



# Florida Grower's Essential Businesses



## Plant Food Systems

As Florida and the nation adapts to the COVID-19 pandemic, *Florida Grower*® magazine is recognizing the important role businesses play in serving specialty crop producers in the state. This month, we are featuring Paul Fabry, President of Zellwood-based Plant Food Systems.

### Q First, give us a little history of Plant Food Systems.

**Fabry:** This year is our 40th anniversary manufacturing premium plant nutrition and protection products, and we've been in Florida agriculture for more than half a century. We got our start in Central Florida and we're proud to still be here, sharing our experience and patented chemistry.

### Q How have your grower customers responded to the pandemic?

**Fabry:** It's inspirational. They have continued to grow the best produce and fruit possible. It's been an honor to work with these hard-working growers during this unprecedented time. Growers are truly essential to our country.

This is a difficult time, but we all have the ability to focus on what we can control; so many of our growers are focusing on keeping their groves as healthy as they are with their families. For our growers, that means getting up every morning and planning ahead. It's focusing on a quality annual program, increasing tree health with products like KPHITE 7LP, and making sure their groves get the nutrients they need. Summer is a critical time for certain applications in our program, so we've been as focused as ever.

### Q How has COVID-19 impacted your operations?

**Fabry:** We're deemed essential, so we're busy working to support our growers. Our Florida-based manufacturing has been running strong to support agriculture across Florida and the U.S. If anything, we're doubling our efforts to make sure we can support our growers as quickly as possible.

We started producing hand sanitizer



Photo courtesy of Plant Food Systems

**Plant Food Systems formulates its products on-site at its facility in Zellwood.**

that we've donated to local fire departments and made available to our customers. We have the facilities to make it happen, so we're happy to contribute to keeping first responders healthy and safe.

### Q Do you believe this virus is reminding the general public about the importance of American agriculture?

**Fabry:** American agriculture is essential. The American farmer is essential. We're talking about our health and the security of our nation and our citizens.

I hope people are being more thoughtful about the importance of agriculture. More people are talking about where their food comes from. They're cooking at home. They're making new recipes with their children. It's too easy to forget the importance of good, quality food that's made here at home.

### Q How are Florida growers "flattening the curve" so to speak when it comes to HLB?

**Fabry:** That's a challenge we've been taking head-on for years now. I've seen growers we've worked with fight back and thrive. The growers we work with regularly in developing a program of products are "flattening" the HLB curve. There are so many positive stories out there of groves that are healthy with strong production. Considering the many obstacles they have faced in recent years, production and quality are outstanding. Their resilience and ability to produce despite these challenges is beyond encouraging.

### Q Do you have any flagship product and/or anything new in development you'd like to discuss?

**Fabry:** We're known across Florida and nationwide for our flagship systemic fungicide/bactericide KPHITE 7LP. The next generation, BULLET HLB, includes control of HLB and other diseases and continues to demonstrate higher effectiveness in studies, including more boxes, less fruit drop, and a healthier tree from top to bottom.

### Q Is there anything else that you would like to add?

**Fabry:** Thank you to everyone in agriculture for the work you do to feed America. Thank you to our growers for trusting us to help, offer our expertise, and continue to provide them with products for advanced protection and production. We can weather this and so many other challenges together. We're proud to support American agriculture!  