

IP IN AG INNOVATION SERIES

Intellectual property is the cornerstone of innovation. As global population grows, developing new technologies that can feed our world becomes more challenging. Intellectual property ensures that innovators can invest the resources necessary to create the next generation of farm technologies.

TULIP

Tulips have been commercially cultivated for over 500 years and have become one of the most popular spring flowers – making it a valuable non-food crop around the world.

Did You Know?

- The Netherlands is known as the “flower shop of the world” because of all of the tulips it grows.
- Keukenhof in the Netherlands is home to the world’s largest flower garden, which features more than 4.5 million tulips of 100 different varieties each year.
- In the mid-17th century, tulips actually created the first economic bubble, known as “tulip mania!” Tulips became so expensive that they were actually used for currency until the market eventually crashed.

“More than 3 billion tulip bulbs are produced annually, making tulips the world’s most important ornamental flower cash crops.”

– Master Gardeners Association

CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

CHALLENGE

Reducing pest pressures

SOLUTION

Pest-resistant tulips

Tulips are one of the most popular flowers worldwide, but they can be delicate flowers, difficult to harvest and susceptible to damage and disease. With this in mind, researchers have worked hard to create a conventional tulip variety that is hardy and resistant to pests that may devastate a farmer’s harvest. By using intellectual property protections, researchers can ensure this trait is properly developed, bred into more varieties of tulips and delivered to those who are providing this beautiful cash crop to consumers.

CHALLENGE

Improving ornamental tulip bulbs

SOLUTION

Disease-resistant tulips

The long growing season and delicate nature of tulips pose serious drawbacks in the production of this important flower crop. Scientists are utilizing new techniques to improve the productivity and constitution of tulips. Public researchers in the United States have developed conventional tulip varieties that use nitrogen more efficiently, enabling improved growth and resistance to disease. Discovering this new species is not a small undertaking, and intellectual property protections ensure researchers can properly develop and deliver a product that will eventually be enjoyed by consumers worldwide.

CHALLENGE

Weak tulips, prone to viruses

SOLUTION

Improved varieties

As the tulip is one of the most important ornamental plants cultivated for cut flowers and landscaping, researchers have been looking at ways to strengthen flowers and ensure protection against viruses. One way to do this is to develop new plant breeding techniques, such as embryo rescue, to make more viable plants and overcome issues that have led to weak tulips. Intellectual property protections help researchers using this technique protect the varieties they develop, a recognition of the value they are bringing to growers, consumers and the economy.

Intellectual Property Makes Agricultural Solutions Possible