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AG STARTUP ENGINE ANNOUNCES INITIAL INVESTMENT IN CLEARFLAME ENGINES

AMES, Iowa, January 30, 2019 – Ag Startup Engine (ASE), at the [Iowa State University \(ISU\) Research Park](#), announced that it has made an initial seed investment in Chicago, Illinois based [ClearFlame Engines](#) - which is commercializing technology that integrates low-carbon alternative fuels into Diesel engines, using a novel, high-temperature combustion process. This is the ninth startup ASE has invested in since formation in 2016.

The ClearFlame co-founders—CEO BJ Johnson, and COO Julie Blumreiter—initially developed this technology during their PhD dissertation research at Stanford University, and they remain uniquely positioned to advance the technology from a lab prototype to a full-scale market solution. Using renewable, low-carbon, domestically-sourced fuels like ethanol, ClearFlame has developed a patented system to “upgrade” the traditional Diesel engine to achieve higher power output with significantly lower emissions of soot, smog, and carbon dioxide.

“The ClearFlame technology can replace traditional Diesel engines across a range of applications, but there is particularly strong synergy between ethanol and the agriculture sector that has us very excited to work with Ag Startup Engine,” said BJ Johnson, CEO of ClearFlame. Using ASE funding and additional government grants, ClearFlame is moving their technology to market, and currently hiring VPs of Engineering and Business Development to grow the company (info at <https://www.clearflameengines.com/jobs/>).

ClearFlame joins several agtech startups including Performance Livestock Analytics, Nebullam, Gross-Wen Technologies, Smart Ag, FarmlandFinder, Tractor Zoom, automed and LEAH Labs in the portfolio of companies in the Ag Startup Engine Fund. This is the first company located outside of Iowa to join the fund. ASE aims to provide agricultural entrepreneurs a structured means of moving from a startup concept to investment-ready business.

“BJ and Julie have made considerable progress in developing ClearFlame’s technology and their move to the Midwest from California is fortuitous,” said Joel Harris, Co-director of ASE. “There are significant synergies with Iowa State University and Iowa’s renewable fuels businesses. ClearFlame has demonstrated skill at attracting research funding to continue pre-revenue work. BJ and Julie also demonstrate skill as both technologists and entrepreneurs and have surrounded themselves with impressive advisers.”

Over the next year, the ASE hopes to add two to six more agriculture technology startups like ClearFlame to the portfolio ranging from animal health to precision agriculture.

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The Ag Startup Engine was launched two and one-half years ago to help address two fundamental gaps that prevent agricultural startups and entrepreneurs from being more successful: early seed-stage investment and organized mentorship from successful entrepreneurs.

Visit www.agstartupengine.com for more information.