

CropLife

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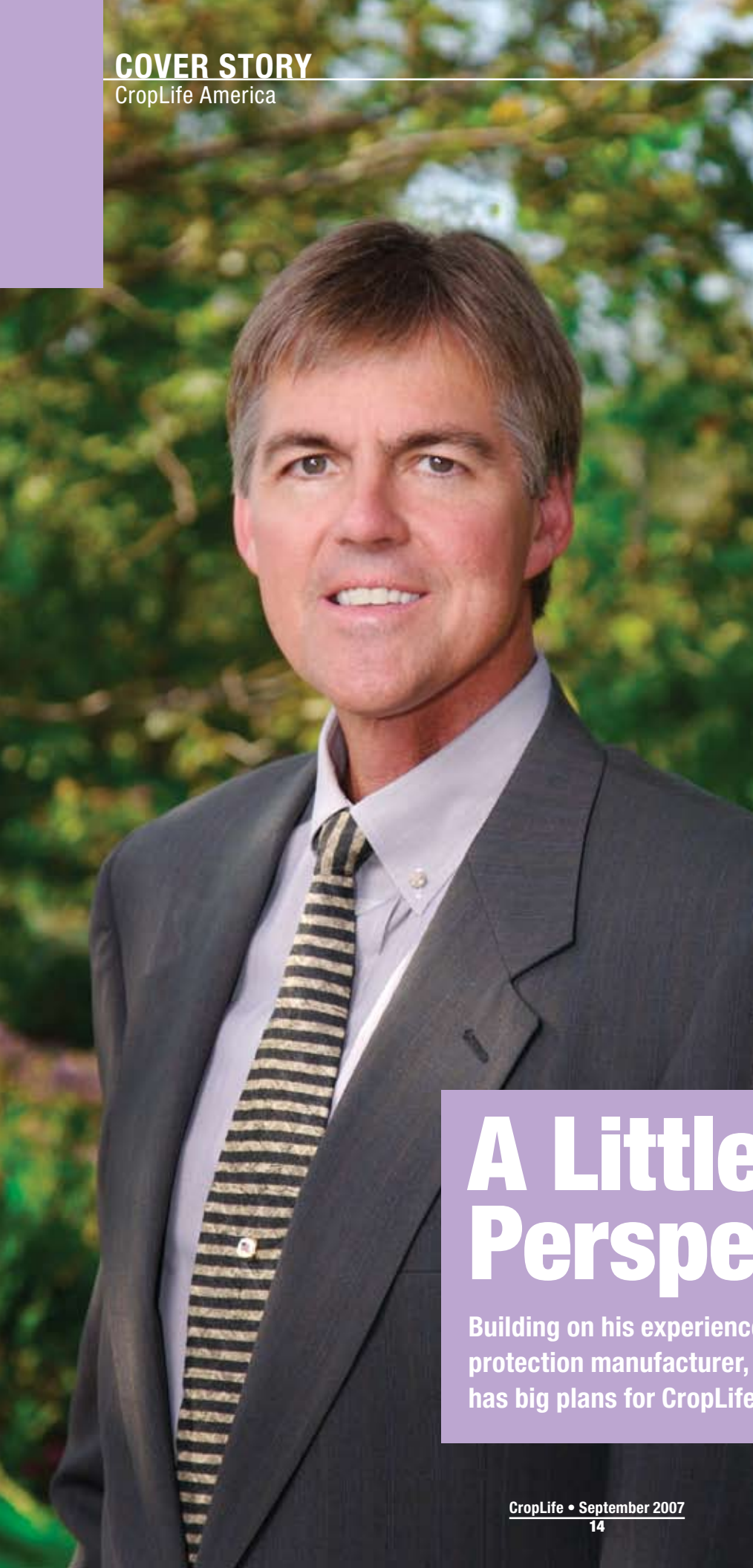
Incoming
CropLife America
Chairman **Eric Wintemute**
plans to augment
crop protection's
positive message

Spreading The Good Word

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A Little Perspective

Building on his experience with a smaller crop protection manufacturer, AMVAC's Eric Wintemute has big plans for CropLife America.

