

# GROWERTALKS

## GT in Brief

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### Fast Five with Ball CTO Matt Mouw

*Chris Beytes*



Meet Ball Horticultural Company's newest executive, who fills a brand new position: Chief Technology Officer. Matt Mouw (rhymes with how now brown cow), joined the company in early March to head up efforts to bring advanced genetics and breeding technology to the flower industry.

Matt comes to Ball from De Moines, Iowa, where he worked for DuPont Pioneer for 17 years. He has a Ph.D in molecular biology from the University of Missouri AND an MBA from the University of Iowa. Impressive!

We did a quick video interview with Matt for Ball's employee website that's called "Fast Five with Matt Mouw." It was a combination of serious and fun questions. Here's an excerpt:

**Chris:** Matt, why are you here at Ball?

**Matt:** We're going to expand our investments ... into advanced technologies so that we can enhance the capabilities overall for the organization.

**Chris:** What can the flower business learn from corn and soybeans?

**Matt:** That's a good question. There are many technologies that have been developed over the previous two decades or so that have led to tremendous improvements in productivity, in throughput and in novel, value-add products that can be leveraged into other domains, particularly horticulture.

**Chris:** What do you think will be the first technology that you'll bring to Ball?

**Matt:** I don't know that you can say I will bring it, but perhaps advance and work on improving both investments as well as applications of marker-assisted breeding technologies that can dramatically improve the throughput and efficiencies of breeding around the world for Ball.

**Chris:** Can you tell a petunia from a calibrachoa yet?

**Matt:** This is what I'm in the process of learning, and I would say that I could probably pick out a petunia at this point in time, yes. Especially after my day in Elburn yesterday [PanAmerican Seed's research center].

**Chris:** When you worked for Pioneer, did you get all the free corn on the cob you could eat?

**Matt:** (laughing) Funny you should say that. When I started twenty-some years ago, they planted about a 30-acre plot of sweet corn for the employees every year, and then they staged it so you could always go in and pick throughout the growing season and always have the perfect maturity of sweet corn. But over the years, that was one of the perks that went away over time ... part of that had to do with security in the research field where this was located. But it sure was nice while it lasted. **GT**