

Driscoll's has partnered with Think Beyond Plastic to launch the inaugural Agricultural Plastics Innovation Challenge.

The challenge aims to stimulate new recycling processes and the development of alternatives to conventionally used field plastics.

Innovators, entrepreneurs, research institutes, start-ups and institutions are encouraged to submit applications for innovative solutions, and winners will have the opportunity to pilot their innovations in a commercial environment.

A dedicated [Ag Plastics Innovation portal](#) is available for submissions with a deadline of Nov. 30, 2021.

The use of plastic in berry production has proven to have significant benefits, however, a series of environmental, community and economic impacts remains since recycling is not a viable option for plastics that have contact with the soil.

Driscoll's outreached to additional berry industry leaders, including Aneberries, California Giant, Gem Pak, Good Farms and Naturipe, to join the innovation challenge.

The Agricultural Plastics Innovation Challenge is an opportunity for berry producers to identify early-stage innovations that effectively collect, recycle, compost or convert waste to energy.

A panel of experts will select winners in each category that have demonstrated the capacity to scale their innovations into commercial production and deliver true environmental benefits.

"Driscoll's is proud to be the corporate sponsor of The Agricultural Plastics Innovation Challenge, as it will support the entire industry in discovering scalable and economically viable solutions to improve the usage and recyclability of agricultural plastics," Scott Komar, senior vice president of Global R&D, Driscoll's said.

"We believe it is important to invest in ways to combat plastics waste and understand that as an industry, we all have a role to commit to broad and significant action toward more sustainable product offerings that are good for both people and the planet."

The Ag Plastics Innovation Challenge complements existing efforts by Driscoll's and others in the berry industry to reduce the environmental impact of plastic clamshells.

In early 2020, Driscoll's and others across the fresh berry industry made a [joint pledge](#) to achieve 100% recycle-ready packaging by 2025.

"As an industry, we share a common goal to reduce the environmental impact of plastics," said Joe Barsi, president of California Giant Berry Farms.

"This challenges us to think beyond the clamshell and address hard to recycle plastic that is used in berry production. We owe it to our growing communities, growers, and consumers to be leaders and help find solutions."