

Industry giants share technology

By TOM J. BECHMAN

ABBOTT and Costello made the baseball comedy routine "Who's on first?" famous. Anyone trying to keep up with all of the interrelationships between seed and chemical companies might think they're in the middle of an Abbott and Costello skit. To top



it off, Syngenta and Dow AgroSciences just added another joint agreement that makes updating your industry scorecard a necessity.

The two say they will "cross-license their respective corn events for commercialization within their branded seed businesses." Syngenta gets global, *non-exclusive* licenses with stacking rights to Herculex I and Herculex RW traits. That should give Syngenta the ability to offer hybrids with multiple modes of action on lepidopteran corn pests by as early

Seed treatment use grows

DATA compiled by Monsanto indicate use of seed treatments on soybeans could potentially reach 45% to 50% of all acres planted. A Monsanto source says it could be the highest percentage of seed-treated soybean acres ever planted.

Monsanto is watching the numbers closely because they've introduced the Acceleron Seed Treatment system this year. All Monsanto soybeans with the Genuity Roundup Ready 2 Yield trait sold this year will feature the system.

as 2011.

In return, Dow AgroSciences gets global, *non-exclusive* licenses with stacking rights to Syngenta's Agrisure CB/LL and Agrisure RW events. The licenses also extend to Agrisure Viptera, a broad-spectrum Lepidoptera event, and to a next-generation event for corn rootworm control.

All this makes an interesting web for Dow AgroSciences. Mycogen, owned by Dow AgroSciences, originally developed Herculex through an agreement with Pioneer, owned by DuPont. Dow AgroSciences will also supply Herculex to Monsanto for inclusion in SmartStax hybrids, with eight genes stacked together. The first commercial SmartStax hybrids are due out next year.

Behind the scenes

Sources inside the seed industry believe this recent agreement between Syngenta and Dow AgroSciences could signal a major shift in how the two companies operate. They believe more cooperation between the two industry giants could be in the offing.

Terms of the current cross-licensing agreement weren't revealed.

The same sources believe this most recent alliance could be good for smaller seed companies. It could provide a more competitive atmosphere when small companies go shopping for stacked traits in various corn hybrids.

Reduced-refuge strategy

One trend becoming clearer is that major players in the chemical and seed business are targeting the reduction of refuge requirements for corn. When Monsanto announced its SmartStax agreement with Dow Agrosciences 18 months ago, spokespeople made it clear that since these new hybrids would carry multiple modes of actions, they hoped to convince regulators to lower refuge requirements below 20%, perhaps as low as 5%. Refuge acres are required to help slow down the potential buildup of insect resistance.

David Morgan, president of Syngenta Seeds Inc., made their intent clear as well. In announcing the new deal with Dow AgroSciences, Morgan said, "Together with Syngenta Crop Protection and Seed Care technologies, we will be able to offer growers diverse choice for insect control while developing reduced-refuge-product concepts designed for use throughout the U.S. Corn Belt."

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