BY ERIC SFILIGOJ

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ERIC Wintemute has worked inside the world of crop protection for the last 30 years, but outside the realm of the "big six" suppliers. Most of his career has been spent with American Vanguard Corp. (AMVAC), a second-tier crop protection manufacturer based in the U.S.

Wintemute believes that this background provides him with a unique view of the industry that prepares him for his upcoming role as chairman of CropLife America.

"AMVAC is on the smaller side of the crop protection equation. This position has led me to establish extensive business relationships with the majority of CropLife America members," he says. "I've had the good fortune of getting to know the people, to understand the needs and concerns of their companies, and to understand the wide range of issues that confront our industry. There is a lot of negative public perception about crop protection, but the members of CropLife America are proud of their industry, and rightfully so. We need to work together to create public awareness of the importance and value of crop protection."

This industry view dates back to 1994, as Wintemute was beginning his second stint with AMVAC. The company was making products for some of the larger crop protection companies, such as Shell and Chevron, and soon expanded its manufacturing capabilities to include plants in California and Alabama.

The industry began to consolidate, and many of the larger chemical companies turned away from crop protec-



From left: Stan Howell, CropLife America's Jay Vroom, and Wintemute.

manufacturers to EPA for the registration of both new and existing active ingredient registrations. "CropLife America worked closely with environmentalists to ensure a result that was satisfactory to everyone," he says. "As a result, PRIA was implemented in 2004 and Congress is expected to renew PRIA before its 2008 expiration date."

FQPA called for an "aggressive timetable" that appeared unworkable, says Wintemute. However, CropLife America worked closely with EPA to develop a "road map" for the effective implementation of the act. "This has been a great success," he says. "During the past 11 years, EPA has been able to meet most of the requirements

of the FQPA, working closely with the industry and environmental groups. It has led to a higher level of understanding food safety, which benefits the entire country."

CropLife America has also been successful in helping to clarify the provisions of ESA. "This was a well-meaning bill, but in practice, the implications were proving unworkable," he says. "We were pleased with the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in the National Association of Homebuilders vs. The

tion. AMVAC saw an opportunity and began acquiring "niche chemicals" — smaller products and technologies that the larger companies could not justify in their consolidation plans. In his position as CEO of AMVAC, Wintemute negotiated acquisitions of such products from many of his fellow CropLife America members, including Syngenta, Dow AgroSciences, BASF, Bayer, and DuPont. This process made Wintemute recognize the important potential role of CropLife America in the crop protection industry.

"CropLife America has the ability to present a strong and unified message about the importance of the crop protection industry for protecting the health of and feeding the world," he says. "This is an important role for CropLife America."

Reviewing Accomplishments

Wintemute points to three recent successes as evidence of CropLife America's significance in furthering the perception of the crop protection industry. These include the Pesticide Registration Improvement Act (PRIA), the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA), and the Endangered Species Act (ESA). In each instance, CropLife America worked closely with legislative representatives and regulatory agencies to include the important perspective of crop protection issues and concerns.

PRIA helped to define fees paid by

"CropLife America has the ability to present a strong and unified message."

Defenders of Wildlife. That ruling provides much needed guidance with regard to ESA, but does not override other Congressional directives in other statutes. This has given EPA assistance in ensuring effective and worthwhile compliance with ESA."

Much of this progress came under CropLife America's previous chairman, Dow AgroSciences' Stan Howell. "Stan

has done a remarkable job of pulling the troops together during the last two years," says Wintemute. "Under his guidance, CropLife America did some serious soul-searching, which will help us to move forward. I certainly have some very large shoes to fill."

