

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

10/1/2023

Expanding for the Future

Jennifer Zurko



At press time, Ball Horticultural Company had just broken ground on a new addition to its Seed Distribution Center in West Chicago, Illinois. Set to be operational in the spring of 2025, the expansion was planned with Ball's customers in mind, said Scott Roskuszka, Global Director of Operations, because it will allow them to bring a host of improvements that will enhance the services they provide.

"Seed is the backbone of our industry and of Ball's customers' production," said Scott. "In preparation for the future of seed supply to customers in the U.S.,

Canada and around the world, we're building a new infrastructure to store the seed, process orders and ship them."

Over the past 40 years, the company has significantly evolved. What began as a small-scale operation in 1986 has now grown to serve customers on five continents.

"The new addition to the Seed Distribution Center not only offers more space, but also introduces cutting-edge technology and automation to streamline processes," explained Dave Hanebuth, Ball's Seed Processing Center Manager. "This means faster order processing and more efficient shipping. Our customers will receive seed orders promptly and in top condition."

One of Ball's mantras for years has been that orders should be shipped "in full and on time," and in order to accomplish this, the focus has to always be on peak efficiency. The current layout of the distribution center, although functional, has its limitations. With the new addition, Ball plans to consolidate operations, reducing unnecessary steps and wait times, and ensuring orders are handled with precision, said Scott. The new facility will also include improved office spaces for employees, making their work environment more pleasant and productive.

"In by 5, out by 7" has been Ball's long-time commitment on how they ship seed (if an order is placed by 5:00 p.m., Ball will ship it the same day by 7:00 p.m.). And this initiative was developed way before our current culture of expecting whatever we order online to be at our door within 24 hours. So Ball's customers have come to expect speed and complete accuracy with their orders, and the new addition will allow the company to continue to do this.

"This is a reflection of our dedication to meeting our customers' needs and exceeding their expectations," added Jim

Kennedy, Ball Seed Sales Director. "This investment will give us the ability to serve our seed customers with all the best for the next generation." **GT**

The Ball folks involved in the new Seed Distribution Center addition get ready to break ground. From left: Susannah Ball, Scott Roskuszka, Anna Ball, Kim Oeltgen, Dave Hanebuth, Todd Frauendorfer, Doug St. John, Melissa Holmes and Al Davidson.

Photo courtesy of Scott Roskuszka.