

# 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 ag, food and health startups.

- **Financial Support:** 6 month stipend\*, tuition, fees, accommodation, travel and conference expenses (not to exceed \$50k).
- **Timeline:** Mid-June through mid-December 2024 (Preferred start date June 17)
- **Eligibility:** UC Davis PhD candidates (students post-QE), or post-doctoral fellows
- **Part 1: Part-time Learning and Exposure to Venture Capital (VC) Group:** During the first half of the fellowship (months 1-3), fellows will begin engagement 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 and health arena, and more. This happens simultaneously while continuing fellow's on-campus research commitments.
- **Part 2: Experiential Learning with Venture Capital Group:** During the second half of the fellowship (months 4-6), the fellow transitions to full-time engagement with the VC in San Francisco.
- **DEADLINE March 7, 2024:** [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 works to catalyze innovation across food and health. Founded on a unique academic-industry partnership and interfacing with both entrepreneurial and research sectors, the institute facilitates development and delivery of commercial products that bring metabolic health to food products and services. We envision this leading to a world where easily attainable metabolic health leads to happier, healthier, longer lives for everyone.

### **Program Description**

***Phase 1 (3 months): Begin part-time work with FTW, splitting time between appointment and academic research***

Start date flexible, ideally June 17: following selection, anticipate joining FTW Ventures remotely for three months.

- At FTW you'll have a front row seat to witness innovation at the forefront of the food industry, as we integrate our interns into the team from day one.
- The fellow will play a big part in helping our team research foodtech trends and evaluating potential deals.
- Support is provided for regular in-person meetings and conferences, as needed.
- Participate in frequent videoconferences with founders, faculty, investors, academic and commercial partners, and subject matter experts
- 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.
- Engage in IIFH Fellowship activities and check-ins

- If schedule aligns, attend the Fall quarter Student Startup Series at the Student Startup Center or the MBA Food & Agricultural Immersion course
- Support from monthly face-to-face meetings with IIFH (virtual or in-person), as needed.
- Access to funds for attending conferences and professional development opportunities.

**Phase 2 (3 months): Immersive Experiential learning with FTW (onsite, San Francisco, or split SF/Davis)**

- Accommodation covered by IIFH Fellowship. Continued access to funds for conferences, professional development and related travel.
- Learn how VCs evaluate investment opportunities and what it takes to commercialize a product.
- Conduct introductory meetings with entrepreneurs, support projects for FTW's portfolio companies and participate in internal fund strategy meetings.
- Perform technical due diligence and market research for new investment opportunities and develop investment thesis by deep diving into one industry.
- Source new investment opportunities and further develop your network in the startup and VC ecosystem.
- Attend at least one in-person food and health industry-related conference
- Engage in IIFH Fellowship activities, check-ins and events.
- In conclusion: provide a blog post 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 supervising PI or Major Professor. (max. 1 page, PDF format)
- 5) Optional: Second Letter of Recommendation (ideally speaking to an area of strength other than your PhD research)

Please combine items 2-5 above (in the order they are listed) into one single PDF for submission.

*\*Compensation note:*

- *PhD-status Fellows must have an active GSR appointment in their department or be able to acquire one. The fellowship covers 100% your existing 50% GSR appointment at its current step for the six months of the program, regardless of where you are in your VC commitment.*
- *75% of postdocs salary and benefits are covered by the program.*