As part of this process, CropLife America's Strategic Oversight Committee (SOC) has a much clearer vision. "Member representatives meet on a monthly basis to review the key functions and priorities of CropLife America, and to ensure that our ongoing efforts further these interests," says Wintemute. "The SOC reports to the Board of Directors. This is leading to a much more focused approach, including the creation of a priority list and a breakdown of the costs and economics associated with each priority item. When it comes to getting new products registered or having existing products reviewed, CropLife America wants to be sure that the best science is applied to the decision-making process."

More Advocacy, Cooperation

Looking ahead to his position as chairman, Wintemute says that CropLife America needs to address several important issues. Crop protection product container recycling is a current issue that must be addressed. "Fairness is the issue here; only a portion of the companies that add to the container stream currently contribute to the cost of recycling," he says.



Wintemute would also like to see more industry advocacy to the public about the important role of crop protection. "We play a significant role in providing plentiful food and good health to the world," says Wintemute. "We need to change the public perception that crop protection is something to be avoided, and draw attention to the extraordinary benefits that our products provide. By 2020,

the world population will increase by another 1.5 billion people. Maximizing crop yields and minimizing health hazards may be the most important issues the world has to face. CropLife America should take a hand in spreading this message.”

The issue of the energy component of crops has also come to the forefront. Analysts estimate that by the end of this decade, more than one-quarter of the U.S. corn crop will be used to produce ethanol. “Crop protection to ensure higher yields of corn will be critical, whether for food or for ethanol production,” says Wintemute.

Wintemute believes that CropLife America is positioned to play an important role in the industry of crop protection. “Once again, CropLife America must show the importance of our products to the future of this country,” he stresses. “We must continue to obtain legislation and work with agencies to protect our environment while meeting the growing needs of the world’s population. There is no industry more important to the future than food and energy. Through CropLife America, we are uniquely positioned to develop new and better methods of ensuring plentiful food and health.” ■

ON THE ROAD TO PROSPERITY

SINCE taking the helm of CropLife America 18 years ago, I have seen firsthand many improvements that have created endless possibilities. Scientific and technological innovations have created immense benefits and

opportunities. The agricultural progress over the past few decades has been as dramatic as the evolution of mobile telephones and the Internet. And, I’d argue, the ag progress has helped people a lot more than being able to chatter on their wireless phone!

Our industry evolution depends not only on cutting-edge science and forward-looking investments, but also upon a stable and global regulatory environment.

In the spirit of a sea of change, our industry was successful in reaching a milestone of success toward pesticide regulatory harmonization. In March, regulators in the U.S. and Canada announced the first joint label, for a herbicide marketed as Far-GO in the U.S. and as Avadex in Canada. Thirteen more products are being considered in this voluntary label program. This represents substantial progress that benefits growers on both sides of the border through in-

creased regulatory efficiencies and competitive prices.

Innovation will continue to be essential to helping America’s farmers become more productive and competitive. USDA recently announced that farmers planted 19% more corn this spring than last — surpassing estimates by nearly 3 million acres. This surge is attributed to rising demand for corn from the ethanol industry. The crop protection inputs to support the farmer response to the corn demand were right there — almost taken for granted.

In *Mavericks at Work: Why the Most Original Minds in Business Win*, author William Taylor discusses ways in which companies in competitive industries such as airlines (Southwest) and traditional consumer product goods (Procter & Gamble) remain leaders in the marketplace. These industries have increased market share and improved profitability by rethinking their business approaches. The pesticide industry has been doing just that. And we’ll continue to need a commitment to innovation, with a customer focus second to none, in order to meet the challenges still ahead of us.

CropLife America will be addressing these issues and more at this year’s *One Voice. One Vision. Endless Possibilities*. CLA Annual Meeting, Sept. 23-26 at the Greenbrier in West Virginia, featuring keynote speaker William Taylor. See www.croplifeamerica.org for more information. — **Jay Vroom**



Vroom