

IIFH - FTW Ventures Innovator Fellowship

A unique opportunity to work with our innovation partners in an immersive, hands-on experience in a food and health investment environment gaining real-world business and entrepreneurial skills while evaluating food and health startups.

- **\$50K fellowship:** 6 month salary, travel, tuition, research and conference expenses (up to \$50K by [IIFH](#))
- **Timeline:** Fall 2022 to Spring 2023 ([flexible](#) start date, virtual option if required)
- **Eligibility:** UC Davis post-doctoral fellows, or PhD students in their last 1-2 years of study
- **Part-time Learning and Exposure to Venture Capital (VC) Group:** During the first half of the fellowship (months 1-3), fellows will begin work remotely, part-time with VC and will be exposed to methods, practices, culture and systems of how VCs identify investable ventures, evaluate startups in the food arena, and more. The fellow will engage in regular virtual (and occasionally in-person) meetings with the VC host. This happens simultaneously while continuing fellow's on-campus research commitments. This time allows the fellow to become oriented with the VC landscape, role responsibilities, and be poised to begin full-time immersion with their VC host during the second half of the Fellowship (months 4-6).
- **Experiential Learning with Venture Capital Group:** During the second half of the fellowship (months 4-6), the fellow transitions to full-time work with the VC host to evaluate startups in the food system and identify investable ventures, kicking off with an anticipated onsite residency in San Francisco (up to \$10K travel, accommodation and conference allowance provided).
- **DEADLINE September 16, 2022 – OR UNTIL FILLED:** [Click here to apply.](#)

About FTW Ventures

FTW Ventures is a leading, early-stage venture fund investing in the breakthrough science & technology for a more Sustainable Food System.

FTW works with a broad startup, corporate and investor community to reverse climate change, improve productivity, reduce waste, and stave off diet-related illnesses in both the developed and developing world. The team looks for companies in biotechnology, hardware/automation, software/SaaS, AI/ML, novel ingredients, sustainable packaging and climate tech to nurture not only with capital, but their expertise and their network of customers, partners and advisors.

They advise founders along their entire startup journey – through fundraising, developing the initial product strategy, building their go-to-market plan, business development connections and providing guidance on effective marketing.

FTW Ventures was founded by Brian Frank, a serial entrepreneur turned venture investor with prior operating and investing experience in the technology and food tech sectors. He's raised capital from some of the most notable founders and innovators in Food and Technology sectors, as well as leading corporates that are defining the future of food. And the team leverages his vast network of 'experts', many of whom are UC Davis Professors, to support the audacious missions to radically transform our worldwide Food Systems. Brian is also already supported by one of our very own IIFH Fellow alumni, who joined the firm full time after completed her PhD in the UC Davis Veterinary School.

To date, their startups have raised \$100s of millions of dollars in additional capital, have launched industry changing products in cosmetics, nutrition, agriculture and food service industries AND do so while creating immense uplift for people, the planet and profits for the network FTW has developed worldwide.

Candidates with coursework or experience related to one or more of the following areas (or similar) are strongly desired: food science, synthetic biology, cell and molecular biology, nutrition, computer science, engineering, materials science, climate tech, entrepreneurship or related topics.

About the Innovation Institute for Food and Health (IIFH)

The IIFH makes uncommon connections between sectors and disciplines to catalyze innovation across food, agriculture and health. It works to accelerate the deployment of products and processes to enable safe, sustainable and secure nutrition for all. Together with strategic partners, the IIFH identifies systemic issues as the basis for collaborative programs using both top-down (partner-driven) and bottom-up (investigator-initiated) approaches to formulate systemic solutions. This reduces the time from conception to application for transformative impact.

Program Description

Phase 1 (3 months): Begin part-time work with FTW (50% minimum), splitting time between research and virtual engagement with FTW

- Start date flexible: following selection, anticipate joining FTW remotely for three months.
- At UC Davis: learn to support FTW's efforts in evaluating startups and selecting investable ventures that address selected challenges in the food system.
- The fellow will work closely with FTW's staff through virtual means. Support is provided for regular in-person meetings, as needed.

- Starting remotely, part-time will allow the fellow an orientation to the startup world, familiarize them with the necessary skills and processes, and begin building a framework for constructive engagement.
- Support from monthly face-to-face meetings with the IIFH (virtual or in-person), as needed.

Phase 2 (3 months): Full-time Experiential learning with FTW (onsite or remote, as needed)

- Join FTW for the second phase at their San Francisco offices in Winter 2022 (including up to \$10K travel, accommodation and conference allowance).
- Explore FTW's strategic ecosystem and extensive network of assets in evaluating and vetting competitive investment opportunities.
- Learn what kind of companies and technologies are considered investable and engage with expert consortium members to understand opportunities in food/agriculture innovation.
- Gain invaluable knowledge about what investors look for in entrepreneurs.
- In conclusion: provide a brief report on the results and impact of the fellowship, with the potential to present at IIFH's annual event or equivalent.

Application Requirements

- 1) Completed application form on IIFH website. [Click here to apply.](#)
- 2) Resume or CV (PDF)
- 3) Letter of interest detailing current research focus, why the program is of interest to you, and how your career goals align therewith (max. 2 pages, PDF format)
- 4) Letter of support from PI approving the applicant's graduation. (max. 1 page, PDF format)

Please combine items 2-4 above (in the order they are listed) into one single PDF for submission.