

To whom it may concern:

July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019

## **AGRIBUSINESS FORUM 2019: LITHUANIA AS A SANDBOX FOR AGRIFOOD TECH**

Over the recent years agriculture and its closely associated food sector have been decisively coming back to the agendas of global policy, science and business leaders. From meeting the needs of a growing global population to addressing the problems faced by rural communities. From raising national competitiveness to sustaining natural resources and adapting to the consequences of climate change.

**Agriculture is intertwined with many pressing issues of the 21st century and timely steps taken in this sector can make a significant contribution towards solving both local and global challenges.**

Despite undeniable importance and urgency, agriculture remains one of the sectors least affected by recent digital innovations. This conclusion is clearly expressed in the recent EU Declaration of cooperation on 'A smart and sustainable digital future for European agriculture and rural areas', signed by representatives from 25 European countries. The Declaration stressed the importance of taking decisive actions to promote digitization of agriculture and to develop a European infrastructure for innovation support.

**The world is on the precipice of breakthroughs in Artificial Intelligence, Robotics and the Internet of Things, and the European agriculture sector has potential to become one of the biggest beneficiaries.**

Lithuania is in a unique position. Being a small yet flexible country with effective public sector, an excellent talent base and an entrepreneurial ecosystem, Lithuania has all the necessary potential for leadership in a chosen innovation field. However, Lithuania still faces difficulties in finding its place on the world innovation map.

And what if it's agriculture? So far agriculture is lacking prominent and targeted leadership in the development, deployment and full uptake of innovative technologies. For Lithuania it's an opportunity to consolidate its scientific, business and public sector potential, become a testbed for innovative solutions and raise its agricultural sector to new levels.

**'The country of agrifood innovations' – such an ambitious vision could become a new direction for Lithuania's development.**

**This year's international Agribusiness Forum invites all to Vilnius on October 17th, 2019 to join the discussion on Lithuanian innovation leadership in agriculture.**

The Forum will be asking and trying to find answers to the following questions:

- How will agriculture look like in the age of AI, Robotics and IoT technologies?
- How can innovations in agriculture contribute towards solving local and global challenges?
- What changes are needed to ensure not only the successful development of these innovations, but also Lithuanian leadership on a European scale?
- What do innovators need the most and how to make use of existing achievements?
- What benefits can this bring to Lithuanian farmers, the agricultural sector and the general national wellbeing?

Forum participant and guests will also witness the final presentations and awards of 'Hack AgriFood' – the first agriculture and food-focused hackathon in Lithuania, held on the 15-16th of October.

**The Forum invites all agriculture, policy, science and innovation leaders, with planned participation by:**

- Lithuanian Ministers of Agriculture and of Economy and Innovation;
- Mayors of Vilnius and Kaunas;
- Presidents of the Lithuanian Business Confederation, the Chamber of Agriculture and the Lithuanian Farmers Union;
- Key national AgriFood industry stakeholders, technology providers and influencers;
- International guests from the Baltic States, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and Serbia.

The Agribusiness Forum 2019 on October 17th in Vilnius is being hosted by the Lithuanian Business Confederation in partnership with the 'AgriFood Lithuania' Digital Innovation Hub.

President



Valdas Sutkus