

Startups, Big Ag betting soil microbes will bring next agricultural revolution

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David Perry believes the next agricultural revolution will come from. . . the millions of unseen microbes in soil that play a crucial but complicated role in the well-being of plants.

Perry believes that he can repackage beneficial bacteria and fungi. . . and deliver them to plants to alter their microbiome in ways that will boost growth, increase resistance to drought, disease and pests, and reduce farmers' reliance on fertilizers and pesticides.

Like Perry's Cambridge, Mass.-based Indigo, a slew of other start-ups and all of the top international agro-industrial companies – BASF, Monsanto, Bayer CropScience, Syngenta, Arysta LifeScience — are rushing into a market that analysts believe could more than double in value, to \$4.5 billion, by 2019.

. . . .

Scientists have known since the 19th century that microbes could be beneficial to plants, not just causes of disease. . . .

But microbes largely were left behind amid the rise of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. . . .

The industry has since turned back toward the soil, combing the combined plant-microbe “hologenome” for the key to fighting pests and disease.

Read full, original post: [Will microbes save agriculture?](#)