

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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BASF Buys Biocontrol Company

Chris Beytes

BASF, based in Ludwigshafen, Germany, has entered the world of biological controls and protections of all types with the planned acquisition of Becker Underwood of Ames, Iowa. Known within horticulture for biological products such as Nemasys beneficial nematodes and Subtilex biological fungicide, Becker Underwood is really big in agriculture, with biological seed treatments, crop protection and animal nutrition. To give you an idea, the purchase price is \$1.02 billion. Annual sales for 2012 are expected to be \$240 million.

BASF will be buying the company from Norwest Equity Partners (NEP), the owner since 2004. Assuming it passes all legal hurdles, the close of the transaction is expected by the end of the year. The deal includes Becker Underwood's 10 global production sites, where 479 employees ply their trade.

"We are impressed with Becker Underwood's ability to translate growers' needs into innovative, tailor-made solutions that can promote higher yields while conserving resources," Dr. Andreas Kreimeyer, Research Executive Director, said in a press release. "Particularly in the rapidly-growing seed treatment market, we will be able to develop innovative solutions for agriculture."

As part of the acquisition, BASF's Crop Protection division will create a strategic global business unit called Functional Crop Care, which will merge BASF's existing research, development and marketing activities in the areas of seed treatment, biological crop protection and plant health, as well as water and resource management with those of Becker Underwood. **GT**