

Biocontrol Latam Opening Remarks

David Cary, Executive Director IBMA

This very week 7 years ago I was offered the position of Executive Director of the then aspirational young teenage organisation, IBMA. It's founding members had a vision back in 1995 of a different form of agriculture a true green revolution! Like the first green revolution it involved producing healthy crops to feed a growing world population. However, in contrast to the first green revolution this one is truly green! It engages in an agriculture that is green not only in producing plentiful harvestable yields but in totality, including interactions with the environment and the human population.

Such a change would never have happened without innovative people looking at what nature offers and working with it! Such a change to truly sustainable agriculture would not have gained traction without passionate people prepared to challenge the status quo and vested interests. Such a change would not have occurred without committed and resilient researchers. Such a change would never have happened without farming organisations accepting that the old style of agriculture could not guarantee the produce, the good health of the population and the farms themselves, the part of the environment for which the farmer is a custodian for future generations. Such a change would never have happened without Media and Conference Organisation outlets like NewAg International. Above all, such a change would never have happened without innovative biocontrol companies, many of them SMEs prepared to take a risk on new technologies and methods of farming.

I have seen over my time with IBMA the developing interest of the large multinational companies. We welcome their engagement and contribution. Yes, they bring credibility in some areas, yes, they bring investment in our technologies, yes, they bring effective logistics and distribution chains. Would they have created the change on their own initiative? I think that highly unlikely, after all they have large investments and shareholders to consider. I believe the structure of our industry at present, as it has developed is a healthy mix. All sectors have different contributions to make. If policymakers across the globe ensure that they work to facilitate a realistic playing ground for all, I am sure we will continue to have a diverse structure of our industry. Agriculture and society will be the beneficiaries.

I am heartened by the contribution that organisations such as IBMA and ABC Bio have made and the developing role of BioProtection Global, the federation to which IBMA, ABC Bio and other likeminded Regional and National biocontrol associations belong. It has made a big difference, although not enough yet! We still have challenges to meet which will rely on such trade bodies that truly represent our industry and not confused with also defending competitive methods and technologies.

Enjoy this event in Brazil a country committed to agriculture and innovation. Above all get the most on offer by being informed and networking between yourselves!