

Grower Uses Innovative Farm Methods to Increase Crop Production

Pisciotta Farms, located in Avondale, Colorado, is a family-run farm that spans three generations. Current farmers Joe Pisciotta, Jr., and his father inherited the farm from Pisciotta patriarch, Pete -- Joe Jr.'s grandfather.

"One main thing that keeps farming alive," says Joe, "is passing it along to family. We're basically a dying breed."

In fact, in 2002 the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) released its Census of Agriculture which notes that between 1974 and 2002, the number of corporate-owned U.S. farms increased by more than 46 percent; and in 2007, a USDA NASS study showed that approximately 8,900 U.S. farms were lost between 2005 and 2006.

Despite what statistics show, however, Pisciotta Farms keeps going. "A farm is a good place to raise a family. You don't learn a better work ethic than you do on a farm," says Joe.

After three generations, Joe has learned the importance of hard work on the farm and the need to create innovative farming methods. In 2007, he launched a farming labor program through Colorado Correctional Industries that hires crews of 10 to 20 female prison inmates from the neighboring women's facility to work on Pisciotta's and neighboring farms.

"It's been a win-win situation for us and the workers," says Joe. "Before they began this program, some of these women hadn't worked a day in their lives -- but they're learning now."

"When I started this program," adds Joe, with a chuckle, "Almost everyone I talked to said I was as crazy as crazy can be." The results have been positive, however, and he has seen financial gains.



Pisciotta Farms in Avondale, Colorado treated 20 acres of their pumpkins with Soil TRIGGRR®.

Pisciotta Farms grows cabbage, watermelons, pumpkins and onions. Joe also utilizes special inputs, including Soil TRIGGRR® and BioLink® products. Soil TRIGGRR® is a registered EPA plant-growth regulator, and Joe has used Soil TRIGGRR® for the past three years, and recently applied Soil TRIGGRR® on 100 acres of onions, 60 acres of watermelons, and 20 acres of pumpkins.

"Soil TRIGGRR® is designed to stimulate a vigorous root system which will, in turn, facilitate better nutrient and water uptake by the plant," explains Dr. Larry Parker, Westbridge Director of Research & Development, who received his Ph.D. from Colorado State University in Agronomy with a specialty in Soil Microbiology. "This allows for plants to yield bigger and more uniform onion bulbs."



Joe Pisciotta has used Soil TRIGGRR® for the past three years, and recently applied it on 20 acres of pumpkins, 100 acres of onions, and 60 acres of watermelons.

"We've been using Soil TRIGGRR®, and it looks like we've had bigger size and more uniform, larger-sized onions," says Joe.

At Pisciotta Farms, they process and pack everything themselves. Joe notes, "Since we've used Soil TRIGGRR®, our packouts of the colossals and super colossals have been greater. I contribute that to the Soil TRIGGRR®."

Joe says he has also seen great results from the use of Soil TRIGGRR® on his watermelons and pumpkins. "Soil TRIGGRR® gives us a firmer fruit," says Joe. "Our fruit consequently sits on the floor until it's ready to be shipped out, and we've seen good shelf-life." He also notes the economic benefits of Soil TRIGGRR®. "If I remember right, Soil TRIGGRR® is at a point where it's justifiable for the costs," he says.

Many conventional growers have incorporated Westbridge's BioLink products into their fertilizer program to grow better quality fruits and vegetables. "I would highly recommend the products for the crops I grow," Joe says.

Along with TRIGGRR®, Westbridge manufactures BioLink®, a line of organic products, as well as a line of specialty fertilizers under the SUNBurst brand name.

Pisciotta Farms also used BioLink® Insect Repellent for thrip control on 100 acres of onions. "My thrips control was good," says Joe. "I think the insect repellent definitely helped."

Pisciotta Farms has incorporated Soil TRIGGRR® and BioLink® Insect Repellent with the support of Westbridge sales representative, Clarke Yearous, who has extensive experience within the onion industry. "Clarke is phenomenal," says Joe. "He is better for me business-wise because he has a lot of background and knowledge of the onion industry."

To find out more about Westbridge Agricultural Products, call (800) 876-2767 or visit their website at www.westbridge.com.

—Reporting by V.B. Segall