



## USDA award Innovafeed \$11M grant to boost Domestic Organic Fertilizer Production and Bolster Regenerative Agriculture

*DECATUR, 14 November 2024* – Innovafeed is proud to announce the **U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has granted \$11M to fund its pioneering initiative aimed at producing high quality insect ingredients for animal and plant nutrition in the USA**, thus boosting domestic organic fertilizer production. This endorsement highlights Innovafeed's potential to contribute to sustainable agriculture, economic growth in rural regions, and enhanced options for American farmers.

### Fertilizer Industry Dynamics and Grant Context

Amidst a backdrop of unprecedented challenges, fertilizer prices have surged by over 100% between 2021 and 2022. The complex interplay of factors, including the Ukraine conflict, limited availability of essential minerals, soaring energy costs, global demand, and agricultural commodity prices, as well as dependence on imports coupled with a lack of competition, have contributed to this volatile landscape. Responding decisively to this industry turmoil, **USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack has earmarked an impressive \$500 million through the Fertilizer Production Expansion Program (FPEP). This visionary initiative aims to bolster domestic fertilizer innovation, invigorate rural job markets, and provide American farmers with a wider spectrum of choices.**

The USDA's call for projects under the FPEP garnered an overwhelming response, with more than 350 businesses vying to increase their fertilizer output. The program's first round culminated in the selection of 21 projects in January, followed by an announcement of an additional 66 eligible projects in July, poised to receive grants to amplify fertilizer production.

### Innovafeed's Project in Decatur

**Among the selected recipients of the FPEP funding is Innovafeed**, an agtech company renowned for its global leadership in insect production. **This grant will go towards replicating its unique production model developed in France in the USA, specifically in Decatur, Illinois. Innovafeed's objective is to provide American farmers with a novel, natural, sustainable fertilizing solution: insect frass.**

Insect frass – a **high-performing organic source of available nutrients that activate soil microbial activity** – is a key component among two additional product lines in Innovafeed's unique production of *Hermetia illucens*, commonly known as the Black Soldier Fly.

Innovadeed's North America General Manager, **Maye Walraven**, shares, "this endorsement from the USDA recognizes Innovafeed's potential to contribute to the autonomous supply of US organic fertilizer and to provide farmers with a solution that improves soil regeneration and carbon sequestration benefits, thus supporting the domestic development of regenerative agriculture".

**David Leishman**, Foreign Agricultural Affairs Director to France commented : “The United States and France share a deep friendship and a long history of collaboration in the sphere of agriculture that date back to Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson and the Franco-American Treaty of Alliance of 1778. Too often, conflict and disagreement overshadow the richness of this historic relationship. In the spirit of the young Marquis de La Fayette, Innovafeed offers an excellent example of how a group of talented French entrepreneurs can successfully partner with the United States to help change the world producing food more sustainably”.

## **Insect Frass and its environmental benefits**

**Innovafeed produces large volumes of 100% frass-based fertilizer in the form of dehydrated pellets, branded “Hilucia™ Frass for plants”.**

Hilucia™ Frass for plants offers a balanced nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium nutrient profile which stimulates plant growth throughout the crop cycle and is suitable for production of all crops from grapevines and fruit trees to vegetables and cereals. **With more than 75% organic matter and the presence of beneficial bacteria and chitin it also helps regenerate soils and boost long-term fertility**, enhancing soil biodiversity and structure to develop a strong root system, improving water retention, and reducing nutrient leaching.

**Innovafeed’s natural fertilizer is the ideal solution for developing high-performance, regenerative agriculture.** It supports farmers' agro-ecological transition towards more natural and environmentally-friendly practices. In Europe, it is authorized in organic farming, in compliance with EU 2018/848 regulation. Its applications in viticulture, in particular in the Champagne area, has demonstrated over the past years that it can deliver equal or improved yields in replacement of conventional fertilizing solutions and contribute to significantly reducing the environmental footprint of farming activities. **A Life Cycle Analysis conducted by Innovafeed in 2022 shows that Hilucia™ Frass for plants emits 45% less CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions than other animal manures during its manufacturing process and can increase soil carbon sequestration by nearly 60 kg of carbon per ton over 5 years, making it a low-carbon fertilizing solution.**

### **ABOUT INNOVAFEED:**

Innovafeed is an ag-tech company (B Corp™, Most Innovative Company 2024) and a global leader in insect production (*Hermetia illucens* – Black Soldier Fly) for animal and plant nutrition. Created in 2016 driven by the ambition to find innovative and disruptive solutions to the challenges faced by the global food system, it develops disruptive technologies that replicate natural processes on an industrial scale. By building a circular, waste-free food chain that replicates the natural role of the insect, Innovafeed reinvents our way of life with increased quality, sustainability, and resilience for all.

Its wide range of products includes: Hilucia™ Protein and Oil for pet food; Hilucia™ Protein for aquaculture; Hilucia™ Oil for monogastrics; and Hilucia™ Frass for plants, a 100% natural fertilizer made from insect excrement.

Innovafeed has over 350 pragmatic dreamers for whom performance and positive impact must go hand in hand to shape the world we will leave to future generations. To find out more: <https://innovafeed.com/en>.

To learn more, visit [innovafeed.com/en](https://innovafeed.com/en)

### **MEDIA CONTACT:**

Nadège Audiffren

Head of Global Communications

[nadege.audiffren@innovafeed.com](mailto:nadege.audiffren@innovafeed.com)