



NAME: Julie Cartwright

TITLE: Sales Agronomist

COMPANY: Jay-Mar, Inc.

LOCATION: Plover, Wisconsin

HOMETOWN: Ceylon, Minnesota

YEARS IN PRESENT POSITION: 5

PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT: Agronomy sales at ADM Grain, Stockton, Wisconsin

SCHOOLING: Bachelor's degree in soils, minor in agronomy, University of Wisconsin-River Falls

ACTIVITIES/ORGANIZATIONS:

Secretary of the WPVGA Associate Division Board

FAMILY: Husband, Mark (married 29 years), and daughters, Amanda (Jake) and Kaylie (Branden)

HOBBIES: Traveling, gardening and running

8 BC'T July

INTERVIEW

JULIE CARTWRIGHT, Sales Agronomist, Jay-Mar, Inc.

By Joe Kertzman, managing editor, *Badger Common'Tater*

Strategically located and landlocked between railroad tracks and truck access roads in Plover, Wisconsin, Jay-Mar, Inc., "Your Total Agri Supplier," celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2020.

Those 50 years of successful business have seen Jay-Mar, Inc. evolve from a packaging supply company located in a warehouse with no heat to a full-service retail store and respected agricultural products provider.

On the retail side, Jay-Mar offers pet, small animal and equine supplies and feed, bird seed and feeders, lawn fertilizers, giftware, wildlife plots, and lawn and garden products.

Agricultural services and supplies include not only adjuvants, farm seed, fertilizers, additives and soil amendments, but also manufacturing, tank mixing, custom blends and blending, private labeling, loading, delivery and custom spraying.

Above: This issue's interviewee, Jay-Mar, Inc. Sales Agronomist Julie Cartwright (right) poses with company President Tony Grapsas (left). Loading, delivery, application and custom spraying of seed, fertilizers, adjuvants, additives and soil amendments are just a few of the many agricultural services Jay-Mar, Inc. provides for customers.



"I have railcars and trucks coming in all the time," says Tony Grapsas, president of Jay-Mar, Inc. "On a busy day in May, we'll go through 600 tons of product and could empty our plant if we weren't restocking."

150 TONS PER BIN

Just one of the bins that Grapsas and this issue's interviewee,

Julie Cartwright, sales agronomist for Jay-Mar, Inc., showed the *Badger Common'Tater* editor on a recent tour holds 150 tons, or 1.5 railcars, of dry fertilizer.

Among its complex system of driveways, buildings, storage tanks, above- and below-ground conveyors, baggers and bins, the facility can unload 100 tons of material an hour, or a truckload in 20-25 minutes.

Owned by Dave Warner, Jay-Mar is a unique company whose employees operate as a family of professionals dedicated to serving the needs of customers, and more importantly, helping them prosper.

Before fielding questions for this interview, Cartwright stressed that she is a small part and a latecomer into the Jay-Mar family, and that Dave and Tony are humble, good and dedicated heads of the company who have made her feel welcome and someone whose opinion matters.

Cartwright lets her own humility show when saying she feels privileged to work for such a family-oriented, professional organization.

Julie, how did you become interested in ag, and what experience do you bring to Jay-Mar?

I grew up on a small corn/soybean farm in southwestern Minnesota (I was never a Vikings fan!). My father instilled a strong work ethic in me and a passion for agriculture.

In the early 1990's, I was a regional agronomist in Southeastern Minnesota for a privately-owned ag retail company with 17 locations in three states. My customers were corn, soybean and dairy farmers. I was active in customer and employee training along with a wide variety of plot work.

More recently, I worked for ADM in Stockton and got my introduction to vegetable crops.

Here at Jay-Mar, I continue my work with many of those same growers



and still enjoy managing fertilizer, and hybrid and fertilizer supplement plots.

What schooling do you bring to the table? I am a graduate (bachelor's degree in soils, minor in agronomy) of UW-River Falls, where I met my husband.

How long have you been at Jay-Mar, and how has your career progressed? This is my fifth season at Jay-Mar as a sales agronomist. I was hired for that role and continue to expand my experience and increase my knowledge base.

