INSIDE SIMPLOT

Summer 2015

Cover Story

Marking a New Chapter in History

Simplot

THE J.R. SIMPLOT COMPANY
EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER
BRINGING EARTH'S RESOURCES TO LIFE

Planning For the Future of the Simplot Company

By Bill Whitacre
J.R. Simplot Company President and CEO

Once again summer is upon us. Across the Simplot Company there's still plenty of work to do. Summer can be a busy time in agriculture, but it is also a time to seek out new adventures and spend time with our friends and family.

As we all embark on another busy summer, I wanted to take a few moments and reflect on the current state of our Company. We have made some amazing accomplishments in our nearly 90-year history, but I truly believe that today we are the best J.R. Simplot Company we've ever been.

We've made steady incremental progress on all fronts and we should celebrate our successes and ready ourselves for a rapidly-changing world.

We have to position ourselves to take bigger steps and be prepared for a world that is going to absorb technology at an unprecedented level. To position ourselves to continue growing our company, we have to be fit.

Some of you are probably aware that I've been on a personal "get-fit" journey for a few months now. When I first started, I thought I was on the right track. I had some good tools, but it seemed that no matter how good my intentions were, I kept getting the same old results.

It's no different for companies. We can get in the same rut. We keep plugging along, using some of the same tools, in the same way, and achieving the same consistent results.

I'm often asked to talk about the Simplot Company of the future. While I can't predict what the future will bring, I know we have opportunities to differentiate ourselves in food products with products like our Sidewinders™ and avocado offerings leading the way.

And through our work with plant technologies we will deliver new varieties of potatoes that will truly transform the potato industry.

We are also poised to continue to build a significant integrated structure for our agriculture inputs, farming and cattle businesses with new cutting-edge products and industry-leading technologies.

We continue to make sizeable investments with our new meat processing facility, the Idaho Plant, the new ammonia plant, plant sciences and our new headquarters.

The Simplot Company of the future must be fit to capitalize on all the big steps we are taking.

What do we need to do to become a truly fit company?

First, it's going to require commitment, passion, focus and a desire to win. Second, it's going to require the discipline to give that something extra and be willing to challenge old assumptions with a never-give-up perseverance.

The Simplot Company of the future is much like the Simplot Company of the past. Perseverance and the never-give-up attitude is a part of our Company's culture.

Our founder J.R. Simplot would often ask his leadership team, "What are you doing to ensure success for the next 100 years?"

J.R. knew that keeping a company fit and ready for the next challenge was critical to our success.

Staying successful is no small endeavor, and there were instances when J.R. could have given up but that wasn't in his nature. Many years later when asked why he stuck it out, he said that keeping the company was his smartest move.

"That's about the way I feel," J.R. said at the time. "And we're going to build on what we got and what we're good at and we're going to stay."

That commitment didn't end with J.R.; the Simplot family shares that same vision and is committed to building the Simplot Company of the future.

Staying fit to meet Simplot's future challenges won't be an easy journey, but I have no doubt that we have the courage to start this journey together and take the actions needed to strengthen our Company today and for many generations to come.

To paraphrase J.R. – we will keep building this Company, we will stay and we will be ready for the next 100 years.

Inside Simplot

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Simplot Chef Travels the Country Introducing Restaurants to Simplot Products

Dianna Fricke Recognized with Research Chefs Association President's Award

Across from Simplot Chef Dianna Fricke's desk it's hard to miss the large map of the United States with sticker dots scattered across it. Each sticker indicates the restaurant accounts that she has visited.

In her 18-year career with Simplot, Fricke has logged more than a million miles of air travel.

As Simplot's director of culinary, Fricke focuses on product development and creating new menu items that will be served at restaurants across the country.

"We are always introducing new products. My job is all about menu innovation and taking whatever is trending and bringing that onto the menu," she says.

Fricke's expertise goes beyond her work at Simplot. Recently, she received the Research Chefs Association President's Award (RCA).

The annual President's Award is given to one individual who demonstrates the highest level of commitment to the RCA and excels in the advancement of the culinary arts.

Fricke, who counts famed chef Julia Child as an inspiration, was the first woman chapter president of the Idaho Chefs de Cuisine as well as the first woman to earn her Certified Research Chef credentials from RCA. She has been an RCA board member for six years.

Fricke said she was surprised and honored to be chosen for the RCA recognition, adding that the organization is invaluable to helping chefs stay aware of the advances in the field of culinary arts.

"Just like technology, everything is always evolving and changing. You have to be on top of your game," she says.

Fricke said it's important to be innovative to make sure restaurants embrace Simplot products. Finding the right product and the right presentation that will appeal to restaurants often involves a great deal of experimentation.

"It's playing with your food, constantly" Fricke said. "We want to be new and different, but at the same time we want to keep things on the menu that people like."

