



INTERVIEW

RILEY REYNOLDS,

director of sales and marketing, Oro Agri

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

NAME: Riley Reynolds

TITLE: Director of sales and marketing

COMPANY: Oro Agri

LOCATION: Fresno, California

HOMETOWN: Preston, Idaho, where he grew up on a family farm

YEARS IN PRESENT POSITION: 10

PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT: Purfresh

SCHOOLING: Bachelor of Science degree in horticulture, Utah State University

AWARDS/HONORS: "I'm honored to have three grandchildren."

FAMILY: Wife and four children

HOBBIES: "I love to shoot [tactical shooting], golf and fish."

Above: Director of sales and marketing for Oro Agri, Riley Reynolds (pictured) says the company's U.S. headquarters in Fresno, California (shown above), covers the United States, Mexico and Canada. "We do manufacture in Fresno," Reynolds notes, "with all our ingredients coming out of Florida and California. Oro Agri products are made and packaged in the USA, not sourced from China. I think that is a powerful statement in today's economy."

Riley Reynolds chooses to live about three hours south of the town where he grew up on a family farm. "I love the Idaho way of life," he says. "That's why I'm here. It's close to the Salt Lake City International Airport, so I do my business and get back home."

The director of sales and marketing for Oro Agri, headquartered in Fresno, California, Reynolds says his uncles all grew potatoes. "I had a lot of experience on the farm growing up," he relates, "pulling truck boards at 8 years old, driving potato trucks when I was about 11 or 12 years old and tractor when I turned 14."

"We had alfalfa and wheat on our own farm," Reynolds adds.

Oro Agri seemingly burst onto the potato and vegetable growing scene, in the early 2000's, with crop protection products and yield improvement solutions, namely conventional and organic biopesticides, adjuvants, fertilizers, bio-stimulants and soil conditioners.

The company develops and manufactures agricultural, home and industrial products marketed as being low impact and environmentally friendly.

Such include Encourage NANOCAL,

a soil-applied liquid formula that supplies potatoes with readily available, sub-micronized calcium when they need it most, during tuber initiation and development; PREV-AM, a three-in-one insecticide, fungicide and miticide; and ORO-RZ, a soil adjuvant designed to improve the uniform distribution of soil-applied pesticides and nutrients.

Oro Agri boasts global distribution to more than 85 countries with upwards of 2,000 dealers and retailers, and 240 employees spread out over 30 countries.

Research, development and technical support teams, as well as manufacturing facilities and laboratories, are based in South Africa, Brazil, the United States and Europe.

Oro Agri manufactures and markets agrochemical products. How long has the company been in business, and who is the founder? The company came into agriculture quite



by accident, having been in the South African mining industry, in the 1990's, making a product to control dust in mines.

Since it worked in mines, it was sprayed as a fog in chicken houses only to realize it was killing the mites.

Later, it was tested on strawberries and lettuce, killing aphids on lettuce and knocking down powdery on strawberries. Now, with EPA registration, it reinforces the old adage that it's better to be lucky than good.

Oro Agri came to the United States, in the early 2000's, with some momentum.

Erroll Pullen, founder of the company, still to this day, at 79 years old, is the acting CEO, and he loves it. Every minute of every day, he loves it. He is a force of nature.

At the beginning of this year, Oro Agri was purchased by a major chemical company out of Europe, Rovensa. The goal is to be the largest biocontrol, bio-stimulant company globally.

Rovensa bought us to introduce its products into the U.S. market, including adjuvants, pesticides and bio-nutritional products. We have access to over 200 products from global sister companies that we will be introducing to the U.S. market in the next 5-10 years. It is overwhelming.

In addition to agrichemicals, biopesticides and adjuvants, both conventional and organic, there are two technologies on the market, bio-nutritional products, that are aggressive and better than conventional fertilizers in motivating what happens in a plant.

