

## DR. MARK LYONS - CEO OF ALLTECH - Interview with Business World Magazine

Business World Magazine



**London, United Kingdom Feb 22, 2022 ([IssueWire.com](https://www.IssueWire.com)) - Dr. Mark Lyons, CEO of Alltech: "More than ever, I am convinced that the next 30 years are critical to agriculture.**

Dr. Mark Lyons grew up in the Alltech business, having traveled with his father and Alltech's founder, Dr. Pearse Lyons, from a young age to visit customers. With experience working in all regions and nearly all departments — from palletizing bags in production to researching in the lab — he has a deep and uniquely personal knowledge of the company.

Based on Alltech's belief that agriculture has the greatest potential to shape our world's future, he launched the Planet of Plenty™ vision in 2019. He has called for collaboration to improve nutrition, human and animal well-being, and the preservation of natural resources. He has spearheaded many critical projects, including simultaneously managing a biorefinery project in Kentucky, the establishment of a plant in Serbia, and the creation of Alltech's flagship yeast production facility in São Pedro, Brazil. He also spent nearly four years in Mexico rebuilding the company's solid-state fermentation plant in Serdan, which is one of the largest of its kind in the world.

In 2012, Dr. Lyons relocated to China, the world's largest feed market, as part of Alltech's focus on the Asia-Pacific region. Living in Beijing and traveling throughout the country, he led the Alltech China office and focused on building bridges between China and the wider industry through research, education, and strategic initiatives.

Under his leadership as director of North America from 2009 to 2011, Alltech expanded its presence with the opening of new offices and growing involvement in all agricultural sectors. Today, Dr. Lyons is based at Alltech's headquarters in Kentucky. He has served as a board member of the American Feed Industry Association, and he is currently serving on the board of directors for Transylvania University and the advisory board for Women in Food & Agriculture. Dr. Lyons is active in many industry groups, such as the International Poultry Council, the National Turkey Federation, the National Chicken Council, and the National Pork Producers Council. He is also vice president of the Soil and Fertilizer Alliance of China and is a committee member of the China Toxicology Association. He is proud to be the only foreign member welcomed to China's Feed Industry Golf Group, which represents more feed tonnage than all of Brazil.

Dr. Lyons has published papers and patents in areas ranging from enzyme production to global economics and is interested in the assurance of food safety and quality throughout the entire food chain. He was also named as one of "The top 50 Irish businessmen and women in the BRIC countries" and "40 Under 40" leaders in agriculture by Vance Publishing Corporation.

He received his bachelor's degree in political science and environmental science in 1999 from the University of Chicago. He received his master's degree in brewing and distilling in 2001, followed by a Ph.D. in the area of solid-state fermentation, at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh. Dr. Lyons is fluent in Spanish, Portuguese, French, and German, and he has a working knowledge of Mandarin.

"Do we want to live on a planet of peril or plenty?"

At the 35th edition of the Alltech ONE conference in 2019, Dr. Mark Lyons started a journey towards a future for his company and – more importantly – a journey that points towards an exciting future for the whole agricultural sector. "Do we want to live on a planet of peril or plenty?" he asked rhetorically.

He continued: "We choose to believe in the latter. With upcoming new technologies, improved farm management practices, and the ingenuity of mankind, a world of abundance could be ours. There is so much to discover, millions of ideas to chase and apply, and, last but not least, stories to tell which show that plants, animals, and people can thrive."

Twelve months later at the 36th edition of ONE, the world has changed in many ways. "Even with large

parts of the world struggling with the coronavirus, there are no limits and we are fully shaping the future of agri-food. More than ever, I am convinced that the next 30 years are critical to agriculture,” says Dr. Lyons.

Of course, we miss the live interactions and networking possibilities but even that is partly possible...

### Alltech One virtual: Covid-19 prompts move to online

Dr. Lyons expected to be welcoming over 3,500 guests to the 36th edition of ONE in Lexington, KY, but the coronavirus threw a spanner in the works. “Sadly we have no live event this year, and even with no lockdown in Kentucky, we decided 70 days ago to prepare ourselves for an online ONE conference, a monumental undertaking which led to a very different experience than we are all used to, but which I am very excited about. The Alltech ONE virtual experience launched with over 23,000 registrants from over 115 countries – truly mind-boggling. They are being provided with on-demand focus sessions, streaming keynote presentations, and live Q&A chats with select speakers.”