Fricke's road to becoming a chef started as a child. She cheerfully admits her inclination to cook was born out of "survival."

"My mother is a terrible cook," Fricke says with a smile. "If you wanted to eat something that didn't come out of a box, then you had to prepare it yourself."

Fricke pursued her new found skill of cooking by earning a degree in culinary arts with honors from Western Culinary Institute in Portland, Ore. and a Bachelor of Science degree with honors in nutrition and dietetics from Idaho State University in Pocatello, Idaho.

She briefly worked at a bagel bakery and started at Simplot initially as an intern before becoming a Simplot chef.

Cooking is not just a job, but a passion for Fricke.

Her fiancée is also a chef, and the couple joined by their pet bull dog spend many hours cooking and entertaining with friends.

In the age where iPads are fast replacing paper recipes, Fricke maintains a special place in her heart for unique cook books.

"There's something about having a paper copy with the background stories that make it more interesting," Fricke said.

During her travels, she spends time "researching" at nearby restaurants.

"I'll have a list of restaurants that have interesting menus or hopefully they are plating things differently," she said.

Fricke finds plenty of inspiration at the restaurants she visits. A stack of menus on her desk are a testament to that and serve as a valuable resource to determine how some of Simplot's many products can make it on the menus of restaurants she likes.

And what is her favorite Simplot food offering?

"Roasted apples are probably one of my favorites," she says. "I am a baker by trade, so I love baking, and the apples are so versatile. We do a pizza with them that's really good with a cream cheese base, apples, and then a streusel topping with cranberries and salted caramel sauce."

Whether it's roasted apple pizza or looking at new ways to use Simplot's venerable hash brown, Fricke said working at Simplot has opened up a whole new culinary world for her to do what she loves.

"Simplot has been an outstanding company to work for," she says. "I have been able to meet a lot of interesting people, and I'm always doing something different, which is fabulous."

New Company Headquarters Mark a New Chapter in Simplot's History

Nearly 40 years ago, Simplot Company Treasure Valley Idaho employees moved into a new state-of-the art headquarters building at 999 Main Street in Boise. The newly dubbed 14-story, One Capital Center was Idaho's largest building and its most modern office building.


One Capital Center - Circa 1976

Ron Winans, Simplot's then director of administrative services, spoke highly of the new building saying it had increased employee morale and work efficiency while providing an "open, uncrowded atmosphere that is relaxing and conducive to productivity."

Employees moved into the new location in August 1975, marking the fifth time the Company's corporate headquarters had changed. Simplot's first headquarters was in a bank building in Burley, Idaho in the 1930s. During the early 1940s the headquarters moved to Caldwell, Idaho and in the mid-1940s the company located its headquarters in downtown Boise in the First National Bank Building. In the 1950s the company purchased a building on Idaho Street in downtown Boise.

The company's tenure at One Capital Center has been the longest in the company's history, but now 40 years later a new Simplot Headquarters – the sixth in the company's history – is starting to take shape at the corner of 11th and Front Streets in downtown Boise. The nine story, 265,000 square foot building and adjacent 60,000 square foot annex, which will include meeting rooms, labs and a company cafeteria, is expected to be completed by the fall of 2016.

Construction of One Capital Center

Simplot's new headquarters is being built on the same property as the JUMP project, which is slated to open in the spring of 2016. Both the JUMP project and the corporate headquarters were designed by Adamson & Associates and are being built by Hoffman Construction.

Construction on the new headquarters building began last summer with the start of the underground parking garage expansion to support the office and annex buildings.

Josh Durham, Hoffman's project manager, said completing the seven-acre underground parking garage was one of the more challenging aspects of the project.

Because much of the proposed park at JUMP sits on top of the parking garage, the roof had to be completely waterproofed. Durham said the garage also has a dewatering system for groundwater and is built to withstand a 100-year flood event.

In April, Hoffman started the vertical portion of the headquarters construction.

"When you start going vertical, that's a milestone for any project," he said.

Over the next 9 months, more of the new headquarters will become visible. By early 2016, the tower structure will be substantially complete and the outer shell of the building should be well under way.

2015 construction of Simplot Company's headquarters

2015 construction of Simplot's headquarters

Once completed, the building will not only be the newest building in Boise, but it will be a modern office building incorporating an open design that is focused on providing an efficient and productive workplace.

In addition, the new headquarters will now allow for the consolidation of many employees in one location. About 800 Simplot Treasure Valley Idaho employees will be located to the new headquarters building.

Durham says the look and feel of the new headquarters building will set it apart from traditional office buildings. An abundance of glass, a narrow footprint and high ceilings will allow for more natural light, and the exposed support pillars will further add to the open feeling of the building.

The headquarters is located on the JUMP campus – a four-block, 10 acre parcel. The innovative JUMP building and its surroundings including a lush park, walking path, and amphitheater will provide a unique and special backdrop for Simplot Company's headquarters.

