



US (IA):

Feeding beneficials = more robust biocontrol

De Jong Greenhouses from Iowa, USA, grow a broad range of quality potted floral products. Started by Martin De Jong, the grandfather of current CEO and owner Mark De Jong, the company started operations in 1933. Today it operates on three sites totaling about 12 acres. De Jong supplies high grade potted plants, annuals, foliage plants, patio pots and hanging baskets to florists, independent garden centers and supermarket chains across Iowa and neighboring states.



Having successfully introduced bioprograms in key crops since 2008 (e.g. gerbera, poinsettia and cyclamen) the management team is working with Biobest's Technical advisor Veronica Cervantes to take these strategies to the next level. With Nutrimite™, a Biobest product that accelerates and enhances the establishment of biological control agents (BCAs), their biocontrol strategies have become increasingly robust and cost effective. Sarah Gunn is the manager/head grower at the Oskaloosa site, where the transition to biocontrol began in 2008.

Extensive bio experience

“Gerbera, chrysanthemum and cyclamen are all attractive to thrips, aphids, spider mites and whitefly,” explains Sarah. “Our bio programs for those crops are quite similar. Key beneficials are *Amblyseius cucumeris*, *Amblyseius swirskii*, *Phytoseiulus persimilis*, *Orius insidiosus* and different species of *Aphidius*. We add *Amblyseius californicus*, nematodes and biopesticides as required.” “Our poinsettia bio program centers on *A. swirskii* and parasitic wasps contained in Biobest's Poinsettia- Mix to control whiteflies. If necessary, we

use *A. californicus* to target Lewis mites and beneficial nematodes against fungus gnats.”

De Jong Greenhouses has successfully applied aphid and *Orius* banker plants. Predatory mites are most often applied in breeding sachets.

The Nutrimite™ boost

Always looking to improve cost efficiency and program robustness, Sarah and Veronica started using Nutrimite™ to enhance *swirskii* efficiency. The team now uses Nutrimite™ in the poinsettia, pot mum, cyclamen and gerbera bio programs. This allows us to work with fewer sachet introductions, often just a single application of sachets at planting for a full crop cycle.

Sarah: “With the Makita Blower and the Nutri-App, applying Nutrimite™ is fast and easy. If the crop has to be watered from above or after a fungicide or growth regulator application, we just re-apply.”

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