September 30, 2025

＜News Release＞

Kagome and SVG Ventures' corporate venture capital fund, "SVG Ventures Sunrise Agri Fund," has invested in EF Polymer K.K., a startup originating from the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology Graduate University.
—Addressing Water Shortages in Processing Tomato Cultivation through Water-Saving Agricultural Technologies—

Kagome Co., Ltd. (President & Representative Director: Satoshi Yamaguchi, Headquarters: Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture, hereinafter, "Kagome") established the corporate venture capital fund "SVG Ventures Sunrise Agri Fund" (hereinafter, "Sunrise Fund") on September 20, 2024, together with SVG Ventures (hereinafter, "SVG"), a venture capital firm based in Los Gatos, Silicon Valley, California, through GARBiC USA LLC, Kagome Group's U.S. subsidiary.

The purpose of this initiative is to identify and invest in innovative technologies in the agricultural sector, generate synergies through collaboration with Kagome Group, and accelerate the creation of new businesses. The Sunrise Fund is pleased to announce that it has made an investment in EF Polymer K.K., (Headquarters: Okinawa Prefecture; hereinafter "EF Polymer"), a startup originating from the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology Graduate University that develops, and markets highly water-absorbent polymers derived from plant-based materials.

[Background of Environmental Issues in Agriculture]

With the progression of climate change in recent years, drought and soil salinization have emerged as some of the most pressing challenges for tomato-producing regions worldwide. Processing tomatoes are cultivated in open fields, where an adequate water supply is directly impacted to both quality and yield. Thus, water shortages not only cause decline in quality and yield but also have negative impact on primary processing industries that rely on processing tomatoes as materials. In dry and semi-dry regions such as California, Southern Europe, and South America—Kagome's main sourcing areas for processing tomatoes, the depletion of water resources driven by climate change is becoming increasingly severe. Ensuring the sustainability of production systems has become an important critical challenge.

Against this backdrop, we recognize that the efficient use and conservation of water resources are crucial for the global processing tomato industry, and we have been promoting a variety of initiatives to address this challenge.

Since 2021, our company has been focusing on the biodegradable agricultural water-absorbing polymer technology developed by EF Polymer, conducting ongoing technical verification at test fields and processing tomato farms within our group. For the 2025 season, we are conducting a large-scale demonstration trial covering approximately 15 hectares at a processing tomato farm in California, USA, to verify the consistency of its effects and assess its suitability for practical farm operations.

Furthermore, this polymer is biodegradable and does not accumulate in the environment after use, making it a promising technology with low environmental impact.

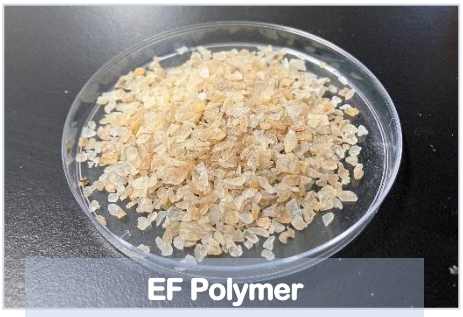
[Future Developments]

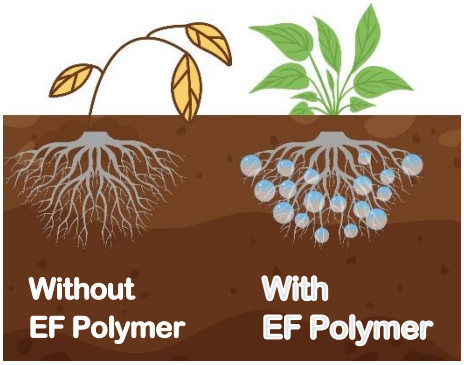
Through investment from the Sunrise Fund, Kagome plans to enhance partnership its collaboration with EF Polymer and advance the following initiatives.

- Accelerating Field Implementation in North America:
  Collaborating with contract tomato growers and processing facilities in California to advance application design and deployment aimed at reducing water usage and stabilizing both yield and quality.
- Exploring Global Expansion:
  We plan to sequentially introduce the technology to processing tomato production regions where our group operates, including Japan

We are exploring not only contributions to our existing businesses such as stabilizing raw material procurement and reducing water-related costs, but also potential synergies through collaboration within the Kagome Group.

＜ Reference 1＞





※ Incorporating appropriate amount of EF Polymer into the soil, it absorbs water, improving the soil's water retention and nutrient-holding capacity. By retaining moisture in the soil for extended periods, it promotes crop growth and is also expected to enhance tolerance to drought stress.
（Pic：Evaluating soil water-holding capacity）

＜Reference 2＞

■ EF Polymer K.K.

Founded: 2020

Founder: Narayan Lal Gurjar, Founder & Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Headquarter Location: 1919-1 Innovation Square Incubator, Tancha, Onna Village, Kunigami District, Okinawa, Japan 904-0495

Business Description: This company develops and provides "EF Polymer," a fully biodegradable, 100% naturally derived superabsorbent polymer made from agricultural residues such as orange and banana peels. This innovative material can retain approximately 50 times its own weight in water, gradually supplying it to crops and supporting their growth even in dry regions and water-scarce farmland. The manufacturing process uses no petroleum-derived raw materials or chemicals. By simultaneously achieving waste recycling and CO_2 emission reduction, the company is addressing the challenge of balancing sustainable agriculture with a decarbonized society.

■ SVG Ventures Sunrise Agri Fund

Established: September 2024

Location: Delaware, USA

Basis of establishment: Limited partnership under Delaware law

Total amount under management: US $50 million (Capital call method*)

Operating period: 10 years from fund establishment

Investment domain: Start-up companies with technology that contributes to sustainable agriculture

Target stage: Seed, early, middle stage

General partner (GP): SVG Ventures Sunrise Agri Fund GP, LLC

Limited Liability Partner (LP): Global Agricultural Research & Business Center USA LLC

*: The general partner (GP) of the fund requests investors (LP) to contribute the funds they will use to invest in the fund. LP provide capital to the fund in stages.

■ SVG Ventures LLC

Established: February 2010

Location: 750 University Ave, Los Gatos, California, USA

Representative: John Hartnett (CEO)

Investment domain: Agri-food startups around the world

<For Media Inquiries>

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