

Alltech ONE Ideas Conference for a Planet of Plenty

IAHJ speaks with Dr. Mark Lyons, president and CEO of Alltech

Q: The Alltech ONE Ideas Conference (ONE) was recently held virtually. What did attendees experience with the online event?

A: Every year during the ONE, we explore innovative solutions through the lens of technology, uncovering opportunities amid industry disruptions. So, pivoting the conference itself to a virtual experience reflects that spirit. As our flagship event, we wanted to create a unique experience for our customers and colleagues around the world, so even though we were not able to meet in-person, we could still connect, share ideas and be inspired.

We offered attendees a unique virtual experience on a new platform that was created by our team this past year. This platform included keynote presentations streaming each day, live workshops, the Alltech Ideas Hub, which is our 3D exhibit hall, as well as networking opportunities that allowed attendees to interact with peers from around the world. We also feature presentations across 11 focus tracks that explore opportunities in dairy, beef, business, aqua, crop science, equine, health & wellness, academic, pet, pig, and poultry sectors. Altogether, more than 70 presentations from renowned experts are available through on-demand videos and on our ONE podcast for listening on the go. The content offers a convenient and customisable experience for attendees and will be available for them to watch – and rewatch – until April 2022.

We recognize that many people are experiencing virtual fatigue or have responsibilities away from their desk, so we have made ONE's ideas and inspiration more accessible than ever. While we offered several live, interactive features for attendees to join at a designated time during the conference, all presentations will also be available on-demand so that registrants can watch when it's convenient for them. Also, if sitting down to watch videos isn't practical, registrants can listen to presentations on-the-go with downloadable audio versions, like a podcast.

Q: As the ONE conference took place over three days, tell us about the journey and the focus of each day?

A: On the opening day, we focused on the way we look at the world; exploring if we are really seeing the facts as they are, or if we are being controlled by instincts so innate to being human that sometimes we change the perceptions we have of reality into something different. We were thinking about the way we look at the world and looking for the good – making sure that we are thinking from different perspectives. Anna Rosling Rönnlund, co-author of "Factfulness," joined us to explore the misconceptions that often shape our perceptions and methods for developing a more realistic worldview.

One of our other opening keynote speakers was Dewitt Jones, a professional photographer, filmmaker and former photojournalist for National Geographic. He has made a career of storytelling through images and has traveled the

world on a mission to find the extraordinary in the ordinary. Through his compelling stories and captivating photography, he shared how changing your lens can change your life and help you to celebrate what's right in the world.

On the second day, we took a virtual trip around the world to explore the challenges we all share, that often have varying outcomes and many possible solutions.

David McWilliams, a leading economist and professor, discussed the need to embrace long-term legacy thinking that will lead to healthier people, healthier societies and a healthier planet.

Dr. Ruth Oniang'o, board chair of the Sasakawa Africa Association, discussed how we can address food insecurity through inclusion, education and partnerships.

On day three, we began asking, "What are the ideas that we can take from ONE and apply to our future?" It starts with taking ownership of our actions as individuals.

Shirzad Chamine, CEO of Positive Intelligence, shared steps that attendees can take to move from self-sabotage to being mindful in mastering happiness and better performance.

From there, I shared our vision for a Planet of Plenty™ and the significance of collaboration to the next era of agriculture.

Q: There are many presentations and workshops as part of the Alltech ONE Ideas Conference across species and sectors. How do they all tie together?

A: Our program is uniquely designed to give attendees multiple opportunities to delve into their specialty, but to also explore universal themes that unite us all. From science, sustainability and storytelling to health and wellness, we have created a robust resource that resonates with people regardless of their industry or geographical location. Ultimately, we are all part of the global food supply chain and have a vested interest in protecting the future of the planet we share.

So much of what is taking place during the Alltech ONE Ideas Conference really brings us that aspect of understanding an overall system and thinking across multiple scientific fields. We like to say what gets measured gets done. This measurement is so critical as we start to think about the development of things like carbon credits, carbon exchanges, and economies that help us to make sure that we're linking up and reducing overall environmental impact.

There is so much that is being developed in terms of new management systems, including ways that we can use filtration to take out methane at source and potentially use this in other agricultural production systems. Manure management, pasture management and all sorts of areas around pasture nutrition help us to get back into that understanding of the microbiome and the importance of seeing all of these things as linked. Utilising the power of



Dr. Mark Lyons, president and CEO of Alltech, launched the company's vision of Working Together for a Planet of Plenty™ at the Alltech ONE Ideas Conference in 2019.

enzymes is one of the areas I'm particularly excited about as it was the focus of my PhD.

These biological catalysts can truly help us in so many ways, not just through improving digestion and feed utilisation – which is an area that we've worked in for years – but also in understanding how the microbiome works in both animal and soils and utilizing beneficial enzymes within these systems. Alternative fermentation can help us to breakdown waste and create new efficiencies, and we can consider environmental toxins that already exist that can be broken down through enzyme systems.

Much as these scientific systems are interrelated, so are we. Economist David McWilliams presented during ONE and told us that the pandemic has shown us that no one is alone. No one can isolate themselves. The world is smaller and more interrelated than we ever realised. We are better when we work together, and certainly we can see that we have achieved a huge amount and can keep improving.

Q: What are the major takeaways that you want to share from ONE?

A: It's incredible what can be achieved when no one cares who gets the credit. If we work together, I believe our industry will create climate-neutral food. We will continue to be one of those core industries that can sequester carbon, and we will be a big part of the answer to climate change. This is what has led us from our ACE principle into such an optimistic and positive view of the world with our Planet of Plenty initiative.

Planet of Plenty has become more than a mission. It is our purpose. It is our "why." It's our opportunity to work together to create a planet of abundance. Let's learn from our keynote speakers and celebrate what's right in the world every day. This will immunise us from negativity, granting us

new energy and new resilience to push forward, creating a positive contagion as we share this energy with those around us, putting ourselves in the place of most potential, making sure that we can maximise our impact, and free ourselves to realise that there is more than one right answer to the challenges posed to us.

We are in this together, and COVID has reminded us of that fact. We need each other, and we have always needed each other. We could always achieve so much more when we work together. No industry can have a more positive impact on the future of the planet than agriculture. It's the industry that I'm most excited about, and it's a great honor to be working in it. We can nourish the world, while cooling its climate. We can leave not just a footprint, but a legacy. What an extraordinary opportunity to create a Planet of Plenty.



Dr. Mark Lyons

Dr. Mark Lyons grew up in the Alltech business, having traveled with his father and Alltech's founder, Dr. Pearse Lyons, from a young age to visit customers. With experience working in all regions and nearly all departments – from palletizing bags in production to researching in the lab – he has a deep and uniquely personal knowledge of the company. He received his bachelor's degree in political science and environmental science in 1999 from the University of Chicago. He received his master's degree in brewing and distilling in 2001, followed by a Ph.D. in the area of solid state fermentation, at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh. Dr. Lyons is fluent in Spanish, Portuguese, French and German, and he has a working knowledge of Mandarin.