

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Young scientists have successfully raised more than their \$10,000 goal in the first two weeks of their Kickstarter campaign to create a one-of-a-kind plush corn to further science communication about GMOs. With two weeks left to go they want to make more awesome food plushes available – and if they hit \$20,000 one scientist will eat one of the hottest chili peppers in the world and post it to YouTube.

Biology Fortified, Inc. (BFI) is an independent, non-profit organization devoted to fostering science-based discussion about issues in biology, plant genetics, and agriculture. BFI's mascot is Frank N. Foode™, your friendly neighborhood genetically modified organism (GMO). This cute corn plush has gotten his photo taken with people, plants, and in exotic places, all to help make the science of biotechnology fun and approachable. Over the years, many people have said that they want a Frank of their own!



On February 3rd, Biology Fortified, Inc. (BFI) launched a Kickstarter fundraiser called “Bring Frank N. Foode™ to Life!” to raise \$10,000 to fund the design and creation of 500 Frank N. Foode™ plushes so everyone can have one of their own. Overnight, they raised almost half of their funding goal, and by the end of the second week, they crossed the \$10,000 mark.

Karl Haro von Mogel, who created the first Frank N. Foode™ plush in 2009, was elated at the success of the campaign. “One day, I had an idea to make a plush corn with glasses to help people understand the science,” said Karl Haro von Mogel. “It’s amazing to see the enthusiasm that people have toward it, and now we’re actually going to put them in people’s hands!”

The next step in their campaign is to offer exclusive T-shirts for their backers, and work toward the goal of making a second plush, such as a papaya, eggplant, or orange. Dr. Anastasia Bodnar, a board member of BFI, says that these additional plants will help teach people about how genetics has helped improve these crops and the lives of farmers who grow them. “There are so many great plant genetics stories to tell. With each new plush we add, we gain the ability to connect with more people,” she said.

Karl Haro von Mogel said, “To show the power of genetics, if we hit \$20,000 I will eat a Trinidad Moruga Scorpion chili on camera and put it on the web for everyone to see!” The Trinidad Moruga Scorpion chili is rated as one of the hottest chili peppers in the world,



at 1.5 to 2 million on the Scoville heat scale. He added, “Kids, don’t try this at home – I’m a scientist.”

Since they raised \$10,000 in the first two weeks, they think they can double it in just as much time. Rewards for donating to this campaign include the Frank N. Foode™ plush, autographed books, dinners with bloggers, hands-on farm tours, and much more. The campaign ends on Friday, March 7, at 8 pm Central Time.

Biology Fortified, Inc. started as a science blog that launched on Halloween in 2008. BFI incorporated in 2012 and gained 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status from the IRS in 2013. The Biofortified Blog and Forum create a civil and respectful environment where people can ask questions, give opinions, and even start up their own discussions. The blog includes interviews with and posts from scientists and other experts, recently passing 1.2 million views and 10,000 comments.

Kickstarter is a website that allows organizations and individuals who want to create new works of art and products raise money from donors through a process called crowdfunding. Backers can pledge any amount of money to a project, and receive unique rewards for contributing to the project. Funding on Kickstarter is all-or-nothing, but since the Frank N. Foode™ Kickstarter has already reached its funding goal, the project will be funded.



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Please let us know if you write about our Kickstarter so we can link back to you!

Kickstarter Profile Link: <https://www.kickstarter.com/profile/biofortified>

Biology Fortified, Inc. Homepage: <http://www.biofortified.org/>

Frank N. Foode Photo album: <http://biofortified.org/community/photos/>

Frank N. Foode on Twitter (with daily updates on campaign):

<https://twitter.com/franknfoode/>

Karl Haro von Mogel is co-founder and Chair of Biology Fortified, Inc. as well as a PhD. candidate in Plant Breeding and Plant Genetics at UW-Madison. In addition to his research on the genetics of sweet corn, Karl is studying science communication and is working on several media projects about plant breeding. www.linkedin.com/pub/karl-haro-von-mogel/4/821/37a/