With Jay-Mar's support, I am now a Certified Crop Advisor. Last year, I also obtained an FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) pilot's license to fly our drone.

Above: Jay-Mar's diverse inventory includes seed corn and oats, Sorghum-sudangrass hybrid soil builder and weed and nematode suppressor, and black oil sunflower wild bird seed.

What aspects of agriculture do you help your grower customers with—planting, crop protection, harvest, storage? I work with my customers in all aspects of crop production, from seed selection and fertility in the spring to soil sampling after harvest in the fall.

I am in contact with my customers all year long. Planning starts already in the fall for the following year with seed purchase and soil sampling, then lots of field scouting (on the ground and in the air) during the growing season.

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Regarding crop protection, what tools do you offer Jay-Mar customers? We offer a full selection of crop protection products in addition to custom fertilizer and herbicide application.

How do Jay-Mar's offerings compare with other agriculture supply companies? We make our starters from scratch. We also produce specialty fertilizers for agriculture and the green industry (lawn, golf course and landscaping). These products are sold around the country.

Our liquid manufacturing plant allows

us flexibility and timeliness in blends and ingredients that our competitors cannot match. We also have two licensed drone pilots for an added scouting perspective.

The retail store that carries everything from bird seed to lawn and garden supplies rounds out our diverse spectrum of goods and services.

Are most of the products such as herbicides, fertilizers, oils, additives, etc., tank mixed or made at Jay-Mar? Jay-Mar has a wide range of foliar fertilizers that we make in-house

Above: An annual Jay-Mar tradition, much like a family holiday photo and, in fact, used in Christmas advertising and greetings, is the all-employee picture.

at our manufacturing plant. Many of them are commonly tank mixed with herbicide and other liquid products.

We also have a full line of herbicide adjuvants manufactured on-site, as well. We do not make any EPA-registered products.

What are the main products you deal with? We deal primarily with liquid and dry fertilizer, seed and herbicides.

What are you most proud of that Jay-Mar offers? There are many things that make me proud to represent Jay-Mar! I really believe that our team here is second to none. We have many people with varying specialties who truly care about serving our customers.

Dan Kwiatkowski in the manufacturing building is always available to lend his wealth of liquid blending expertise. Dave (Warner) goes above and beyond to be flexible with growers on payment terms.

Tonja Simmons in the warehouse helps everyone with a smile and her southern charm. I think that we all really care about the growers that we serve.



Jay-Mar, Inc. offers TriEst Ag Group's Pic Plus chloropicrin soil fumigant and insecticide (in the green barrels) that prevents pests such as wireworms and nematodes, and diseases caused by certain species of Pythium, phytophthora, fusarium and verticillium, including common scab in potatoes.

You are on the WPVGA Associate Division Board. Why is this important to you and why is it important to support the WPVGA and Industry at large? I am relatively new to the vegetable industry. Being elected to the WPVGA Associate Division Board and now serving as an officer has taught me a great deal about the inner workings of the industry while I continue Jay-Mar's proud tradition of civic and industry participation.

I am proud of the work we do on the Board from educating the community through the Spudmobile to sharing information with growers at the Grower Education Conference & Industry Show, offering scholarships for those pursuing ag careers and a lot of other little things in between.

In general, I think that it is important to increase the awareness and education of our potato and vegetable industry.



Jay-Mar holds an annual field day showcasing corn seed varieties and hybrids available from the company, including such brands as LG Seeds, Jung Seed Genetics and Legend Seeds. This issue's interviewee, Julie Cartwright, is at center with hand to chin.

Is part of your or Jay-Mar's job to educate, or do you and growers work together to come up with crop production and protection plans? Yes, a big part of our job is to educate. We host a growers' meeting in the winter where we

invite speakers from various corners of the industry to present on the most current products or research.

Beyond that, all our sales staff meets with each customer individually every winter to evaluate the previous

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Contact: Jim, John or Joe

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season as we plan for the next.

Are you typically on the road, visiting customers? If there is a typical day for Julie Cartwright, describe it or the variety of things you might do in a day. Diversity is one of the things that I love about my job! One day I may spend all day in the office working on cropping plans and preparing for grower appointments.

