

S&W Seed Company

Vertically integrated alfalfa seed supplier



S&W Seed Company alfalfa seed production field in southern California's Imperial Valley. Few other areas have the ideal weather conditions and dry summer growing season required to force alfalfa plants into the seed production stage. (S&W Seed Co. photo)

THE S&W SEED COMPANY is, in one word: alfalfa (*Medicago sativa*) – lucerne as it is known in the United Kingdom,

S&W Seed Company

Five Points, CA
(Nasdaq: SANW)

559-884-2535 • www.swseedco.com

Key Personnel

- Mark Grewal, President/CEO
- Matt Szot, Chief Financial Officer
- Dan Karsten, VP Operations
- Fred Fabre, VP Marketing
- Dan Gardner, VP Plant Breeding and Genetics

Company Profile

- Proprietary alfalfa varieties dormancy 2 through dormancy 10.
- More than nine million pounds annual alfalfa seed production.
- Germplasm for developing new varieties.
- Major international markets for its salt-tolerant varieties including the Middle East and North Africa.
- Established 1980.

Australia, South Africa, and New Zealand. From research and new variety development to production, processing, marketing, and exporting, S&W Seed Company is all about alfalfa seed.

“We do it all, every single component needed to put seed into the hands of

our customers,” President/CEO Mark Grewal says. “We are not just a one-sided company. We breed new varieties, contract, grow, sell, and market seed. One aspect of our success is that we have spent 20 years breeding high yielding, salt tolerant varieties.



S&W Seed Company leadership team includes (left to right) Dan Karsten, VP operations; Dan Gardner, VP Breeding and Genetics; Mark Grewal, president/CEO; and Fred Fabre, VP Sales.



Existing equipment such as these Clipper airscreens are grandfathered into compliance with California's clean air standards. To replace the old machines would involve an extensive permitting process. Even if a permit would be granted, the associated fees would make it impractical to install new equipment.

and which can thrive on poor, saline soils,” Grewal says. “In those areas, alfalfa touches everything. First the hay. Without hay, there can be no livestock. There is extreme pressure for hay. We have the varieties that perform well in these markets.”

2012 Expansion

The company is headquartered 30 miles southwest of Fresno, CA in the San Joaquin Valley where it maintains its seed processing, distribution, and field research activities on a 40 acre tract. The company also owns or leases more than 2,000 acres of farmland available for seed production in the Imperial Valley in southern California. ▶

“Our goal is to be the major supplier of non-dormant proprietary alfalfa varieties in the world,” he says.

The adaptive qualities of S&W Seed Company's salt tolerant varieties have opened warm-season markets where centuries of farming have resulted in

high levels of salt accumulation in the soil. Without salt-tolerant crops, vast areas are no longer suited for crop production.

“S&W is already a leader in breeding and developing proprietary alfalfa seed varieties that grow in warm climates



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Oliver gravity separators are components of S&W Seed Company's three processing lines for alfalfa, wheat, and small grains at its Five Points, CA facility. The facility is capable of processing 24 million pounds annually.

“Our biggest current challenge has been how to produce enough seed to meet the increased demands in the marketplace,” says Dan Karsten, vice president operations.

In 2012, S&W Seeds took several steps to expand its production and marketing efforts. It acquired Imperial Valley Seeds, Holtville, CA (IVSeeds). Located in the Imperial Valley, IVSeeds was the international marketing arm of Imperial Valley Milling (IVMilling).

IVSeeds will continue its working relationship with IVMilling as a source for substantially all of its production. S&W has more than 10,000 acres in production for 2013 in the Imperial and San Joaquin valleys combined.

In yet another 2012 transaction, S&W Seeds acquired rights to a substantial portfolio of alfalfa varieties for colder climates.

“This is our first step into production of low two, three, and four dormancy alfalfa seed,” says Grewal. “The portfolio also includes multi-leaf alfalfa varieties.”

This acquisition will permit S&W Seed to start a breeding program for the dormant market which is a large worldwide market in which the company has not previously participated.

On the marketing side, S&W Seed acquired the customer list of one of its international distributors and remarketed its seed in S&W branded bags.

“While many in the industry were

into one of the world's largest alfalfa producing countries,” Fabre says. “Our salt tolerant varieties are particularly well suited to thrive in those local conditions.”

Total international alfalfa seed sales for fiscal 2012 were nearly \$10 million.

Biotech Traits

“In what may be one of our most important developments to date, we announced in October 2012, an agreement with Monsanto and Forage Genetics International (FGI) which will allow us to produce and sell S&W's leading varieties with the Roundup Ready® biotechnology,” Grewal says.

S&W Seeds has worked with FGI for the past two years to introduce the Genuity® Roundup Ready® trait into two of its highest yielding, salt tolerant, non-dormant varieties.

In early 2013, the two companies began field trials of the first integrated variety to confirm trait efficacy.

“Alfalfa is a green crop that is good for the environment,” Grewal concludes. “With the advances we made in the past year, we believe we are well positioned to be the major supplier of proprietary alfalfa varieties in the world.”

Joe Funk, editor



Three two magnetic separators (mag mills) are useful for removing certain weed seeds. When fine iron powder is mixed with seeds, enough powder gets trapped in the weed seed's rough seed coat to enable the large magnet (red coils) to attract the powder and remove the weed seed. Similarly, the process also removes some alfalfa seed with cracked seed coat. (JWF photo)

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