



PRESS RELEASE

FIRA USA 2025: AUTOMATION EMERGES AS KEY SOLUTION TO ADDRESS SPECIALTY CROP AGRICULTURE'S CRITICAL CHALLENGES

Growers and innovators unite around economically viable robotic solutions; commercial deals signed across major crops



Woodland, California – November 4, 2025 – **The fourth annual FIRA USA, held October 21-23, 2025 in Woodland, California, demonstrated that automation has evolved from experimental technology to practical solutions for the pressing labor, economic, and sustainability challenges facing specialty crop agriculture. With over 60 exhibitors and 30 robotic solutions demonstrated live, the event united 1,800 leading attendees including top growers, robot manufacturers, OEMs, major AgTech investors, universities, and innovators. Their shared mission:**

deploying automation solutions that address real-world farming challenges.

GROWERS AT THE HEART OF THE EVENT, CONCRETE DEALS SIGNED

The 2025 edition distinguished itself through qualified participation from farmers across strategic sectors: tomatoes, sugar cane, fresh vegetables, leafy greens, tree fruits, vineyards, row crops and tree nuts. This strong field presence enabled the signing of several commercial agreements between growers and robotic solution manufacturers during the event.

“What I wanted to see this week was growers and robot companies having conversations about one thing: can this product work for grower economics? That's

the whole key to making automation work,” explains Walt Duflock, VP of Innovation at Western Growers. “California agriculture spends \$16.3 billion annually on 850 million labor hours, of which only 2% to 3% has been automated. Until we move that number up, we'll keep relying on international labor at \$30 an hour.”

Maialen Cazenave, Co-Director of FIRA USA, emphasizes: “ This year’s exchanges between growers and innovators were especially constructive and business-driven, with farmers keen to adopt new technologies. This is exactly FIRA USA's mission.”

INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION: THE INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESS

The event featured several major announcements, with press conferences from Ecorobotix and Niqo Robotics launching new products, as well as notable demonstrations from major equipment manufacturers. John Deere, represented by Sean Sundberg, Business Integration Manager, and Michael Bailey, Director, Production system, High Value & Small Acre Crops, showcased the autonomous 5ML tractor, continuing to advocate for regulatory changes allowing legal use of autonomous farm vehicles in California. New Holland, with representative Paul Welbig, Director of Precision Technology, also demonstrated their commitment to advancing automation solutions for specialty crop growers.

“The state of California has invested nearly \$30 million in the last six months to help build a statewide ag tech ecosystem with the launch of the California AgTech Alliance,” announces Gabriel Youtsey, Chief Innovation Officer at UC Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR). “That includes startups, universities, investors, and growers — everyone needed to bring real solutions to scale.”

Beyond technology demonstrations, FIRA USA 2025 fostered numerous strategic partnerships between participants and exhibitors. The improved demo areas covering vegetables, orchards, and vineyards — enabled in-depth exchanges and the creation of lasting commercial and technical collaborations.

Gwendoline Legrand, Co-Director of FIRA USA, notes: “We're seeing true collaboration emerging between technology providers and growers. The partnerships formed here aren't just about selling equipment — they're about co-developing solutions that work in real-world conditions. That's what drives meaningful adoption.”

A RAPIDLY EXPANDING INDUSTRY

Specialty crop automation was a \$250 million business in 2024 and is projected to grow to \$1 billion by 2030 (Source: WGA). This growth generates significant adjacent opportunities: integration services, data analytics, and circular economy could represent an additional \$1 billion market.

The Farm Robotics Challenge, co-organized with UC ANR, continues to expand, now including community colleges and high schools alongside university teams. The University of Georgia team won this year's competition with an innovative integrated solution that dramatically increases spray efficiency for chemical inputs.

STRENGTHENED PROGRAM AND EXPANDING FOOTPRINT

The 2025 edition showcased significant improvements in layout and programming. "The demo area was our best yet, despite challenging weather conditions during the preparation phase" notes Maialen Cazenave. "We learned from last year and took full advantage of those lessons. The flow between registration, presentations, exhibitor areas, and live demos created an optimal environment for meaningful business conversations."

Multiple press conferences throughout the week reinforced FIRA USA's position as the premier launch conference for specialty crop automation solutions. The California AgTech Alliance Press Conference highlighted the extensive partnerships that make California agriculture and AgTech effective when working toward common goals. Western Growers also launched its third case study at FIRA USA, focusing on water efficiency with Cal.Net and tools helping Terranova Ranches optimize irrigation operations, including complete ROI analysis.

LOOKING AHEAD: NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL EXPANSION

"Since launching FIRA USA in 2022, we've successfully activated the California market for agricultural robotics," explains Maialen Cazenave, Co-Director of FIRA USA. "Now we also want to activate new markets for manufacturers and give growers in other regions access to these autonomous solutions. That's why we're exploring Washington State, Pennsylvania, and Florida."

Following the 10th edition of World FIRA in Toulouse, France (February 2025) and four successful FIRA USA events, expansion plans are underway for both a four-corners US approach (Pacific Northwest, Florida, and Northeast regions) and international editions in Spain, France, The Netherlands, Italy, and Belgium.

"FIRA USA's format has proven it can accelerate automation adoption wherever specialty crop challenges exist," adds Gwendoline Legrand, Co-Director of FIRA USA. "The combination of live field demonstrations, grower presence, and startup-investor connections creates the conditions for real progress. For specialty crop agriculture to remain competitive and sustainable, automation isn't optional — it's essential."

2025 EDITION HIGHLIGHTS

- 60+ exhibitors from the ag robotics industry
- 20+ live robotic solutions demonstrated across four demo zones
- Farm Robotics Innovation Awards by UC ANR
- Debut of the Women in Ag Robotics Award, won by Arha Padman, Founder's Office & CMO of Niqo Robotics
- Best Start Up of the Year, rewarded to 4AG Robotics
- Major grower delegations from Pennsylvania, Florida, and Washington State
- Commercial deals signed between growers and manufacturers across tomatoes, sugar cane, fresh vegetables, leafy greens, tree fruits, vineyards, and nut trees sectors
- Strategic partnerships formed between participants and exhibitors
- Press conferences from Ecorobotix, Niqo Robotics, the California AgTech Alliance, and The Reservoir Farms

About FIRA USA

FIRA USA is the premier event dedicated to accelerating automation and robotics adoption in specialty crop agriculture. Co-organized by GOFAR, Western Growers and UC Agriculture and Natural Resources, FIRA USA brings together growers, technology innovators, investors, researchers, and industry partners to advance economically viable automation solutions for California and U.S. agriculture.

Media Contact: Gwendoline Legrand gwendoline@world-fira.com +33 688 87 17 11

For more information: fira-usa.com