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| |  | | --- | | ****Innovators Pitch Ideas for Handling Kentucky Bourbon Industry’s Surplus Stillage****Louisville team takes top prize with plan to convert spent grains into sweetener, activated carbon and animal feed **FRANKFORT, Ky. (Nov. 1, 2021)** – Innovators from across the United States came together last week during the Distillers Grains Reverse Pitch Competition to propose ways to use stillage produced by Kentucky’s signature bourbon industry.  BioProducts of Louisville was selected by the judges as the first-prize winner. SoMax Circular Solutions of Philadelphia was chosen as runner-up and voted crowd favorite. BioProducts’ concept includes a process that yields xylose, a low-calorie sweetener, and activated carbon, which has applications for battery cells. The first-prize winner received a spot to present at the James B. Beam Institute of Kentucky’s conference and a collection of bourbon donated by the Kentucky Distillers’ Association.  “I want to congratulate all those who answered the call to address an issue facing one of our state’s signature and already soaring industries,” said Gov. Andy Beshear. “It is inspiring to see so many innovators approach this challenge as an opportunity to ensure the bourbon boom continues well into the future. Whether it’s our native beverage or automotive manufacturing, Kentuckians are and will continue to create sustainable technologies that support our industries and create good-paying jobs.”  With the number of Kentucky distillers increasing 250% over the past decade, the need to address the industry’s spent-grain byproduct has grown. For every gallon of bourbon produced, approximately 10 gallons of stillage remains. Currently, the demand for stillage – including traditional low-tech uses – is declining as the supply of stillage increases. The call went out to innovators over the summer to submit ideas for stillages solutions that prioritized sustainability and environmental impact; demonstrated an economic value to the distillery and the end-user of the stillage; and highlighted the scalability of the solution among others.  The pitch competition, the first of its kind related to addressing the stillage issue, was held at the [25th Distillers Grains Symposium](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__urldefense.com_v3_-5F-5Fhttps-3A_lnks.gd_l_eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9..v1iB0DModSaeX1zzmuJ8glkoeelGgQpbLydMMolp-5FXY_s_1728857079_br_115998319898-2Dl-5F-5F-3B-21-21Db6frn15oIvDD3UI-213TxtOnZFTVv0SmG-2DIgwD-5Fmf8QcxnyCNGc8tk0-2DdsYopErtYBW-2DZ3eRL3ft1qLQB36FCxzhk-24&d=DwMFaQ&c=euGZstcaTDllvimEN8b7jXrwqOf-v5A_CdpgnVfiiMM&r=-MADDLabcmHngw2qb1XnwkIl3KiCSsJjc3Ho-NvdPJc&m=bOlc4UUAbuNuqyxlgYBrp-ZXyIZk6EIP5tEcwbaMkF0&s=mBpFtR2oAeYrrg07c8e3wQmbBnh5kD4NrJddkf-ctAQ&e=) at the Downtown Louisville Marriott for an audience of distillers and industry stakeholders. The event was hosted through a partnership between the Distillers Grains Technology Council, the James B. Beam Institute for Kentucky Spirits, Innovation Incubated, the Energy and Environment Cabinet, and KY Innovation, the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development, with support and guidance from the Kentucky Distillers’ Association.  “It was inspiring to see such creative ideas to allow one of Kentucky’s signature industries to grow while protecting our natural resources,” Energy and Environment Secretary Rebecca Goodman said. “We believe that energy, environment and economic development must go hand in hand, and environmentally conscious solutions like these make economic growth all the more sustainable.”  Kentucky Distillers’ Association President Eric Gregory said the reverse pitch competition spreads the industry’s momentum in a new direction.  “The dramatically increasing global demand for Kentucky bourbon fuels the commonwealth’s economy through our state’s farming, distilling, retail and tourism industries. Now we can see opportunities for new business models taking shape in other industries that could benefit Kentucky,” Gregory said. “We at KDA are proud to support this kind of innovative thinking that increases the sustainability and long-term growth of Kentucky bourbon.”  BioProducts’ presentation was delivered by company founder and CEO Dr. Jagannadh Satyavolu and Cliff Speedy of C&I Engineering, which is a partner on the project. The company has plans to build units capable of handling 75,000 gallons of stillage a day and converting it into the diabetic-friendly sugar substitute, activated carbon and biocoal, and a protein that can be used in animal feed. | |