For Durham and the rest of the construction team, the significance of working on a project of this magnitude is something they will long-remember.

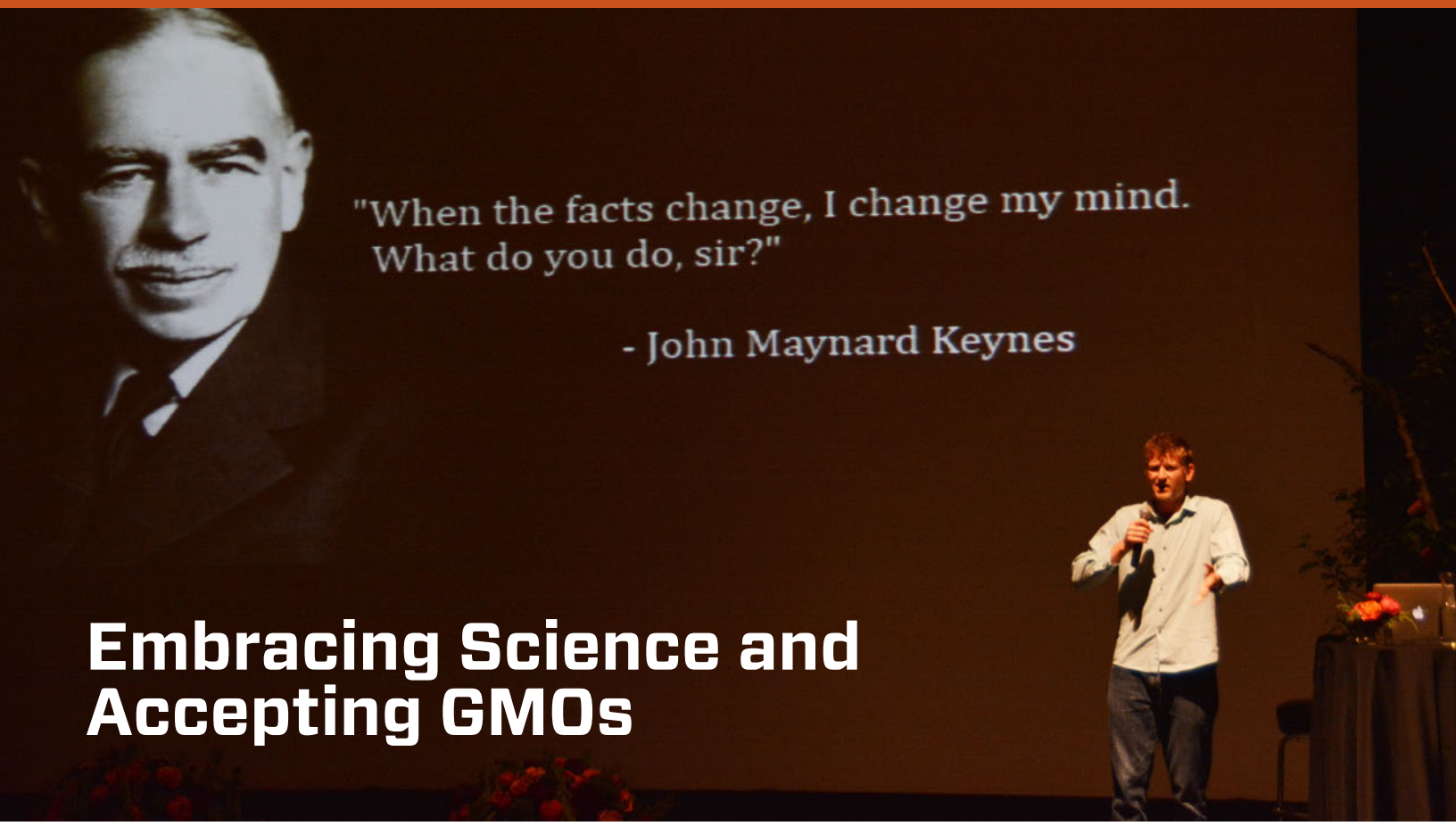
"This isn't just an office building, we're building a headquarters and Simplot Company's new home," Durham said. "It's been an honor to be involved in the project."

This artist rendering shows what the new Simplot Company headquarters will look like once completed. The nine-story building will also include an annex joined by a sky bridge. The annex will include meeting rooms, labs and a company cafeteria.