Having only been in business since 2002, why should Central Wisconsin potato and vegetable growers trust and rely on Oro Agri products? What sets us apart is good technology that has been proven time and again. In 2003-2004, I introduced into Wisconsin the first bio-degradable

Above: The potatoes at left in each of the two images are treated with NANOCAL by Oro Agri, versus the untreated potatoes at right in the photos. The Nolan variety shows better root development and plant vigor, at left in the first image, and Atlantics exhibit excellent uniformity, left in the second image, compared to the untreated set at right.

soil-wetting agents. In my experience with products that come and go, of what has been and where technologies are now, there are no products out there like ours, and I have seen some good ones.

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Vine mealybug 10 minutes after an application of PREV-AM.



40 minutes after the PREV-AM application.
Body fluid oozing out of the mealybug is clearly visible.



PREV-AM is a quick contact insecticide with a physical mode of action.



I have been with Oro Agri for 10 years, and the company's products are the best I've seen. Proof is in the pudding.

The first time Wisconsin potato and vegetable growers use our products, they will never go back to what they were using before. And we are willing to let growers try them with our extensive field trial program.

The top three are PREV-AM, a contact insecticide, fungicide and miticide; ORO-RZ, a soil adjuvant that should be applied in-furrow or in any combination of spray-on chemigation used in a proper wetting pattern to assist the chemistries it is applied with in the soil; and our newest product, NANOCAL, that is taking the potato and vegetable market by storm, quickly becoming the go-to

product in the U.S.

For potato growers using NANOCAL, the calcium goes to the tuber and improves size and quality. Calcium uptake reduces hollow heart and improves overall storability, factors critically important to potato growers and those raising cabbage and carrots to get maximum benefits in vegetables.

NANOCAL maximizes calcium benefit uptake during cellular division. It is a very specifically timed product application, with the perfect timing for potatoes being about a week ahead of hook (three-to-six weeks after planting) on sandy soils, and another three weeks following that.

In heavier soils, NANOCAL is applied at planting and then intermittently, carrying application on through the

Above: A contact insecticide, fungicide and miticide, PREV-AM controls insects, diseases and mites quickly.

season. Sand versus clay is a whole different game of timing.

For tomatoes, peppers or bulb crops, put it on during the season as needed, every three to four weeks. NANOCAL maximizes the strength of cell walls in these crops.

How can you specifically help the grower members of the Wisconsin Potato & Vegetable Growers Association?

If they want maximum quality in vegetable or tuber crops, growers should get on an ORO-RZ and NANOCAL program to maximize overall quality, especially this year with all the chemical companies experiencing shortages in everything from herbicides to pesticides.

We do not have a shortage of ORO-RZ.

If growers run into white mold, we have solutions; insects, disease, zebra chip virus, aphids, or if running into a multitude of issues out there, we have great tools in our toolchest to make sure these growers have product. It is not an expensive remedy.

I would tell them to get their feet wet using this program, and once they understand how many tools we have available, start with these three products that will never let them down.

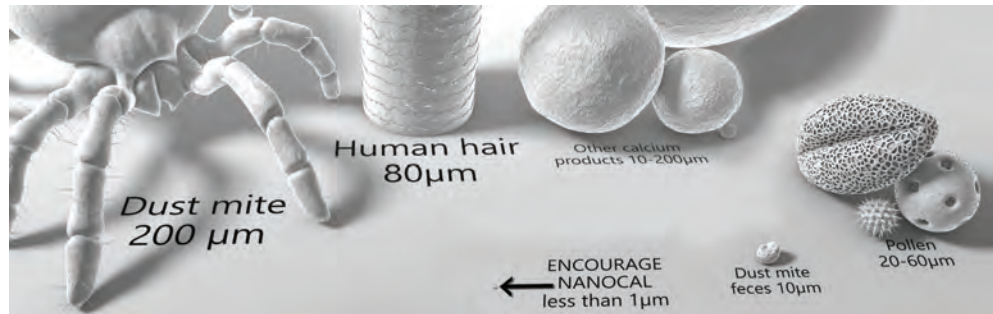


The Atlantic potatoes at right, treated with NANOCAL, show no hollow heart compared to the untreated tubers at left.

