

Filling the Licensee Pipeline

How Corteva Agriscience is leveraging germplasm, technology and innovation to fuel growth for independent seed companies



In the seed game, there's one simple rule: The best product wins. Your farmer customers aren't loyal to any particular germplasm developer: They're loyal to you. They care about how products will perform for them, so they can remain productive and profitable for another year.

But what constitutes a winner in one type of ground may not lead the pack in another part of the country. What works for one seed company's customers might not be right for yours. You need a way to distinguish your offerings. To show your customers you're bringing new and different options to the table that will help them succeed. This is why Corteva Agriscience has invested in a hybrid pipeline process specifically for licensee companies, with a focus on what's right for your business.

Narrowing the options

It all begins with one of the world's largest germplasm pools and a history of corn breeding that dates back a century. The breadth and depth of Corteva germplasm resources contribute to an incredible array of genetic diversity that helps us produce hybrids that are both high-performing and resilient.

Each year, our R&D team collects billions of data points to help predict performance. Advanced technologies make it possible to crunch these huge numbers. With tools like predictive analytics, marker-assisted selections, drone phenotyping and AI, we can home in on promising prospects faster than ever before. From this information, Corteva produces hundreds of thousands of hybrids every year. Less than 0.001 of those (1/10th of one percent!) make the cut. Even fewer are selected for our licensing pipeline.



Selecting hybrids for the licensing pipeline

Corteva works closely with two companies who serve as licensing agents for our hybrids: Peterson Corn Genetics, LLC and Thurston Genetics. Both companies are completely independent of Corteva, and that's exactly the point. They evaluate hybrids from Corteva, as well as other germplasm developers, looking at performance with your interests in mind, not ours.

The Corteva team, however, has long-established relationships with both organizations. This facilitates an important exchange of knowledge that helps tune the Corteva licensing pipeline to meet the needs of independent seed companies. Peterson Corn Genetics and Thurston Genetics share trends they're seeing and performance observations. "Thurston and Peterson tell us, 'Here are the inbreds and hybrid combinations that are working for the licensees', so we can continue building knowledge of their needs and pull forward better products," explained Jim Bueltel, Corn Portfolio Manager, Corteva Agriscience. Using knowledge like this, Bueltel and his team look at hybrids from the 0.001 that have made it through the research funnel to determine which ones are best suited for the licensing market. "Licensing has their own dedicated pipeline," said Bueltel. "We have products being developed and tested just for this channel. It's about using a different lens to look at the products. We look through an independent seed company lens, not a Corteva lens."

That's the same lens Peterson Corn Genetics and Thurston Genetics use as well. "They provide an unbiased opinion of the genetics. They are not beholden to Corteva and they get material from other companies, too," Bueltel said. "Licensees don't always know, or care, where the genetics came from. It's all about the

best product wins." He continued, "These companies are vetting all of the material Corteva gives them and only advancing the products that are best for their customers."

The competitive nature of providing products to the licensing market keeps Jim and his team on their toes, so the pipeline continues flowing with more winning products for independent seed companies and farmers. "You have 150+ different seed companies. They all have their own strategy and choose products their own way," Bueltel said. "We're providing them options so they can decide what works for them. We want them to have that independence."



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