Simplot Company Headquarters Fun Facts

The building of Simplot's new corporate headquarters involves a great deal of different building materials. Here's a look at how to put some of those materials into context:

- 16,800 yards of concrete or enough concrete to build 45 miles of standard city sidewalk.
- 1,200 tons of steel reinforcing or nearly enough steel to build 400 full size pickup trucks.
- 515 tons of structural steel or enough to build nine U.S. Army tanks.
- Heaviest beam is 18,500 pounds or about as heavy as a full size 18-wheeler.
- Six miles of cast iron pipe.
- 3.3 million feet or 625 miles of electrical wire, which is enough to stretch to Portland and then onto Seattle.
- More than 3,700 electrical outlets and switches.
- More than 1,320 fire alarm and notification devices for the safety and protection of employees in the facility.
- More than 6,000 state-of-the-art LED light fixtures that will provide a 35 percent energy savings over traditional fluorescent style lighting.
- 50,000 tongue and groove boards to construct the acoustical radiant ceiling.
- 8.4 million BTU's of chilled water capacity or enough to cool 250 Boise homes.



Embracing Science and Accepting GMOs

Mark Lynas was once a prominent anti-GMO activist, but in 2013 he changed his views on GMOs and said he could no longer ignore the overwhelming scientific evidence proclaiming the safety of GMO crops.

Lynas, who was born in Fiji, grew up in Peru and the United Kingdom and currently lives in Oxford, England, spoke last month in Boise to Treasure Valley Idaho employees about his journey from anti-GMO activist to his new role of championing science-based environmentalism.

Lynas has published extensively on the impacts of modern human activity. His award-winning books include: *Six Degrees: Our Future on a Hotter Planet* and *The God Species: Saving the Planet in the Age of Humans*.

During his visit to Boise, Lynas spoke to *Inside Simplot* about his changed views on GMOs, his continued focus on addressing critical environmental issues like global climate change and why we must continue our focus on sustainability to ensure food security.

Q: How did you get your start as an anti-GMO activist?

A: In the mid-1990s, I was first informed that Monsanto was trying to take over the world's food supply and pollute the genetic integrity of all our natural food crops. I thought this was a terrible thing and so did everyone else in the environmental movement so off we went and occupied Monsanto and destroyed its crops. We were instrumental in kicking off this global anti-bio tech movement.

Q: What prompted your decision to change your views on genetically modified organisms (GMOs)?

A: I started working on climate change, which I believe is one of the most important global challenges we have as a species. I became a prolific science reader and communicator and read hundreds of scientific papers on climate change, but I hadn't actually read anything on biotechnology. I probably couldn't even have told you what DNA stood for at the time. In the process of becoming better informed on climate science and on the natural sciences overall, I began to realize that I didn't know anything at all about biological science and it begrudgingly dawned on me that my anti-GMO activism had been ill-informed.

Q: How did you come to that conclusion?

A: I was talking about the scientific consensus on climate change and trying to convince skeptics, and at the same time I realized there was a similar consensus on the safety of GMOs. I couldn't go out there and denounce one set of scientific consensus, while at the same time promoting the other.

Q: A recent study from the Pew Research Center found that 88 percent of scientists believe in the safety of GMOs, yet only 37 percent of the public believes that. What is driving such a discrepancy?

A: There are a lot of cultural factors behind these kinds of moral panics. But the understanding on this issue is very shallow, which it is on almost any issue that is complicated, and this is a very complicated issue. This causes an emotional trigger. People have the intuition that it is something scary or unnatural and ultimately this has to be turned around.

Q: One of the things that comes across in anti-GMO rhetoric is that GMOs only contain Roundup-brand glyphosate. How do we move the focus away from that?

A: Part of the strategy is to come out with good, useful products and take the conversation in a different direction away from glyphosate and into developing countries with crops that have more obvious environmental and health benefits.

Q: In a recent *New York Times* story you spoke about the benefits of the GMO eggplant. Do you expect that there will eventually be greater acceptance of GMOs in foreign countries?

A: Every country is different. Hungary has written anti-GMO language into its constitution and France and Italy are not far off. These are countries where the GMO issue is seen as threatening their cultural identity. They believe in their food culture and own sense of authenticity. But the tide is turning in areas like sub-Saharan Africa, and the need for GM technology as a part of more modern agriculture is increasingly accepted - this will do a lot to ensure food security.

Mark Lynas spoke to Simplot Treasure Valley Idaho employees in May about his changing views on GMOs. The Food Producers of Idaho also sponsored a public talk by Lynas at the Egyptian Theater in Boise.

Q: The *National Geographic* recently published an article that focused on the war on science and you've said that the scientific community is losing the battle. What is the science community doing wrong?

A: One of the reasons people buy conspiracies about GMOs is because the industry is felt to be non-transparent. People are conditioned to feel scared about something being imposed on their food supply without them knowing it.

Q: The anti-GMOs would likely say that the obvious solution for more transparency is to label GMOs. Is that the solution?

