

# GROW<sup>2</sup>ASIA CASE STUDY: RAINSTICK

*Rainstick emerges as the pioneer, simulating lightning's effects to cultivate larger, faster, and more sustainable food growth. Serving as an alternative or complement to chemical treatments, Rainstick fundamentally alters the economic dynamics of food production without requiring a shift in farming methodologies.*



Amidst the strain that modern agricultural practices impose on the climate, producers are actively pursuing alternatives to lessen their environmental footprint while ensuring ample, nutritious food for a burgeoning population. Rainstick emerges as the pioneer, simulating lightning's effects to cultivate larger, faster, and more sustainable food growth. Serving as an alternative or complement to chemical treatments, Rainstick fundamentally alters the economic dynamics of food production without requiring a shift in farming methodologies.

The Rainstick founders are Darryl Lyons, a proud Maiawali man and third-generation farmer, and Mic Black, an engineer and scientist from North Queensland. Their vision is to combine ancient Indigenous techniques with a modern science-backed approach to innovation in which the natural impact of lightning is replicated via Variable Electrical Field (VEF) seed treatment technology, thereby accelerating crop growth by enhancing seed germination and growth into seedlings. Their ultimate goal is to create better climate resilience for global agricultural systems.

## TAPPING INTO THE SUSTAINABILITY MEGA-TREND

Rainstick have attracted significant interest in a relatively short timeframe and are listed as one of Australia's top 100 innovators. CSIRO Australia has called Rainstick technology a 'Deeptech game-changer'. Rainstick has applied for the Australia-Singapore Go-Green Co-Innovation Program (GGIP) which provides funding for Australian and Singaporean enterprises to collaborate on commercially viable, innovative green products and services.

One of their main objectives coming into the GROW2Asia Future Protein program was to build a specific approach for Singapore to secure collaboration partners to enter into trials of their technology and to establish key partnership with major global food companies (many of whom have R&D facilities in Singapore).



"We had one goal: to find a collaborative partner and some funds to trigger expansion into Asia. Thanks to the support we found in the GROW2Asia Future Protein program, we now have four collaborative partners and a much deeper understanding of the needs of the SE Asian market."

**Mic Black**

Co-Founder, Rainstick



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Food Futures Company GROW2Asia Program

### KEY RESULTS

- ✓ Rainstick have recently closed a \$1.6M pre-seed round
- ✓ Progressing with the GGIP grant targeting up to \$3M
- ✓ 30+ connections with companies such as ComCrop, Livfresh and AgroCrop
- ✓ Secured 3 collaborative producer partners and one collaborative research partner



"The GROW2Asia team provided a great network of mentors and connections for Rainstick to develop an ASEAN expansion strategy during the program. Then helped massively during SIAW to lock in country partners to deliver on the strategy."

### BUILDING A NETWORK OF COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS TO ACCELERATE GROWTH

Rainstick was an active participant in the program with the highlight being the in-market visit to Singapore International Agrifood Week (SIAW) in October 2023. Founder Mic Black took advantage of this opportunity to put into action all the learnings of the program and to solidify introductions and to make new ones. As part of the program support, Rainstick were invited to exhibit at the GROW booth at the Agri-Food Tech Expo Asia (AFTEA) which meant Mic was able to have direct conversations with potential partners and customers interested in the start-up. Rainstick also attended a number of networking receptions including the AUSTRADE and TIQ events.



Supported by the Food Futures and GROW teams, Mic pitched at the Future of Agriculture Pitch Hour as part of the Rethink Agrifood Innovation Summit and was awarded 'Best Pitch' which secured him an invitation to the Gala Dinner and the opportunity to meet the Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore and collect his award.

During SIAW Rainstick made 30+ connections with companies such as ComCrop, Livfresh and AgroCrop. As a result of the successful in-country visit, Rainstick have secured three collaborative producer partners and one collaborative research partner which will underpin Rainstick's engagement in ASEAN market and assist with the GGIP grant (where they are targeting up to \$3M supported by the partners they are now working with in Singapore).

Rainstick recently closed a \$1.6M pre-seed round with 7 collaborative partners. As a result of the program Rainstick are now looking to push further into the ASEAN region and enter markets including Japan, Philippines and Malaysia.

*An exclusive program developed by leading agrifood innovation systems design firm Food Futures Company in partnership with global agrifood tech impact accelerator GROW to help Australian scale ups capture the opportunity in Asia.*