



FIRA USA expands Women in Agricultural Innovation Award for 2026, broadening beyond robotics to honor trailblazers across AgTech

YAKIMA, Wash., Sept 16, 2026 - Nominations are now open for the second annual Women in Agricultural Innovation Award (WiAI), as FIRA USA broadens its recognition of female leaders across agriculture's innovation landscape. Applications are due Oct. 5, with the winner honored at FIRA USA 2026.

What began in 2025 as the Women in AgRobotics of the Year Award now celebrates women driving progress across the full spectrum of agricultural innovation, from robotics and autonomous systems to precision agriculture, data and AI, biotech, digital tools, sensors, software, irrigation and more.

The shift reflects the evolving reality of modern farming, where hardware, software and data increasingly work together. In a sector still largely dominated by men, the award spotlights founders, engineers, farmers, researchers and leaders whose determination, vision and tangible impact are shaping the future of AgTech.

"Agricultural innovation is stronger when the women shaping it are visible, heard and connected across borders," said Maialen Cazenave, the co-director of GOFAR (the Global Organization for Agricultural Robotics) and the FIRA events. "This award is an opportunity to recognize the leaders whose ideas and determination are helping agriculture evolve for the future."

Last year's winner, Arha Padman, chief marketing officer and member of the founder's office at Niqo Robotics, set a high bar as the inaugural honoree, recognized for her leadership in advancing AI-powered agricultural robotics and for inspiring the next generation of women in the field. The 2026 award builds on that foundation while opening the door wider.

"One thing I learned working on the front lines of technology is that innovation needs translators. People who can move between the language of technology, the economics of a business and the lived reality of the consumer. That is why I believe this award matters. It is not about celebrating individual achievement, but about making the pathways of AgTech more visible to the women who will shape its next chapter. When

you make the people building the future visible, you make it easier for others to believe there is a place for them in it,” said Arha.

The award is open to all women holding an influential or strategic role in agriculture, robotics or AgTech more broadly. Candidates will be evaluated on professional contributions and achievements, innovation scope, project impact, leadership and role-model qualities, and a short personal statement explaining why they should be honored. A brief video introduction (maximum of two minutes) is also requested.

Submit applications through the official application form: [Apply here](#).

A jury of leaders and advocates from agriculture, robotics and AgTech will review entries.

The winner will receive an official FIRA USA trophy and on-stage recognition at FIRA USA 2026 (Oct. 20–22 in Yakima, Washington), visibility across FIRA USA channels, use of the official award logo, potential media features in Women In Ag Magazine and Agricultural Robotics News, and opportunities for community engagement with partner organizations. Partner prizes include membership and event benefits from American Agri-Women and California Women for Agriculture, with additional prizes possibly added.

“We encourage everyone across our network to participate in this expanded. By amplifying the achievements and voices of women innovators, the award seeks to inspire more women to enter and lead in the AgTech ecosystem,” said Cazenave.

For more information about FIRA USA 2026 and the Women in Agricultural Innovation Award, visit [FIRA USA](#).

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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