



GENETIC ALTERNATIVES



YOUR NEWSLETTER ABOUT THE LATEST ON SEED RESEARCH

Vol. 4, Issue 2
SPRING, 2017

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Change is Inevitable

by Ed Baumgartner

Change is inevitable. Without change and adaptation we would be stagnant as a society. I am not opposed to keeping things stable at all, but in reality very little is stable. Our seed industry continues to be in a state of change. We are all wondering what will happen after the ownership and management changes in the big companies are final. Will there be access to germplasm and traits as before, or will we need to start over again? What will be the new normal? Most of us put it out of our minds and tend to business as usual because there is nothing we can do to influence it anyway. However, we can influence what steps we take to keep our businesses viable - no matter what happens.

As a service provider in Puerto Rico and Minnesota, we are making changes to keep up with what we see going on in our part of the seed world so we can continue to provide top notch genetic services for years to come. We have revived working on the original goal or game plan when we started 3MG back in 2005, which was to integrate vegetables and contract research work together on our farms. However, the demand for our services in the early days and throughout most of our existence exceeded all of our expectations so we focused only on the contract research work until recently. We started planting watermelons, cantaloupe, honeydew and cucumbers this past February on a weekly basis. Planting fruits and vegetables will be an ongoing part of 3MG Caribe (Puerto Rico) from now on. The really cool part of this is that when you travel to our farm to work your project, there will be the added bonus of a variety of good things to eat while you are here, especially as we add more crops to the mix. An important piece of this to remember is that as a genetic services customer, we will



Change is Inevitable (Continued)

require a commitment from you much earlier than in the past to ensure the space and resources will be available. We will be planting all of our acres between the two farm projects.

During July, I will be calling on all of our current and past customers to understand the needs you may have so we can properly plan for them. We have a preliminary map drawn out our farm based on last year's activity. This is way ahead of what we have done before. This means that I will also be asking for a commitment from you for the 2017-18 season when I call. We really appreciate your business with us. Please know that we understand that things do change and we have always been as flexible as possible. Please also understand that planning is even more crucial now with this added venture on our farm.

We are also integrating 3MG North (Minnesota) services more with our 3MG Caribe operations than before. Debbie and I are spending more time at 3MG North than in the past to facilitate the integrated work. We are experiencing growth in customers using both locations for nursery work and yield testing to create continuity in their projects. We can offer a wide range of opportunities for unique projects with these two locations. We are increasing the shuttling of personnel back and forth between locations too. Good people follow the projects from either direction and know the materials. We believe this to be a huge advantage to using our services.

Our testing program at 3MG North covers a wide geography in Minnesota and the Dakotas. We attempt to cover all of the major tillage practices, crop rotations, irrigated/dryland, integrated livestock farm operations that rely on manure for fertility as well as conventional fertility, in addition to various plant populations. It is our idea to understand product positioning much better than ever before. Our farm clients are hungry for this information and represent nearly 90,000 acres at this time. It is our goal to grow this number dramatically in the very near future. We are working with corn, soybeans, small grains, sunflower, canola and sorghum this year between yield trials, silage trials and nurseries. We have put in and will manage several demonstration plots for varieties, herbicides, insecticides and seed treatments.

These changes will be our new normal for the foreseeable future. We can help your new normal become reality with out-of-the-box thinking. We have many tools at our disposal from good people, unique ideas, excellent cooperators and proprietary methodology/products. Our #1 job is to help you develop, test or increase new germplasm, new traits and other yield enhancing products that will create the next big change in the seed industry.

May God Bless all of you and your families!



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Diliana Cartagena Castillo



Diliana is our newest intern, and she has certainly set herself apart. She is a 24-year-old native of Ponce, Puerto Rico. She is a graduate of Pontificia Universidad Católica de Puerto Rico in Ponce and holds a BS in Biology. She has been with 3MG for five months, and in that time she has proven to be a team player who is willing to do the hard work. As an intern, she is involved in many areas of farm operations from planting, harvest, pest control, and shelling. She has a positive and cooperative attitude that makes her a joy to work with.

Q. What do you like most about working here?

A. Pest Control.

Q. What advice would you give a prospective employee?

A. Work hard, be considerate. It is not easy, but this is a good place to work.

Q. What are your hobbies?

A. Reading- everything I can get my hands on.

Q. Where do you see yourself in five years?

A. I would like to continue to develop my skills so that I can assume a leadership role within the company.

Q. If you were on Death Row, what would you want your last meal to be?

A. Anything my mother makes. (she chuckles)

Itzamar Gutierrez



Itzamar Gutierrez is our Administrative Assistant extraordinaire. She is a graduate of the University of Puerto Rico with a BA in Foreign Languages. She is multilingual and speaks fluent Spanish, Portuguese, English and French. She will be continuing her education at Purdue University in the fall. She is a 23 year old native of Ponce, Puerto Rico who has worked with our company since November of 2016. She has many responsibilities including reception and human resources. Her intelligence and sweet demeanor have made her an asset to our company and we are happy to work with her.

Q. What do you like most about working here?

A. I do my own thing. It is an easy going environment, I don't have anyone hovering over me. It is a nice place to work. I enjoy meeting clients and learning about their crops.

Q. What advice would you give a prospective employee?

A. Try to be respectful to everyone. If you are uncomfortable, talk to your supervisor. Put yourself in someone else's shoes.

