GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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On the Move

Jennifer Zurko

Ball Seed

Ball Seed announced the hiring of Emily Mason as Customer Experience Director. In this new role, Emily is charged with bringing greater alignment across marketing, digital engagement, sales enablement and customer insights, ensuring a seamless, customer-first experience that supports demand generation, supplier programs and long-term growth. She will work cross-functionally with Sales, Customer Service, Supplier Relations and Regional Business Teams to drive pull-through strategies and measurable commercial impact. Emily brings deep industry experience across growing, product development and global marketing, with hands-on and leadership roles at ColorSpot, Dümmen Orange and Syngenta Flowers.

BioWorks

BioWorks announced the appointment of Michelle Opela as Biological Solutions Advisor for the Southeast region. In this role, Michelle will support growers and distributors by aligning biological solutions with production needs of growers and delivering technical expertise to advance integrated pest management (IPM) strategies. Michelle has more than a decade of experience in horticulture and IPM program development across large-scale, multi-site operations. Most recently, she served as Senior IPM Manager at Costa Farms, where she led pest and disease management strategies across more than 250 acres of production. She also developed and implemented comprehensive IPM programs that significantly reduced input costs and crop losses, including a program at one facility that reduced costs by 65%. Additionally, she spearheaded sustainability initiatives, improving site performance ratings and advancing certification efforts.

Throughout her career, Michelle has demonstrated a strong commitment to integrating biological control, applied research and grower education. She's overseen R&D trials, supported sales teams with technical training and collaborated with industry partners to evaluate product efficacy under real-world conditions. She's an active industry contributor, serving as a speaker, workshop instructor and co-host of the PlantRx Podcast.

Darwin Perennials

Darwin Perennials announced that Rachel Welz has joined the team as a Marketing Coordinator. Rachel will be responsible for coordinating many of the key marketing initiatives, including trade shows and events, as well as collaborating with the internal Marketing Communications to create promotional materials under the guidance of the Sales & Marketing Manager.

Rachel is an internal hire from Ball Seed's Customer Relations Department where she was a Key Account

Specialist. She has had prior experience in customer relations, sales and digital marketing strategy with SR Aquaristik.

Oasis Grower Solutions

The Smithers-Oasis division of Oasis Grower Solutions has added a new member to their team of Territory Sales Managers, along with two newly created positions to support North American and global sales. Woody Lilly joined the Oasis Grower Solutions team as Midwest and Mountain States Territory Sales Manager. Woody comes to the team with more than 30 years of experience in horticulture-related sales, with the bulk of his career focused on growing media. His extensive experience spans work with horticulture distributors and retailers, and commercial greenhouses and nurseries, including many of the nation's leading growers. Woody's territory will be the U.S. Midwest and Mountain regions, along with Eastern Canada, responsible for key national distributor accounts.

Brenton Williams has transitioned into a newly created in-house position as Oasis Grower Solutions Technical Customer Service & Sales Specialist, designed to capitalize on his extensive technical product knowledge and grower relationships. Brenton joined Smithers-Oasis in 2014 as Research Greenhouse Technician. His most recent role was Oasis Grower Solutions Midwest Territory Sales Manager. In his new position, Brenton will primarily focus on providing technical customer service to Oasis Grower Solutions customers, along with inside sales support to West Coast and Western States, plus select countries outside the United States. He's also responsible for key national distributor accounts.

Abhijit Joshi will assume a newly created position as Oasis Grower Solutions Technical Business Development Manager–APAC & Middle East. With Smithers-Oasis since 2016, Abhijit currently serves as Technical Manager for Smithers-Oasis India, where he works with FloraLife and Oasis Grower Solutions products. In his new position, Abhijit will represent Oasis Grower Solutions exclusively throughout the Asia-Pacific and Middle East markets.

RISE

RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment) announced the hiring of its next leader Scott Herndon, who joins as executive director. Scott brings more than 14 years of experience in advocacy, policy, law and coalition building to the specialty pesticide and fertilizer trade association. Most recently, Scott led U.S. government and industry affairs in Washington, D.C., for Corteva Agriscience and was president of Field to Market: The Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture. He worked as vice president and general counsel for the American Sugarbeet Growers Association, served in the U.S. Senate, the U.S. House of Representatives and in the Florida Senate. He first came to D.C. from his home state of Florida as a staffer for a U.S. Representative. Scott's initial priorities will be to rapidly establish strong engagement with staff, the RISE Governing Board and members, spearhead the refresh of the association's five year strategic plan, and amplify the association's voice and impact across all levels of government.

Scott earned a Juris Doctor, cum laude, from the University of Miami School of Law, a Master's of Business Administration from the University of Florida and a Bachelor of Arts from Tulane. He's admitted to the bar in Florida and the District of Columbia, and before the Supreme Court of the United States.

Syngenta Professional Solutions

Syngenta Professional Solutions (SPS) announced that with the retirement of Scott Reasons, head of Syngenta Professional Solutions North America, in May, Dave Ravel, currently head of sales for Syngenta Professional Solutions, will assume the role. Concluding a distinguished 40-year career with Syngenta and its legacy companies that included 16 years leading SPS, Scott oversaw a period of transformational growth, with the business nearly tripling in size across the Americas. He began his career with the company in 1986 and held leadership roles across

sales, sales management and marketing before assuming leadership of the Professional Solutions business.

Dave brings more than 30 years of experience within the turf, ornamental and pest management industries, and has spent more than 25 years with Syngenta and legacy companies, having held leadership roles across sales, marketing and key accounts. Since becoming head of sales in 2012, he's played a pivotal role in strengthening customer relationships, advancing the Syngenta solutions-based approach and supporting growth across golf, lawn care, ornamentals and professional pest management.

To replace Dave, Todd Loecke has been appointed head of sales for SPS. Todd began his 35-year career with Syngenta in the Crop Protection business before joining SPS as a territory sales manager in the Midwest. He's since held several critical leadership positions, including Midwest district sales manager and most recently led the key accounts team. In his new role, Todd will guide the entire SPS field sales organization.

Gregg Wisniewski has been named head of key accounts for SPS. Greg currently serves as head of business development for North America and brings a combination of global marketing leadership and hands-on key account experience to the role. His previous positions include head of global marketing for ornamentals and garden based in Basel, Switzerland, key account manager in the U.S., and professional pest management market manager. In his new role, Greg will lead the SPS key accounts strategy. **GT**