The next day I may be delivering seed on my way to soil sample a field that is next to an alfalfa field that needs to be swept for leafhoppers. No two days are the same.

Do you also offer vegetable seeds or planting products, and if so, what are they? Our retail store offers garden seeds, seed potatoes, sweet corn in bulk and onion sets, along with gardening tools and bagged fertilizer.

Are most of your customers potato and vegetable growers or other retailers, feed mills? Explain. Jay-Mar serves potato and vegetable growers in the Central Sands along with corn, soybean and dairy farmers. We also provide wholesale products to several fertilizer and bird seed vendors around Northeast Wisconsin.

Has coronavirus affected business, and if so, how? We are encouraging people to call ahead for warehouse orders and limiting access to the warehouse.

Our day-to-day operations as salespeople haven't changed a lot with COVID-19. We are all more diligent about handwashing and wiping down our workstations. We do not just drop in on growers without permission right now.

Other than that, spring weather does not wait for viruses, and it is business as usual at the plant and in the field.

Our retail store has seen a nice up-



Current & Opposite Page: The never-ending cycle of product movement at Jay-Mar starts with the bins loaded from semis and railcars, and then via front-end loaders onto conveyors and into trucks for delivery.

tick in business from people who just want to buy their dog food without the congestion of big box stores. We are also doing a lot of curbside pick-up.

Are there new technologies or products Jay-Mar is offering now that haven't been available in the past? Jay-Mar has added a drone to its list of scouting tools. The FAA requires drone pilots to be licensed if they are flying them in support of a business.

With more and more objects sharing our air space, it is important for people to know flight rules to keep everyone safe. That is pivotal in the Central Sands where crop dusting is so prevalent.

Jay-Mar has two licensed pilots and we are using the drones for crop scouting and diagnostics.

Have you had to change with changing ways of farming in the area, with growers becoming



more efficient or environmentally conscious? Wisconsin farmers are and have been leaders in being conscientious about nutrient management, water quality and being good stewards of the land.

When it comes to being good environmental stewards in agriculture, cover crops are playing an increasingly larger role. Jay-Mar has a wide range of cover crops for

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Interview. . .

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Jay Mar Sales Agronomist Julie Cartwright explains that the green polymer coating on ESN nitrogen fertilizer allows for slow release in six-to-eight weeks, depending on temperature and soil moisture. It also requires the use of conveyors instead of augers so the coating isn't damaged during product handling, storage and transport.



Jay-Mar's laboratory is where new liquid fertilizer recipes are created and refined. The company has dozens of ingredient choices, allowing the creation of hundreds of blends for agriculture and specialty markets.

"Wisconsin farmers are and have been leaders in being conscientious about nutrient management, water quality and being good stewards of the land."
—Tony Grapsas

sale by the bag or by the pound.

Many watersheds are now providing cost sharing for the planting of cover crops, so we work closely with growers to help implement those plans to improve nutrient retention and water quality.

Describe the Jay-Mar square footage, and is most retail, storage/



Jay-Mar has added a drone to its list of crop scouting and diagnostics tools, as well as two licensed pilots. Julie Cartwright, shown flying a drone over an alfalfa field interseeded with some Italian rye, says the FAA requires drone pilots to be licensed if they are flying them in support of businesses.

warehouse, tanks and tank mixing, or what exactly? Our fertilizer plant sits on about 44 acres. The store, warehouse and office make up about 2.5 acres.

What are the most critical aspects of the operation today, and how will they evolve or change in the future?

This year, keeping our employees, customers and their families healthy is a huge priority. We are using appropriate cleaning procedures and distancing behaviors.

Anything that I've missed or that you'd like to add, Julie? This is Jay-Mar's 50th year. We are still a family-owned company that values being a contributing member to the community, not just a business located in Plover. **BC'T**

Right: Liquid gravity storage tanks are a common sight at Jay-Mar, Inc. in Plover, Wisconsin.



Jay-Mar's newest dike of tanks is landlocked by railroad tracks and doubled the agricultural supply company's storage capacity.