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Companies to watch in green tech: Food and drink

Posted by [Michael Kanellos](#) | [Post a comment](#)

With Earth Day upon us again, News.com green reporters sat down and selected five leading companies in five different clean technology categories. Here are the ones to watch in the areas of food and drink:

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1. Purfresh: Formerly [Novazone](#), the company's goal is to become the giant in organic pesticides. It makes a system that kills [fungi and microbes](#) in bottled water and food with ozone, and also offers a [sunscreen for fruit](#). It cuts back on industrial chemicals, boosts the amount of food that makes it from the field to the table without spoiling, and saves water. Old science combined with Silicon Valley management style.

Look out for [loteq](#) (iodine-based food purification that also conserves water), [Agraquest](#) and [Marrone Organic Innovations](#). The last two scour the world to find microbes that will kill other microbes.

2. Altela: People have been trying to make it rain for centuries. Albuquerque's Altela says it has a [tractor-trailer-size device that can simulate rainstorm with industrial runoff or salt water](#). The droplets that come out at the end are distilled water.



Make it rain, says Altela.

(Credit: Altela)

A flood of investment is sweeping into the water purification market, in large part because several nations around the world are already grappling with [severe water shortages](#). Unfortunately, traditional desalination and distillation cost quite a bit and can be energy intensive. Some other options out there include a low-energy desalination membrane from UCLA's [NanoH2O](#), Israel's [Aqwise](#) and a membrane-less system from secretive [Quos](#).

3. Vidler Water: In the old days, water rights disputes were fairly straightforward. You'd shoot your neighbor and hope not to get caught. Nevada's [Vidler Water](#) is taking a more civilized approach. It is collecting agricultural water rights, converting them to municipal water rights and setting up mechanisms to lease or sell them to cities that need them. Municipal water has a higher value than agricultural water, in part because of decades-old allocation schemes that haven't kept up with demographic shifts.

4. TyraTech: A dairy product that kills...tapeworms! The company is working on a cheese with Kraft Foods for emerging nations that can provide nutrition while medicinal benefits. Nutraceuticals are expected, by many, to be a big business. At one end of the spectrum, you'll have companies like Attune selling probiotic energy bars to upscale parents (who will likely afterward clean their kids' hands with CleanWell, the organic hand cleaner.) At the other end, companies will devise products for wide populations. Another one to watch: The Marine Institute in Galway, Ireland, which wants to create [food additives and supplements out of fish processing waste and marine plants](#).



An Attune probiotic energy bar. Fancy that.

(Credit: Michael Kanellos)

5. Archer Daniels Midland: Ok, everyone boo, but genetically modified crops are likely inevitable. They help reduce the need for pesticides, improve farming yields, and will likely play a key role in developing crops for biofuels. ADM is one of the few large companies--along with General Electric and Shell--that participate in a wide, seemingly disparate swath of clean markets. Some GMO start-ups to watch include [Targeted Growth](#), which is working on biofuel feedstocks.