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I understand that Oro Agri sells its products through an independent wholesale distribution network in approximately 80 countries worldwide. How did it land such a vast network of countries or huge territory? Our company in Fresno, California, covers the USMC—United States, Mexico and Canada. We have a manufacturing plant in Portugal, one in Brazil, another in South Africa, and we are actually in a little over 95 countries with a very strong presence in all.

We do manufacture in Fresno, with all our ingredients coming out of Florida and California. Oro Agri products are made and packaged in the USA, not sourced from China. I think that is also a powerful statement in today's economy.

What kind of independent distributors are we talking about in Wisconsin and the Midwest?

We work with some independent retailers like Nutrien Ag Solutions, Simplot, Growmark and

TH-Agrichemicals, which all have a presence and representation in Wisconsin.

Who is Oro Agri's competition?

I really think, in the realm we are playing in, we don't have any competition for good contact pesticides that will compete with us, or nano-calcium in the tank mix.

ORO-RZ is a soil adjuvant that does what most soil-wetting agents can do and a whole lot more.

Our competitors are ourselves. We've been really strong in the western United States, are making inroads into the Midwestern states and

“When Rovensa bought us, it ramped up our service and team. We are excited and ready to have Wisconsin growers take notice.”

– Riley Reynolds

striving for an eastern presence.

When Oro Agri says its products have low environmental impact, what does that mean?

Low environmental impact, meaning, “I'm not putting anything into the soil that will cause phytotoxicity and not spraying anything onto plants that will cause harm to adjacent fields.”

Some of our four products are renewable resources. As long as orange growers grow oranges, I will always have product for PREV-AM and our adjuvants.

There's a lot of phosphate and nitrogen accumulation in soils. We can help mitigate it and make it available to plants. We have what I consider a trifecta of absolute success for potato growers.

How can some of the products (and which ones) enhance yield in the potato and vegetable growing industry?

Certainly ORO-RZ and NANO CAL—we have data on NANO CAL achieving a 10-1 to 20-1

Above: NANO CAL's sub-micronized calcium particles are immediately available for root uptake.





ORO-RZ distributes soil-applied pesticides uniformly for improved efficacy.

return on investment (ROI) on yield and quality in the potato crop, and our products have a 10- or 15-1 ROI across the board.

PREV-AM is not necessarily there to get us a yield bump, but it reduces the ability of insects to negatively

CONTROL OF SOIL-BORNE PATHOGENS

UNTREATED

SOIL-APPLIED FUNGICIDES MAY MISS PATHOGENS DUE TO POCKETS OF HYDROPHOBIC SOIL.

ORO-RZ

ORO-RZ MIXED WITH FUNGICIDES PROVIDES IMPROVED INFILTRATION AND PENETRATION OF HYDROPHOBIC SOIL FOR BETTER CONTROL OF SOIL-BORNE DISEASES.

impact yield. Then, when you add it to a program and consider what ORO-RZ and NANOCAL do in improving the genetic potential and quality at harvest, there is your trifecta.

How many employees work for Oro Agri domestically? Here in the U.S.,

I have 27 area managers, including Kevin Boehm in Wisconsin. We recently hired him during a hiring spree in which we went from 13 to 27 area managers, and added five in-field technical reps, so we have 32 in the field across the U.S.

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Contact: Jim, John or Joe

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When Rovensa bought us, it ramped up our service and team. We are excited, ready to go and to have Wisconsin growers take notice.

Are there researchers and scientists under the umbrella, and if so, what do they do specifically? They put on demonstrations and field trials. Several are Ph.D.'s and highly qualified for conducting research trials. They are spread out from New York to Indiana, Idaho, Texas and Mississippi.

I am looking for more. We are going to be ramping up the number of people as the company is in a major growth mode, and I think Oro Agri will be a known, recognized brand in the next couple years.

