



Stanford eCorner

The Product Vision

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/1482/The-Product-Vision>

Marrone formed focus groups to change policies to amend incorrect artificial testing procedures carried out by academic scientists to test the efficacy of AgraQuest's product.



Transcript

So being an entrepreneur especially in this business where you're changing the paradigm of how farmers produce their food with these products and substituting one product for another. What we found is that the academic scientist would test products in an artificial situation so that it actually introduce insects or molds to the field in a very high level in a little test plot and then test my product side by side with the chemical. And it was totally artificial. The farmers don't do that at all. The farmers use lots of different products in cocktails. So they'll mix five products in a tank and spray it out. A fungicide, an insect killer, a weed killer and maybe even two fungicides at the same time or they'll rotate products. So they'll have a program to prevent insects and the fungus from developing resistance to the chemicals so the chemicals will still work. They rotate from one chemical to another. So they never use anything stand alone. But all the government work was done, I mean sorry, all the academic work was done with stand alone very artificial situation. So I actually formed a group called the Biopesticide Industry Alliance in the year 2000.

I called all my colleagues in the industry and said, let's get a trade group together and start lobbying to change some of these things, which we did, which is now non-profit with an executive director in dues paying have about 29 members. And we got the Environmental Protection Agency and the US Department of Agriculture to fund a program. They always say that if you want someone in the university, at least in our Leningrad University to do something, they go where the money is. So they seeded and put out a lot of grant. And as part of the grant proposal, they had to, if they'd sent in a grant proposal, a grant application that had them stand alone side by side, immediately rejected. The whole idea was that they would get money for doing on-farm research where we'd integrate these types of bioproducts just like the farmer was doing in a more practical way, that completely changed the attitude of these types of university professors, extension specialists they call them. When they saw that, they started getting really good data on the farm they saw these products were getting, when you integrated one of these bioproducts in, the farmer was getting higher yield at least has good control. And even often a better quality. One of the farmers I've met in Mexico when I was down there talking to customers, said he saw that when you break this chemical cycle it's like the plants on steroids all the time. And so it's chemical, chemical, chemical. And then eventually the health of the plant poops out. But if you have this break with the biological product in there, it can give a little break in the plant, health increases. And time and time again the growers tell us that there's a higher yield and higher quality when they incorporate our products in.