



FIRA USA launches first Grower-Led Innovation of the Year Award to honor farmers shaping agricultural technology

YAKIMA, Wash., Sept 24, 2026 – FIRA USA has launched the Grower-Led Innovation of the Year Award, a new honor recognizing farmers and farming operations that are helping shape the future of agricultural technology through real-world innovation and on-farm results.

Rather than recognizing technology itself, the award puts the spotlight on the growers behind innovation, the farmers who test emerging technologies, work alongside developers to improve solutions, and make critical decisions about what works, what doesn't and what is ready to scale.

"Every grower who takes on a new solution is taking a risk, and the ones who do it well move the whole sector forward," said Marie-Flore Doutreleau, AgRobotics Project Manager, GOFAR (the Global Organization for Agricultural Robotics) and the FIRA agricultural robotics forum. "This award recognizes that initiative — and gives growers a platform to share what worked, so others can learn from their experience."

The award is open to growers and farming operations that have tested, evaluated, helped develop, purchased or adopted an innovative agricultural technology.

A distinguished jury will review applications. Panelists include Julien Laffont and Marie-Flore Doutreleau of GOFAR, Shannon Dininny of Good Fruit Grower, Steve Mantle of innov8.ag, and Walt Duflock of Western Growers. Together they will identify growers whose engagement with innovation is making a clear difference in the field.

Nominations close Oct. 5, 2026. Applications must be submitted through the official form: [Grower-Led Innovation of the Year Award nomination form](#).

The winner will be recognized at **FIRA USA 2026, Oct. 20–22 in Yakima, Washington**. The event, now in its fifth edition and expanded to encompass both agricultural robotics and broader AgTech, brings together growers, technology providers, researchers and industry leaders to accelerate solutions that work in real farm settings.

By spotlighting the growers who drive adoption and shape what succeeds in the field, FIRA USA aims to elevate the voices of those who turn innovation into practical results and encourage wider collaboration between technology developers and the farming community.

For more information about FIRA USA 2026 and the Grower-Led Innovation of the Year Award, visit [FIRA USA 2026](#).

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ABOUT GOFAR:

GOFAR (Global Organisation for Agricultural Robotics) is the leading association for the agricultural robotics ecosystem worldwide. As the organizer of FIRA (International Forum for Agricultural Robotics), GOFAR has been accelerating the development and adoption of autonomous solutions for more efficient and sustainable agriculture since 2016. www.agricultural-robotics.com