

Can you introduce yourself and share what drives your passion for agriculture?

I am Ené Leppik, a scientist and entrepreneur passionate about developing sustainable pest management solutions using semiochemicals. Growing up in a small village of 2,000 people in Estonia, my family's farm and nature's resilience fascinated me. I spent my childhood observing ecosystems, intrigued by how life constantly struggles yet finds inventive ways to survive. This curiosity led me to a career dedicated to harnessing biological mechanisms for more sustainable agriculture.

What challenges have you faced in your career and how did you overcome them?

Bridging the gap between scientific innovation and commercial application has been one of my biggest challenges. Regulatory hurdles, market adoption barriers, and funding constraints are constant obstacles. However, I have an incredible team that doesn't take "no" for an answer. A team of fighters with whom anything is possible. Our strength lies in our diversity; we challenge each other, complement one another's skills, and push boundaries. With them, the sky is the limit.

What led you to your current role? Was there a defining moment?

My high school biology teacher, a passionate and energetic woman, sparked my interest in science. Through the school's biology club - birdwatching, research institute visits, and science competitions - I developed a deep passion for biology and ecology, leading me to study at the University of Tartu in Estonia. The turning point in my career came in the summer of 2018 when I met Alain Thibault. At the time, I was a post-doc at



Ené Leppik
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INRAE (France), and we met in a cafeteria at an incubation hub. I shared my vision of founding a company that uses plant odors to influence insect behavior instead of pesticides. Alain found the idea crazy but potentially genius. A few months later, on January 7, 2019, we co-founded Agriodor, bringing that vision to life.

What advice would you give to women entering your field today?

Believe in your expertise and don't shy away from leadership. Speak your mind, stand your ground, and never apologize for taking up space. Do not fear failure - it is part of the process. Surround yourself with a strong team and hire smart, talented people. In fact, hire people smarter than yourself. A great team will challenge you and push ideas forward.

A common misconception is that women in agriculture, especially in leadership roles, are less technically proficient or capable of driving innovation. I've challenged this by leading complex R&D projects, securing funding, and proving that deep scientific expertise combined with business acumen can create impactful change.

How does your work contribute to the future of agriculture?

As CTO of Agriodor, I oversee research and development, ensuring our solutions are scientifically sound and practically viable. I also lead collaborations with industry and academia to bring cutting-edge semiochemical technologies from the lab to the field.

By providing farmers with sustainable alternatives to traditional pesticides, we help reduce environmental impact while improving pest control efficiency.

Can you share a moment when you felt particularly supported or uplifted by other women in your field?

Women in science often approach ideas with intellectual openness, not being personally attached to hypotheses. This allows for constructive discussions, adaptability, and real innovation. I've experienced this firsthand while working with brilliant female scientists who support one another, prioritize progress over ego, and push boundaries together. This collective strength continues to inspire me in my work.