Q. What are your hobbies?

A. Reading fantasy books and watching TV.

Q. Where do you see yourself in five years?

A. Being a college professor.

Q. If you could be any animal what would you be and why?

A. I would be a dolphin and swim in the oceans.



From the Corn Capital

by Raechel Baumgartner Delgado

It has been an interesting spring (aren't they all?). Flurries of activity followed by slower days, either because of late-arriving seed or rain delays. But when the planters are rolling, it is a beautiful dance.

I was able to do something this year that I have not been able to do since 2013: join the planting road crew! It was only for a week, but it emphasized the changes we have made in such a short period of time. When we first started planting yield trial plots on a small scale—two



years before the official start of 3MG North—we had six total locations, one 4-row Wintersteiger planter, and two cables. Our 8-9 acre locations took a long hard day to plant, and if they were larger than 9 acres, we had to plan on being there at least a day and a half. We had no lights. There was no planting in the dark.

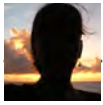
Fast forward to this year and we planted a 15 acre location in one day with a 4-row planter with GPS (cable-free!) ... but that was a LONG day because we were not using the 8-row. Planting the less than 10 acre locations with the 4-row planter now elicits groans (from me, too!) because it is going to “take so long.” We can plant in the dark. We do not have to stop to move a cable after every pass. We do not have to lay out the little pink baseline string. Our average location size is bigger, and we have a lot more locations spread out over more geography. Without our new technology, we would not be able to do what we are doing now.

The things we can do with the planters we have now still amaze me when I think about it, and we put them to further testing this spring. Changing plot lengths and planting populations mid-pass are old tricks now. This year we experimented with skipping passes to come back in and plant late arriving nurseries or delay females instead of having to mark the whole area to make sure we left enough space. Yes, the technology has its quirks, and when it decides to not work...that is not a good situation. But I am grateful for it.

Maybe the changes in technology, even in the relatively brief time I have been involved in plot work, were reemphasized this spring because we had to go old school this year with two special projects: we had to cross mark and manually trip the planter. It was a good lesson in the value of keeping old skills sharp.

A new addition to the technology arsenal of 3MG North this year is an aerial drone! We are excited about being able to further improve our services with improved monitoring and more detailed location analyses. Additionally, soil sample analyses will be available for most yield trial locations this year. As always, we strive to improve our communication, so if at any time you need more information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Wishing you a wonderful season!



Customer Satisfaction and Service Work

by Erin Rodríguez

What drives customer satisfaction, and how do you measure it? This is a question I have been thinking about as I prepare for the annual round of customer satisfaction surveys. Yes, you will be hearing from me soon if you haven't already. Is it only the end product that dictates the customer's satisfaction with their project? I venture to say no. It is the whole experience. From previous years' surveys, I have identified five attributes that, according to our clients, influence satisfaction. They are: communication, pricing, delivery of products or services, problem solving and follow up.

Communication is one of the key factors in how clients define a positive experience. From the point of initial contact to project completion our customers have told us how important this is. It is critical for both parties to set parameters and realistic expectations for each project. When this is achieved, we are better equipped to deliver on our promises. It is equally important that progress and developmental changes be conveyed. Many customers have told us that clear and concise updates on their project's progress was one of the most important aspects of feeling comfortable in working with us.

Pricing is a tough one. Every customer wants the most value for the least amount of money. The question is not really about the price; it is about the value. When value exceeds price, our customers report feeling positive about paying the associated costs. It must be reasonable and profitable for both parties. It is also a question of fairness; we have a responsibility to our customers to ensure that we deliver both value and just pricing.

Delivery of products or services, in the end, is almost always about the seed. This is probably the largest factor when customers consider their level of satisfaction with our company. Did they receive the amount of product they expected and in the condition they expected to receive it? We are always working towards producing the highest quality seed for our clients. When we consistently deliver on this expectation, our clients trust us and can progress in their own business ventures. However, sometimes Mother Nature or human error prevail. Which leads us to another facet of satisfaction: problem solving.

Problem solving is a measurement of our ability to respond to issues in the



best interest of our clients. Let's face it, we are human beings working in agriculture, an industry highly dependent on multiple factors that are out of our control. Things can and will go wrong. It is how these inevitable problems are resolved that provides an insight into our staff's abilities and commitment to success. Are we using innovative ways to resolve issues? Are we flexible and yet consistent? Most importantly, are we focused on finding solutions rather than fault? We know that this is an integral part of both agriculture and service work. As we obtain these satisfaction metrics we are allowed insight into our staff and our company.

Follow up is the final stage of project completion and the one that leaves a lasting impression with the customer. It is an opportunity for both parties to review the season and project and to evaluate what worked and what didn't. It is a chance to tie up any loose ends and complete our work and reporting to our client. Many clients who were surveyed cited this as one of the key reasons they return season after season.

We are constantly evolving and improving as a company and as a group of professionals. Those improvements are in large part a result of our customers' feedback. I leave you with a request. Please think about the following questions: Did we communicate well? Do you feel that the pricing was fair? Did



we deliver a quality product? Did we effectively solve any problems that arose? Did we follow-up with you? As we strive to deliver perfection in each of the aforementioned areas, we engage in honest evaluation of our practices, successes and failures. As we enter this round of surveys, I say thank you. Thank you for taking the time, for your candor, for being our customer and for helping us constantly improve.

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We thank our staff at all our locations for providing us with support as well as many of the photographs used on our articles. Keep on contributing!

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Did we say something you like? Did we strike a nerve? Do you have something to add to a discussion?

We would love to hear from you! Please send your letters, questions or comments to:

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a 3rd Millennium Genetics LLC Publication

3rd Millennium Genetics LLC

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