

# AmebaGone's alternative to antibiotics may aid organic farming

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When it comes to the best and healthiest organic plants, it's difficult to avoid disease and harmful bacteria taking over the crops. AmebaGone provides a solution.

This Madison-based startup has developed an all-natural alternative to antibiotics that treats bacterial diseases of plants. The company's product eliminates the disease-causing bacteria while leaving no toxic remains.

AmebaGone relies on benign, soil-dwelling organisms known as Dictyosteid discoideum, or Dicty. This organism consumes bacteria that cause diseases in plants. This includes those found in biofilm, a group of bacteria that can live on other cellular structures such as proteins, which antibiotics can't even do.

"Biofilm is the natural defense mechanism of bacteria. You can think of them as a suit of armor," said Cheryl Vickroy, president and CEO of AmebaGone. "If you think of biofilm as a way that bacteria protect themselves against their death, we can destroy biofilm-enmeshed pathogens, which nearly any other solution cannot."

AmebaGone started in 2010, and its team has been working to find ways to make organic crops sustainable and healthy. The company was profiled as part of an ongoing business series written by UW-Madison students.

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