

NEWSLETTERS

Listening To The ‘Heart Of Agriculture,’ Feeding Humanity Highlight Barnes & Thornburg’s 2018 Food And Ag Seminar

July 13, 2018 | Indianapolis

Barnes & Thornburg recently hosted its annual Food and Ag seminar, Planting the Seed, to discuss advances and current trends in the food and agriculture industries. Following are highlights from this year’s sessions, which were organized by the firm’s Agriculture and Food Practice Group.

Corteva Agriscience™ Listening to the ‘Heart of Agriculture’

Listening to what customers and other stakeholders have to say goes a long way to developing a clear understanding of all sides of a particular issue. It’s a process that consumes the busy schedule of Krysta Harden, vice president of external affairs and chief sustainability officer of Corteva Agriscience™, agriculture division of DowDuPont™.

Harden talked about the recent DowDuPont merger and how it spawned the new business, Corteva, putting it literally at the “heart of agriculture,” during her keynote presentation at Barnes & Thornburg’s Planting the Seed seminar.

“Our purpose is to enrich the lives of those who produce and those who consume, ensuring progress for generations to come,” Harden said. “We have got to do more as a company to stand shoulder to shoulder with our farmers and listen to consumers.”

Harden said Corteva has embarked on a long-term program to listen to and have conversations with parents, chefs, pediatricians and others to get their thoughts on a number of topics associated with global food sources.

Issues, including genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and crop protection regulations, are at the forefront of consumers’ minds, and Harden said it is important to begin a dialogue with them even if they have differing views.

“We have to be trustworthy and transparent,” she said. “We have to ask what we are doing better and what we are going to do that’s different. That’s where we are as a company.”

Science and Technology, Markets and Policy Key to Feeding Humanity for Future Generations

From humble beginnings in a small Ethiopian village, Purdue University distinguished professor Dr. Gebisa Ejeta understands the plight of those who are food insecure.

His lifelong work culminated in his successful attempt to identify drought-

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and weed-resistant sorghum seed, which earned him the 2009 World Food Prize.

Ejeta recently brought his message of feeding humanity to Barnes & Thornburg's annual Planting the Seed seminar, discussing what role science, technology, markets and policy play in feeding the growing world.

Ejeta, who also is director of Purdue's Center for Global Food Security, identified the four pillars of food security – availability, access, utilization and stability – and how poverty is the root cause of hunger throughout the world. Added to the dynamic are major global challenges that affect feeding the hungry. They include rapid population growth, collapse of various ecosystems, shrinking land resources, nutrition pressures, and food loss and waste.

It doesn't end there, Ejeta said. Grand challenges include a water crisis, climate change, energy demand and global trade.

Addressing these various challenges and solving the food shortage is where science and technology can help, as evidenced by Ejeta's lifelong work.

"Dr. Ejeta's accomplishments in improving sorghum illustrate what can be achieved when cutting-edge technology and international cooperation in agriculture are used to uplift and empower the world's most vulnerable people," said Dr. Norman E. Borlaug, founder of the World Food Prize, when presenting the esteemed professor the award in 2009. "His life is as an inspiration for young scientists around the world."

Many Barnes & Thornburg attorneys played a role in the seminar, including Brian Burdick of Indianapolis and Brandt Hershman of Washington, D.C., who discussed state and federal agriculture policy on a panel moderated by William Wales of Indianapolis. Bill Padgett of the firm's Indianapolis office and Robert Stead of the firm's Grand Rapids office both moderated panel discussions about litigation trends in the agriculture and food industries and the transformation of the food industry, respectively.

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