

**For Immediate Release**  
**October 31, 2013**

**Contact: Sally Anderson**  
**615-242-8856**

## **TENNESSEE'S AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY TO LEARN STRATEGIES IN FUNDING FOR INNOVATION**

### **Ron Meeusen of Cultivian Ventures to discuss accessing venture capital at three events in Tennessee**

Nashville, TN – Life Science Tennessee (LifeSciTN) and NextFarm Agricultural Innovation Accelerator will host a series of events titled, “Securing Venture Capital for Agriculture Innovations” across Tennessee, November 5-6.

The series, featuring Ron Meeusen of Cultivian Ventures, is designed to help Tennessee’s agricultural community learn new strategies for developing a commercialization ecosystem for agriculture including how to identify and attract capital, which is a critical to fostering innovation.

“Tennessee has a thriving and diverse agriculture industry supported by world-class research, a robust agriculture extension program, superior logistics and access to international markets,” said Pete Nelson, CEO of Ag Innovation Development Group and chair of the Life Science Tennessee Agricultural Innovation committee. “These assets make Tennessee an ideal environment for fostering technology innovation,” said Nelson.

NextFarm is an agriculture innovation accelerator led by a partnership between the Northwest Tennessee Entrepreneur Center and the Memphis Bioworks Foundation. NextFarm currently has nine participating companies representing technologies related to precision agriculture, food safety, specialty crops, and biobased products.

“Ron Meeusen brings a wealth of expertise about innovation in agriculture based on his experience in industry and his leadership in the development of an agricultural strategy for the state of Indiana. This leadership has been instrumental in the formation of Cultivian Ventures, a leading agricultural venture capital company. His presence in Tennessee will be a valuable learning experience for those looking to expand Tennessee’s agricultural innovation assets,” said Nelson.

Meeusen has 30 years of experience in bringing new technologies and products to market. He has led research and development for major corporations in agricultural chemicals, field crop and vegetable genetics and breeding, animal health, novel foods and industrial materials. His successful projects include planning and conducting the world's first field trial of a genetically engineered crop trait in 1986, development and launch of one of the first insect and herbicide resistant corn hybrids in 1996, introduction of a trans-fat free canola oil, and development of dozens of new varieties of field and vegetable crops on three continents.

In addition to access to capital, the Life Science Tennessee’s Agricultural Innovation committee has identified two additional actions important to fostering new agriculture business: developing a statewide agriculture technology accelerator network and implementing a program of model entrepreneurial development.

Ron will speak at three events November 5 - 6. The sessions are open to the media and to the public:

Nashville – Tuesday, November 5

11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Hosted by Bradley Arant Boult Cummings

1600 Division Street, Suite 700

Martin – Tuesday, November 5

5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Hosted by the University of Tennessee at Martin

Brehm Hall, 574 University Street, Martin, TN 38238

Dyersburg – Wednesday, November 6

7:30 – 9:00 a.m.

Hosted by Security Bank

Dyersburg Chamber of Commerce 2000 Commerce Avenue, Dyersburg, TN 38024

To learn more or to register visit <https://m360.lifesciencetn.org/frontend/event.aspx?EventId=91049>

### **About Life Science Tennessee**

Life Science Tennessee is a statewide, non-profit, member organization whose mission is to advance and grow the life science industry in Tennessee through advocacy, partnerships and alignment with economic and workforce development.

Members include companies, universities, research institutions, government and economic development groups, and other industry associations involved in discovery and application of life sciences products and related services that improve the health and well-being of people throughout the world.

Life Science Tennessee conducts business and economic development activities; advocates on behalf of the industry; educates the public about the benefits of life sciences research and product development; and provides a network for the exchange of ideas, information and opportunities.

###