A: People don't even know what GMO stands for let alone what it means. Those behind labeling initiatives really are aiming to scare people away, but how do you address the public's right to know? You address it with transparency. As an industry, we should want people to preferentially seek out our products, so the idea that we would always want to hide the presence of every single modified or biotech trait forever is increasingly out of date. Let's figure out ways to be maximally transparent and use this as a positive opportunity to communicate why these traits are important and why they are in the foods to start with. We should say, 'this is our product, this is why we're proud of it, this is what the traits are and this is why we're doing it.' And then when people demand the right to know, we can say, 'it's already on the package.'

Q: As you've been talking about your change from an anti-GMO activist, you also continue to talk about climate change. Why is it important to continue linking the two?

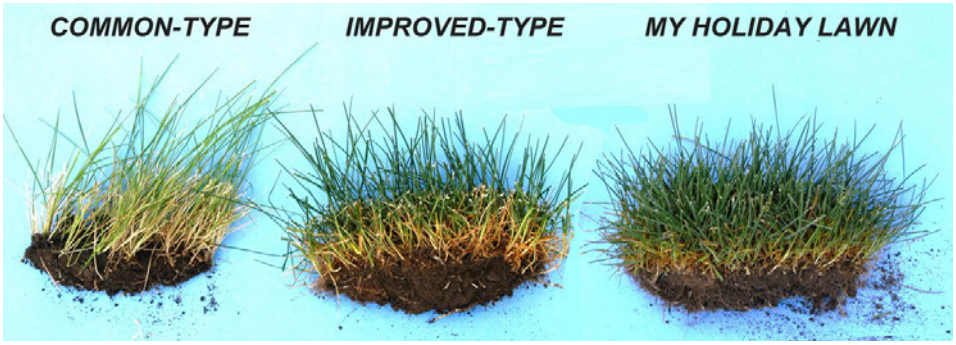
A: The climate change issue is central to my own story. If it weren't for having spent years defending the science on climate change and talking about a scientific consensus, I wouldn't have changed my mind on GMOs. You can't just go through life exercising confirmation bias and only assimilating information that conforms to your preexisting beliefs. The thing about science is that your personal intuitions are often wrong. I make a real point of challenging audiences with the climate change issue. If you're going to ask science to prove that GMO crops are safe you should probably also accept that climate change is happening. Almost every farmer will tell you that the weather is changing. They've seen that within generations of their families and they know how to change practices and adapt to it.

Q: How can we personally change the debate on GMOs?

A: Everybody has to be an ambassador. All of the social science research on communications shows that people believe their friends and family more than they believe any other source whether it be celebrities or talking heads. I think everyone has an active responsibility to talk about the work they do and explain it to people. It's important to be involved in the broader sustainability conversation. Simplot has a broader role in the world and what Simplot is doing must help protect food security for decades to come.

To find out more about Mark Lynas, visit **www.marklynas.org**.

Jacklin Seed's Introduction of My Holiday Lawn™ Dramatically Reduces the Need for Mowing



Grass plugs extracted from one-year-old turf plots that had not been mowed for one month prior. Under these conditions, the common type variety grows vertically similar to a pasture grass. Even with the improved variety, you notice a lot of browning on the shoots below the mowing height with green foliage up above. With the My Holiday Lawn™ variety even the bases are green and the foliage is kept mainly below the mowing height.

Dr. Doug Breede, director of research and development at Jacklin Seed, examines test plots of My Holiday Lawn™ grass. The new grass has a low-growing canopy that allows for significant reduction in mowing.

If you have a yard, you know that one thing is synonymous with summer – mowing.

Being able to enjoy a lush lawn is something everyone looks forward to, but frequent mowing can quickly diminish that enjoyment.

Reducing the frequency of mowing has been a long desired trait in grass varieties and this spring, Simplot's Jacklin Seed division introduced a new grass that can potentially reduce the need to mow from once or twice a week to just monthly.

The new series of grasses is aptly dubbed My Holiday Lawn™ because it lets you take a holiday from frequent lawn mowing.

My Holiday Lawn™ has a low-growing canopy and the grass maintains green leaves below the mowing height even when left unmown for weeks. When it is mowed, the new growth is only partially removed, keeping the lawn looking fresh and green.

"The really good news is that in addition to its compact canopy, My Holiday Lawn™ is beautiful turf," says Dr. Doug Brede, director of research and development at Jacklin Seed. "It will likely be the most attractive lawn on the block. You'll enjoy less mowing, along with a lush, fine leaved, dark green stand of grass."

Brede started working on the development of My Holiday Lawn™ 14-years ago at Jacklin's Post Falls, Idaho, research facility.

Developing a grass variety that doesn't need mowing has long been a wish for homeowners.

Arden Jacklin, who founded Jacklin Seed in 1936, always said that was one of the most frequent requests when he was asked questions.

Jacklin knew that a non-growing grass wasn't realistic because grass had to grow or it wouldn't be able to heal from normal wear and tear. The challenge was developing a grass that would still be healthy and be able to handle the wear and tear, but not grow at a rate of traditional grasses.

