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Stockton rebrands as STK, has new focus on bio-ag technologies

BY JOHN GROH | MARCH 14, 2018

Stockton, an Israel-based leader in bio-ag technologies for sustainable crop protection, has changed its name to STK to reflect a shift from its legacy business in generic agrochemicals to its current strategy of bio-ag technologies and botanical-based solutions.



“The new STK name comes after a yearlong rebranding process,” said STK Chief Executive Officer Guy Elitzur. “STK represents a short, smart and memorable name, which maintains a bridge to the company’s heritage and reflects our focus and commitment to bio-ag technologies for the future of sustainable agriculture.”

STK will be comprised of two distinct business units: STK Bio-Ag will serve global agriculture markets, offering botanical-based and hybrid solutions for crop protection; and STK Aqua, offering biological solutions for the aquaculture industry.

Elitzur said the idea for the rebranding and shift in focus to botanical-based solutions came as a result of what is currently taking place in the industry.

“We were looking at what is happening now throughout the food chain, with the change in consumer buying habits and the emphasis on healthy and safe foods,” said Elitzur.



Guy Elitzur

Elitzur elaborated, saying that consumers today are more educated than ever and want to know where their food comes from and how it was produced. With botanical-based solutions like STK's Timorex Gold, pesticide residue levels on crops are greatly reduced compared to crops treated with traditional agrochemicals.

"When it comes to residue levels, retailers and other food companies are setting their own standards that are even more strict than regulatory agencies," said Elitzur. "With bio-ag technologies, we can achieve levels that are far below what is permitted. This is a way to prove that we are looking out for the consumers, which the retailers really want."

Aside from reducing pesticide residue levels, STK's bio-ag products are healthier for the plants, allowing for better production, according to Elitzur.

"Bio-ag has an impact on the pests but doesn't stress the plant's immune system, so the energy and vigor of the plant can go toward growth," said Elitzur. "This often means earlier harvests and increased yields."

Elitzur gave the example of a grape grower in China who switched to a bio-ag application and saw the same size and color of his grapes, but an earlier start to the harvest. He was able to capitalize on the early window and go to market when no other grapes were available.

Another advantage of bio-ag is that it can easily be implemented as part of a grower's spraying protocol, with no specialized training or education required.

"Timorex Gold is botanical based and the advantage of integrating botanicals into a chemical pesticide is that it has perfect synergy with chemical, so it creates a better level of satisfaction to the farmer," said Elitzur. "It is easier to use and implement in their program, with no specialized training or education required. Also, the product has a great deal of consistency, and farmers like to know what to expect."

Additionally, STK's bio-ag products meet the needs of organic growers as well, an advantage during a time when the popularity of organics is at an all-time high.

"With the big focus on organics, our product meets the standards required for organic production," he said. "In fact, we have over 20 organic certifications."

Timorex Gold is STK's flagship product, and Elitzur said it has seen increased penetration into China and the United States.

"It is now approved for use in 40 U.S. states," he said. "California has not yet granted approval, but we expect that to happen in a couple of months."

He added that Timorex Gold recently won a Best in Class Provider of Choice Award in a global evaluation of biopesticides, beating out products from Bayer, Syngenta and other agrochemical giants.

"Those are all great companies that make outstanding products, and to see Timorex Gold come out on top gives us a lot of pride and proves how terrific our product is," said Elitzur.

Elitzur said STK is also a pioneer in hybrid solutions that combine biological and chemical compounds, and the company is eyeing that category as a means for further growth.

“Hybrids, such as our new REGEV product, allow us to penetrate into new sets of farmers that might be more conservative based on bad past experiences with other biologicals,” he said. “We look at our hybrids as a bridge for us to reach other types of crops and farmers and give them a new level of confidence. We are the first in the market to do this and we’re already launching in a couple of countries, with more to come later this year.”

Elitzur said that in 2018-19, STK’s goal is to position its products not just with the farmers but also with other players on the food chain that have interactions with the farmers.

“We want them to understand the fantastic impact of biopesticides, which creates a new level of clean, better quality produce.”