

An interview
with



Pedro Peleato,
CEO, **SEIPASA**



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Hello Pedro, it is a delight to be able to find out more about yourself and your company, SEIPASA. Please can you tell me a little about yourself?

Pedro Peleato,
CEO, SEIPASA



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Pedro Peleato is an entrepreneur who, 20 years ago, had the vision to anticipate the changes that are now transforming the agricultural industry. Seipasa arose as a company specialised in developing and formulating natural solutions for crop protection, bio-stimulation and nutrition. Twenty years ago we took an alternative path to that of active materials obtained by chemical synthesis and our idea has grown into a powerful business initiative that has allowed us to achieve strong international presence in more than 20 countries.

Over the past few years my work has focussed on strengthening the foundations for solid international growth,

obtaining plant protection registration for our products in each of the markets in which we are active. My aim and that of the rest of the management team has been to position Seipasa as a recognised, authoritative partner in the agro-food industry. Along these lines, we were the first Spanish company to form part of BPIA in 2010 and we are also founders of the EBIC Task Force in the biostimulant market sector.

With the same goal in mind, 8 years ago I became a founder member of CEPBIO, the first Spanish biopesticide consortium.

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What is your vision for SEIPASA?

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My vision for Seipasa is for it to reach a consolidated position as a company that offers the market an alternative for the production of fruit and vegetables free of chemical residues. Our goal is to achieve this based on the principles of natural technology and through innovation and research. Our vision of agriculture is rational, committed to sustainability, respect for the environment and consumer health.

It is also important to recall that European legislation is becoming increasingly stringent when authorising active substances for chemically synthesised products. Farmers have less and less aids available to protect their crops and new, sustainable, highly effective solutions in line with the new regulatory framework, such as those developed by Seipasa, are clearly needed. There is a real lack of such solutions in the market and Seipasa develops efficient, cost-effective products to cover it.

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Where do you see some of the biggest opportunities in Agriculture today? For example in Biologicals, Precision Agriculture or any other technology...

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Precision agriculture and the development of new technological applications have enabled groundbreaking progresses to be made. An example is the use of drones to help monitor the advance of diseases and pests and to rationalise the application of plant protection treatments. These are tools that producers could never have dreamed of a decade ago. I am sure that projects to optimise water use in agriculture will also be crucial, especially bearing in mind that water is an increasingly scarce resource.

In our segment the greatest opportunities will arise from the development of biotechnology and its applications in agriculture. Research with microorganism and applying them in crop treatments opens up a gateway to knowledge that will be fundamental in the coming years.

At Seipasa we have recently increased our laboratory facilities to include a new specific microbiology area, in preparation for this new environment, which will give us internal knowledge that is very important for the development of products with microorganisms which are also natural enemies of pests and diseases affecting crops. We will have in-depth knowledge of the specific strains of bacteria we work with, characterised through their genetic code. Our work involves highly specialised genetic identification techniques that only a few pioneering centres in Spain employ.

Technology helps us to gain a better understanding of the pests and diseases that affect crops, enabling us to develop more sustainable, rational, environment-friendly plant protection solutions.

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SEIPASA has strengthened its presence in Peru. Are there other countries in Latin America that SEIPASA are present in?

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Seipasa is a global company that is clearly determined to expand its activity internationally. Peru and Ecuador are two countries in which we have recently strengthened our commercial presence after signing agreements with new distributors. In Mexico it has been 10 years since we set up our first subsidiary and we are currently active in more than 20 countries worldwide. Our strategy is based on obtaining new plant protection registrations to expand internationally.

In addition to Peru and Ecuador, in Latin America we have obtained plant protection registrations for our products in Costa Rica and Colombia as well as Mexico. In Chile the process to register new solutions is also under way. Our global map of plant protection registrations shows that we have products registered in USA, Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, Ireland, UK, Morocco, Turkey, Greece and the Ivory Coast, among others.

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What are some of the core challenges, in your view, that biostimulant companies face today?

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The recent approval and publication of the European Fertilizer Regulation 2019/1009 marks a turning point that will bring order to the biostimulant sector, ensure greater quality, transparency and safety, and eliminate the barriers detected in the EU. The new regulation entails important changes for producers and manufacturers alike in regard to product labelling and defining the real functions that a biostimulant product has on crops.

The European Fertilizer Regulation also opens the gateway to products of microbial origin. This is field that offers vast

possibilities of development and research for companies like Seipasa. Although the Regulation establishes positive lists which, in practical terms, could limit the advances of the industry in developing biotechnical applications, it is possible that these lists may be extended in the future.

The truth is that in the biotechnology industry, R&D&I advances at a much faster rate than legislation. Aligning the pace of these two realities would be a way of overcoming many of the obstacles in the field of innovation.

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