He continues: “Of course, we miss the live interactions and networking possibilities but even that is partly possible with online groups coming together for separate discussions and a drink to toast with. Or as our keynote speaker, Cady Coleman, former NASA astronaut, and US Air Force colonel, stated when she shared her experiences of working in the challenging conditions on the International Space Station: ‘I think the world understands missions in a different way because of this pandemic. Covid-19 has created this need to solve problems together and be on the same mission. People are coming together, helping each other. It’s hopeful.’ I fully agree with that.”

### Removing barriers and connecting people

“With this edition of ONE, we are removing barriers and connecting people. And – apart from our live events – we want to keep the project running for 12 months by adding more presentations, projects, and inspiration until the next event in 2021. I do have to say, it feels somewhat strange connecting to an audience from my father’s office, but as he used to tell me: ‘Change is the only constant in life’. When he passed and when my beloved sister passed, I often referred back to his learnings. In all things, we have a choice in responding to difficult times, to change. It is my choice to take action and to be inspired by the great people I have lost and do what they would have wanted me to do. That is what moved me to envision the Planet of Plenty.

...we didn’t inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children

### Planet of Plenty

Last year we launched this ambitious mission. We need not one idea to make the future a better one; we need millions, to learn from each other’s expertise and, above all, communicate our wins. What keeps me up at night is the limited views I see in some companies’ leadership where the focus is only on short-

term gains for the company and not a win-win scenario for all of us. The key question should be: what can we do together?

“The Planet of Plenty concept is still in its early days because I believe the next 30 years are most critical to agriculture. We at Alltech have built upon our own past moving beyond our ACE (agriculture, consumer, environment) principle. We, as an industry, are the caretakers of the land; we didn’t inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children. Our mission to improve the health and performance of animals, plants, and humans through nutrition and scientific innovation should be the mission of the industry, the world, to produce food for billions sustainably and efficiently. And the world is changing; until recently people would ask how much CO2 is emitted with the production of one kilo of chicken meat. With corona in play, the question now is whether there is a kilo of chicken in the supermarket. For the first time in many generations, we are experiencing a shock to our system and are seeing food scarcity. The perspective is changing and this can change the way we present ourselves. We need to respond and create immunity against the shock which Covid-19 has given our society.”

### Compelling stories

“I am proud that we are in an industry where we are able to tell the farmers’ stories, compelling stories of a proactive industry in which being on the defensive is a bygone. As an example, we now see a tremendous drop in worldwide CO2 emissions but we are still producing and food is still on the table. The idea that agriculture alone is the problem is just not true. The opposite is true: agriculture is the life support for our planet. And with the disruption caused by the coronavirus, we see people going to farms to pick up produce when supermarkets are empty. Where price drove our game in the past, now connected to the consumer and trust are becoming far more important. People now understand again how the food chain works and that helps us to get our message across. There is so much opportunity for agriculture on a local level and in society for getting the right food to the right place with the right value.

### Sustainability goals

“The most wonderful thing about the concept of Planet of Plenty is that it is pre-competitive. We can all help make our industry better for the world and at the same time benefit from doing so. That is what Alltech found when we signed up for the UN sustainability goals. Because this includes being audited, we asked ourselves what is required. That sharpens your mind and gets everyone involved. Such a process also makes you realise the importance of inclusion in creating innovative and productive teams. Or as our keynote speaker, Cady Coleman said: ‘It’s a proven fact that diverse groups are more successful’. We know that inclusion and diversity in our teams are essential and see that women play a critical role in our company and around the world in agriculture.”

## ABOUT

Our mission is to improve the health and performance of people, animals, and plants through nutrition and scientific innovation.

We pursue this mission guided by what we call the ACE principle, our promise that in doing business we

have a positive impact on the Animal, the Consumer, and the Environment.

[www.alltech.com](http://www.alltech.com)



**Media Contact**

BUSINESS WORLD MAGAZINE

[awards@businessworldmagazine.net](mailto:awards@businessworldmagazine.net)

Source : BUSINESS WORLD MAGAZINE

[See on IssueWire](#)