Brede said the possibility of low-growing grasses was first discovered when he saw some curious plants growing in his breeding nursery.

"In plant breeding, oftentimes serendipity is the mother of invention," he says.

In 2002, Brede assembled a lawn trial containing plots of all the dwarf mutants he could locate at the time. It was a small trial of only 40 entries intended as a proof of concept.

Brede said the initial results were less than desirable.

"The grasses looked dismal under infrequent mowing," he said. "They just weren't pretty."

But Brede didn't give up. He expanded his trials by using several larger aging turf quality trials as source-material for infrequent-mow varieties.

Expanding the trial worked amazingly well. In all, Brede tested 10,000 plots that were mowed just a few times a year.

"We rated the plots as we normally would, with a rating of 1 being undesirable, 5 being minimally acceptable, and 9 being get-down-on-your-knees-and-kiss-the-grass beautiful," he says. "And believe it or not, out of 10,000 plots there were a handful that got me down on my knees."

The selected varieties for My Holiday Lawn™ are somewhat shorter than a typical Kentucky bluegrass plant, but they are not miniature or dwarf.

Since its introduction in January, sales of My Holiday Lawn™ seed sales have been brisk.

In the Boise area, My Holiday Lawn™ is being grown at two sod farms for 2016 sales. Seed is available from Simplot Partners in Caldwell. My Holiday Lawn is planned for the outdoor facilities at the Jack's Urban Meeting Place (JUMP) project. More information can be found at **www.myHolidayLawn.com.**

Simplot employee, Julie Tobler, volunteered to be the home lawn guinea pig for My Holiday Lawn™. Researchers killed her existing lawn of clover and dandelion and seeded it to My Holiday Lawn. Julie says it's the nicest looking lawn on her street.

Simplot's Energy Program Achieving Savings Ahead of Schedule

From left to right: Lucas Bergeson, Greg Huderle, Pete Bruggeman, Travis Seaver, Tal Elseth

Six years ago, the J.R. Simplot Company launched an aggressive energy reduction effort.

The goal was to reduce Simplot's energy intensity (energy per unit of production) by 25 percent over the course of 10 years.

The energy reduction goal started in 2009 when Simplot was invited by the Department of Energy (DOE) to participate along with 30 other Fortune 500 companies in a program dubbed "25 in 10."

However, finding ways to save energy in many of the big production facilities that Simplot operates isn't always an easy task. Energy – by-and-large – has been thought to be "cost of doing business" without much attention being placed on it.

"We didn't realize how much it cost and it was always someone else's job. Changing our awareness and culture have been key," said Don Sturtevant, Simplot's director of energy.

Often energy savings can be right in front of you as was the case at the Rivergate Terminal in Portland. For safety, Rivergate had a natural gas flare to burn excess ammonia that ran constantly rather than when it was needed. A new system was developed that used a much smaller flare without sacrificing safety. It also had the added benefit of helping us realize how often we were burning the very ammonia that we were selling to our customers which increased our revenues.

That and other changes helped Rivergate become the first to achieve the 25x10 goal in just two years. The change to the flare operation alone saved 8 billion BTUs, which was enough energy to power nearly 7,000 high efficiency refrigerators for a year.

The latest location to meet its 25x10 goal is the Grand Forks processing plant.

Grand Forks implemented a number of efforts including its anaerobic digester that produces a biogas to offset natural gas use by 20 percent; a fully condensing economizer system that recaptures heat from boilers to save more than $320,000 annually, and a water conservation effort that reclaimed and treated grey water to use in cleaning the plant which saves enough water to fill an Olympic size swimming pool each day.

"Since starting this goal, our plant teams have exceeded our expectations and now Simplot is seen as a global leader in energy efficiency," Sturtevant said. "This has resulted in adding $30 million back to our bottom line. It's amazing, but I know that there is a lot more work to be done."

In just five short years, eight Simplot locations exceeded the 25 percent reduction with some approaching 40 percent. These sites include : Rivergate, Helm, Kelso NSW, Grandview Feedlot, Western Stockmen's Caldwell, Simplot IT Irving, and Grand Forks. In addition, The Idaho Plant and AgB Overton are on target to meet the "25 in 10" goal this fiscal year.

With 2019 looming not too far in the future, what's next after the "25 in 10" program is completed?

"Electricity prices in particular, have strong upwards pressure due to much needed generation, transmission, and distribution capital improvements and the EPA is trying to add on cost of carbon," Sturtevant says. "All of this will make electricity rates much higher in the years to come."

"Reducing our Energy Intensity is not just a goal, anymore," said Bill Whitacre, Simplot Company president and CEO. "Careful management of all of our business costs will make us more competitive. Reducing energy globally has the added benefit of reducing our greenhouse gas emissions and will be a vital part of our social operating license for years to come. It is simply the right thing to do."