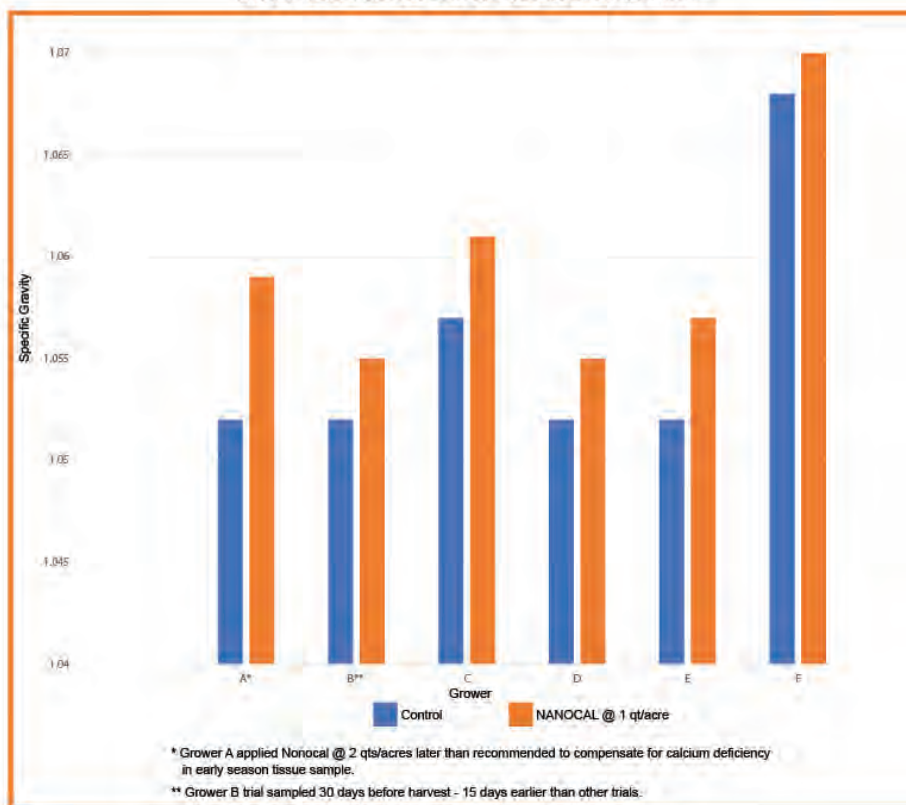
Is the potato and vegetable industry in Wisconsin/the Midwest important to Oro Agri, and why or why not?

It is critical, yes. With the success we've experienced in specialty crops, we're also getting into the corn and soybean market.

If you went back more than five years ago, Oro Agri was mostly a tree and vine company, almonds and grapes in California. As we've grown so rapidly, our success story has been in commodity crops, alfalfa, wheat, soybeans and corn.

We still work in trees and vines, but our growth will be in commodity crops, from vegetables to corn and soybeans, or, as we say, everything

THE EFFECT OF NANOCAL ON POTATO SPECIFIC GRAVITY
AROOSTOOK CONSULTING, PRESQUE ISLE, MAINE



NANOCAL has been shown to increase potato specific gravity.

from apples to zucchini.

With so many crop protection companies offering biopesticides, adjuvants, bio-stimulants, fertilizers and soil conditioners, why should growers invest their dollars with Oro Agri? It's extremely hard and confusing to the consumer. We are here to make their lives simpler.

I would invite any of your Wisconsin growers to talk to Kevin Boehm. He knows his chemistries, and we are

here to make their programs better, more efficient and less expensive where possible.

What do you take most pride in, as a sales manager, regarding Oro Agri products? I take most pride in the fact that our products are the best I've ever seen, and secondly in the people I've had a chance to hire in the past 5-10 years. I have one of best teams surrounding me nationally and locally, so the quality of products and people.

What should WPVGA grower members know about the company? We are here to help and do the right thing. Our company is focused on growth and the grower.

Is there anything I've missed that you'd like to add, Riley? I am excited Wisconsin has its own rep and about potential growth in the Midwest. It's exciting. **BCT**

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