023

Open to: all

Brendan Smith, CEO of J-WAFS Solutions spinout SiTraction, will discuss SiTraction's approach to providing a low-

sustainability, & access, can apply for funding to attend the UNC Water & Health Conference this October in Chapel Hill, NC.

MORE INFO

cost and sustainable process for extracting materials from recycled lithium-ion batteries and waste streams in mining.

MORE INFO

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

J-WAFS takes part in an MIT colloquium

The MIT Energy Initiative hosted MA State Senator Mike Barrett who described the state’s progress on tackling global warming, alongside a poster session with J-WAFS & the Environmental Solutions Initiative.

LEARN MORE

First female MIT grad was a pioneer of food science

MIT’s Association of MIT Alumnae created a self-guided tour on Ellen Swallow Richards, who was admitted to MIT in December 1870 and went on to build the foundations for food science, among other things.

LEARN MORE



Gabriella Carolini featured on MIT podcast

She discussed the U.S. Infrastructure Deal, equity, & clean water access for Americans, while touching on her J-WAFS water affordability project.

LISTEN NOW

J-WFAS researcher presents on food-systems

At an MIT Morningside Academy for Design event, Dan Sweeney explained his projects, including one with J-WAFS to



help Cameroon poultry farmers.

[WATCH NOW](#)

INTERESTED IN SUPPORTING J-WAFS?

When you make a gift, you are making an investment in both the future of J-WAFS and our Institute-wide work to improve the productivity, accessibility, and sustainability of the world's water and food systems.

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J-WAFS is an Institute-wide effort that brings MIT's unique strengths to bear on the many challenges our food and water systems face.

Our program catalyzes MIT research, innovation, and technology for ensuring safe and resilient supplies of water and food while reducing environmental impact, to meet the local and global needs of a rapidly expanding and evolving population on a changing planet.



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