Simplot Australia Embraces New Company Branding

Simplot Australia has made significant progress with the revitalization of its brand identity, part of the wider global initiative to strengthen the Simplot brand and achieve greater global consistency.

Simplot Australia (SAPL) began its transition to the Company's new logo and branding at the beginning of 2015.

Terry O'Brien, Managing Director, Simplot Australia said that the global brand revitalization project is helping to give Simplot Australia "a feeling of belonging and a clear direction to follow."

In April, SAPL updated all signage at its head office in Chifley Park, Victoria.

In May, SAPL relocated its South East Asian head office in Kuala Lumpur to a purpose-built, open plan space designed to enhance collaboration. The Simplot Company's new potato leaf design was incorporated into the office layout, and all Simplot Australia stationary was refreshed to reflect the new brand.

SAPL's next major project will be the replacement of all corporate signage at its sites. New site signage at the factory in Pakenham will be completed in August.

"At Simplot Australia, we have experienced a number of changes over the past 12 months and the global alignment of purpose flowing from the re-branding initiative has come at the right time," said Kaelene McLennan, SAPL corporate affairs, sustainability and communications manager.

Son of Idaho Plant Employee wins Simplot Global Energy Coloring Contest

Isaiah Garcia, winner of the Simplot Global Energy Coloring Contest, is pictured with his mother Maribel Garcia, who is a quality assurance auditor at the Idaho Plant in Caldwell.

Isaiah Garcia, 11, a student at Lone Star Middle School in Nampa, was the Special Grand Prize winner in a global energy calendar coloring contest sponsored by Simplot Australia and the Simplot corporate energy department.

Garcia is the son of Maribel Garcia, a quality assurance auditor at the Idaho Plant in Caldwell.

Don Sturtevant, Simplot's director of energy, said the intent of the contest was to engage with employees and their families to think about saving energy both at home and at work.

"Employees were given calendars to take home to their children to color and as a conversation starter with the children on ways to save energy," he said.

Isaiah, who included an essay with his colored calendar, was singled out for the special grand prize because of his understanding about the limited supply of energy sources.

"What really set Isaiah's response apart from the others, was his letter talking about the importance of saving energy," Sturtevant said.

Here is Isaiah's winning essay:

"Saving energy is important because we will save money and we will reduce air pollution caused by burning coal to generate electricity and from car fumes. Energy isn't free. Grownups in our homes pay for the electricity we use, so wasting energy is the same thing as wasting money and we know that's not a good idea. Most of the energy sources we depend on like natural gas can't be replaced. Once we use them up they're gone forever. Another problem is that most forms of energy cause pollution, so the more energy we save, the better off our pocketbooks and our earth will be."

Isaiah received a $75 gift card for his winning entry and his mother received a new digital, Wi-Fi capable NEST thermostat for the family home. The NEST is a learning thermostat that adapts to the occupants and their daily routines.

Isaiah said he planned on picking up a new video game with his winnings. Science is Isaiah's favorite subject in school and saving energy has always been important to him.

"We had a lot of entries which helped raise the awareness of energy efficiency at home and work," Sturtevant said. "Maribel and Isaiah are a great example of thinking globally and acting locally."

Simplot Collaborates with Universities for High Tech Ag Projects

Projects Focusing on Sensors for Unmanned Aircraft Systems and Data Analytics Receive IGEM Grants from Idaho Department of Commerce

From left, Shane Slack, Coordinator/Instructor ISU College of Technology Robotics and Communications Systems Engineering Technology, Donna Delparte, ISU assistant professor of geosciences, and Scott Rasmussen, dean of the ISU College of Technology with UAS. (Photo by Bethany Baker, ISU Photographic Services.)

The Idaho Department of Commerce recently awarded more than $500,000 to two technology projects at Boise State (BSU) and Idaho State (ISU) universities, which are part of a partnership with the J.R. Simplot Company.

Idaho Global Entrepreneurial Mission (IGEM) grants are awarded to universities who have partnered with industry leaders on projects geared toward commercialization.

The two projects look at the development of new sensor technology for unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) and harnessing the power of data analytics to increase crop yields.

Boise State University received $338,110 for research and development in data analytics for agronomic decision making. Idaho State University received $179,755 for the development of algorithms of field crop data using unmanned aircraft systems (UAS).

While the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) currently limits who is allowed to fly UAS for precision agriculture, ISU has been allowed to use UAS for research purposes.

According to Allan Fetters, director of technology for Simplot, agriculture is expected to be the largest growth sector for unmanned aircraft systems.

Simplot will partner with ISU in the development of an effective sensory program that effectively captures plant health information and allows for more effective identification and prevention of plant diseases and nutrient deficiencies.

Hyperspectral sensors mounted on UAS will capture crop data at the individual plant level. This data will be used for water management, crop nutrition, and other agronomic efficiencies.

