

Biography of Jordan Koehn



Jordan Koehn

Head of Platform and Chemical Genomics, ForagR Medicines.

[Jordan Koehn, PhD](#), co-founded ForagR Medicines alongside Kevin Weeks, PhD, and Andrea Epperly, PhD. Established in 2024, ForagR Medicines is a pioneering biotech company committed to developing groundbreaking RNA-targeted small-molecule therapeutics that hold the potential to revolutionize human health. At ForagR, he serves as Head of Platform and Chemical Genomics, where he leads the company's innovative drug discovery efforts. His expertise and leadership are integral to advancing technologies that identify novel RNA-based targets, laying the foundation for therapeutics addressing critical health challenges.

A Leader in Biotechnology

Throughout his academic and professional journey, Jordan has focused on tackling complex challenges in human health through biotechnology. His postdoctoral research under the mentorship of Dr. Kevin Weeks at the University of North Carolina (UNC) culminated in the development of a transformative RNA-ligand discovery platform. This platform, now central to ForagR's drug discovery efforts, explores how higher-order RNA structures influence biological function. His work has unveiled numerous RNA structural elements and demonstrated how small molecules can modulate their functions, unlocking new therapeutic possibilities. His commitment to harnessing RNA-targeted medicines positions him at the forefront of biotech innovation.



Expertise in Small-Molecule RNA Modulation

Koehn's research centers on small molecules that bind RNA, offering a unique therapeutic avenue for diseases involving traditionally undruggable protein targets. His deep knowledge spans small-molecule synthesis, RNA structural biology, molecular and cellular biology, and high-throughput chemical genomics. His innovative approach in targeting RNA enables ForagR Medicines to develop treatments for diseases where conventional drug development struggles. Additionally, his collaboration with BASF Corporation applied the ForagR platform to create advanced insecticides and crop protection agents, highlighting the versatility of his work across sectors.

Educational and Professional Foundations

Jordan earned a Bachelor's degree in Chemistry with a minor in Biology from the University of Minnesota Morris, where he gained invaluable experience in asymmetric synthesis, renewable hydrocarbon fuels, and enzyme analogs for tuberculosis research. His early research experiences ignited a passion for blending chemistry and biology to address pressing societal needs. He pursued his PhD in Organic Chemistry at Colorado State University, conducting advanced research in Dr. Debbie Crans' lab. His doctoral work explored electron transport lipids related to Mycobacterium tuberculosis pathogenesis and investigated vanadium complexes for cancer therapeutics, equipping him with interdisciplinary research expertise.



Jordan Koehn

Co-Founder, ForagR Medicines.

Postdoctoral Research and Technological Innovations

Following Jordan Koehn's PhD, he joined Dr. Kevin Weeks' lab at UNC Chapel Hill as a postdoctoral researcher, where he further developed RNA-targeting technologies. During this time, he was awarded both a UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center Fellowship and an NIH Kirschstein Postdoctoral Fellowship. His research expanded the understanding of RNA modulation, identifying key RNA motifs with therapeutic potential. These insights now serve as the core scientific principles driving ForagR's development of RNA-targeted medicines.

Research Grants and Collaborations

Over the past four years, Jordan has secured significant research funding, including a \$450,000 Sponsored Research Collaboration with BASF Corporation, focusing on RNA-ligand interactions for crop protection solutions. Additional funding includes the NIH NRSA Postdoctoral Fellowship for exploring bacterial RNA targets and fellowships from the UNC Lineberger Cancer Center.

These awards underscore his ability to translate scientific research into practical solutions across diverse fields, from human health to agriculture.

A portrait of Jordan Koehn, a man with a beard and short brown hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt. He is smiling and looking directly at the camera. The photo is set within a white hexagonal frame with a blue border, which is centered on a dark blue background. To the right of the frame, there are five white dots arranged in a horizontal line. Below the portrait, the name "Jordan Koehn" is written in a bold, dark blue font. Underneath the name, the text "Published Author on RNA Modulation and Cancer Therapeutics." is written in a smaller, dark blue font. The entire graphic is set against a light blue background with a subtle wave pattern at the bottom.

Jordan Koehn

Published Author on RNA Modulation and Cancer Therapeutics.

A Prolific Contributor to Scientific Work

Koehn has published 18 scientific articles in the following areas: (i) small-molecule modulation of RNA biology (ii) structural factors in electron transport lipids that influence *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* pathogenesis, and (iii) short-lived cytotoxic vanadium metal complexes as potential cancer therapeutics.

Some of his published work with co-authors includes: ["Fingerprinting Tertiary Structure in Complex RNAs Using Single-molecule Correlated Chemical Probing,"](#) ["Innovations in Targeting RNA by Fragment-based Ligand Discovery,"](#) ["Electron Transport Lipids Fold within Membrane-like Interfaces,"](#) ["Investigating Substrate Analogs for Mycobacterial MenJ: Truncated and Partially Saturated Menaquinones,"](#) ["Synthesis and Characterization of Partially and Fully Saturated Menaquinone Derivatives,"](#) ["A Synthetic Isoprenoid Lipoquinone, Menaquinone-2, Adopts a Folded Conformation in Solution and at a Model Membrane Interface,"](#) ["Halogenated Non-innocent Vanadium\(V\) Schiff Base Complexes: Chemical and Anti-proliferative Properties,"](#) ["Vanadium Chloro-substituted Schiff Base Catecholate Complexes are Reducible, Lipophilic, Water Stable, and Have Anticancer Activities,"](#) ["Hydrophobicity May Enhance Membrane Affinity and Anti-Cancer Effects of Schiff Base Vanadium\(V\) Catecholate Complexes,"](#) ["A Short-lived but Highly Cytotoxic](#)

[Vanadium\(V\) Complex as a Potential Drug Lead for Brain Cancer Treatment by Intratumoral Injections.](#)

Mentorship and Educational Impact

Committed to fostering the next generation of scientists, Jordan has mentored over 20 undergraduate students, as well as several graduate and postdoctoral researchers. His mentees have achieved co-authorship on published articles and received recognition for their research. His passion for teaching was evident during his tenure as an Organic Chemistry instructor at Colorado State University, where he cultivated an engaging learning environment. His dedication to mentorship reflects his belief in empowering others to excel in science and research.

Professional Engagement and Community Involvement

Jordan Koehn has actively contributed to the scientific community through his role on the postdoctoral committee at UNC's Lineberger Cancer Center, where he helped organize the Research Study Group and Annual Postdoc-Faculty Day. These initiatives foster collaboration between postdocs and faculty, promoting interdisciplinary research and professional development. His involvement underscores his commitment to advancing the field of biotechnology and nurturing professional networks.



Jordan Koehn

RNA-Ligand Discovery Technology Inventor.

Personal Life and Community Values

Born in Fort Dodge, Iowa, and raised in Willmar, Minnesota, Dr. Koehn developed a deep appreciation for nature and community. His childhood on a 40-acre family farm instilled values of hard work and curiosity, which continue to shape his personal and professional life. Since marrying his wife in 2018, he has made Durham, North Carolina, his home, where they recently welcomed a son. An outdoor enthusiast, he enjoys fishing, snowmobiling, gardening, and cooking, finding a balance between his professional achievements and personal passions.

Jordan is also committed to community service, contributing to disaster relief funds and supporting nutrition education initiatives through Sprouts Farmers Market. From 2014 to 2018, he served as a judge at the Celebrate Undergraduate Research and Creativity exposition at Colorado State University, encouraging young researchers to pursue their academic passions. His contributions to memorial scholarships and nonprofit organizations reflect his dedication to giving back to the communities that shaped his journey.