"This collaboration positions ISU and Simplot to be at the forefront in the effort to commercialize this technology," Fetters said.

ISU – with Simplot providing soil analysis, crop expertise and serving as a liaison with participating growers – will soon commence imaging of more than a half dozen potato and sugar beet fields from American Falls to Idaho Falls. The project has already received Federal Aviation Administration authorization.

"There is potential for Simplot, working with the university, to take the methods and procedures we're learning and to be able to commercialize them," said Donna Delparte, an assistant professor of geosciences at ISU. "That would have a direct benefit to the state.

Effectively using data obtained from UAS and other sources such as satellite imagery and ground level sensors will be the goal of the BSU grant.

The project between Simplot and BSU presents an opportunity for the development of software and systems needed for precision agriculture.

Greg Hanmer, Simplot IT director for business and analytics said there is no shortage of data in agriculture, but there isn't an effective way to effectively store, organize and provide robust analysis of that data.

"Effectively identifying 'actionable data' fills in a gap in the industry that is well recognized by many companies," Hanmer said, adding that the first company to develop a successful data analysis solution will be best positioned to capture a leadership position in precision agriculture which is projected to be a $4.5 billion market by 2020.

Hanmer says the goal of working with BSU will be to develop a robust data management system that allows for effective data analysis. The system could be marketed in either a software package or web-based service that can further Simplot's precision agriculture efforts.

Idaho Commerce Director Jeffrey Sayer said these types of projects are an opportunity to position Idaho, its universities and its industry as leaders in the precision agriculture space.

"There will be constant demand to develop more efficient methods to feed the world's population, and Idaho is uniquely positioned to take a leadership role with experience in both agricultural excellence and technological innovations," Sayer said.

To learn more about IGEM, visit **http://commerce.idaho.gov/igem**

COMPANY BRIEFS

Simplot Plant Closings Handled with Employee Professionalism

When the Simplot Food Group embarked on an ambitious effort to design, build and commission a new state-of-the-art food plant in Caldwell, Idaho several years ago, a difficult decision was made to close three older plants in Aberdeen, Caldwell and Nampa.

The new Idaho Plant, built adjacent to the site of the original Caldwell plant, was the largest expansion in the company's history. The plant has proved to be a progressive, proactive response to market challenges, which has allowed Simplot to maintain a competitive edge in a very fluid market.

The Aberdeen, Nampa and original Caldwell processing facilities were an important part of Simplot's history, but at some point in time every competitive business is required to look at facilities and their infrastructure and balance the costs of maintaining older buildings and equipment, or investing in newer technologies.

John Coulter, Simplot's EHS Manager, credited all employees at the plants and the professional manner in which the plant closings were handled over the last year and half of operation.

"The plants are now closed and the employees have gone on to other endeavors within and outside of Simplot, but it's important they be recognized for the commitment they showed to the safety and well-being of their fellow employees," Coulter said.

Simplot's Nampa location was one of three locations closed as a result of the opening of the Idaho Plant in Caldwell.

All the plants averaged a Total Incident Rate (TIR) under the national industry rate, and Aberdeen finished Fiscal Year 2015 with zero OSHA recordable incidents.

Coulter said anyone who has been part of a plant closure, realizes it is a tough time in the life of that facility and its employees. Emotions are running high and it can be difficult to maintain concentration on the tasks that must be accomplished. But business must continue until the doors are closed and keeping everyone safe has to be a priority.

"During the closure process the plants continued making their production goals and keeping employees safe, which is a remarkable achievement," Coulter said "Meeting these goals is a testimony to the professionalism and integrity of each plant's staff and employees.

Simplot Enters into Agreement to Deliver High Resolution Satellite Imagery

Airbus Defense and Space and Simplot are launching a project to deliver Pléiades very high-resolution satellite imagery to Simplot customers. In the United States, Simplot will monitor customer and company fields distributed over several states during the growing season. This imagery will be acquired at key crop growth stages, and will be assessed for in-season adjustments.

Satellite imagery provided during the growing season will allow Simplot to collect data on crop conditions, and pinpoint variations that could be related to specific pest, nutrition or water issues.

Using the imagery, Simplot will be able to cover its entire geographic footprint to create a precise and detailed database. This advanced mapping will enable Simplot to provide growers with crop change detection analysis and estimate the possible impacts this may have on yield.

Simplot hopes it will become possible in the future to diagnose crop issues through field comparisons allowing Simplot to guide crop production management and optimization decisions in real time. Factors such as seed density, fertilizer, water and other inputs could be adjusted on a sub-field level with pinpoint accuracy.

"The Pléiades images collected at key crop stages will fully support more sustainable farming practices while saving time and cutting costs," said Allan Fetters, director of technology for Simplot Grower Solutions.